

# COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

## OVERVIEW

**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, and wildlife.

### 5 Things Colorado's Water Plan Will Do ...

- 1 Foster collaborative solutions to responsibly address the looming gap between supply and demand (effect of this is to fortify Prior Appropriation Doctrine, not undermine it)
- 2 Identify and test cost-effective alternatives to the permanent "buy & dry" of irrigated lands
- 3 Affirm that Colorado will protect its compact entitlements, act affirmatively to avoid compact curtailments where possible, and demonstrate effective state-based policy to prevent federal erosion of state water authority
- 4 Push federal regulatory processes to move "quicker" by front-loading state activity
- 5 Align state policies and dollars to support Colorado's water values and policy objectives



### 5 Things Colorado's Water Plan Will **NOT** Do ...

- 1 Erode, or in any way cede, Colorado's compact entitlements
- 2 Advocate alternatives to the Prior Appropriation Doctrine
- 3 Infringe upon water rights' status as private property rights
- 4 Ban the "permanent buy & dry" of irrigated lands
- 5 Allow the status quo to drive increased uncertainty and undesired results



## 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. SWSI is currently being updated.

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 significant shortfall. 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.



## COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

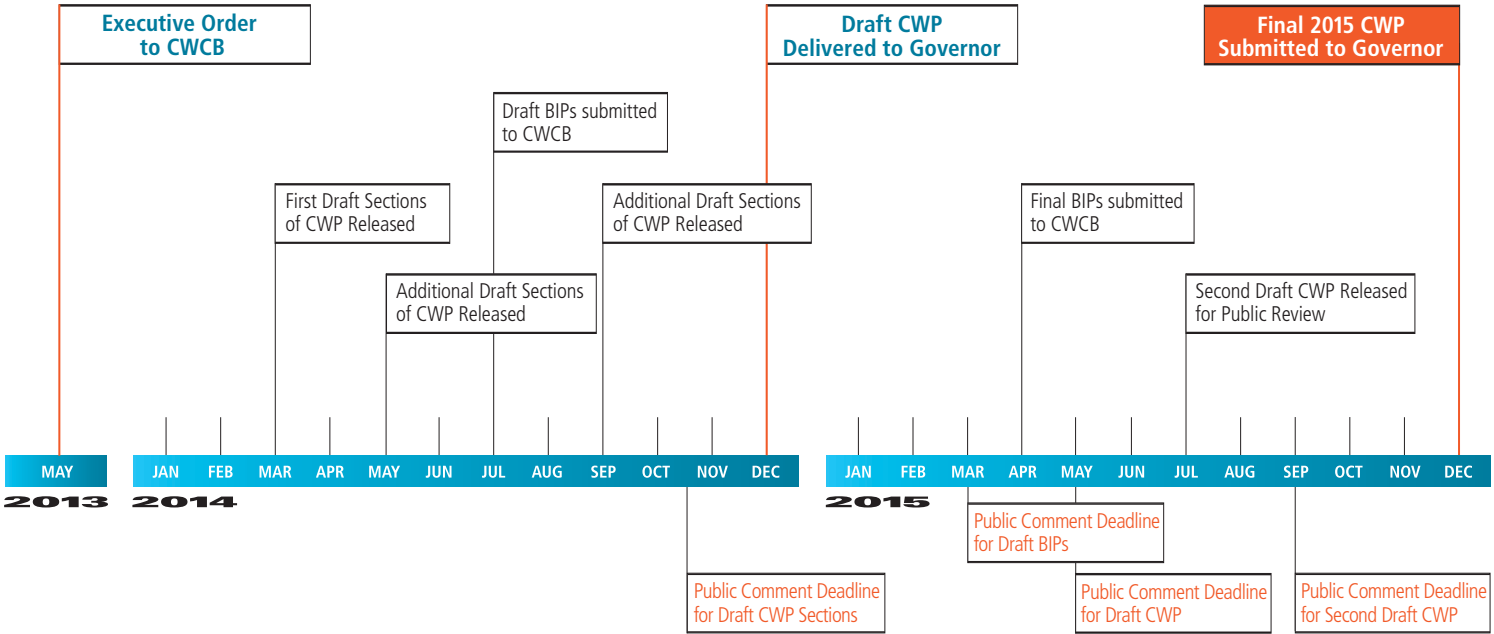
Department of Natural Resources

# COLORADO'S WATER PLAN TIMELINE

## DRAFT 05/20/14

**CWP** = Colorado's Water Plan    **CWCB** = Colorado Water Conservation Board    **BIP** = Basin Implementation Plan

**2015** = All 2015 events are recommendations



## JOIN THE DISCUSSION

Communicating with interested stakeholders and keeping them informed throughout the development of Colorado's Water Plan is our priority. 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](http://www.coloradowaterplan.com).

## QUESTIONS?

Contact us at [cowaterplan@state.co.us](mailto:cowaterplan@state.co.us) and visit us online at [www.coloradowaterplan.com](http://www.coloradowaterplan.com).

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COLLABORATING ON COLORADO'S WATER FUTURE