

COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

NEWS AND UPDATES



THE CHALLENGE

Water is essential to Colorado's quality of life and economy, yet we face an uncertain future. This is due to

- 1) increasing gaps between water supplies and water demands;
- 2) the trend of permanent buying and drying of productive agricultural lands in order to meet growing municipal demands, and
- 3) greater uncertainty due to drought, climate change, and more.

If we don't take responsible action now the consequences will be great. Hundreds of thousands of acres of Colorado's most productive farmland will dry up, our cities and towns will have insufficient water, wildfire response will become more difficult, and the environmental health of our watersheds will be increasingly threatened.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Governor Hickenlooper issued an Executive Order in May 2013 directing the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to develop Colorado's Water Plan. Creation of this plan is a grassroots effort drawing upon eight years of unprecedented work, dialogue, and consensus-building that water leaders from across the state have engaged in through the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) and Basin Roundtable process. Colorado's Water Plan will be aligned with our state's water values: vibrant and sustainable cities, viable and productive agriculture, a robust skiing, recreation and tourism industry, and a thriving environment that includes healthy watersheds, rivers, streams, and wildlife.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Communicating with interested stakeholders and keeping them informed throughout the development of Colorado's Water Plan is our priority.

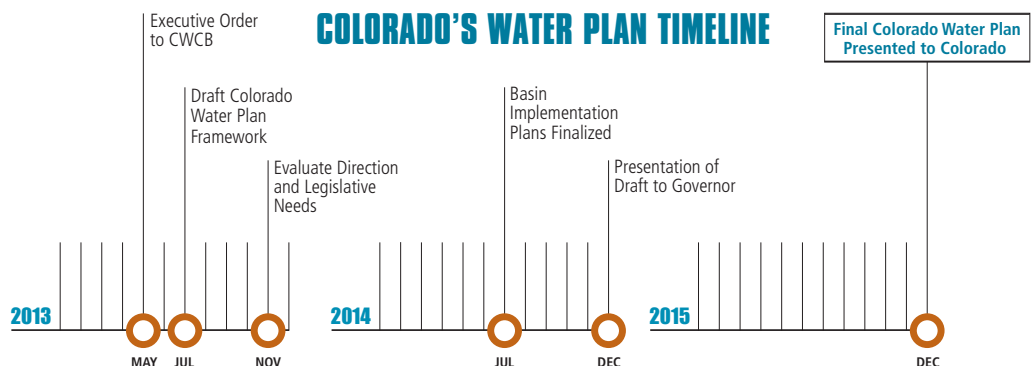
JOIN THE DISCUSSION

The most effective way to get involved is to be engaged in your Basin Roundtable. To learn more about when your Roundtable meets and who represents your basin on the Roundtable, visit www.coloradowaterplan.com.

Find Colorado's Water Plan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter – @COWaterPlan.

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at cowaterplan@state.co.us and visit us online at www.coloradowaterplan.com.





WHY NOW?

Since the 2002-2003 drought, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has been leading the most comprehensive analysis of Colorado water ever undertaken through the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI 2010). As a result, **we know more today than we have ever known about our future water demand**: what supplies are available, how much water we need for consumptive and non-consumptive needs, and much more.

We know that the gap between water supply and demand is growing. Within the next few decades, even assuming aggressive conservation and the completion of dozens of water projects currently being considered, the state could face a shortfall that exceeds 500,000 acre feet annually. In a single year, we have experienced severe drought followed by severe flooding. This climactic variability in our water supply emphasizes the need to strategically plan for the future, now more than ever. Without a thoughtful, educated, and measured response to this problem we run the risk of compromising Colorado's future of being one of the best places in the nation to live and work.

The work of the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) and Basin Roundtables has made the development of Colorado's Water Plan possible. The 27 members of the IBCC, representing every water basin and water interest in Colorado, have agreed that unless action is taken, we will face an undesirable future for Colorado with unacceptable consequences. The IBCC has reached consensus on a number of actions that Colorado must take in the near term to secure our water future. These include conservation, alternative methods of utilizing agricultural water that doesn't result in the permanent dry-up of farmland, and support for water projects that meet certain factors.

The Basin Roundtables have brought together leaders from each of Colorado's major river basins and the metro area to map out their own basin's needs and water future, to engage in facilitated discussions on water issues, and to develop locally-driven, collaborative solutions.



HOW WILL IT BE DEVELOPED?

Colorado's Water Plan is a grassroots effort. Each Basin Roundtable will develop its own plan. These Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) will identify the specific challenges to a secure water future that each basin faces, the strategies it will pursue to address those challenges, and the projects and methods that the basin may implement to meet its water needs. These BIPs will then be incorporated into Colorado's Water Plan.

The IBCC will continue to facilitate dialogue across basins and continue its work of refining and adding to the list of action items around which there is consensus, including a thorough examination of options for new water supply.

The CWCB is tasked with drafting the plan. To do so, it will be reviewing and combining technical information and policy recommendations, incorporating the work of the IBCC and Basin Roundtables, and conducting any additional technical analysis needed.

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COLLABORATING ON COLORADO'S WATER FUTURE