

Colorado



Stream Lines

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF THE STATE ENGINEER
COLORADO DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

1313 Sherman St. Room 818, Denver, CO 80203 - (303) 866-3581

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Unusual Arkansas River Basin Conditions

The Arkansas River Basin is experiencing very unusual streamflow and reservoir operation conditions this fall and winter. John Martin Reservoir reached the maximum capacity of the conservation pool (350,000 acre-feet) in mid-December resulting in the release or spill of water from the reservoir. This rare situation results from several factors including significant basin-wide carryover storage at the end of the 1997 irrigation season due to heavy rains in late summer, above average return flows, water being made available from replacement plans for post-compact well depletions, and runoff from snowmelt from the October blizzard.

Spill of water from John Martin Reservoir is managed under the 1980 operating plan and the 1997 offset account resolution. The first water to spill will be the Section III water stored by the Amity, Fort Lyon, and Las Animas Consolidated canal companies. About 59,000 acre-feet of water will spill by mid-January. The next water to spill will be the offset account water placed there by the Lower Arkansas Water Management Association. This water totals about 5,200 acre-feet. After this, the Section II account water will be spilled pursuant to the 1980 operating plan which total about 280,000 acre-feet.

The State and Division Engineers are allowing storage in Pueblo Reservoir under post-compact water rights and accounting for this water daily as part of the spill computations. They are monitoring streamflow conditions in Kansas via the USGS real-time streamflow data on the Internet. On January 13, 1998, the Arkansas River had a minimum flow of about 500 cfs throughout the State of Kansas. Thus, it would appear that Kansas has surplus water above its compact needs.

The State of Kansas disagrees with Colorado on this method of operation, and additional discussion and meetings of the Arkansas River Compact's Engineering Committee are expected in February and March.

*Spill of water
from John
Martin Reservoir*

Visit the Colorado Division of Water Resources web site
at <http://water.state.co.us/strmline.htm>

Announcement Of Water Well Testing Certification Class

The Colorado Division of Water Resources is considering providing another class for Certification as a Water Well Tester to interested well drillers, pump installers and other professionals in mid-April, 1998. The cost of the class is \$250 for the three days of class and field exercises. The class is designed to give an overview of groundwater and well hydraulics, measurement methods, methods of collecting and analyzing data for determining power coefficients, well efficiency and system head considerations, reporting requirements, totalizing flow meter verification and more. Attendees will be allowed to take a test at the end of the class to obtain certification as a water well tester for the Colorado Division of Water Resources.

***Obtain
certification as
a water tester***

This announcement is intended to solicit response to determine need and regional demand to aid in finding a centrally located site to hold the class. In the past, this class has been offered in the Arkansas River Valley because of the local demand due to development of Rules and Regulations. Depending on responses received, the tentative plan will be to offer the class in conjunction with the re-certification process currently done annually for certified testers in the Arkansas River Basin.

If you or one of your employees is interested in this class to obtain certification, you need not apply at this time; however, you may wish to make known your interest to aid the Colorado Division of Water Resources in finalizing where the course should be held. You may contact Ms. Janet Kuzmiak at (719) 542-3368 Ext. 101, or by writing to her attention at the Colorado Division of Water Resources, 310 E. Abriendo Ave, Suite B, Pueblo, CO 81002.

Public Notice

The Division of Water Resources will be rewriting the Procedural Regulation Rules. These regulations shall govern all procedures and hearings before the State Engineer except when he is acting pursuant to authority delegated to him by the Ground Water Commission or the State Board of Examiners of Water Well and Pump Installation Contractors. They are intended to assure that all such procedures and hearings will be fair and impartial. If you would like to be advised of and/or participate in the rule making proceedings, please submit a written request to be placed on the mailing list to: Angela Sanchez, 1313 Sherman, Rm. 818 Denver, CO 80203.

***Participate
in rulemaking
proceedings***

New Division Engineer Appointed To Yampa/White River Basin

Mr. Hal Simpson, State Engineer, is pleased to announce that Mr. Robert M. Plaska, former Assistant Division Engineer for the Rio Grande Basin, has been appointed as the new Division Engineer for Water Division 6. The Division Engineer's Office, located in Steamboat Springs, is responsible for managing water rights, ground water well permitting, hydrography, and dam safety in the Yampa, White, Green, and North Platte River drainage basins.

Mr. Plaska will be replacing Mr. Edward W. Blank who is retiring after completing 23 years of dedicated service to the citizens of the state, including nine years as Division Engineer for the Yampa/White River Basins. Mr. Blank plans on remaining in the Steamboat Springs area to enjoy his retirement. The entire staff of the Division of Water Resources congratulates Mr. Blank and wishes him a long and healthy retirement.

Mr. Plaska will assume his new duties on February 2, 1998. He brings over 13 years of experience in water administration and engineering with the Division of Water Resources to the job, which includes 11 years as Assistant Division Engineer in Alamosa.

Retirements

Fred Loo retired on November 30, 1997, after 26 years of employment with the Division of Water Resources. Mr. Loo worked in the Water Supply Section, Team 237, primarily responsible for evaluating well permit applications. Mr. Loo also provided geotechnical support evaluations of well permit applications, water court cases, subdivision water supply plans and substitute water supply plans.

Mel Malley retired on December 31, 1997, after 23 years of employment with the Division of Water Resources. Mr. Malley worked in the Water Supply Section, Team 1A, primarily responsible for evaluating well permit applications and dealt with the public on a daily basis. Specifically, Mr. Malley evaluated all of Division 1 exempt well permit applications (outside of the Denver Basin). Mr. Malley also evaluated emergency verbal requests and late registration/replacement applications.

Walter Clotworthy retired on December 31, 1997, after more than 12 years with the Division of Water Resources. Mr. Clotworthy worked in Division 2, District 11, as a Water Commissioner in the Leadville, Lake County area. He was responsible for surface water administration as well as ground water permitting, monitoring, and reservoir administration.

Endangered Species Recovery in the Central Platte River Valley

Endangered Species Recovery in the Central Platte River Valley in Nebraska continues as the most significant issue for users of the South Platte River in Colorado. In 1997, an agreement on a program was reached between the states of Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and the U.S Department of Interior to protect endangered species in the Central Platte River Valley in Nebraska. This agreement came as a result of months of meetings between representatives of the states and Federal government concerning this issue. The program will allow water use and development activities in each of the three states to continue, in compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and in accordance with state water law and state entitlements under the interstate compact.

Under the agreement, the states and the Department of Interior made a commitment to develop and implement a recovery plan for one fish species, the pallid sturgeon, and three bird species, interior least tern, whooping crane, and piping plover. As required by agreement, Colorado representatives are presently pulling together baseline data concerning statutes and studies on water in Colorado and are refining the model which predicts water impacts of future development in the state. Colorado representatives are also working with other state representatives to select an agreement program director and a consultant to analyze additional water supply and conservation alternatives. The agreement and anticipated activities generated by the agreement are discussed in more detail in a previous Article in Streamlines (1997, Vol XI, No. 3).

Water user input to the Colorado representatives involved in the program is provided through the Platte River Project (PRP). This group is made up of numerous water users and providers in the South Platte basin including many of the cities, water conservancy districts, and agricultural interests in the basin. Participants in the PRP also have contributed to a recent assessment (required as a part of last year's Colorado legislation, Senate Bill 96-74) of the need for and scope of participation of the State of Colorado to the Federal ESA.

Another group that was formed partially in response to issues associated with the Endangered Species Act is the South Platte Lower River Group (SPLRG). This group was formed as a non-profit corporation and consists of an Advisory Committee of water users and a four member Board of Directors. The group is funded by individual contributions and from the Colorado Water Conservation Board Construction Fund. The group's efforts are focused upon identification and development of potential projects which enhance flows in times of need. The majority of the potential projects that have been identified and that are being developed as demonstrations are managed ground water recharge projects because of their ability to be developed soon and affordably. Such projects involve diversion of excess river flows mainly during late fall, winter, and early spring to ground water recharge basins where the seepage from the basin returns through the ground water aquifer to the river at a later time to augment river flows during critical summer periods. Participants in SPLRG also provide an assessment concerning additional water resources development in the lower South Platte River required as another part Senate Bill 96-74.

San Juan Recovery Implementation Program

One of the most imposing issues in the San Juan Basin as well as other areas in western Colorado is the impact of the Army Corps of Engineers' Section 404 Permits. In the past several years, the interpretation of the Corps as to the definition of "waters of the United States" has allowed increased federal involvement to such a level that in nearly every action, even privately held water rights are affected. The charge against upstream minor depletions came as a result of the Reasonable and Prudent alternative for the Animas-La Plata Project in 1991.

If a federal action is called for by any proposed water project which impacts the "Waters of the United States", an evaluation of the depletion is made. This is charged against the relatively small 3,000 acre-feet of new minor depletions allowed for the States of New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah on the San Juan River and tributaries under the San Juan Recovery Implementation Program (SJRIP).

A recent example of how the SJRIP has affected water development is an application made during the last year by the City of Durango. The City wishes to build a new intake structure on the Animas River to accommodate future growth. The maximum proposed rate of depletion ranges from 0.1 cfs in December to 3.9 cfs in June. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, issued a draft biological opinion. This opinion stated that the proposed future annual depletion of 1,051 acre-feet, and the historic depletion of 388 acre-feet, "may affect" the endangered Colorado squawfish and razorback sucker and "may affect" their critical habitat. As a result, the City of Durango is required to make a payment of \$50,000 to be used by the SJRIP to construct and maintain a pond for raising endangered fish. This payment is required despite the fact that the Durango project is included in the previously approved 57,100 acre-feet depletion of the Animas-La Plata Project.

*Impact of the
COE'S
Section
404
Permits*

Calendar Of Events

- January 28 & 29 Colorado Water Conservation Board , Board Meeting; Holiday Inn Northglenn. Contact Susan Maul, CWCB at 303.866.3441, for more information.
- January 29 & 30 Colorado Water Congress, 40th Annual Convention; Holiday Inn Northglenn. Contact Dick MacRavey, CWC at 303.837.0812, for more information.
- February 2 Board of Examiners Meeting, Room 615, Centennial Building 1313 Sherman Street, Denver, CO. Contact Gina Antonio, DWR at 303.866.3581, for more information.
- February 12 Ogallala Aquifer Symposium, Northeastern Junior College, Sterling, Colorado. Contact Mahdi Al-Kaisi, CSU, at 970.345.2259, for more information.
- February 13 Colorado Ground Water Commission Meeting, Northeastern Junior College, Sterling, Colorado. Contact Marta Ahrens, DWR at 303.866.3581, for more information.
- February 17 & 18 Colorado Rural Water Association, Conference; Double Tree Inn Colorado Springs, Colorado. Contact Herman Wooten, Colorado Rural Water Association at 719.545.6748, for more information.
- April 7 Board of Examiners Meeting, Room 615, Centennial Building 1313 Sherman Street, Denver, CO. Contact Gina Antonio, DWR at 303.866.3581, for more information.

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