



# Colorado's Water Supply Future



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## Interbasin Compact Process Update

### Background



The Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act sets up a framework that provides a permanent forum for broad-based water discussions. It created two new structures: 1) The Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC), a state-wide committee that addresses issues between basins; and 2) the Basin Roundtables (BRTs). Nine separate roundtables are established for each of the state's major river basins, and a "Metro Roundtable" for the Denver metro area.

Figure 1 - Enabling Legislation Addressing Colorado's Water Challenges

**SB03-110** authorized the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI), which implemented a collaborative approach to water resources issues by establishing SWSI roundtables. The SWSI focused on using a common technical basis for identifying and quantifying water needs and issues.

**HB05-1177** or The Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act provides a permanent forum for broad-based water discussions. It creates two new structures: 1) the IBCC, and 2) the Basin Roundtables (BRTs). There are nine BRTs based on Colorado's eight major river basins and the Denver metro area.

**SB06-179** created the Water Supply Reserve Account (Account). Throughout SWSI and Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act processes, there has been a clear recognition that financial assistance is needed to address the water challenges in our state. This legislation directs the State Treasurer to annually transfer \$10 million from the Operational Account of the Severance Tax Trust Fund to the Account. These monies are available to the BRTs to fund water activities.

**HB06-1385** created the CWCB's Intrastate Water Management and Development Section, which implements SWSI, the Water Supply Reserve Account, develops reconnaissance level water supply alternatives, and tracks and supports water supply projects and planning processes.

**HB06-1400** appropriated money to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to fund staffing of the Water for the 21st Century Act process and monies for contracted technical assistance to the BRTs.



### M&I Demands to 2050

Colorado is facing significant growth, with our population potentially doubling over the next 40 years. This population growth will drive municipal and industrial (M&I) water demand. Because of the uncertainty in projecting economic conditions and employment levels in 2050, the CWCB developed low, medium, and high population projections. Each scenario reflects unique assumptions for the economy and for each employment sector.

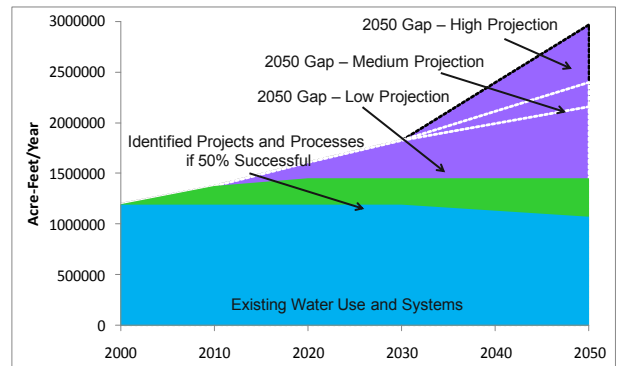


Figure 2- Demand Projection Scenarios with 50% Success of SWSI Identified Projects & Processes

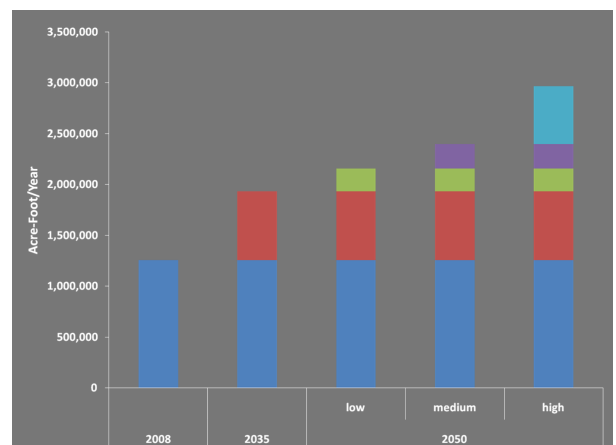


Figure 3- By 2050, Colorado will need up to an additional 1.7 MAF to meet M&I demands



# Nonconsumptive Needs Assessment (NCNA) Overview

Phase 1 of the NCNA is an objective, science-based set of maps representing Colorado's important environmental and recreational attributes. It includes maps of stream reaches with concentrations of environmental and recreational amenities, and results of pilot flow evaluation tools and site-specific instream flow quantifications. The NCNA will not create a water right for the environment; however, it will provide tools and data to allow BRTs to integrate environmental protection into water supply planning. The NCNA shall not be interpreted to diminish, impair, or cause injury to existing absolute or conditional water rights.

The statewide map shows the environmental and recreational attributes for all of the nine BRTs. This effort involved working with each of the BRTs and their respective subcommittees to assemble data on the nonconsumptive resources in their basin, discuss options for mapping, present mapping results, integrate feedback, and assemble maps upon which all subcommittee members could agree. Throughout the iterative process, CWCB met with the BRTs or the related nonconsumptive subcommittees more than 40 times across the state.

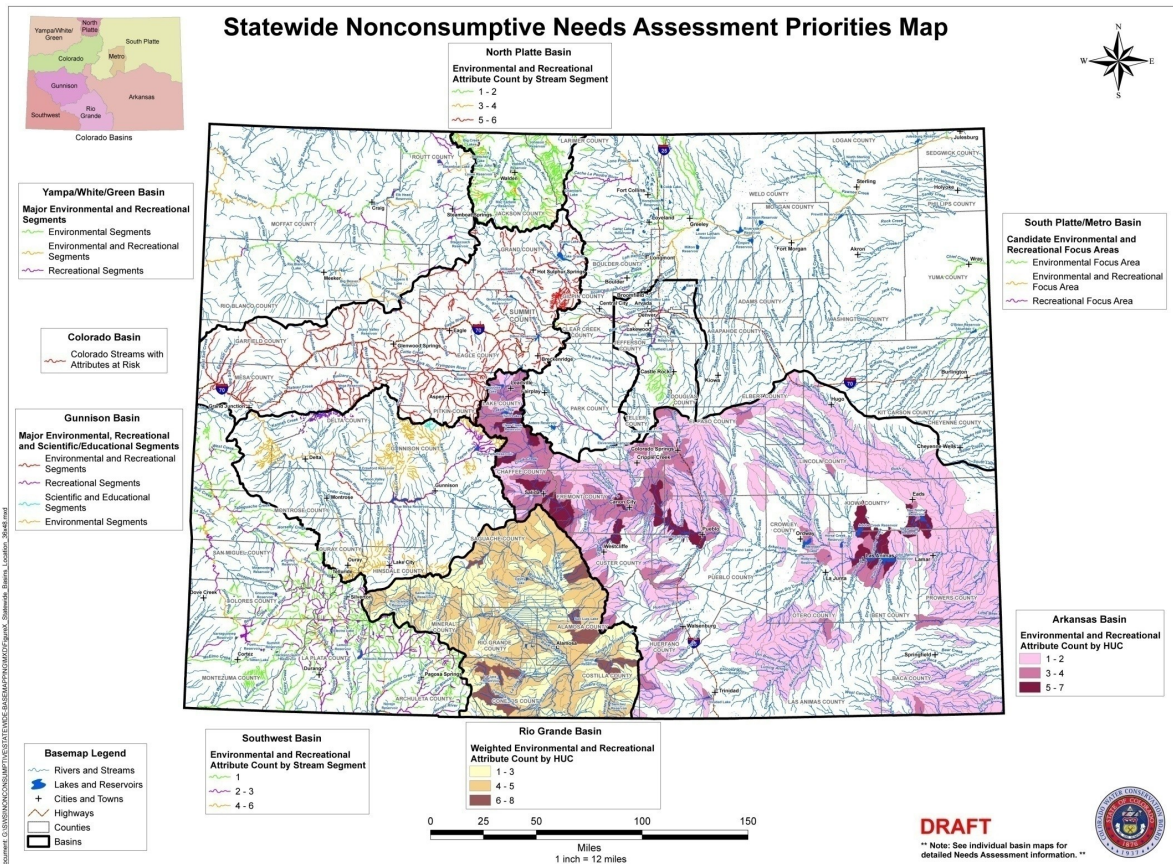
# Water Supply Strategies

Water supply strategies have been identified to help meet Colorado's water supply future. When combined into water supply portfolios, these strategies will address M&I, agricultural, and nonconsumptive needs:

- Water conservation
- Agricultural transfers
- Development of new supplies

# Key Findings

- Colorado's population will nearly double by 2050 requiring between 830,000 and 1.7 million acre-feet of additional water to meet M&I needs.
- Nonconsumptive water needs have been identified statewide. Identifying projects and methods to meet those needs will continue to be a priority.
- To meet these consumptive and nonconsumptive needs, Colorado will rely on a mix of conservation, agricultural transfers, and new water supply development.
- Meeting Colorado's consumptive and nonconsumptive needs will require a substantial investment. For example, a new water supply project yielding 250,000 acre-feet will cost between \$7.5 to \$10 billion, exceeding previous projections.



For detailed technical reports:  
<http://cwcb.state.co.us/IWMD/COsWaterSupplyFuture/>  
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