

## Yampa River Basin Management Plan Update

Originally scheduled for completion in the fall of 2000, the Yampa River Basin Management Plan will hopefully be ready for public review and comment by spring of 2001. The delay in finalization of the plan was due mainly to re-evaluation of the estimates of future depletions in the basin that will be covered by the plan. Original estimates of future depletions of 50,000 acre-feet were based on maximum growth predictions for various uses. When viewed on an average annual basis, future deple-

tions would be about 30,000 acre-feet. Current discussions center around using a two step approach similar to that used for the 15-Mile Reach on the Colorado River. The first increment would allow for development of 30,000 acre-feet of additional depletions in the basin. A second increment of 20,000 acre-feet would be considered in the future depending on progress of recovery of the endangered fish in all the basins. This two-step approach has not been agreed to by the US Fish and Wildlife Service

(F&WS) or by the water uses as yet.

It is anticipated that a draft plan will be available for public comment early this spring. Public meetings will be held in the basin to review the plan and gather input. The plan will then be finalized and submitted to the F&WS for use in the preparation of a Programmatic Biological Opinion for the Yampa River basin.

A major component of the plan will be an enlargement of Elkhead Reservoir to provide stor-

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age of water that will be used to augment natural streamflow for the endangered species. The anticipated enlargement would be about 8,000 acre-feet with 3,700 acre-feet designated for the endangered fish flow and the remainder for future human consumption. A very ambitious schedule has been proposed that would see construction of the enlargement beginning as early as 2003.

### Colorado Streamgaging Symposium

May 3, 2001, The Village at Breckenridge, Breckenridge, Colorado

The symposium is sponsored by the Colorado Water Resources Research Institute, the State Engineer's Office, and the U.S. Geological Survey. It will provide an opportunity for sharing of information about the major streamgaging programs, the importance and various uses of streamflow data, and the historic and current coverage of streamflow gages. Topics will include the history of streamflow data collection, the evolving uses, access to and importance of streamflow information, and user perspectives. Additional information and a registration form can be found at [www.cwrri.colostate.edu](http://www.cwrri.colostate.edu) under 'Upcoming Events', or contact Robert Ward at 970-491-6308.

## South Platte River Reservoir Storage

The 2000 irrigation year was the first dry year since 1994 in the South Platte River Basin. Because of the dry conditions, demands for irrigation water were so heavy that most of the plains irrigation reservoirs downstream of Kersey were completely emptied, stranding fish that had to be removed by “salvage fishing” or by Division of Wildlife personnel. By September, water users and Division of Water Resources personnel were very concerned that there would not be adequate water to fill reservoirs for next year’s irrigation demand.

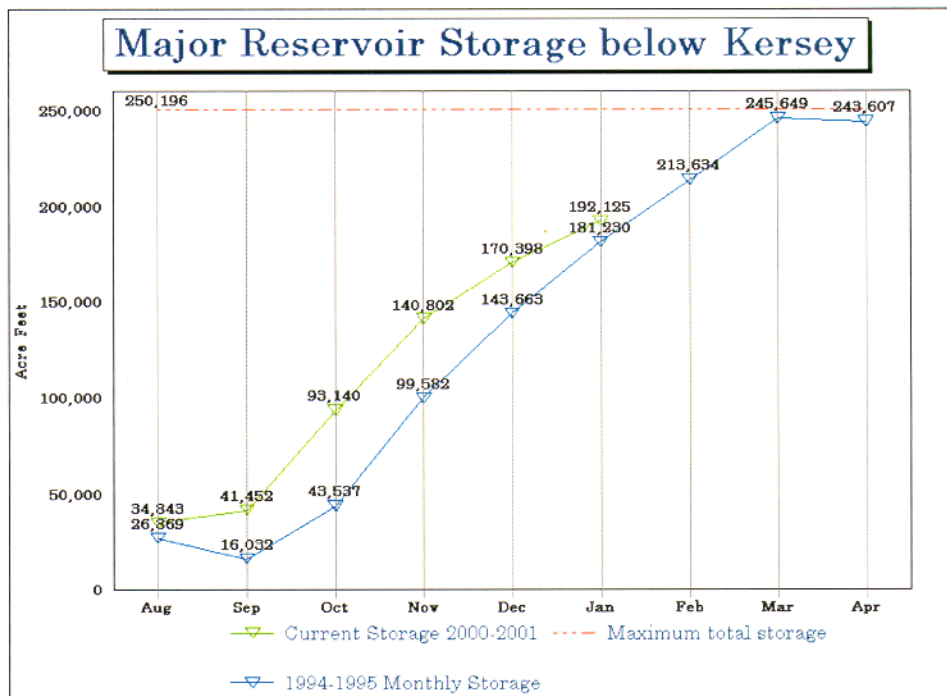
During most summers, diversions during the end of September and the beginning of October would be for recharge as irrigation demand was reduced. Because of the low storage levels of reservoirs, users this year chose not to recharge but to begin refilling their reservoirs in order to get a jump on next year’s supply. As evidence of the concern, owners of reservoirs located downstream of Kersey placed their senior storage calls at the beginning of the water year for the first time in approximately 60 years. This reflects not only the dry conditions, but also reflects the increased competition for water from recharge and other new uses that divert water during

what historically was considered to be the storage season.

The early start to storage and river call to fill reservoirs paid off. By the end of November, three of the main irrigation reservoirs on the South Platte River below Kersey — Empire Reservoir, Julesburg Reservoir and Jackson Reservoir — were at or near their winter storage level. By December 13, 2000, the storage call on the South Platte was removed as demand was reduced with the filling of some of the reservoirs and because the ability to divert water was limited due to ice conditions in the filling ditches. Riverside Reservoir and Prewitt Reservoir reached their winter storage levels in

January.

Only one of the major lower South Platte River reservoirs, North Sterling Reservoir, has not filled to its winter storage level to date. North Sterling Reservoir is expected to fill within the next 60 days. The filling of all the reservoirs will allow recharge this spring, the second major component in helping to augment the natural supplies in the South Platte downstream of Kersey. The diagram below shows progress in filling reservoirs downstream of Kersey since the end of last summer’s irrigation season. This diagram uses the filling of reservoirs in 1994-1995, the last dry year, as a comparison.



## What does the Division 7 Cortez field office do?

The Division of Water Resources' Division 7 southwestern field office presently located in Cortez, Colorado, has over the past 20 years become a much used resource by the water using public. The Cortez office, under the supervision of Senior Water Commissioner Glen Humiston, serves Water Districts 32, 34, 69, and 71.

Many water users, prospective water users, realty agents, title companies, and lending agencies use the staff at the Cortez office to inquire about or verify court decreed water rights. They provide a considerable amount of help with citizens who are making applications for court decreed water rights and the filling out of well permits requesting the right to drill water wells.

**The staff makes a concerted effort to solve all controversy and problems related to the Cortez Office's district boundary**

The water commissioners work closely with two Water Conservancy Districts, one large irrigation company, several smaller ditch and reservoir companies, three municipalities, the Ute Mountain Tribe, the National Park and National Monument Service, in addition to the water users mentioned in the previous paragraph. The staff also makes a concerted effort to solve all controversy and problems related to

the Cortez office's district boundary rather than letting them become an added burden on the Division 7 Office which is located in Durango.

Last, but certainly not least, the Cortez office provides the necessary place and space for three water commissioners to work in performing their required job duties. They experience a considerable amount of "off the street" and telephone business. In addition, they act as a source of advice and information for the Montezuma and Dolores Counties Sheriff's Departments.

For additional information, please contact the Cortez office at 722 Main Avenue, Cortez, Colorado 81321, or call 970-565-3111.

## Human Resources

### New Employees

**Scott Cuthbertson** started with the Division on December 11, 2000, as a Water Resource Engineer on Team 1A and his duties include reviewing well permit applications for the Denver Basin area. Prior to this, Scott was a self-employed manufacturing and environmental driller. Other work experience included 15 years with Conoco and 5 years in environmental consulting.

**Don West** started employment on February 12, 2001, as an Engineering Intern on Team 237. His responsibilities include reviewing well permit applications, subdivisions and substitute water supply plans. His prior experience included working locally in the private sector as a civil engineer performing subdivision designs and as an environmental engineer doing remediation work.

**Steve Barrett** started in the Denver office on February 26, 2001, as an Engineering Technician. Steve joined Team 1B and will be responsible for reviewing Division 1 well permit applications. His prior experience included working a few summers assisting the Division 7 office in Durango. Steve is from the Kansas City area, graduating from the University of Kansas with a degree in Environmental Science.

### Retirements


**John Taylor** retired on November 30, 2000 from Division 7 after almost 22 years of service with the state. John worked the upper San Juan and Piedra drainages as water commissioner and has maintained a good working relationship with the newcomers as well as the old-timers. He studied future development potential in preparing for alternatives to Piedra River Wilderness and Wild and Scenic designations in 1988. John will be greatly missed by the Division Seven staff but will remain active in water issues in the future.

**Lyman Campbell** retired on January 2, 2001 after serving 26 1/2 years with the Division IV office. He was water commissioner for District 60, the entire San Miguel drainage. Having lived in the Norwood area all his life, he was very familiar with his district, and was an invaluable resource for historical water use. He has earned the respect of the water user community and will be greatly missed.

**Clarence "Crandall" Howard** will retire from Division 4 on March 31, 2001, with 26 years of state service. He started with the Division in April 1975 in Water District 28, and worked as a water commissioner in the Montrose and Cimarron area in Water Districts 41 and 62 since 1978. He has worked closely with the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association in the administration of the Uncompahgre River, as well as officials from the Tri-County Water Conservancy District, who operate Ridgway Reservoir. He will be surely missed.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

- March 26-27 Colorado Water Conservation Board Meeting, Greeley, CO; for more information, contact Noreen Chambers at 303-866-3441
- April 3 Board of Examiners of Water Well Construction and Pump Installation Contractors, Denver, CO; for more information, contact Gina Antonio at 303-866-3581
- April 18-20 State Engineer's 2001 Annual Meeting, Lakewood, CO; for more information, contact Marta Ahrens at 303-866-3581
- May 3 Colorado Streamgaging Symposium, The Village at Breckenridge, Breckenridge, CO; for more information, contact Robert Ward at 970-491-6308.
- May 18 Colorado Ground Water Commission Meeting, Denver, CO; for more information, contact Marta Ahrens at 303-866-3581
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