



INTERBASIN COMPACT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board

October 28, 2022



A MESSAGE FROM

THE CHAIR

Members of the General Assembly,

After years of facing unprecedented challenges, communities across Colorado are beginning to return to a sense of normalcy as we are able to meet in-person to collaborate and innovate. However, the challenges facing Colorado from long-term drought, severe wildfire and flooding continue to loom large over our entire state. IBCC, the basin roundtables and the state remain resolute in the commitment to find collaborative, practical solutions to help Colorado meet its water challenges.

The IBCC continued having the hard, honest conversations that advance our collective interest this year. Moreover, the IBCC established a work plan subcommittee and their consideration of a work plan, combined with unprecedented funding opportunities, have prompted members to look for ways to expedite and advance local projects in their basins. While the IBCC continues to receive regular updates on other major issues and policy discussions from across the state, the IBCC's renewed focus on catalyzing innovative projects in Colorado comes at a critical time. It puts the IBCC in a position to offer leadership in developing pathways for project development that make each basin more resilient to current and future water challenges.

This year we have seen a remarkable surge of funding for water projects at both the state and federal level, and as the IBCC has recognized, we need to meet the moment by moving good ideas into action. With these funds and continued collaboration across the basins we can chart the path forward in ways that protect our forests, streams, cities, agricultural lands and people. We can rise to the challenge ahead if we continue to work together. This will take everyone across the state, including our tribal partners and other groups who have not always had a seat at the table to work together and build a stronger Colorado.

With the completion of the Basin Implementation Plans and the draft Colorado Water Plan nearing completion, we have strategies and projects identified to address continued drought and long term aridity as well as other statewide challenges. Now is the time to drive projects forward and take advantage of available resources to build Colorado's resilience. As a forum for the exchange of ideas, best practices and public engagement, IBCC has an integral role in advancing water projects across the basins that contribute to our shared goals. I've challenged all IBCC members to help advance at least one local project and I am excited to see what IBCC will achieve over the next year.

The IBCC shows its value collectively through its thought leadership in Colorado, but individual members shine when they work at the local level to drive projects forward. It's been amazing to see members recognize their instrumental role as local leaders in advancing basin and regional water projects.

Truly,

Dan Gibbs

Interbasin Compact Committee Chair

Director of the Department of Natural Resources



COLORADO
Department of
Natural Resources

IBCC BACKGROUND:

Since its inception in the 2005 “Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act” the IBCC has provided an important, diverse, and balanced forum for policy input from across Colorado. Built on the vision of Russ George, Diane Hoppe, and Jim Isgar, the IBCC has helped shape numerous planning initiatives through a focused discourse on the major policy challenges within and across the basin roundtables. Formed at a critical time, the IBCC has helped to rise above regional and basin divisions to simultaneously address statewide and local issues in a cooperative, transbasin manner.

As former Director John Stulp said, “*The IBCC has served many specific roles over the years, but the most broadly, has stood as a united think tank to bring the self-interests of basins and stakeholders back to the statewide lens—where most of our self-interests are, in fact, common to the great state of Colorado.*” The IBCC’s statewide perspective and ability to function as a think tank has generated critical feedback to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), basin roundtables, and broader water community.

Some past examples of IBCC discussion and work products include:

- **2022** – IBCC continues to refine its work plan and facilitate collaboration among the basins to increase capacity and leverage more readily available State and Federal water project funding for Basin Implementation Plan project advancement.
- **2021** – The IBCC prioritized developing stronger links between Public Education, Participation and Outreach (PEPO) roundtable efforts and the IBCC to facilitate communication within the roundtables by reactivating the PEPO subcommittee and naming Lisa Darling the IBCC PEPO representative.
- **2020** – Acted as a de facto CWCB working group on equity in Demand Management (DM) as part of the CWCB board’s DM feasibility study and participating in a joint DM workgroup and IBCC meeting in March, 2020. Providing updates to the CWCB board on a range of Demand Management equity/proportionality noted in the [Demand Management Equity Summary document](#) that was included in the July 2020 CWCB Board packet.
- **2018** – IBCC members and the precursor to the *For the Love of Colorado* campaign team coordinated to identify critical funding areas and possible funding opportunities for the Colorado Water Plan.
- **2014** – Carefully negotiated the Conceptual Framework that was included as a guidance document in the 2015 Colorado Water Plan to evaluate a course for discussion for any new Trans Mountain Diversions (TMDs).
- **2013** – Compiled a *No and Low Regrets Action Plan* to identify smart near-term actions that support Colorado under any future scenario as well as beginning discussions around the Conceptual Framework.
- **2009** – Evaluated the *Portfolio and Tradeoff Tool* and initiating the scenario planning framework documented in the 2015 Colorado Water Plan that now serves as a foundation for technical analysis.
- **2006** – Created by-laws and charter documents for the IBCC.

HIGHLIGHT OF IBCC 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For IBCC’s three meetings a year the easing of COVID-19 meeting restrictions has brought the power of in-person meetings to the forefront. IBCC continues to allow for hybrid participation but held in-person meetings in Denver (February), Breckenridge (June) and Winter Park (October). The 2022 IBCC conversations centered on the update of the Colorado Water Plan, the IBCC work plan, project funding, basin capacity building and updates on Colorado River issues. Regarding the latter, IBCC acknowledged, at the February IBCC meeting and later codified at the June IBCC meeting through review of the Work Plan Subcommittee meeting notes, that “interstate negotiations are beyond the scope of the IBCC, but the committee could benefit from regular updates on these topics and should focus on advancing good work/projects for Colorado including intrastate water security, drought management, or

other supportive projects, etc.” The IBCC conversations on project advancement and funding continued across each meeting. In June, IBCC Chair Gibbs, challenged each IBCC member to help advance at least one project in their basin.

In addition to the conversations surrounding project implementation, the IBCC has worked to promote the need for greater support of PEPO. IBCC PEPO Liaison, Lisa Darling offered updates on the CWCB’s efforts to stabilize PEPO funding and noted ongoing initiatives and discussed possible solutions to capacity issues so that basins can leverage more readily available State and Federal funding for water projects. As noted in the founding legislation, IBCC has a clear role in “creating a process to inform, involve, and educate the public on IBCC activities,” as well as creating “a mechanism by which public input and feedback can be related to the IBCC.” PEPO coordinators at the basin level help support and work with IBCC towards these goals.

HIGHLIGHT OF IBCC PRESENTATIONS & INTERESTS

In keeping with their rich history of being a diverse and balanced forum for policy input, the IBCC continues to entertain presentations on a wide array of topics. In 2022, the committee discussed potential topics for further IBCC exploration and heard presentations from topic areas of interest identified in past years. Examples of topics and presentations include:

- **Colorado Water Plan Update** – Cognizant of the IBCC’s ongoing involvement and interest in the [Colorado Water Plan](#) update, CWCB staff (Russ Sands) provided a review of the updated Colorado Water Plan and announced the opening of the 90-day Public Comment period at the June 30, 2022 IBCC meeting.
- **Colorado River Updates** – Per CWCB’s commitment to update the IBCC on Colorado River issues, CWCB Director Becky Mitchell and staff (Amy Ostdiek) provided multiple updates to the IBCC over the year.
- **Forest Health** – Noting the IBCC’s interest in watershed health, CWCB staff (Chris Sturm) presented the CWCB’s [Wildfire Ready Watersheds](#) Framework and programming. This program is designed to create a statewide susceptibility analysis, provide a framework for pre-fire preparedness and support local action to limit the impacts to water supplies, infrastructure and human life during and after a wildfire event. IBCC Director Dan Gibbs also discussed the Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) at the February 23, 2022 meeting. A program designed to help identify critical areas for wildfire planning and mitigation.
- **Funding Sources** – The IBCC has a continued interest in exploring funding and capacity issues in the basins in order to facilitate projects highlighted in the Basin Implementation Plans. DNR staff (Nate Pearson) discussed American Recovery Program Act (ARPA) Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding at the February and June meetings. Nate provided information on the [Colorado Water Funding Opportunity Navigator](#), a new toll created to house all federal and state funding opportunities for water projects in a single place. CWCB staff (Lauren Ris) discussed the new CWCB Regional Coordinator positions. These four coordinators will assist with Water Plan Grant funding opportunities in the nine river basins. Lauren also provided information on the first Proposition DD funds that have been allocated with matching Water Plan Grant funds.
- **Basin Capacity and Project Prioritization** – The IBCC shows continued interest in advancing Basin Implementation Plans in all nine basins. During the June 30, 2020 meeting Basin Roundtable (BRT) members Jason Turner (Colorado BRT), Bob Peters (Metro BRT), and Emma Reesor (Rio Grande BRT) discussed the ways their basins prioritize, recommend and build capacity for project implementation through the Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF).

Some of these conversations have more immediate pathways for the IBCC to continue to make advancements while others may require additional input. Enhancing communications with basin roundtables about their interests, projects and best practices remains a top priority for IBCC as the committee charts a path forward. IBCC has committed to refining their work plan, increasing project capacity through basin collaboration, and advancing Basin Implementation Plan projects in all nine basins.

RESOURCE QUICK REFERENCE

- [Engagecwc.org website](https://engagecwc.org)
- [CWCB main website](https://www.cwcb.state.co.us)
- [CWCB webpage for IBCC](#)
- [CWCB webpage for PEPO](#)
- [CO Water Funding Opportunity Navigator](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

To learn more or if you have questions please email waterplan.info@state.co.us, call 303-866-3441, visit the CWCB website (www.cwcb.state.co.us) or see how we're working to engage the public at engagecwc.org.