



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Joe Busto, Watershed and Flood Protection Section
Andrew Rickert, Interstate, Federal & Water Information Section

DATE: May 15-16, 2019 Board Meeting

AGENDA ITEM: 11. CWCB Weather Modification Update

Introduction:

This is an informational item only. There is no formal Action requested of the Board. During this agenda item, Staff will highlight accomplishments since teaming up with the Lower Basin to support local cloud seeding programs.

Background:

Colorado has seven wintertime ground based permitting programs and one aerial permitting program in several western slope and southern watersheds. The CWCB is the permitting agency on behalf of DNR. Andrew Rickert lead the permitting effort in January of this year for Colorado's first aerial commercial cloud seeding operation focusing on the Never Summer Mountain range in the North Platte basin.

Each year, the CWCB, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (NMISC), and the Lower Basin provide a mix of grants to operators to fund equipment upgrades, studies, and evaluations to augment ongoing regular funding from local water agencies and ski areas. The first eleven years were a successful collaboration. A new nine year agreement was signed by CWCB Director Mitchell in 2018. Each year staff collects input on how to allocate funding and presents this to the Colorado River Technical Advisory Committee in May. The funding is about 53% local sources including ski areas, towns, and local water districts with the State of Colorado providing approximately 15%. The remaining 32% comes from the Lower Basin and the State of New Mexico.

Cloud seeding has become an issue of statewide and regional significance. Wyoming and the Lower Basin have set the precedent of seeding to benefit the Colorado and Green River Basin through the seeding of the Wind River Basin in Wyoming. At this time, staff believes there is opportunity to seed the Colorado and Platte Basin

through the Left Hand Water Conservancy District due to strong, ongoing partnerships. There could be benefits to the upper Arkansas water users, the Lower Basin, the Rio Grande, and New Mexico.