



COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Emily Zmak

DATE: July 20, 2023

AGENDA ITEM: 18. Colorado River Communications and Outreach

This is an informational item with no board action requested.

Background:

Communications & Outreach

The Interstate, Federal, and Water Information Section works closely with the Marketing & Communications Director and Colorado River Commissioner to convey timely, accurate information about interstate Colorado River matters.

Staff have identified three objectives that drive Colorado River-related communications:

1. Update water users about the Colorado River matters and how the CWCB and Commissioner are protecting Colorado's interests;
2. Consult with stakeholders to build support, exchange information, and address concerns; and
3. Utilize the CWCB website as a central location for Colorado River-related resources, such as Frequently Asked Questions, blog-style updates, and infographics.

In an average month, staff communicate through a number of outlets, including the CWCB website (Commissioner's Corner), social media (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn), press releases, interviews with media outlets, and CWCB newsletters. Staff also coordinate with the Colorado Department of Agriculture, CWCB Staff, Congressional staff, and others. Additionally, Commissioner Mitchell and Amy Ostdiek present at public conferences, panels, or events an average of six times per month.

Upcoming Colorado River Outreach & Communications

With the Department of Interior's recent announcement of a formal process for the post-2026 negotiations, staff are preparing for two large-scale outreach events in the coming months. Both events will provide Colorado water users with the opportunity to learn about the post-2026 negotiations and engage with Commissioner Mitchell.

1. Colorado Water Congress, August 2023: CWCB staff and the DNR Communications Director aim to communicate Commissioner Mitchell's expanded role and the interagency team supporting her, as well as to provide information and solicit feedback about the post-2026 negotiations; answer questions; provide information about the process; and convey the Commissioner's negotiation principles and priorities.



2. Basin Roundtable Tour, Fall 2023: CWCB staff, along with the Interstate & Federal Unit of the Attorney General's Office, aim to visit each Basin Roundtable for an in-person presentation and discussion. Topics will include an informational Law of the River presentation, updates on the Colorado River matters, an overview of the State's priorities and principles guiding strategy, a list of ways to support and engage with Commissioner Mitchell, and resources to stay informed.

Requests for information about the Colorado River have increased significantly in the past few years. The Governor and Colorado Legislature recently approved an additional Communications Director position to be housed in the Department of Natural Resources Executive Director's Office, which will provide much-needed capacity. More information about this position will be available in coming months.

Board Toolkit

In 2021, as part of the CWCB Board's Demand Management Feasibility Investigation, staff and consultants developed a Demand Management Board Toolkit, which included digital resources for the Board to consult and utilize. Staff have developed a [Colorado River Board Toolkit](#) to provide a similar array of digital resources.

The Colorado River Toolkit includes:

- Talking points, updated monthly
- Colorado River infographics
- Illustrations, graphs, and charts
- Colorado River FAQs
- Commissioner Mitchell's priorities and principles for the post-2026 negotiations
- QR codes to the Commissioner's Corner
- A list of ways that water users can support the Commissioner

The Board Toolkit can be used to engage with water users, to share with local organizations, to help Directors prepare for panels or events, to answer questions, and to direct people towards trustworthy information.

