



COLORADO

**Colorado Water
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members
FROM: Andrew Rickert, Interstate, Federal, & Water Information Section
DATE: November 21, 2019

AGENDA ITEM: 19. Weather Modification Update

Background:

Colorado has seven wintertime ground based permitting programs and one aerial permitting program. The CWCB is, on behalf of the DNR, the permitting agency. Each year the CWCB awards weather modification grants around the state to augment and increase snowpack. The funding is about 53% local sources including ski areas, towns, and local water districts. The State of Colorado provides 15% of the funding. The remaining 31% comes from the Lower Basin and the State of New Mexico. This year the State of Colorado was awarded \$450,000 from the Lower Basin to help extend operations and support program upgrades for existing weather modification projects that benefit the Colorado River Basin.

The CWCB has had grants for winter cloud seeding since 2004. Colorado River downstream water users have been matching CWCB funding since 2007. Weather modification is one of the three legs of the stool for the Colorado River drought contingency plan. Currently, there are over 40 program sponsors of the eight permitted programs in Colorado.

Cloud seeding has become an issue of statewide and regional significance. A new, eight year agreement with the Colorado River Basin States was signed in 2019 that will budget up to \$500K per Upper Basin state per year to be matched with the Upper Basin State funds. This successful multi-state program serves as model for local, state, and interstate collaboration. In 2019, the Wyoming Water Development Office partnered on a cloud seeding program with water users in the North Platte Basin and the CWCB. The partnership helped to create Colorado's first permitted aerial cloud seeding program. Moving forward, the CWCB will continue to pursue other opportunities for collaboration between basins to benefit multiple watersheds.

Staff Recommendation: This item is informational only, no Board action required.



