

State Engineer's Forum

September 30th 2011
South Fork, Colorado

Tom Spezze
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
SW Regional Manager

Colorado Water – How Can the State Agencies Cooperate?

Colorado Parks & Wildlife as a Water User, a Partner,
and a Member of the Community

CPW as a Water User

- CPW owns water and/or real estate in nearly all of Colorado's 64 counties
- Surface Water Rights
- Wells
- Reservoirs
- Shares in Mutual Ditch Companies
- Trans-mountain Diversions
- Decrees for irrigation and wildlife uses on State Wildlife Areas, fish propagation at State Fish Hatcheries

CPW as a partner and a member of the community:

- Statewide, CPW staff are involved in many important efforts in the world of water:
 - Cooperator in water resource data acquisition (gages, SNOTEL sites)
 - Stakeholder processes in water management and water quality:
 - Dolores River Dialogue/ “A Way Forward”
 - Aspinall Unit/Taylor River Operations
 - Wild & Scenic Rivers efforts in the southwest and Colorado River basin
 - Water Quality Forum and CDPHE-WQCC standards workgroups
 - RiverWatch Program

Statewide, CPW staff are involved in many important efforts in the world of water (Continued):

- Staff Liaisons to the IBCC Basin Roundtable Processes
- Provide data and information to each BRT's Non-Consumptive Needs Assessments
- In the spirit of the IBCC mission, CPW stands at-the-ready to assist water users in fish, wildlife, habitat, water quality, and/or recreation aspects or impacts associated with water resource development.
- Assist water project developers in identifying project impacts and mitigation alternatives early in the permitting and/or NEPA processes.

Some Local Examples of How CPW is a:

- *Steward of Water Resources,

- *Partner, and

- *Member of the Community

SLV Conservation Pool Agreements

- CPW works with owners of reservoirs high in the basin to provide water deliveries from CPW sources
- Reservoirs remain full or minimize fluctuations during summer recreation season
- Water users get a better water supply because CPW covers transit losses
- Citizens and visitors get better recreation opportunities
- A win-win

Rio Grande Cooperative Project

- CPW & SLVID have initiated discussions and work on the simultaneous repair and restoration of 2 pre-compact reservoirs, Rio Grande Reservoir and Beaver Park Reservoir
- Coordinated and integrated use/re-operation of these reservoirs to meet a wide variety of CPW, SLV water users, and state needs (compact and overall river administration)
- This project has been a conceptual idea for several years but has recently been gathering momentum with CWCB & DNR

Water and Wetlands

- Promote the maintenance and growth of a variety of native plant communities to provide food and cover resources for wildlife
- Creation of habitat conditions necessary for wetland dependent wildlife, including threatened and endangered species
- Maintenance of wetland mitigation requirements, NAWCA and CPW wetland restoration and enhancement project sites
- Provide recreational hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities

Weminuche Trans-mountain Diversion Ditch Repair, 2011

Repair of the diversion is important for the enhancing management capabilities of water resources to efficiently manage significant wetland resources on state, USFWS, and BLM areas, as well as exchanges with Private Land Owners within its decreed use of Irrigation and Storage



Youth hunting opportunities through water exchanges with private landowners



100+sq yads of ditch material washed out



3,500 sand bags, yards of fabric cloth, 50 + beetle killed spruce trees and over 1,000 hrs of labor and the Ditch will run water in 2012!

- The Colorado Division of Wildlife provides 120 acre feet annually to the Bureau of Land Management for augmentation of wells.
- This water allows BLM to operate it's post-1979 wells, which provide over 600 acres of habitat.

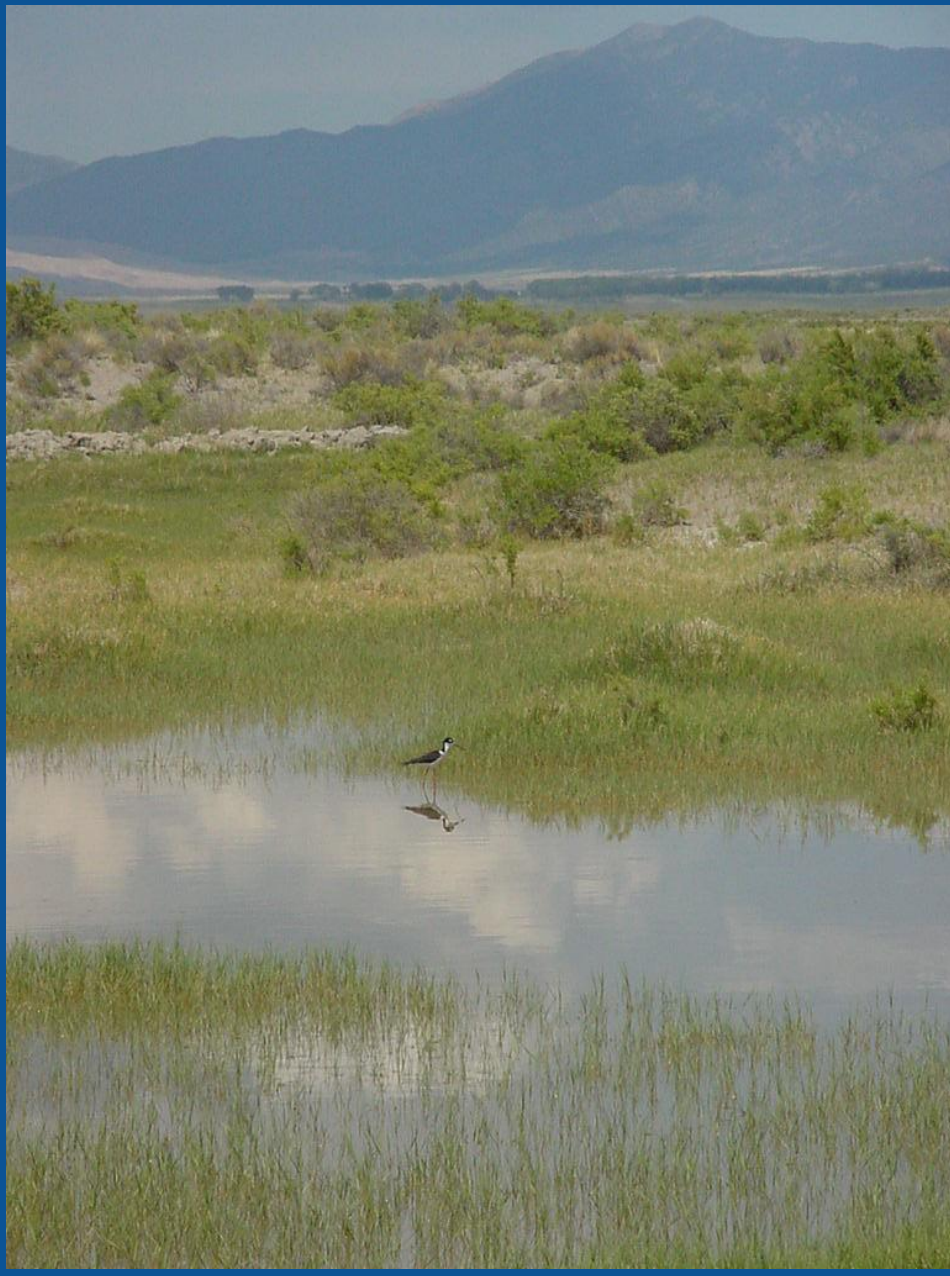


by:

1. Protecting threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, such as the Rio Grande chub and western snowy plover



2. Providing recreation opportunities for trout and bass/bluegill fishing and waterfowl hunting.



Through an agreement between Division of Parks and Wildlife and Bureau of Land Management, up to 1,000 acre feet of irrigation water has been exchanged annually.

This additional water creates up to 300 acres of wet meadow conditions providing additional habitat for threatened, endangered, sensitive and recreational species.

Conclusions:

- As with any “relationship” there are always things we could do better or areas for improvement
- The merger of CDOW and DPOR presents several new opportunities both internally and externally
- Under the current leadership at DNR, there are clear expectations for us to be both good stewards and good “neighbors”
- Under current economic conditions, we have to seek to do our water resource work collaboratively rather than in court