

Work Group Meeting Report Out

Work Group: Agricultural Impacts Meeting #1 **Date:** August 8, 2019

Meeting Topics:

Agenda topics included: background on demand management and drought contingency planning; process and expectations of the work groups; initial issue identification; and public comment.

The group spent the majority of the meeting identifying the key big-picture issues associated with agricultural impacts of a potential demand management program and discussing the scope of the workgroup's future discussions.

Key Take Aways:

The workgroup discussed the need for research on best management practices for managing agricultural lands temporarily fallowed through a potential demand management program. The availability of technical assistance (e.g. conservation districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colorado State University Extension, and other research institutions) to provide information on conservation practices, management techniques, the effects of temporary fallowing on future land management practices and long-term crop production and returning fallowed lands back into production.

The group discussed the connection between other workgroup efforts particularly local governments and economic impacts and the environmental workgroups. Specifically, that there needs to be an assessment of the potential regional economic and ecological impacts of a potential temporary, voluntary, compensated demand management program. There was a consensus to explore development of a program that avoids an undue burden on a specific water right holder, economic sector, or geographic region.

All members of the workgroup voiced support for conducting further scenario planning and conducting pilot projects to help answer questions to these potential issues and inform the investigatory process.

Questions/Concerns to Raise:

The group identified some threshold questions and issues to consider going forward, including:

- How to avoid injury to non-participants on ditch systems and water right holders
- How to structure a potential demand management program to address barriers to participation such as design contracting to fit needs of ag participants
- The need for research on best management practices for managing agricultural lands enrolled in a demand management program and the availability of technical assistance

Additional technical, informational other needs:

The group discussed opportunities to utilize contractor assistance such as conducting a literature review to review results from other programs and investigation efforts, including the System Conservation Pilot Program and various alternative transfer method projects. The workgroup also discussed the need to collect information regarding studies assessing on-farm and operational impacts (e.g. crop yield, forage quality, crop rotations, soil management) associated with temporary fallowing and other conservation practices such as deficit irrigation including the results of studies done by Colorado State University and other research institutions on methods to temporarily reduce irrigated crop consumptive use.

Other:

The group will identify a next meeting date in the November timeframe to be held on the Western Slope