



Colorado's Water Supply Future

Interbasin Compact Committee Annual Report

October 31, 2018



View of the Sierra Blanca Massif from Blanca Vista Park , Alamosa County

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

Special Policy Advisor to the Governor for Water

Director of Compact Negotiations Interbasin Compact Committee

Dear General Assembly, Basin Roundtable and Interbasin Compact Committee Members,

Another year past and a flurry of activity behind us. The Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) and several task groups have been especially hard at work since November 2017.

Since being created by the 2005 “Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act” the IBCC has provided an important, diverse, and well-balanced forum for policy input. Built on the vision of Russ George, Diane Hoppe, and Jim Isgar, the IBCC has given shape to numerous planning initiatives while setting the course for roundtable work. Coming at a critical time, the IBCC helped to rise above polarization in an attempt to simultaneously address statewide and local issues in a cooperative, transbasin manor.

The IBCC’s statewide perspective and ability to operate freely as a “think tank” has generated critical feedback to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), basin roundtables, and broader water community. As such, the work of the IBCC has largely contributed to the success of those roundtables, the creation and implementation of Colorado’s Water Plan, Basin Implementation Plans, and many other notable efforts. Some past examples of this important work include:

- Creating carefully articulated By-laws and Charter documents
- Providing preliminary input on broad water supply portfolios and tradeoffs
- Drafting the 2010 letter report to Governors’ Ritter and Hickenlooper (including recommendations, a timeline of major accomplishments, Vision Goals, Subcommittee Reports, and IBCC Work Plan)
- Compiling the No and Low Regrets Action Plan
- Initiating the scenario planning framework that was documented in the Water Plan and now serves as a foundation to the current Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) update
- Carefully negotiating the Conceptual

Framework

- Supporting important education and outreach efforts of PEPO (Public Education, Participation, and Outreach group)
- Providing critical feedback on the Water Plan

Looking back to 2005 reveals a diverse history of accomplishments. This year, I am pleased to share great progress was forged on a renewed work plan developed by the IBCC at the November 30th, 2017 meeting. Each effort following was selected as an area of priority for 2018:

- Created the *Funding Concepts Task Group* which produced a working document to help inform multiple, ongoing statewide funding efforts (see “Funding the Future: Financing the Implementation of Colorado’s Water Plan”)
- Created the *Candidate Letter Task Group* which coordinated the drafting of a concise letter to 181 candidates for statewide office to inform and direct future elected officials to the Water Plan
- Created the *Conceptual Framework Task Group* which revisited the process and critical elements of the framework and contributed to an uptick in statewide education on Colorado River Issues
- Project of Statewide Significance: Discussed critical elements of a potential statewide project in which to apply the Conceptual Framework
- Colorado River Risk Study: Received regular updates on progress of Risk Study

From its inception, the IBCC has had a difficult and often ambiguous assignment, but accomplishments so far indicate this consortium of statewide representatives has largely succeeded in its original goal to facilitate conversations among Colorado’s diverse river basins and to address challenging water management issues.

Thank you all for your tremendous daily efforts and cumulative contributions.





Resource Quick Links:

[Colorado Water Conservation Board Website](#)

[Colorado Water Plan Website](#)

[Water Plan Fact Sheet](#)

[IBCC Letter to Candidates for Statewide Office](#)

[IBCC Funding For the Future](#)

[Statewide Water Supply Initiative Fact Sheets](#)

[Ripple Effects Report](#)

COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

COLORADO'S WATER PLAN IS A LIVING DOCUMENT

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) delivered Colorado's Water Plan in November 2016 as a result of Governor Hickenlooper's 2015 executive order. The 161-page plan represents the collective effort and vision of thousands of stakeholders. This included dozens of state agencies, providers from each of Colorado's eight major river basins, input from the nine basin roundtables, thousands of meetings, and over 30,000 public comments.

COLLABORATIVE WATER MANAGEMENT

Colorado's Water Plan is built on decades of evolving water policy and unprecedented collaboration. But the plan is just a start. Our water challenges demand continuous effort and innovation. The institutional system governing how much water Colorado can use and consume within its boundaries is based on science, equitable apportionment, demand, Colorado's water law (updated year after year), and local city and county control. Colorado's Water Plan is presented on these elements with, over decades, have facilitated including individuals, Colorado water clubs, and various regional allies. That spirit of collaboration is embodied by over 100 articles and three core values in Colorado's Water Plan.

MOVING FORWARD

Colorado faces drought, wildfire, flooding, climate variability and change, and extraordinary growth. Reconciling the rising imbalance between diverse water demands and our variable water supply remains a complex bipartisan effort. The objectives and actions in Colorado's Water Plan will be updated periodically as part of a robust planning cycle to evaluate our state's changing conditions. This includes technical data updates to evaluate water needs and targeted project implementation planning which will ultimately inform future updates to Colorado's Water Plan.

KEY STATISTICS:

- 1 A provider economy that supports shared responsibilities, agriculture, recreation, and industry
- 2 Efficient and resilient water infrastructure
- 3 A strong environment with healthy watersheds, rivers, streams, and wildlife

80% OF THE WATER FALLS WEST OF THE CENTRAL DIVIDE

90% OF THE PEOPLE LIVE EAST OF THE CENTRAL DIVIDE

24 BODIES OF WATER

8 BASINS where water flows

15 MAJOR INDUSTRIES depend on water for growth and economic

9 ROUNDTABLES established on water for local needs

15 MAJOR INDUSTRIES depend on water for growth and economic

80% NATURAL EXPOSURE to air pollutants

5.6 MILLION PEOPLE live in the state, with 1.5 million in Colorado

UP TO 20% OF PROPOSED LAND COULD BE REDESIGNED BY 2050 TO MEET NEW FUNCTIONAL DEMANDS

IBCC | INTERBASIN COMPACT COMMITTEE

Summer 2018
Dear 2018 Candidate,

The Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) commends your bid for public service and wants to alert you and all citizens to important water and natural resource challenges in front of all Coloradans. Colorado faces drought, wildfire, flooding, climate variability and change, and extraordinary growth. Reconciling the rising imbalance between diverse water demands and our variable water supply remains a complex bipartisan effort. Our state's future requires flexibility and action in the face of uncertainty.

Who are we?
The IBCC is a 27-member committee, with two representatives from the state's major river basins and Denver metropolitan area, six gubernatorial appointees, two legislative appointees, and a director. Established in 2005 by the Colorado Legislature's Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act, the IBCC's main charge is to facilitate conversations among basins and inter-basin interests.

The state's nine basin roundtables and the IBCC were foundational to the creation of Colorado's Water Plan and are invaluable in their capacity to engage and implement water solutions at a local level. The IBCC and roundtables continue to provide critical input on a variety of water issues, policies, and programs since their inception.

Why should you care?
As a candidate for office, you know that water is fundamental to the function and prosperity of our state. Our iconic mountains, rivers, and plains draw people by the millions. All are key to our economic well-being, but the health of these resources is under significant stress. Our population grew from 2 million in 1930 to over 5 million today and could reach 8.5 million by 2050. Supporting this growth and our quality of life requires water.

What is the solution?
Colorado's Water Plan sets forth strategies to meet our future needs through balanced policies and actions that all Coloradans and their elected officials can support while preserving the Doctrine of Prior Appropriation – the basis of our water laws since statehood. The plan affords to our citizens' ability to organize around shared goals to preserve our water values of a productive economy, vibrant and sustainable cities, productive agriculture, a strong environment, and a robust recreation industry.

But a plan isn't enough. Colorado's Water Plan alone does not relieve us of the inherent uncertainty of water scarcity, uncertain supplies, natural hazards, economic cycles, or population and economic growth. The plan requires implementation, leadership, and funding.

How can you get involved?
The plan requires implementation of collaborative, balanced water solutions through the intersectional efforts of political will and leadership, as well as long-term stable and sustained funding.

The State of Colorado and countless water providers and experts are working hard to implement Colorado's Water Plan and will need continuing, bipartisan statewide support.

All Coloradans share in the responsibility to fund and implement water solutions as we all have a stake in our state's water future. The IBCC is available to answer any questions about Colorado's Water Plan and the implementation required to support Colorado's water future.

The IBCC looks forward to working with you to ensure the state's most valuable resource is protected and available for generations to come.

With Colorado,
John Swaby
The Interbasin Compact Committee
John Swaby, Director

1. Find out our progress at [swsiupdate.com](#)
2. Read Colorado's Water Plan at [colorado.gov/swsi](#)

IBCC

RIPPLE EFFECTS
COLORADO'S WATER PLAN IN ACTION

2017

COLORADO'S WATER PLAN
IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

SWSI Update Overview

The SWSI Update provides an overview of the context, process, and features of the update to the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI).

The SWSI Update is the first iteration of SWSI to the context of Colorado's Water Plan Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) that were developed in Colorado's eight major river basins. Prior iterations of SWSI included components such as portfolios of projects and methods to meet future gaps that are now a part of the BIP & CWP processes. As a result, the SWSI Update will be a technically-focused effort to develop analysis tools and data sets that will be useful to basin roundtables, water managers, and the public for planning and education purposes. The SWSI Update results will provide more detailed scientific information to help guide basin roundtables as they update their BIPs, which in turn will serve as the backbone for the next update to CWP.

Features of the SWSI Update

The SWSI Update addresses a wide variety of new questions, processes, and tools.

New Questions
The SWSI Update will estimate future available water supplies and gaps under the five different planning scenarios described in CWP. Previous iterations of SWSI were conducted prior to CWP and therefore did not consider the scenarios. The planning scenarios incorporate water supply and demand drivers associated with the potential effects of climate change, population growth, and many other factors.

New Processes
In their BIPs, the basin roundtables cataloged various projects and methods to mitigate future water supply gaps. The SWSI Update focuses on developing tools and more detailed datasets to help the basin roundtables update their portfolios of projects and methods for meeting future water needs in a targeted manner with forthcoming updates to their BIPs.

New Tools
New analysis tools and data sets have been developed since the last iteration of SWSI. Consumptive use and surface water allocation models are now available in most river basins. Municipal water demand and conservation data is available via HB10-1051 reporting. The availability of these new tools and data sets allows for a more robust approach to assessing future water availability and gaps.

Diagram: A circular diagram showing the relationship between CWP (Colorado Water Plan), BIPs (Basin Implementation Plans), and SWSI (Statewide Water Supply Initiative).

JANUARY 2018 | SWSI UPDATE OVERVIEW FACT SHEET



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

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