



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

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DATE: November 16-17 2022

AGENDA ITEM: 8: Colorado Airborne Snow Measurement Group Update

This is informational only.

Background:

CWCB Staff have been using Airborne Snow Observatories (ASO) since 2014 to provide high resolution, spatial snowpack data to stakeholders. Data collection is conducted using airplane mounted LiDAR and Spectrometer units, then processed and modeled by ASO staff to provide stakeholders a highly accurate picture of the snowpack in their basins. When combined with modeling efforts such as WRF-Hydro, this data can strengthen decision making through refining streamflow forecasts. This data has always been spotty, as funding would only allow one or two basins to be flown each winter. It has always been the goal of CWCB to make this powerful data more available throughout the state. Water Year 2021/2022 was the first season that a broader scale program could be examined, developed, and implemented, thanks especially to the vision of Denver Water's Laurina Kaatz.

At the July CWCB Board Meeting, the Colorado Airborne Snow Measurements Group (CASM) presented findings from their WSRF Study, and some results from the Water Year 21/22 flights. The Board requested that the group examine barriers to expediting expansion of the program, and follow up with the Board later. CWCB Staff has been working with CASM to identify these barriers and potential ways to address them.

CASM Website: <https://coloradosnow.org/>

