

Colorado Water Trust

Request for Water Process



**COLORADO
WATER TRUST**
Just Add Water

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PART 1

- Who we are
- What we do



PART 2

- “Request for Water” Outreach
- Timeline
- What we look for
- How to learn more


PART 3

- Three step process
 - Look @ stream
 - Look @ water right
 - Determine tool
- Tools & Examples

OVERVIEW



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WHO IS COLORADO WATER TRUST & WHAT DO WE DO?

PART 1



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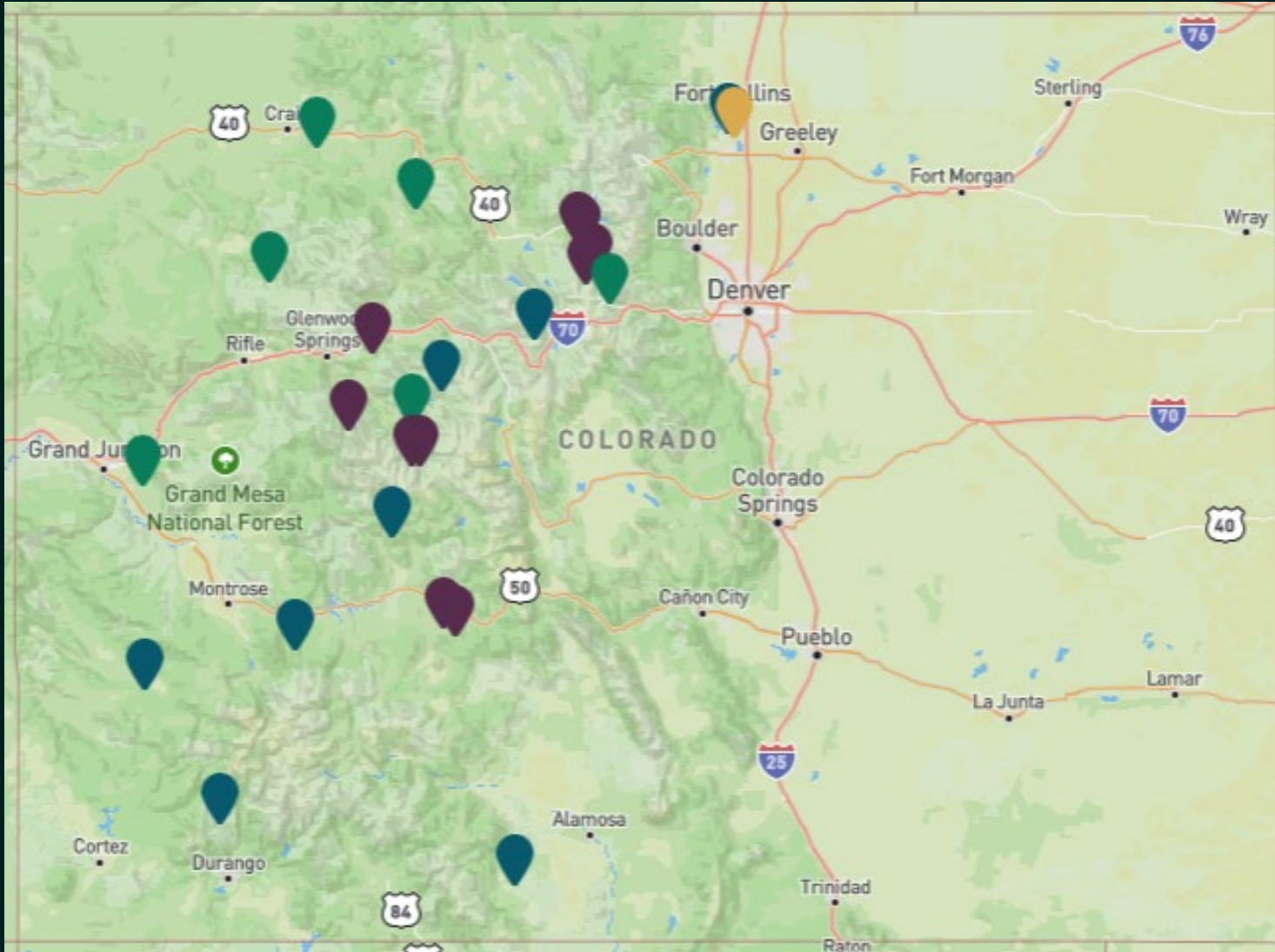
WHO WE ARE:

- Non-profit organization who works statewide to restore flows to **Colorado's** rivers
- Formed in **2001** to partner with Colorado's Instream Flow Program and amplify its work
- We work with water users to put together **voluntary** transactions that benefit the **environment**
- Transactions are **tailored** for each water right and each water system
- We work within the **prior appropriation system** and compensates water rights owners at fair market value

PART 1



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WHAT WE DO...

We've successfully completed 27 projects, adding over 82,000 acre-feet of water to over 800 miles of natural stream in Colorado.

PART 1



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COLORADO WATER TRUST'S "ANNUAL REQUEST FOR WATER"



PART 2



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REQUEST FOR WATER

- Annual outreach
- Water right owners are invited to submit a preliminary form
 - Does NOT commit owners in any way
 - Invites us to evaluate water rights for potential streamflow restoration opportunities
- Evaluation is free & confidential

PART 2



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DIRECT OR STORAGE ABOVE...

DECREED DIVERSION
RATE > 0.5 CFS

STORAGE RIGHT
> 20 AF

WATER RIGHT HAS...

GOOD HISTORY AND
RECORD OF USE

WILLING AND ABLE
TO CHANGE
OPERATIONS

CANNOT ACCEPT:

CONDITIONAL

GROUND WATER

SPRINGS

ABANDONMENT LIST

REQUEST FOR WATER



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RFW Process
Launch

JANUARY 2025

Submitting
Preliminary
Offers of Water

ANYTIME

Transaction
& Project
Development

OCTOBER 2025-2026+

FEBRUARY – JUNE 2025

Outreach to
Water Users

2-3 MONTH TURNAROUND*

Water Trust
Response to
Preliminary Forms

REQUEST FOR WATER



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VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

[COLORADOWATERTRUST.ORG/REQUEST-FOR-WATER](https://coloradowatertrust.org/request-for-water)

OR SHOOT US
AN EMAIL OR
GIVE US A
RING!

Request for Water

Colorado Water Trust works in partnership with water rights owners to restore water to rivers while protecting water rights and livelihoods.

The Request for Water Process, launched in collaboration with the Colorado Water Conservation Board, is a streamlined process for water rights owners to explore options for using their water to benefit Colorado's rivers and streams.

There are many legal tools available that protect water rights while also benefiting local streams and rivers. Voluntary water sharing arrangements or voluntary acquisitions of senior water rights, on a temporary or permanent basis, can help restore water to rivers for ecological benefits and complementary uses downstream or on irrigated property.

Request for Water is confidential, completely voluntary and open to all water rights owners, including agricultural, municipal, industrial, or others. Interested water rights owners can submit a confidential, non-binding Preliminary Interest Form to RFW@coloradowatertrust.org at any time.

Potential benefits to water rights owners are:

- Compensation for water can provide additional income to support agricultural operations
- Protection of water rights and use from diminishment or abandonment
- Knowing that you are helping keep Colorado's natural environment healthy and beautiful for future generations

Request for Water has several goals:

- To invite water rights owners to explore how their water might be able to benefit rivers
- To streamline complex transaction processes and utilization of resources

WATCH: A recording of our 2023 Request for Water presentation at the Colorado Water Conservation Board's Instream Flow Workshop.



Links & Resources

- [RFW Process Overview \(PDF\)](#)
- [Timeline \(PDF\)](#)
- [Preliminary Interest Form \(Online submission\)](#)
- [Preliminary Interest Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Water Right Criteria \(PDF\)](#)

REQUEST FOR WATER



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COLORADO WATER TRUST'S THREE STEP PROCESS

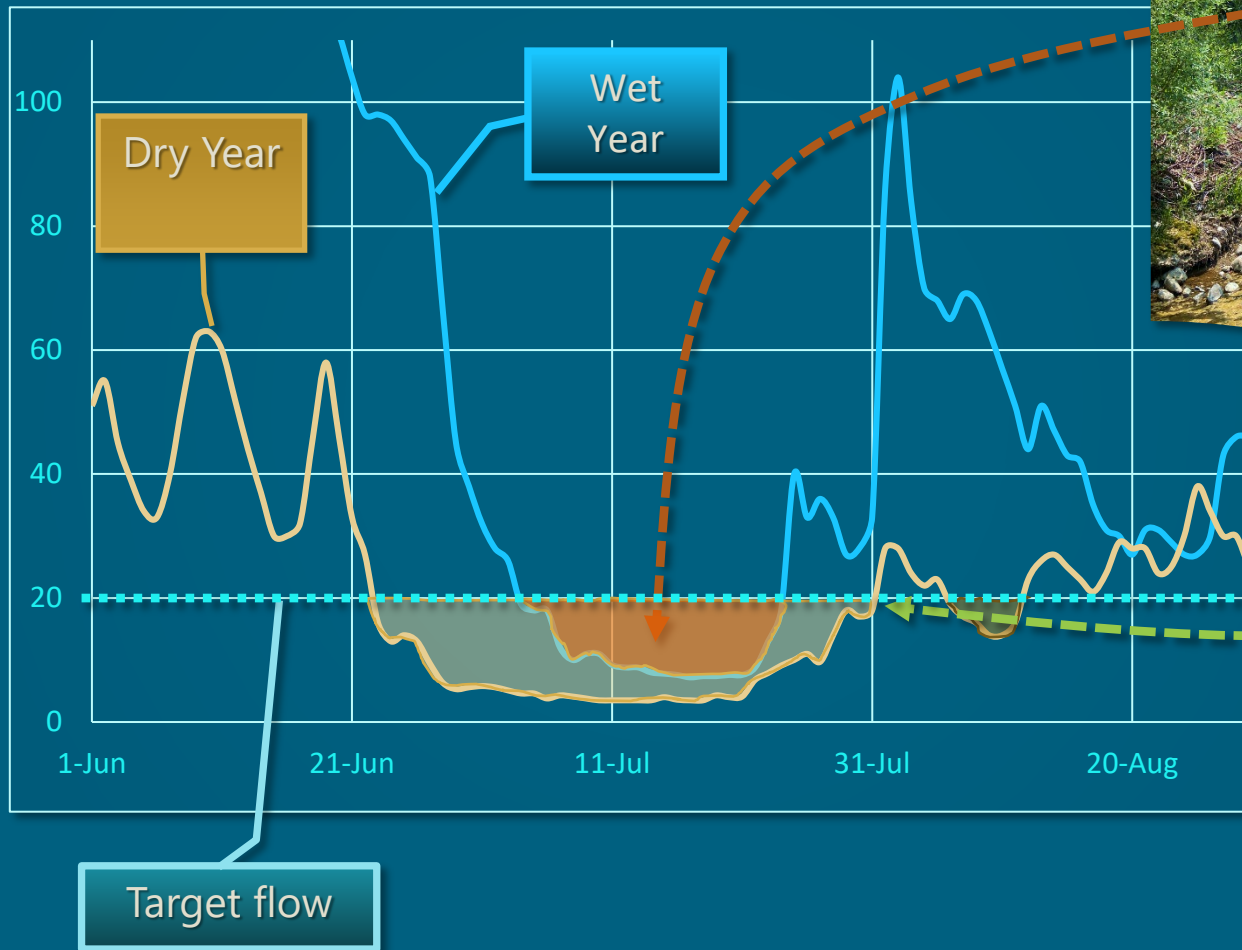


PART 3



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LOOK AT THE STREAM



This stream is in need here at this time

The stream is able to recover with boosted flow

EVALUATE STREAM'S HYDROLOGY TO DETERMINE IF IT IS "IN NEED" IN 1) TIME OR 2) PLACE

EVALUATION – STEP 1



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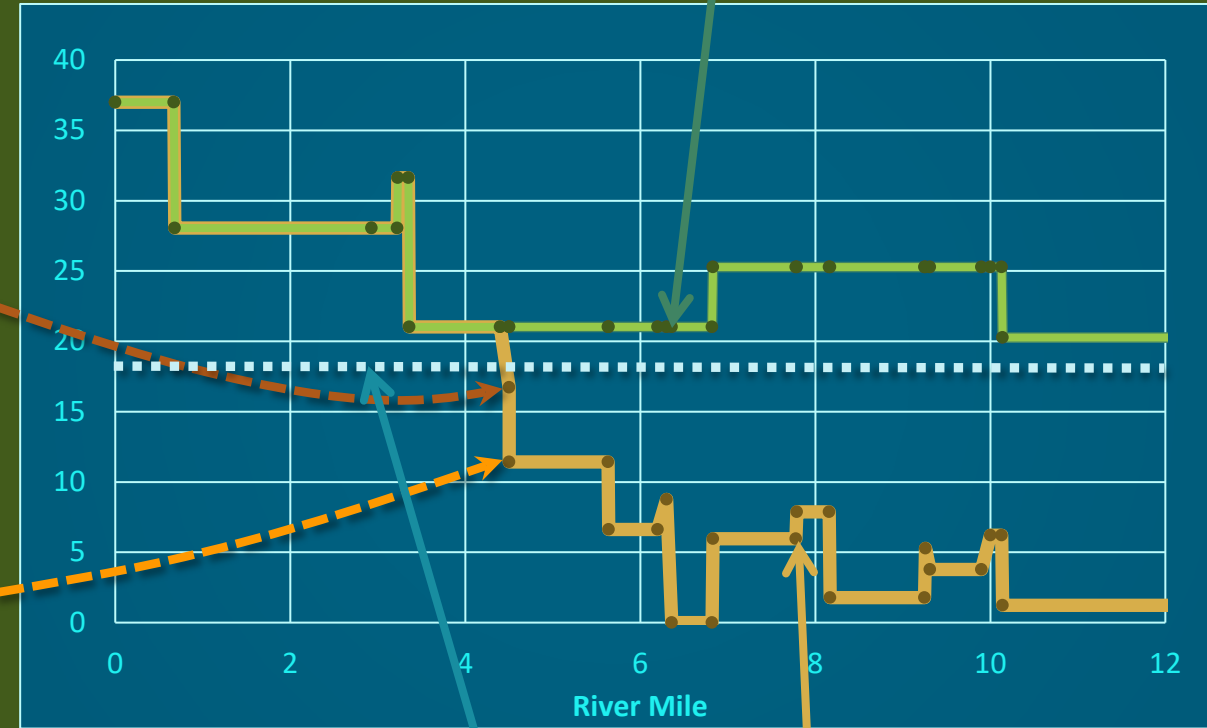
LOOK AT THE WATER RIGHT

THESE
DIVERSIONS
DROP
STREAMFLOW
BELOW
TARGET



DETERMINE IF WE CAN HELP RESTORE
FLOW **WHEN/WHERE NEEDED**

NON-DIVERSION



TARGET FLOW

DIVERSIONS

EVALUATION – STEP 2



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FIGURE OUT THE BEST TOOL

PERMANENT?

Change of use to
instream flow?

Change of use/point of
diversion/place of use?

Strategic Abandonment?

If the water right at issue can help the
stream in time/place, figure out if there
is a legal tool that will work.

FLEXIBLE?

Strategic reservoir
releases?

Streamflow
augmentation plan?

Agricultural water
protection water right?

Downstream decreed
beneficial use?

TEMPORARY?

Water
conservation
plan?

Interruptible
water supply
plan?

5/10
temporary loan
to instream
flow?

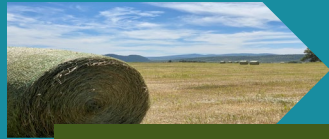
Non-diversion
agreement?

Substitute water
supply plan?

EVALUATION – STEP 3



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1800
Irrigation



1900
Irrigation



1950
Stockwater



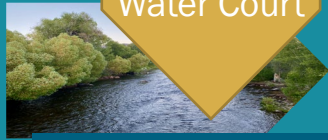
1977 Instream
Flow



2000
Municipal

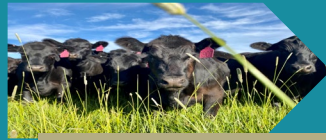


1800
Irrigation

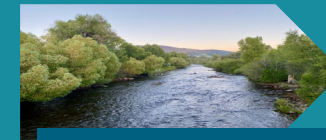


Change of
Use in
Water Court

1900 Instream
Flow



1950
Stockwater



1977 Instream
Flow



2000
Municipal

Water Right
Maintains
Priority

PERMENANT AQUISITION



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- Split-season irrigation approved in water court
- CWT owns water right subject to grants of irrigation and environmental flow uses



PERMENANT ACQUISITION
Little Cimarron – McKinley Ditch



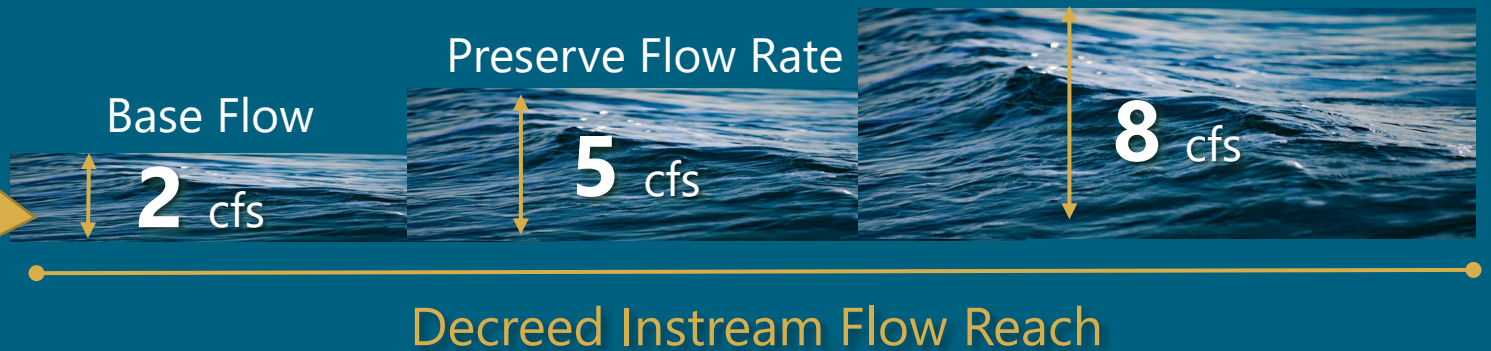
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10-Year Term

Administrative Approval of 10-Year "Loan" to Instream Flow

Operate?	1	Operate?	2	Operate?	3	Operate?	4	Operate?	5	Operate?	6	Operate?	7	Operate?	8	Operate?	9	Operate?	10
Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Boosted Flow	Boosted Flow			Boosted Flow			Boosted Flow			Boosted Flow			Boosted Flow			Boosted Flow		Boosted Flow	Boosted Flow

Water decreed for another use can be used temporarily to boost flow in already decreed instream flow reach up to defined preserve or improve flow rate.

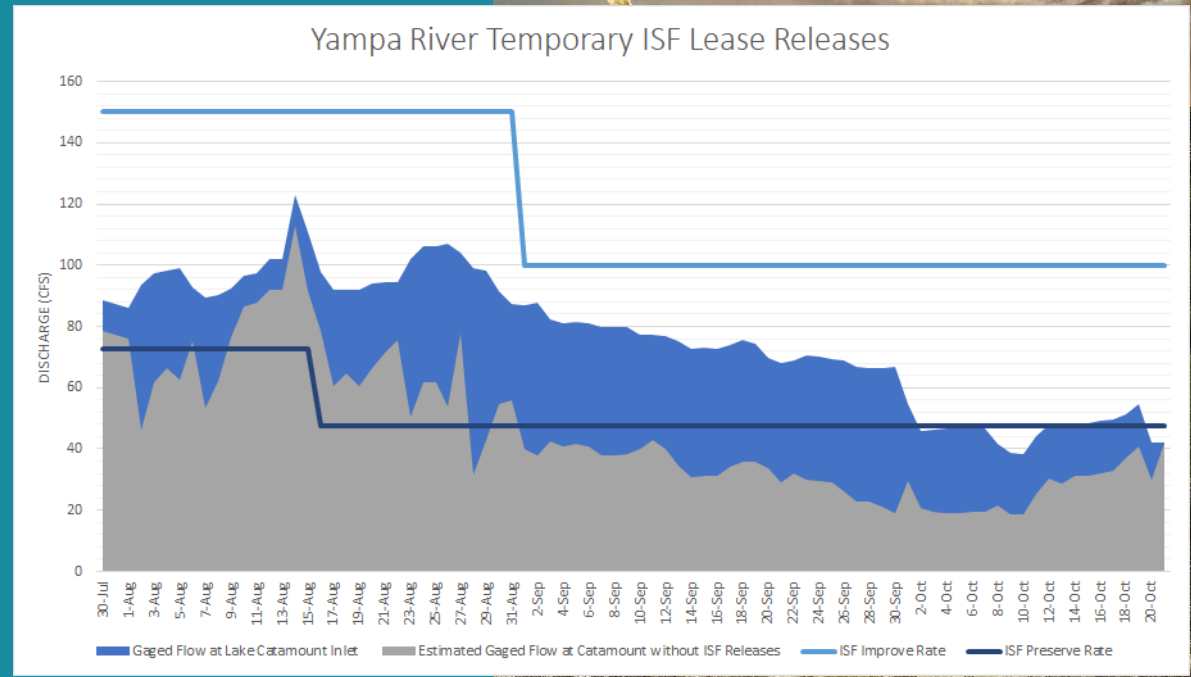


5/10 TEMPORARY TO INSTREAM FLOW



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- Stored water in Stagecoach Reservoir used to boost flows on the Yampa River
- 5100 AF was released in 2024 to restore flows on the Yampa for ISF



5/10 TEMPORARY TO INSTREAM FLOW
Stagecoach Reservoir



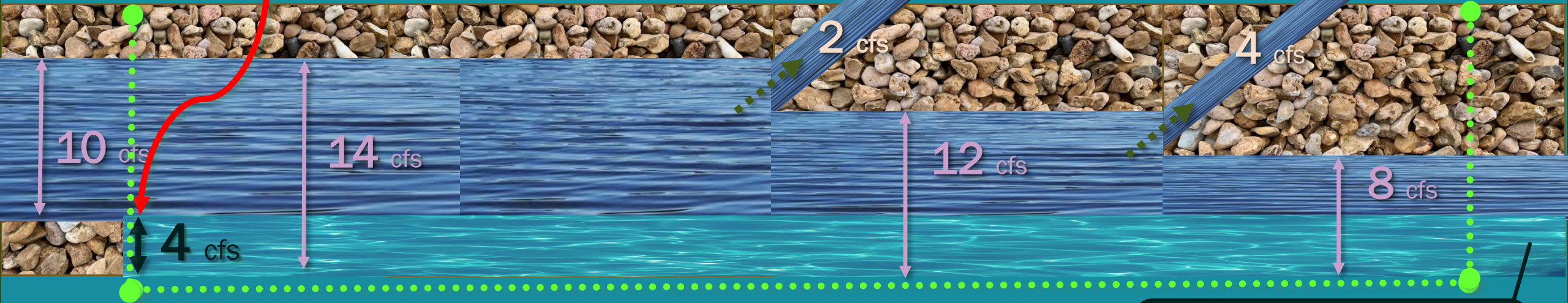
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Seed
Water

Changed & quantified for
augmentation (not ISF)

1900

1950



Protected Reach

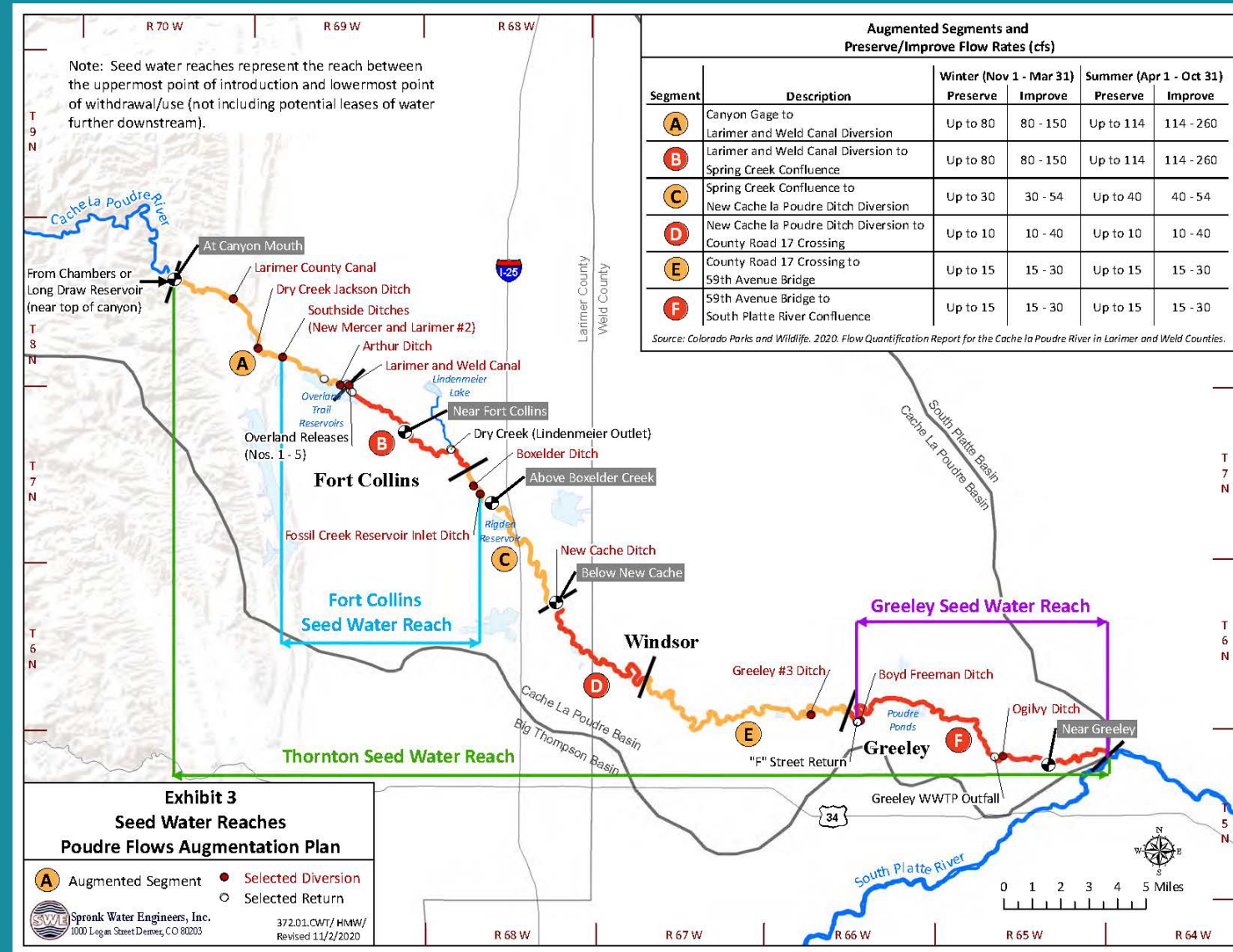
Water can be diverted
downstream of reach

STREAMFLOW AUGMENTATION



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- Seeks to restore flows to the Poudre River
- 57 river miles
- Partnering with ag and municipal

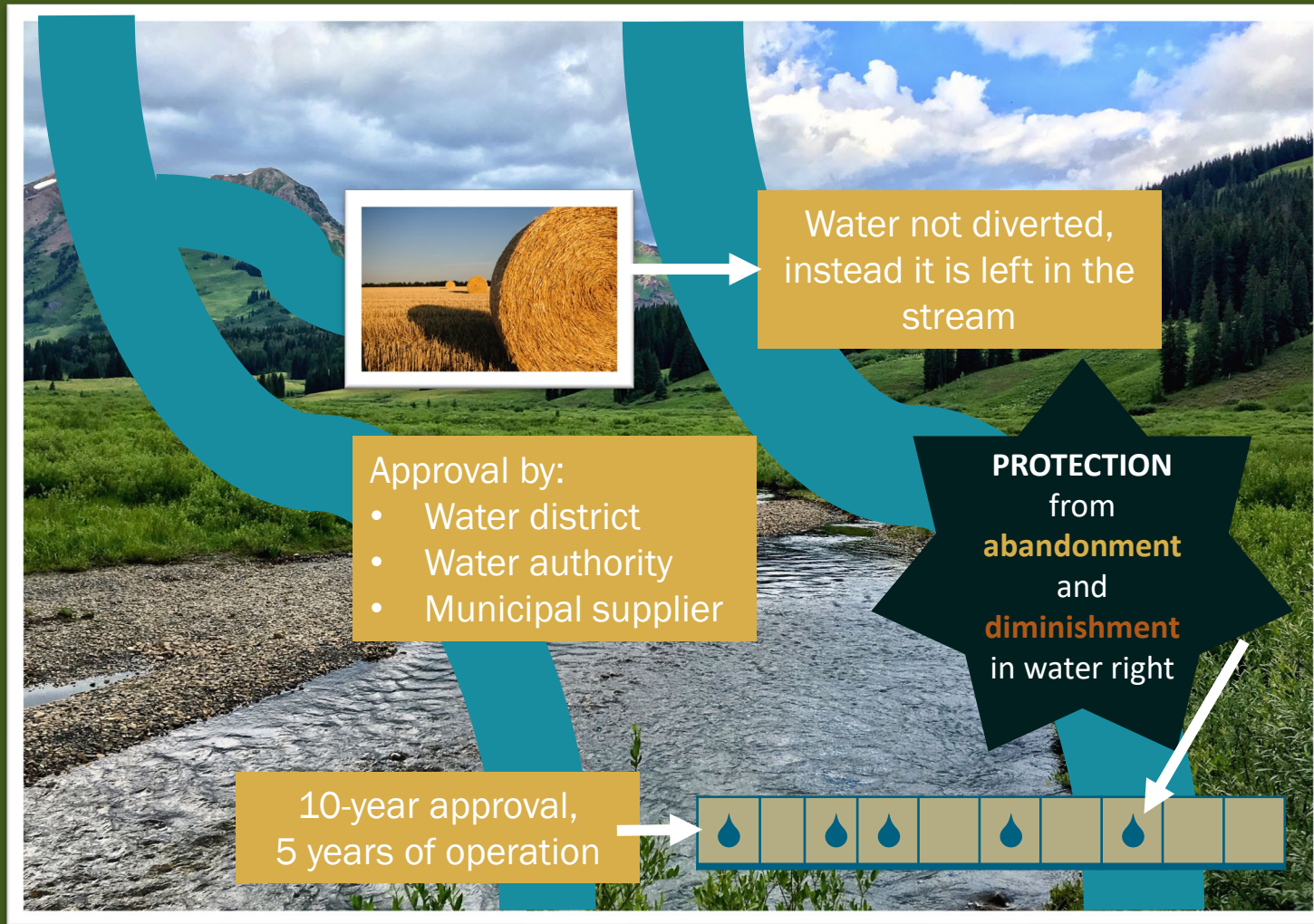


STREAMFLOW AUGMENTATION PLAN

Poudre Flows Augmentation Plan



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- Not necessarily used in partnership with CWCB
- Lower barrier to entry comparatively
- No administration
- D7 Exemption

WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS



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- Cold Mountain Ranch gets compensated for coordinating a reduction in diversion to boost flows on the Crystal River
- 119 AF in 2022 and 94 AF in 2024

Crystal River rancher, Water Trust again try to boost flows

News [FOLLOW NEWS](#) | July 9, 2022

Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism



Cold Mountain Ranch owner Bill Fales stands on the banks of the Crystal River. Fales has entered into a second agreement with the nonprofit Colorado Water Trust to voluntarily reduce diversions from the Helms Ditch to boost low flows in the river. Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

Bill Fales 1

A Crystal River Valley rancher and a nonprofit organization are teaming up for the second time to try to leave more water in a parched stream.

Cold Mountain Ranch owners Bill Fales and Marj Perry have inked a six-year deal with the Colorado Water Trust to voluntarily re-time their irrigation practices to leave water in the Crystal River during the late summer and early fall, when the river often needs it most. In addition to a \$5,000 signing bonus, the ranchers will be paid \$250 a day up to 20 days, for each cubic foot per second (cfs) they don't divert, for a maximum payment of \$30,000.

The water would come from reducing diversions from the Helms Ditch and could result in up to an additional 6 cfs in the river. The agreement would become active in the months of August and September any time streamflows dip below 40 cfs and extend through October once it is active. The agreement will lift if streamflows rise above 55 cfs.

WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Crystal River – Cold Mountain Ranch



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If requested, market-based **COMPENSATION** is available for water that is successfully leased or conveyed to CWCB for ISF use.



Additional benefits include **protection against abandonment, safeguarding HCU and helping the local stream.**

COMPENSATION



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PART 1

- Colorado
- Non-profit
- Facilitates water transactions for the environment and beyond

PART 2

- “Request for Water” outreach
- Fill out a form, send it to us, and we’ll conduct a free, confidential review

PART 3

- Three step process
 - Stream
 - Water right
 - Get out the tools
- Tools & Examples

SUMMARY



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THANK YOU! Questions?



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