

INTERBASIN COMPACT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board
October 31, 2019



Presented to the House of Representatives House Rural Affairs and Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.



COLORADO
Department of
Natural Resources



A MESSAGE FROM
RUSS GEORGE

OCTOBER 31, 2019

General Assembly, Basin Roundtable and Interbasin Compact Committee Members,

This last year has brought renewed energy to the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) with a new governor, new Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director, new Director of Compact Negotiations, and new IBCC gubernatorial appointees. In combination with the steadying hand of the existing membership, the IBCC continues to work through some of the most important water challenges of our time. This ability to wrestle through these hard conversations on topics of statewide significance in support of the roundtables is fundamental to the IBCC and central to its success.

Looking back to the October 18, 2018 meeting, the IBCC concluded a multi-year funding strategy discussion, providing input on how a potential future water funding mechanism should be allocated. The Committee also helped set the stage for the kick-off of the Basin Implementation Plan updates- a core goal stated in Chapter 11 of the Colorado Water Plan.

With the aforementioned changes, the IBCC took time to re-evaluate its goals and look for cross-basin collaboration opportunities. Chief among these are ongoing Demand Management (DM) discussions to evaluate how any potential voluntary, temporary and compensated program for storing more water in Lake Powell could be developed in a way that fairly shares both burden and benefit. The IBCC is uniquely poised to discuss this question of “equity” in program access opportunity, and will continue to evaluate this in 2020.

In July 2019, the IBCC held a joint meeting with the Colorado Water Conservation Board in Leadville. That meeting raised this issue of equity in demand management to the board, allowing for a broader dialogue to explore the topic. That meeting also presented the preliminary release of the Analysis and Technical Update to the Water Plan (Technical Update) – the first statewide water supply initiative update since the Colorado Water Plan in 2015. Chapter five of the Technical Update includes recommendations on how to use the study tools and findings in the forthcoming Basin Implementation Plan updates. This recommendation section was a direct work product of a joint IBCC and roundtable-led working group.

In keeping with the IBCC’s goals to educate and collaborate, a report out was delivered to the Water Resources Review Committee on IBCC activities on October 23, 2019. A key intent was to highlight the importance of the IBCC and thank the Water Resources Review Committee and legislature for its continued support of state water issues.

Since the IBCC was created by the 2005 “Water for the 21st Century Act,” deep-seated disagreements over water issues continue to arise. While disagreements will always exist, the IBCC has undeniably shown that ongoing and collaborative statewide dialogue can supersede isolated, regional contentions. By deliberately building cross-basin interaction and relationship building, we can help to realize our greatest hopes rather than our worst fears. This path isn’t easy, but it is deeply necessary to inform balanced water policies that work best for Colorado.

Resource management conversations are hard, yet they must be had. The IBCC, the roundtables, and the greater Colorado water communities are up to the task. We have to be. The Colorado Water Plan was founded on that spirit of collaboration and our future depends on our ongoing commitment to work together in the best interest of all Coloradans.

Thank you all for the good work you do every day. It matters, we need you, and I know our continued collaboration will help ensure Colorado’s water future is stronger than ever.

Sincerely,

Russ George
Director of Compact Negotiations



IBCC BACKGROUND:

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 the Colorado 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 in 2013
- Initiating the scenario planning framework documented in the Colorado Water Plan that now serves as a foundation to the Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan (the next statewide water supply initiative)
- Carefully negotiating the Conceptual Framework that was included in the Colorado Water Plan in 2015
- Developing a candidate letter for those running for office to educate them about the Colorado Water Plan in 2018

HIGHLIGHT OF IBCC’S 2019 GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL: Engage the IBCC with ongoing Demand Management discussions

ACTION #1: IBCC members are represented on almost every Demand Management Working Group.

ACTION #2: IBCC as a whole is working through the concept of equity in any potential Demand Management effort.

GOAL: Continue to coordinate with and inform the legislature and CWCB Board

ACTION #1: IBCC participated in a joint meeting with the CWCB Board in July 2019.

ACTION #2: IBCC presented at and attended the Water Resources Review Committee in October 2019.

GOAL: Enhance coordination between roundtables and the IBCC

ACTION #1: IBCC representatives continue to play a vital role in communicating and participating with roundtables.

ACTION #2: IBCC members participated in the Implementation Working Group meetings that developed recommendations in the Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan.

RESOURCE QUICK REFERENCE:

[Colorado Water Conservation Board Website](#)

[Colorado Water Plan Website](#)

[Water Plan Fact Sheet](#)

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

[Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan](#)



CONTACT INFORMATION

To learn more or if you have questions please email waterplan.info@state.co.us, call 303-866-3441 or visit the Colorado Water Conservation Board website at, www.cwcb.state.co.us.

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