



INTERBASIN COMPACT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Submitted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board

October 27, 2023



A MESSAGE FROM

THE CHAIR

Members of the General Assembly,

The last few years our way of life, business operations, and relationships have experienced major disruptions stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. This has presented unique challenges for stakeholder groups like the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), but those same challenges also resulted in unprecedented funding opportunities for water projects across the state through federal and state stimulus and other funding windfalls. These funding opportunities have created pathways for project development and leadership for the IBCC.

This year the IBCC continued to promote cross-basin collaboration and local innovative projects for practical solutions to meet Colorado's water challenges. The IBCC conversations centered around project advancement and the IBCC and Basin Roundtables' response to Director Gibbs' 2022 project challenge; for each member to advance one local project through local support and grantmaking. The IBCC Public Participation, Education, and Outreach subcommittee helped CWCB Staff plan the Colorado 9 Basin Roundtable (C-9) Summit event in November of 2023. The C-9 Summit will promote cross-basin collaboration and alignment between the CWCB Board, IBCC, and the Basin Roundtables. The IBCC is in a position to offer leadership in developing pathways for project development to assist each basin in taking advantage of once in a generation state and federal funding levels. This critical leadership role requires IBCC members to be knowledgeable and informed of state issues and to serve as resources for their basin roundtables. As such, the IBCC also continues to receive regular updates on other major issues and policy discussions from across the state.

Last year's remarkable surge of funding for water projects at both the state and federal level facilitated great opportunities for the advancement of each basin's Basin Implementation Plan (BIP) and created more resilience in the basins to Colorado's future water challenges. The IBCC recognized the need to move good ideas into action, and the IBCC provides a fantastic forum for collaboration across the basins to chart the path forward in ways that protect our forests, streams, cities, agricultural lands and people. We can meet this unique moment head on if we continue to work together and promote statewide interests. 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 Colorado Water Plan in January, we now have a roadmap and numerous projects identified to address continued drought and long-term aridity as well as other statewide water challenges. The IBCC has an integral role in advancing water projects across the basins that contribute to our shared goals. It's been amazing to see members rise to the challenge I issued last year to advance local projects in their basins and recognize their instrumental role as local leaders in implementing the Basin Implementation Plans and Colorado Water Plan.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the chair of this committee for the last three years, and with the submission of the 2023 IBCC Annual report I conclude my tenure as the IBCC Chair. I would like to welcome the new chair of the IBCC Rebecca Mitchell, the State of Colorado's Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission, creating a direct link between the Basin Roundtables, the IBCC, and the interstate Colorado River negotiations. It has been an honor serving as your Chair, and I know the IBCC will be in very capable hands with Becky and our supportive CWCB staff.

Truly,

Dan Gibbs

Interbasin Compact Committee Chair

Director of the 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 a forward-thinking vision that Coloradans can work together collaboratively to address the water needs for the state. Over nearly the last 20 years, the IBCC has helped shape numerous planning initiatives through a focused discourse within and across the basin roundtables on the major policy challenges facing Colorado. The IBCC has consistently 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:

- **2023** – IBCC members led efforts to advance projects in their respective basins as a response to Director Gibbs’ 2022 Project Advancement Challenge.
- **2022** – IBCC continued 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 PEPO and the IBCC to facilitate communication within the roundtables by reactivating the PEPO subcommittee and naming Lisa Darling the IBCC PEPO representative.
- **2020** – The IBCC acted as a de facto CWCB working group on equity in Demand Management (DM) as part of the CWCB board’s DM feasibility study. IBCC participated in a joint DM workgroup and IBCC meeting in March of 2020. IBCC offered updates to the CWCB board on a range of Demand Management equity/proportionality issues, as 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** – IBCC carefully negotiated the Conceptual Framework that was included as a guidance document in the Colorado Water Plan to evaluate a pathway or discussion for any new Transmountain Diversions (TMDs).
- **2013** – IBCC compiled smart near-term actions that support Colorado under any future scenario, known as the *No and Low Regrets Action Plan*.
- **2009** – Evaluated the *Portfolio and Tradeoff Tool* and initiated 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 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For IBCC's three meetings this year, the IBCC continued to allow for hybrid participation but met in Winter Park (February), Glenwood Springs (June) and Denver (November). The 2023 IBCC conversations centered on the planning of a 2023 Colorado 9 Roundtable Summit (C-9 Summit), Director Gibbs' 2022 project advancement challenge, project funding, basin capacity, and a busy 2023 Legislative Session. The IBCC continues to receive updates on Colorado River issues from CWCB's Interstate and Federal Water Information section and Colorado's Upper Colorado River Commissioner Becky Mitchell. In June of 2022, IBCC Chair Gibbs, challenged each IBCC member to help advance at least one project in their basin from concept to grantmaking, in order to take advantage of historic levels of available funding. These conversations on project advancement and funding continued across each meeting in 2023 and culminated with reports on IBCC project advancement efforts at the June 2023 meeting in Glenwood Springs.

In addition to the conversations surrounding project implementation, the IBCC PEPO workgroup has sought to promote the C-9 Summit across the basins and supported CWCB staff planning efforts. IBCC PEPO Liaisons, Lisa Darling and Ken Brenner, offered updates on the CWCB's Statewide PEPO funding initiative and the C-9 Summit planning. In keeping with their rich history of being a diverse and balanced forum, the IBCC welcomed new members from across the state and created opportunities for cross basin collaboration.



HIGHLIGHT OF IBCC SESSIONS & INTERESTS

The IBCC continues to entertain seminars from experts on a wide array of topics. In 2023, the committee heard presentations from areas of interest identified in past years. Examples include:

- **Public Education, Participation, and Outreach (PEPO)**– The IBCC's PEPO subcommittee led discussions of topics and themes proposed for the upcoming C-9 Summit and was influential in planning the event. The PEPO subcommittee also helped facilitate discussions at roundtables for stakeholder input on the proposed agenda for C-9 Summit and encouraged roundtable member participation in the event.
- **Colorado River Updates** – Per CWCB's commitment to update the IBCC on Colorado River developments, Colorado's Colorado River Commissioner and CWCB staff provided multiple updates to the IBCC over the year.
- **Legislative Session** – Noting the IBCC's interest in a busy 2023 Legislative session, Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff updated the IBCC on bills that the DNR was tracking and the budget details that impacted DNR. These updates focused on position authorizations for CWCB and DNR, and detailed the many water-related initiatives that were passed in 2023 for stream restoration, drought resilience in the CO River Basin, and numerous funding opportunities for water projects around the state.
- **Funding Sources** – The IBCC has a continued interest in exploring funding and capacity issues in the basins in order to facilitate projects highlighted in Basin Implementation Plans. DNR staff discussed DNR's efforts to increase regional capacity and upcoming federal funding opportunities that may be useful in the IBCC's ongoing efforts to support local project advancement. CWCB, Administration and Operations, staff discussed the establishment of new CWCB Regional Coordinator positions and other CWCB staffing updates. They also provided updates on CWCB's technical assistance and capacity building funding opportunity to help entities apply for federal funding. CWCB, Water Supply Planning, staff discussed ongoing outdoor water conservation efforts across the state and the Governor's Urban Landscape Conservation Task Force support of these efforts.
- **Basin Capacity and Project Advancement** – The IBCC continues to be interested in advancing Basin Implementation Plan projects across all nine basin roundtables. During the June 30, 2020, meeting, Chairman Gibbs issued IBCC members a challenge to advance projects in their respective basins. During the June 8,

2023, meeting, IBCC members updated the committee on their basin's efforts to advance projects and locally capture the unprecedented levels of state and federal funding available through federal stimulus legislation including the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). A brief overview of project advancements from each basin roundtable is shown below:

- **Arkansas** – The Arkansas Basin Roundtable refined their Water Supply Reserve Fund processes to be able to prioritize Basin Implementation Plan projects and other large and small water projects around the basin. They also wrote many letters of support for Water Plan Grant applications from entities in the basin.
- **Colorado** – The sheer volume of local projects the Colorado Basin Roundtable has funded this year is unprecedented. The roundtable was able to prioritize projects identified in the Basin Implementation Plan and leverage both State and Federal funding through collaboration and partnerships.
- **Gunnison** – The Gunnison Basin Roundtable continued its long history of prioritizing the replacement and updating of aging infrastructure around the basin. The roundtable historically supports projects that are led by diverse partnerships which leverage both state and federal funds.
- **Metro** – The Metro Roundtable is seeing a lot more application submissions and continues to prioritize projects that have engaged with the roundtable for support through their development. One project the roundtable's own Municipal and Industrial committee helped develop was a statewide survey of values and attitudes toward water wise landscapes.
- **North Platte** – Agriculture continues to be a top priority for the North Platte Basin Roundtable and the roundtable prioritized projects targeting aging infrastructure and soil and watershed health.
- **Rio Grande** – There were numerous projects around the Rio Grande basin to champion this year, and the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable prioritized leveraging new funding opportunities and creating new partnerships across the basin. The roundtable worked to advance projects related to innovative forecasting methods, key wetland complexes and basin-wide education efforts.
- **South Platte** – Storage and supply is constantly the subject of discussion at the South Platte Basin Roundtable and the roundtable supported aging infrastructure, storage, weather modification and other supply related projects leveraging State and Federal funds.
- **Southwest** – The Southwest Basin Roundtable took a slightly different approach to Director Gibbs' challenge and leveraged diverse partnerships to advance projects across all eight sub basins in the Southwest. Projects included Stream Management Planning, Integrated Watershed Management Planning and innovative forecasting methods like the Airborne Snow Observatory.
- **Yampa/White/Green** – Aging infrastructure projects continue to be a priority for the Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable. There are many multi-benefit projects being funded locally through the roundtable that leverage strategic partnerships across the basin and a variety of funding sources.

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 increasing roundtable project capacity through cross-basin collaboration, advancing Basin Implementation Plan projects in all nine basins, and strategically creating more alignment between the CWCB Board, the Basin Roundtable, and the IBCC.



RESOURCE QUICK REFERENCE

- [Engage CWCB](#)
- [CWCB Website](#)
- [CWCB webpage for IBCC](#)
- [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 engagecwcb.org.