

Annual Report of the State Engineer

1996



Doing the Right Thing in Water Resource Management

As State Engineer for Colorado, the theme that I constantly stress to our employees is to develop a service attitude of "doing the right thing" in our working lives. I believe that by doing this we can meet the challenge of becoming the best state water resource agency in the west.

Are we doing the right things to meet our goals?

- 1996 shows the largest single increase in employee morale since 1993, at 34%.
- Customer opinion survey indicates areas of excellence, while providing feedback in areas needing improvement.
- Strategic planning goals in human resources, communications, well permitting, technology and interstate compacts are being met or exceeded.
- State's role as a facilitator is being enhanced and demonstrated through cutting edge projects such as the Colorado River Decision Support System (CRDSS) and collaborative review of South Platte River issues.

Accomplishments

Interstate Compacts

- Successful completion of first irrigation season under the Amended **Arkansas** Rules and Regulations.
- Diligent efforts on the part of the State Engineer to ensure allocation and use compliance by all members of the the **Rio Grande** Compact.
- Began implementation of Senate Bill 74 to review the **South Platte River** system and the effects of Denver basin aquifer pumping.
- Continuing efforts through the **Colorado River** Decision Support System (CRDSS) to protect Colorado's compact entitlements.

Ground Water Well Permitting

- Completion of decentralized domestic well permitting process allowing for local application evaluation in all western slope offices.
- Initiation of a re-engineering project to use technology in analyzing well permit applications.
- Implementation of new well permit application forms to simplify well permitting process.
- Action on 10,983 well permit applications.



Technology

- Completion of interconnected computer communication of all division offices throughout the state increasing efficiency of water administration and dam safety.
- Completion of Phase I of the Colorado River Decision Support System (CRDSS), which models Colorado River basin streamflows allowing for better water management practices.
- Full completion of the South Platte Water Rights Management System allowing for near real time stream administration for the entire South Platte River system.
- Continued ground water modelling efforts of the Arkansas River system allowing management and compliance with the Arkansas River Compact.
- Implementation of internet resources to provide the public with needed, timely information on water resource issues and services of the agency.

The Field

"When I think about water administration, I think about the men and women who truly make our agency great. The water commissioners and our field offices are the people who day in and day out keep the priority system intact." ...Hal Simpson, State Engineer



The Division of Water Resources has seven offices in the field that monitor and administer the waters of the state based upon priority while at the same time ensuring that the dams of the state are safe for our residents. Some of the highlights of those offices during 1996 were:

- Inspection and review of 750 dams.
- Community education and involvement with realtors, homeowners groups, schools and universities.
- Ongoing dialogue, consultation and cooperation with water conservation districts and water suppliers.
- Providing expertise in facilitating solutions to complex water administration issues such as tributary ground water, reservoir administration and water resource management.
- Daily administration of 5 interstate compacts and 2 federal decrees.

Hydrography

- Historical streamflow data was made available on CD-Rom format allowing quick and easy access to this data by our personnel.
- Continued modernization and expansion of the stream gaging station network to meet flood watch demands and environmental concerns.
- Near real-time streamflow information available to the public via phone (WaterTalk) and the internet.
- Monitoring 458 gaging sites throughout the state including maintenance of 257 sites.
- Cooperative efforts with federal, county and local officials during times of high streamflow runoff.

Geotechnical

- Hydrogeologic mapping of the Denver basin.
- Water level monitoring of over 1,000 wells statewide.
- Geologic support of well permitting and litigation.
- Cooperative hydrogeologic studies with the U. S. Geological Survey.

Meeting the Demands of Tomorrow

Over the next year, the Division will be re-examining its vision, mission, goals and objectives in an overall effort to be the best water administration agency in the west. Focus in this arena will include identification of agency principles and organizational alignment to assist us in meeting our expectations. We look forward to this journey and invite your comments on how we can serve you better. We will also continue to diligently pursue long range planning objectives already in existence, including the Colorado River Decision Support System, overall Arkansas and South Platte River basin strategies and metropolitan water supply studies. Further, we will continue to seek out creative solutions to the increasing demands and conflicting interests that are placed upon this most precious resource as we move towards the 21st century.
