



Blue River Watershed Regional and Individual Water Efficiency Plans CWCB 75% Progress Report – October 27, 2017

The Blue River watershed is located in central Colorado on the west side of the Continental Divide. The watershed drains 680 square miles covering all of Summit County and parts of Grand and Lake Counties. The watershed also includes Dillon and Green Mountain Reservoirs which support trans-basin diversions to Colorado's Front Range communities. Rivers in the basin include the Blue, Snake, and Ten Mile which flow north to the confluence with the Colorado River near Kremmling. The Colorado River supplies water to more than 30 million people in the arid southwest, with the Blue River contributing roughly 324,000 acre feet per year.

The High Country Conservation Center is a Summit County environmental non-profit dedicated to promoting practical solutions to resource conservation in our mountain community. HC3 serves all of Summit County by providing waste reduction education, energy efficiency programming, local and sustainable food systems, and water conservation education.

The municipal communities of the Blue River Watershed are served by several water providers that have come together in this efficiency project. They include the Town of Breckenridge, Town of Frisco, Town of Dillon, Town of Silverthorne¹ and the Copper Mountain Consolidated Metro District. Their annual (2015) combined water use is approximately 4,029 AF per year.

HC3 and the Town of Frisco hired Brendle Group as the consultant on this project. Brendle Group is specialized in working with communities, counties, and cities across the country - large and small - for more than 20 years on projects related to sustainability for both municipal operations and communities. To date, they have completed over 300 sustainability projects across more than 30 states with their recognized approach that combines facilitation and strategic planning with rigorous research, engagement, and engineering techniques.

Thank you to the CWCB for helping launch the planning process for a Blue River Watershed Efficiency Plan. We look forward to plan adoption and implementation in the coming months.

Task 1: Project Management

Brendle Group continues to maintain a detailed schedule and communication protocol and provides regular status updates and reports to HC3 and the ExCom as necessary. They require executive review of all major deliverables, and provide mechanisms for rapid response that has proven to be proactive in addressing concerns that arise along the way.

Brendle Group held a kickoff meeting with appropriate HC3 and water provider staff to review the project scope and schedule, confirm goals and expectations, and outline a work plan for the remainder

¹ In August 2017, Town of Silverthorne expressed interest in no longer participating in the Blue River Water Efficiency Plan. Details of their project exit are elaborated in the "Revised Scope of Work" section below.

of the project. Generally, this timeline has been strictly enforced. Brendle Group holds recurring bi-weekly check-in meetings between our team's project manager and HC3's project manager to provide updates, make sure the project is on-track, and address any questions or concerns. They also engage the ExCom (core water group/participating water providers) in advance of each stakeholder engagement milestone outlined in the Stakeholder Involvement section below to ensure alignment among the core project team throughout the project. We are on course to complete this project in the allotted time frame (by March 31, 2018).

Task 2: Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Brendle Group has a strategy to engage a key group of stakeholders, identified with help from the ExCom, at targeted milestones throughout the process. They have facilitation expertise and a stakeholder engagement toolkit that draws from past experience that leverages the watershed constituents for this project.

As with other community planning efforts, the stakeholder meeting work sessions are where everyone identifies how to contribute to a successful project, including providing data, input on reasonable goals, identification of available resources, and input on potential barriers. To this end, we assume a series of four Stakeholder Advisory Committee workshops to support the major phases of the project. We have completed three out of the estimated four at this time with roughly 40 stakeholders in attendance at each meeting. Stakeholders include but are not limited to ski areas, local conservation and river restoration groups, municipalities, private water providers, Denver Water, Colorado Water Utilities, landscapers and irrigation specialists, land use planners, golf course maintenance, and resort lodging/HOAs. The fourth and final stakeholder meeting will be held Wednesday, November 15th, 2017.

1. **Project Kick-off and Baseline Assessment:** Provide an overview of the project and review baseline supply, demand, and demand management results from Tasks 2 and 3.
2. **Goals and Activities:** Discuss options and alternatives for goal setting, considering alignment with existing goals and objectives in the watershed. Brainstorm ideas for water efficiency activities building off best practices and existing initiatives in the region.
3. **Plan Implementation:** For each water efficiency activity identified, populate an implementation matrix that calls out key players, action steps, potential funding source, barriers to consider, co-benefits, and other key factors for consideration.
4. **Draft Plan:** Review the draft regional water efficiency plan and gather input from the committee. *NEW – the vision for the final stakeholder meeting now includes working groups for focused implementation topics. We plan to convene standing groups around Outdoor Water Use, Indoor Water Use, Institutional Collaboration (land use/planning), Education/Outreach, and Commercial.*

Task 3: Supply System Profile

This step is primarily completed and involved characterizing the existing water supply systems, reliabilities, limitations, and needs for the individual water providers as well as synthesizing the information for a regional watershed perspective to describe how each water provider operates within the larger system.

Brendle Group worked with each water provider to gather information on geographic service area, water sources, facilities, water rights and associated yields, and reliability and drought criteria. They took advantage of existing work underway, and considered previous planning resources and water

studies, and used the most immediate data available relative to water supply and reliability. They presented this information for feedback at both ExCom meetings and the first two stakeholder meetings. See the Obstacles section for more commentary on supply and demand system profile.

Task 4: Demand Management Profile

Defining the baseline from which to project future demand has been critical to both the individual and regional plans. Brendle Group worked with providers to understand future demand and developed projections on the basis of expected population growth, the effects of demand management activities, and forecasted needs. This step has led to identifying supply limitations that inform ongoing goal setting.

The CWCB guidance document outlines specific details for conducting this type of baseline water demand profile. Our intent here is not to repeat these details but instead summarize key themes and considerations relevant for this plan.

- Demographics and Key Characteristics of the Service Area
- Historical Water Demands
- Past and Current Demand Management Activities and Impacts to Demands
- Demand Forecasts

Task 5: Integration, Benefits, Goals

Task 5 is still ongoing and entails mapping and forecasting supply, identifying environmental and economic benefits of efficiency activities, considering existing water management activities, and setting reasonable goals to meet and reduce demand in the future. In particular, this step looks at:

- Water Efficiency and Water Supply Planning
- Water Efficiency Benefits
- Water Efficiency Goals

An update for this task was presented at the September 13th stakeholder meeting. Brendle Group has meet one on one with water providers to better understand the benefits of water management activities to each particular jurisdiction. Input from the water providers has allowed Brendle Group to revisit the list of management activities and to narrow down the best options for each jurisdiction. Trouble meeting in a timely manner with all providers has led to a small delay in this process. Final lists will be presented at the November 15th stakeholder meeting.

Task 6: Efficiency Activities

Brendle Group has developed a variety of assessment and forecasting tools that will be used to help inform selecting the most effective efficiency measures and activities for the region to meet identified supply and demand goals while considering the economic impacts (implementation costs and cost savings). These tools offer quantifiable means of identifying and filtering a variety of options to best meet local needs and resources.

Brendle Group has looked to existing resources and studies to inform their work. Many plans and policies have already been created for the region that highlight the importance of water conservation and efficiency that we will synthesize and expand upon to create the Blue River Watershed Regional Efficiency Plan, including:

Breckenridge's 2004 Water Conservation Plan, 2016 SustainableBreck Annual Report, Town of Frisco's 2011 Community Plan, Town of Silverton's 2013/14 Water Fund Policy, Summit County's 2013 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, the 2015 Colorado Basin Implementation Plan: Collaborating on Colorado's Water Plan, and the 2012 report for the Roaring Fork Watershed titled "The Opportunities for Water Conservation-- Realizing the Streamflow Benefits from Local Conservation Efforts." These are just some of the existing resources used provide the best value for the Blue River Watershed.

The goal is to target the most impactful activities that can be backed by reliable funding sources, consistent messaging, and education while also addressing the triple bottom line impacts of each activity. We also will explore potential barriers to success and remedies to these barriers, such as social norms (green lawns), the influence of tourists and second homeowners, perceptions about lost water rights, etc.

We are in the middle of completing this task to be presented to the ExCom and Stakeholder groups at the November 15th meeting. Brendle Group, in one on one meetings with water providers, has identified the most relevant and easily implementable efficiency activities identified by the stakeholder group. The key areas of focus moving forward will be:

- Foundational Activities
 - Ex: Base Rates, Ordinances, Smart Meters, etc.
 - Indoor Water Efficiency
 - Ex: Target top Commercial users (e.g. Hotels)
- Outdoor Water Efficiency Examples
 - Ex: Sub-metering for irrigation, water audits, etc.
 - Education & Outreach
 - Ex: Mailers or bills with comparative use.
- Internal Operations
 - Ex: Staffing needs
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Task 7: Implementation and Monitoring

This task has not been completed. At the November 15th meeting, we will convene standing working groups around topic areas to move forward on implementation. These areas of focus are Outdoor Use, Indoor Use, Institutional Collaboration (land use/planning), Education/Outreach, and Commercial. These groups will help to maintain a regional collaboration between jurisdictions as well as ensure committed resources in each focus area. An umbrella goal for these working groups will be to research funding mechanisms to share for implementation at various levels. Brendle Group and HC3 have already compiled a list of funding opportunity to be included in the appendices of each individual water plan.

Task 8: Plan Adoption

This task has not been completed. HC3 is working with each jurisdiction to schedule a council/board update on plan drafts as well as meeting with town staff to create a game plan for pitching the proposals

for adoption. We will be creating a “1-pager” that describes the planning process, stakeholders involved, and organizational chart that describes the partners involved in the project. We will use this as an educational tool in approaching decision makers.

OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED SINCE 50% REPORT

In early August 2017, the Town of Silverthorne contacted HC3 with concerns about their individual water plan draft and Brendle Group’s inquiries into the town’s water system, water rights, and future demand. It was expressed that Town of Silverthorne was not interested in providing that information to Brendle Group or CWCB at this time. Because Town of Silverthorne is not a covered entity under CWCB’s regulations, they are not required to.

Of course, HC3 reached out to representatives from the town to see if there were options moving forward to keep the town engaged since stakeholders felt they were an important piece of the project. While the town didn’t want an individual efficiency plan, they agreed to remain as stakeholders in the regional plan, provided there were no mandates or requirements asked of them at this time. HC3 and Brendle Group held a phone conference with Ben Wade at CWCB on August 31, 2017 to update him on the status of Silverthorne and to inquire what, if any, action needed be taken in terms of the grant request. It was decided to submit a revised scope of work eliminating the individual plan component for the Town of Silverthorne (see below). It was also agreed that Silverthorne could remain a partner at the regional level.

This information was presented to the stakeholder group at the September 13th meeting with Silverthorne representatives present.

On October 23, 2017 HC3 and Brendle Group held a second phone conference with Kevin Reidy at CWCB to bring him up to speed on the project changes. He reiterated Ben Wade’s previous recommendation from August 31, 2017. We also asked him questions about regional plan adoption and who could be the stewards of that document since we have had challenges getting the BOCC to commit to adoption on behalf of the entire region (see Obstacles section from 50% progress report). He recommended that we try to have the regional plan adopted at each municipality when the individual plans are adopted, but recognized the possible difficulty of this. As a second option, HC3 as the community organization, could adopt the plan and work towards implementation on behalf of the region.

REVISED SCOPE OF WORK

The Regional Plan will be comprised of (4) Individual Water Efficiency Plans, which will be prepared for the participating water providers listed in Figure 1. The Regional Plan will summarize, consolidate, and integrate the Individual Plans plus input from stakeholders, small water districts and Town of Silverthorne, into a single document that identified opportunities to address water efficiency throughout the Blue River Watershed, both collectively and individually.

Figure 1: Participating Water Providers for Individual Water Plans

Number	Provider
1.	Town of Breckenridge
2.	Town of Frisco
3.	Town of Dillon
4.	Copper Mountain Metro District

BUDGET AMENDMENT

Brendle Group has asked for a budget amendment to reallocate funds across tasks based on experience to date. The overall cost of the project has not changed. This amendment was submitted with the 50% progress report in August.