



Colorado's Water Supply Future

Interbasin Compact Committee

October 31, 2014

Annual Report

To the House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy



From John Stulp

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Committee*

Dear Colleagues,

2014 marks an historical moment in Colorado water history. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers that make up the basin roundtables and Interbasin Compact Committee. This hard work has significantly advanced:

- 1) The legislative charge of the basin roundtables to define each basin's needs and the necessary projects and methods to meet those needs, and
- 2) The charter of the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), which asked the IBCC to "Guide the process of negotiating interbasin compacts and other agreements by providing a framework that creates incentives for successful deliberations, agreements, and their implementation"

The basin roundtables submitted their draft Basin Implementation Plans and the Interbasin Compact Committee their draft conceptual agreement to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) in July of 2014.

After nine years of hard work, these accomplishments are monumental, and together with the IBCC's No and Low Regrets Action Plan (September 2013) are primary inputs into the first draft of Colorado's Water Plan. However, there is still more work to be done to finalize both documents and incorporate them into Colorado's Water Plan in 2015.

The success we have achieved thus far confirms the legislature's belief in 2005 that collaborative processes can change conversations surrounding water and build sound grassroots solutions. It is because of the Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act that

- the first version of Colorado's Water Plan is possible,
- Conservation is becoming a common part of each conversation
- The concerns for future impacts on irrigated agriculture are being discussed
- recreation and the environment are integrated more fully into water planning,
- multi-purpose and cooperative projects are commonly viewed as necessary for the future, and
- rational discussions are possible regarding the preservation of the option(s) for a future transmountain diversion.

Looking beyond completion of these drafts, there is still much more to be done. If developing the plans was difficult, partnering with project proponents to implement them will take even more dedication and focus. In addition, plans don't work if they become static; we will need to periodically update them so that our vision for the future continues to gain clarity.

Because staff and our volunteers have produced so much great work this last year, the annual report is brief, but provides highlights and links to the impressive work that has been drafted.

John Stulp



Draft Basin Implementation Plans

The Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act asks the basin roundtables to determine projects and methods to meet their consumptive and nonconsumptive needs. The basin roundtables submitted their draft Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) on July 31, 2014. The BIPs built on a foundation of public outreach, past studies or planning efforts, and years of roundtable work and discussion. These Plans identify the challenges for water supply concerns within the basin, major policies and basinwide themes as identified by the roundtables, and projects and methods by which these water supply gaps may be met.

Every roundtable undertook a process for compiling their BIP, taking under consideration the complexities of their basin. These processes were unique to each roundtable, with every group looking at project identification, public outreach, and roundtable input into the process differently. Each roundtable hired a technical consultant, to assist with

outreach and the layout of the BIP, as well as specific technical tasks such as mapping or modeling.

The work of the BIPs will be used in preparation of Colorado's Water Plan, in the draft due December 2014, as well as the final version due a year later. Though the themes, projects, and methods will be reflected in Colorado's Water Plan, each BIP stands on its own as the most recent articulation of policy, public outreach, and water supply planning within the basin. Moving forward, the roundtables will finalize their BIP, with some additional project and method identification, modeling, and outreach, submitting their final BIP on April 17, 2015.

The Draft BIPs can be found at www.coloradowaterplan.com under resources/IBCC and Roundtable Documents.

Progress on Colorado's Water Plan

CWCB staff has submitted draft chapters to the Board for comment and review throughout 2014, at the Board's bimonthly meetings. These draft chapters, as well as an update on public comment, are available for review at www.coloradowaterplan.com, along with the draft Basin Implementation Plans and other outreach and informational documents. These draft chapters, augmented by Board comments, public comment, and internal editing, will be submitted to the Board at their November meeting for consideration, and then delivered to the Governor on December 10, 2014.

The draft chapters cover a range of topics, and have generated a great amount of public input including

over 13,000 comments reviewed by the CWCB. Moving forward, CWCB staff will continue to work to address the concerns of the public, Board members, and other stakeholders as chapters are supplemented and revised. Staff will also be working very closely with basin roundtables in the upcoming months to ensure that the BIPs are being accurately represented in Colorado's Water Plan, revising sections dealing with project information and identified basin concerns.

After the December draft deadline, the CWCB will again undertake an ambitious public outreach process, soliciting comments on the complete draft, and working with basin stakeholders to fine tune the Plan.



Progress on Colorado 's Water Plan continued

The grassroots effort, represented by the involvement of basin roundtables and incorporation of IBCC work, is central to Colorado's Water Plan.

Public outreach and stakeholder involvement will remain central to the process in 2015 as the Plan moves from draft to final.

IBCC Draft Conceptual Agreement

A long standing controversial issue in Colorado is the development of water supply from the Colorado River basin for use on the eastern slope. It is controversial because of issues such as supply gaps, environmental health, and compact compliance. Basin Implementation Plans have addressed this issue in a variety of ways, which will be captured in the discussion on the matter in Colorado's Water Plan.

In 2013, the IBCC focused its discussion on a conceptual framework for future detailed discussion on a potential new transmountain diversion (TMD). As expressed in the draft agreement, there may be years where additional development is available from the Colorado River system, and some years where this water is not physically available. This discussion stemmed from the No and Low Regrets Action Plan, as the IBCC decided that additional discussion and consideration on this particular issue was necessary. The IBCC members determined in June of 2014 that the Draft Conceptual Agreement was ready to be submitted to the CWCB for inclusion in Colorado's Water Plan and for input by the basin roundtables.

The Draft Conceptual Agreement focused on the following points of consensus:

- The eastern slope is not looking for firm yield from a new TMD project and would accept hydrologic risk for that project.
- A new TMD project would be used conjunctively with eastern slope interruptible supply agreements, Denver Basin Aquifer resources, carry-over storage, terminal storage, drought restriction savings, and other non-West Slope water sources.
- In order to manage when a new TMD will be able to divert, triggers are needed.
- An insurance policy that protects against involuntary curtailment is needed for existing uses and some reasonable increment of future development in the Colorado River system, but it will not cover a new TMD.
- Future western slope needs should be accommodated as part of a new TMD project.
- Colorado will continue its commitment to improve conservation and reuse.
- Environmental resiliency and recreational needs must be addressed both before and conjunctively with a new TMD.

Moving forward, it is crucial to have the basin roundtables participate in further discussion about the Draft Conceptual Agreement to further inform identified discussion points and project considerations.

2014 Statewide Basin Roundtable Summit

The 3rd Statewide Basin Roundtable Summit was held in Golden, Colorado on March 6, 2014. It was attended by members of the nine basin roundtables, Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), and interested members of the public; over 350 individuals participated in total. The Summit included presentations and panel sessions on a wide range of subjects but was focused on basin roundtable participation and feedback.

Governors Hickenlooper, Ritter, and Owens have all supported the basin roundtables and the IBCC. The HB-1177 process has been a continuous arc from 2005 to the present, through three administrations, and across party lines. Colorado's Water Plan is an extension of this process.

Participants were seated at diverse discussion tables to encourage integrative and cross-basin dialogue about Colorado's Water Plan, IBCC progress, and the basin implementation planning process. Afternoon breakout sessions were more targeted toward specific components of water supply planning and allowed for additional exploration of key themes and ideas.

The 2015 Statewide Basin Roundtable Summit is in the works and will be held in early March, check the Colorado Water Conservation Board website at the end of November 2014 for details. The Summit will be an opportunity to provide input on Colorado's Water Plan and the Draft Conceptual Agreement. It will also be a place to discuss and share Basin Implementation Plan work Statewide.

“The basin roundtables have shown how individuals with different political and geographic affiliations can come together to talk about broader shared interests instead of narrow self interests.”

-Gov. John Hickenlooper

“Basin roundtable members deserve a great deal of appreciation for the work they do and the bottom-up approach they participate in.”

-Former Gov. Bill Owens

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