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WATER DIVISION THREE**

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April 8, 1996

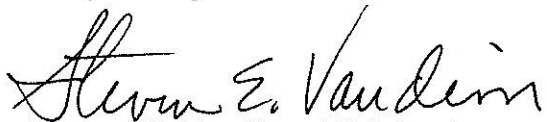
Hal Simpson, State Engineer
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Dear Hal:

On behalf of the staff of Division III, I submit herein the Annual Report for 1995.

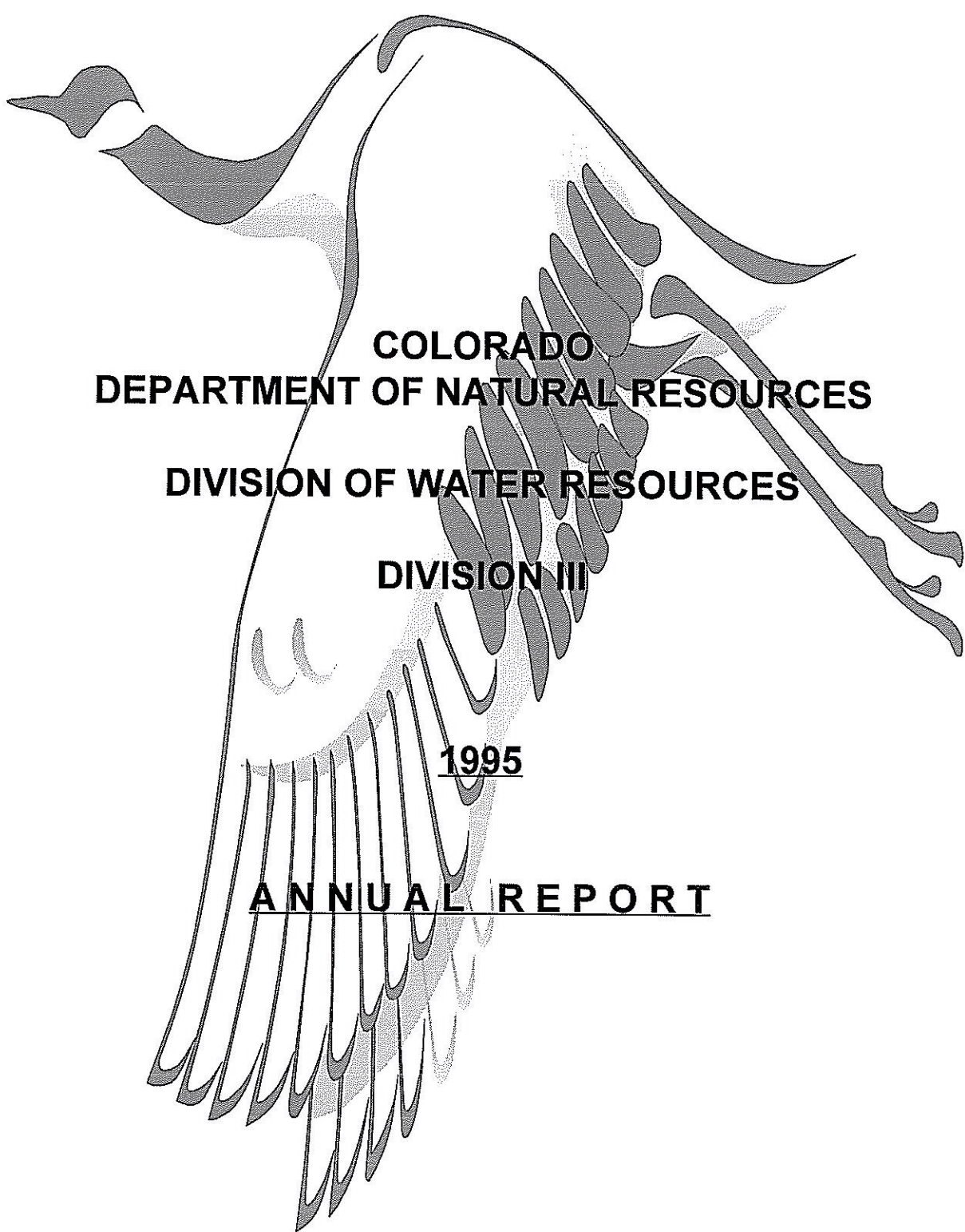
I would like to express special thanks to the Division III staff, as well as you and your staff for the help and support in fulfilling the various responsibilities of water administration in our division.

Respectfully submitted,


Steven E. Vandiver, Division Engineer
Division III


Robert M. Plaska, Assistant Division Engineer
Division III

jb/annual.cvr



**COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES

DIVISION III

1995

ANNUAL REPORT

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I. WATER ADMINISTRATION

A. Current Water Year - 1995

1. Accomplishments

a. Water Administration

In 1995, water administration in the San Luis Valley ranked as one of the best years in recent history. The combination of a mild winter from a temperature standpoint, coupled with abundant snowfall resulted in an above average water supply for all the drainages in the Valley.

The year started out with a very mild January. The average temperature in Alamosa was 23.3 degrees Fahrenheit, which was 8.6 degrees Fahrenheit above the long term average. During this month the snowfall amounts in the western mountains was about 100 percent of average, and in the eastern mountains only about 50 percent of average. From February through April the moderate temperatures prevailed, but the snowfall amounts continued to increase. In April, one of our snowiest months, precipitation ranged from 150 to 200 percent of average throughout the mountains around the Valley.

As should be expected, the runoff forecasts also increased drastically over the February to May time frame. The February 1 forecasts ranged from 93 percent of average for La Jara Creek to 152 percent of average for Culebra Creek in San Luis. By May 1, these forecasts had increased to a low of 132 percent of average on Saguache Creek to a high of 193 percent of average on Trinchera Creek. This is the first time in

many years that all of the drainages in the Valley benefited from an above average water supply.

As the runoff season started, it became apparent that the forecasts were accurate. There was plenty of water waiting to come down off the mountains. By the beginning of May, the focus had shifted from delight over the very good snowpack to concerns over potential flooding. There were several drainages which were of concern, including the Conejos River, Culebra Creek, the Alamosa River, and the Rio Grande. Luckily, the mild temperatures which had accompanied winter became below average temperatures in April and May and helped to delay the snow melt and extend the runoff season.

The protracted runoff eased the flooding dangers, although some minor flooding did take place, and also provided an extended diversion season for many junior priorities. At some point in time during the runoff season, all water rights on all the drainages were in priority and able to divert water. At the same time, all the reservoirs in the Valley were able to fill or substantially increase their storage. Rio Grande Reservoir spilling for 43 days is a prime example of the unusual year. The flooding that did occur was a result of unusual rainfall events in the middle of the runoff; one on Father's Day and one before the 4th of July weekend. Significant hail also occurred in some areas. This was truly a year to remember, especially when viewed with the fact that there was no Rio Grande Compact obligation.

1. Rio Grande Compact

As 1995 started, there were high hopes that a spill of Project

storage could be achieved and eliminate Colorado's obligation for the year. At the start of the year there was 2,173,730 acre feet of Project storage which included combined credit for Colorado and New Mexico of 151,000 acre feet. Although the forecasted runoff looked good at the start of the year, by the time the April 1 forecast was released there was no doubt that a spill would occur; the only question was when it would happen.

Of the total credit water in Elephant Butte as of January 1, 1995, Colorado's share amounted to 44,200 acre feet. Project storage filled in late May and excess water began to be released on May 31, 1995, and a spill was declared. Excess releases continued for 65 days, totalling 24,500 acre-feet of usable water and all the Colorado and New Mexico credit water. The large volume of excess releases caused by the above average runoff in Colorado and northern New Mexico resulted in all the credit water of both states being spilled. Colorado will start 1996 with a zero balance in Elephant Butte Reservoir.

Because of the high runoff forecasts and the anticipated spill, no curtailments were set for either the Conejos River or the Rio Grande. As soon as the ditches were ready to divert water, they could take all they were entitled to based solely on the physical supply and the priority system.

The Closed Basin Project once again was not used at full production because of the fact of the spill occurring. The allocation was set at a 60/40 percentage by the Allocation Committee for the water that did reach the river in 1995. A total of 10,180 acre feet of creditable water reached the river and was split according to that allocation. The Project production was reduced on March 15, 1995, because water

was no longer needed for Compact purposes and only Operation and Maintenance and mitigation water was produced through the end of the year. Because of the abnormally warm fall and early winter, those reduced flows were able to be sustained until late December.

With a spill behind us and no Compact obligation for the year, the administration of the main rivers shifted to maximizing the utilization of the resource within Colorado. While the extended runoff period helped the ditches by prolonging the period of time they could divert, the lack of significant upstream storage facilities once again resulted in the inability to control flows in excess of demand. With the ditches taking all they could and with no curtailments, over 123,000 acre feet of water flowed past Alamosa in June and July heading for New Mexico. Combined with flows out of the Conejos system and with return flows below Alamosa, the flow leaving Colorado at the Lobatos gage totaled 305,100 acre feet for these two months. Even if a spill had not occurred, Colorado would have met its delivery obligation for 1995 without imposing a curtailment on either the Rio Grande or the Conejos River.

Without a Compact obligation, winter recharge began on November 1, 1995. All of the six ditches on the Rio Grande which could participate under the winter recharge decree diverted water. Several other ditches also took water after the others were satisfied. A total of 22,900 acre feet were diverted in November and December.

2. Closed Basin Project

As in the previous year, the Closed Basin Project was not

operated at full capacity. At the beginning of the year, the Project was delivering about 50 cfs to the Rio Grande. This discharge rate continued until March 13, 1995. On that date, the Closed Basin Operating Committee met and decided to reduce the operation of the Project to a minimum level in anticipation of a spill under the Rio Grande Compact. Project pumping was reduced to a maintenance level which would provide mitigation water to the Blanca Wildlife Habitat Area and the Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge. Deliveries were also made to San Luis Lake to maintain the lake level and hold TDS concentrations within acceptable limits.

Deliveries during 1995 were:

2,700 acre feet	Blanca Wildlife Habitat Area
4,500 acre feet	Alamosa National Wildlife Refuge
14,140 acre feet	Rio Grande
1,531 acre feet	Delivered to San Luis Lake
3,366 acre feet	Pumped From San Luis Lake

In addition to the water delivered to San Luis Lake by the Project there was also considerable inflow from Sand and Big Spring Creeks.

Prior to the decision to reduce deliveries to the Rio Grande, the water quality of the discharge to the river easily met the TDS limits.

3. Reservoirs

Because of the above average runoff, all the reservoirs in Division III were able to fill or pick up substantial storage. Several reservoirs pre-evacuated storage in order to have space available during the runoff to help minimize the flooding potential.

Platoro Reservoir, on the Conejos River, went into flood control operations in early April. Based on the runoff forecast, releases from the reservoir started on April 11, 1995. By May 10, 1995, approximately 18,500 acre feet of storage had been released in order to comply with flood control operating procedures of the US Army Corps of Engineers. During the course of the runoff season, all of this storage was recaptured, plus the reservoir was able to fill to its maximum conservation pool of 53,571 acre feet. In fact, it was necessary to encroach into the flood pool a few hundred acre feet.

In anticipation of the high runoff, Rio Grande and Terrace Reservoirs also pre-released storage. Rio Grande Reservoir released about 11,200 acre feet of water and was down to 9,330 acre feet of storage at the end of May. A large portion of the water released was diverted at the Farmers Union Canal headgate. By July 7, 1995, Rio Grande Reservoir had filled to its maximum capacity of 51,113 acre feet and began spilling. Spill continued for a total of 43 days.

Terrace Reservoir, on the Alamosa River, pre-released about 2,085 acre feet. The Terrace Irrigation Company had agreed to voluntarily pre-release in order to try and provide some flood protection to downstream property. The Reservoir has no flood control pool or obligation to provide for flood control operations. By June 11, the Reservoir had been pulled down to a content of 10,410 acre feet. The peak inflow to the Reservoir occurred on June 15 and by June 19 Terrace Reservoir had filled to its restricted level of 13,812 acre feet.

While many of the other small reservoirs in the Valley also filled, two which were watched with some concern were Continental and Sanchez Reservoirs.

Continental, which has a storage restriction because of seepage on the downstream face of the dam, was allowed to fill above its restricted level to perform an Engineering evaluation. There were no apparent problems while the Reservoir was above the restricted level. Sanchez Reservoir, which had its storage restriction lifted in 1994, filled to a level of 57,800 acre feet, which was the second highest storage level in history. It also exhibited no problem.

4. Stream Administration

With the abundant runoff on all the drainages in the Valley, the early season administrative problems focused on how to get rid of excess water. Minor flooding occurred on the Rio Grande, the Alamosa River, Saguache Creek, the San Antonio River, and Trinchera Creek, as well as on other minor streams. Much of the Water Commissioners' time was spent keeping local officials and water users informed of what was happening. The Alamosa office was in daily communication with the Emergency Preparedness personnel and local law enforcement agencies. Happily, no major flooding events occurred.

As the runoff flow subsided, a more normal day-to-day operation took over in all the districts. The high stream flow allowed for ample water for all ditches. As the streamflows dropped, the junior priorities were shut off and administration returned to the priority system. Apart from the usual local water disputes the rest of the irrigation season was pretty uneventful. As surface water supplies diminished, the farms with wells used them to finish up the season.

On the Conejos River, direct flow rights for senior ditches were once again partially stored in Platoro Reservoir. This was the fifth year of this program, run in cooperation with this office. This year approximately 6,663 acre feet of senior direct flow rights were stored in the reservoir for later release back to the ditches. This program has proven to be very beneficial and the Conejos Water Conservancy District hopes to have the program decreed by the Water Court in 1996.

5. Water Court

The Water Court activity for 1995 was relatively uneventful. A total of 47 cases were filed in the Division III Water Court for the year. There were 51 decrees entered by the Court, and as of January 1, 1996, 79 cases remain pending. A breakdown of the Court activity is contained in Appendix A.

The change in the operation of the Water Court, combining administrative functions with the District and County Courts, has caused some additional workload for Division III personnel. It appears we are seeing more people who are seeking help in filing their applications to Water Court. Many of the questions we are asked were handled by the Clerk of the Water Court in the past. Now that the administrative structure has changed, it appears we have inherited some additional work by default. Also, communications between our office and the Water Court do not seem as good as they were before the restructuring. We are working to identify areas that need improvement and hope that this situation is temporary and can be easily fixed.

A major change took place in the Water Court this year when George Woodard retired as the Water Referee for Division III. Mr. Woodard had served

as Referee for 6 years. Prior to his appointment to the Water Court, Mr. Woodard had a private practice in the Valley and practiced water law for several decades.

The new Referee is William Martinez, a local attorney. Mr. Martinez served as the Deputy Water Referee under Mr. Woodard. Mr. Martinez was appointed as the Water Referee on January 1, 1995. To date, we have had a very good working relationship with the new Referee and look forward to working with him in the future.

b. Dam Safety

Dam safety inspections in Division III were conducted by Frank Kugel, the Dam Safety Field Engineer shared with Division VII. Three dams were repaired, with one repair resulting in removal of a zero storage restriction. Thirty-three dams had annual safety inspections performed by the Field Engineer. An additional eleven dams were observed by the Water Commissioners.

An outlet sliplining project was completed at Alberta Park Dam. This structure is a 32-foot high Class II dam located on Pass Creek in District 20. The owner, the Colorado Division of Wildlife, had originally attempted to slipline the outlet conduit in 1983. Construction problems forced them to abandon the project after only 52 feet of the 180-foot long HDPE liner had been pulled. The liner was cut off and left ungrouted. Construction in October 1995 removed the partial liner using a remote cutting device. A cast-in-place liner was then installed. This procedure used a resin-impregnated "sock", which was cured with heated water. The resulting liner conformed to the existing conduit interior, eliminating the need for grouting. Hydraulic characteristics of the newly lined

conduit are such that outlet capacity was increased despite a nominal decrease in the effective pipe diameter.

Wee Ruby Dam also benefitted from an outlet restoration project in 1995. This Class III dam in District 20 had a zero storage restriction imposed due to a perforated CMP outlet. Construction progress was hampered by difficult site access. The dam was four miles and two thousand vertical feet from the nearest road. Approval was finally granted by the US Forest Service allowing the contractor to bulldoze a temporary access road to the site. The dam was breached and a 15-inch diameter PVC outlet installed.

c. Hydrographic Program

1. Duties

The hydrographic branch has the responsibility of tracking and recording the stream flows in the San Luis Valley of Colorado. This includes the Rio Grande and Conejos Rivers and their tributaries, along with those streams tributary to the Closed Basin. The branch operates, works records, or maintains equipment for 46 gaging stations in and around the Valley, as well as operating eight trans-mountain diversions that bring water into the Valley from other basins. Thirty-eight of these stations are equipped with satellite monitoring equipment that relay information to our office every four hours. A water-year record (October 1 through September 30) of daily flows is developed for 43 of the stations. In addition, a calendar-year record is developed for 19 of the stations.

Eight of the stations operated by the branch are Rio Grande Compact stations. The Rio Grande Compact governs the apportionment of Rio Grande

and Conejos River flows to Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico. These eight Compact stations are operated under Compact guidelines and are used to determine the amount of water to which Colorado is entitled.

2. Closed Basin

The Division of Water Resources, Division III, continued its work with the US Bureau of Reclamation under the cooperative agreement regarding the collection of hydrologic data on the Closed Basin Project. This Project's main purpose is to deliver ground water to the Rio Grande to aid in Colorado's Compact delivery to downstream states. The Division of Water Resources collects and compiles streamflow data at many sites throughout the Project. Division personnel also assist the Bureau of Reclamation in identifying and addressing problems and concerns related to the Project.

3. Construction Projects

The hydrographic staff was involved in several construction projects this year, in addition to dealing with the high water and problems that it caused.

A new bank operated cableway was erected at the La Jara Creek near Capulin station and a new A-frame was installed for the cableway at the Conejos River below Platoro Reservoir station. Also, we have been working closely with Conejos County in the replacement of the cableway at the Conejos River near Mogote station.

Construction or rehabilitation was performed at the Rio Grande at the County Line, Kerber Creek near Villa Grove, and North Crestone Creek near Crestone stations before and/or during the very high water periods in order to safeguard

the stations and to provide more accurate records.

Various smaller construction projects were also performed at several stations.

4. Satellite Monitoring Repair Facility

The Satellite Monitoring System Repair Facility in Division III is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and calibration of all electronic data collection and telemetry equipment in Divisions III, IV, and VII. The facility provides technical support and assistance to field engineers and technicians in these divisions for system installation, field maintenance, and modifications. Approximately 30 percent of one full-time position is spent operating the facility.

In addition to the everyday repair and maintenance duties, several other functions were performed by the facility. In Division III, one state owned Satellite Monitoring System was installed at the Rio Grande River near Cerro, New Mexico. The US Geological Survey discontinued operation of this gaging station and the data is vital for winter estimation at Rio Grande near Lobatos. A system owned by the Great Sand Dunes National Monument was installed on Medano Creek at the Great Sand Dunes. Also, fourteen existing state owned systems were upgraded with Sutron 8200A data collection platforms and SE8500 shaft encoders.

Two trips were made to Division IV to troubleshoot and repair various ongoing and intermittent problems at several stations. In Division VII, two state-owned Systems were installed and interfaced with existing electronics in the Dolores Project and several existing systems were visited for maintenance and repair.

d. **Ground Water and Well Permitting**

In 1995, the Division III staff processed over 425 well permit applications. This was an increase of 3.7 percent from 1994. Our staff also performed about 125 field inspections which was approximately the same as the previous year.

The staff continued to spend a considerable amount of time investigating potential expansion of use questions. Old wells which have had little or no historic use are being refurbished with the hope of supplying a full water supply to new sprinklers. We have tried to discourage this practice as much as possible and have recommended that the owners of such wells may want to consider alternative methods of supplying water to their land. If it can be shown that the well was historically used, we have allowed the wells to be rehabilitated and put back into operation for their permitted purposes. Many of these old wells which have no apparent historic use will be prime candidates for the abandonment list to be published in the year 2000.

e. **Water Records and Information**

Two major events occurred this year in the areas of records and information. The first was the delivery of Water Commissioner Tool Kits to the lead Commissioners. In December, six tool kits were distributed. Previously we had received two computers, one each for the Districts 20 and 22 offices, which were also considered tool kits. With the new machines came updated software and training. This new equipment now makes it possible for each Commissioner to have water rights, wells, and historic diversion records readily accessible to them.

The second event was a change in how we processed our annual

diversion records. This year, instead of sending our records to Denver for copying, we copied them ourselves in the Division office. This resulted in the records being available to the public as soon as they were signed and copied. We believe this procedure made our records available about three months sooner. The one drawback to this procedure is trying to determine an equitable allocation of resources to offset additional cost to the Division office. While the extra costs incurred by the Division may be nominal, it does impose an additional burden on our operating budget.

Thanks go out to all our Water Commissioners for their efforts in getting our diversion records for 1995 entered and checked. Each year seems to go smoother and 1995 was no exception. All of the Commissioners entered their own diversion records in the computers and the checking process took less time than ever before.

A major effort was made this year to report on all the augmentation plans in Division III and to include all the municipal pumping information for the Valley. As time permitted, we also continued working on reviewing and updating our databases, especially ownership information for ditches and reservoirs.

f. Special Projects

During Calendar Year 1995, the Division III staff participated in many training opportunities. Much of the training received was provided by Division of Water Resources Personnel, resulting in training at very low cost. Dennis Felmlee provided several training sessions dealing with groundwater and well permitting concerns and also well inspection procedures. Kathi Daugherty and Deb Bell visited Division III and provided

our staff with several days worth of computer training with an emphasis on Windows applications.

Divisions III and VII were able to participate in a combined spring meeting in April 1995. The combined spring meeting was held in South Fork, Colorado. Several representatives from the Denver office gave presentations at the meeting concerning well inspections and computer support.

One other big ticket training item for Division III staff during 1995 was the CWOA Annual Meeting held in Alamosa and hosted by the Division III staff members of the CWOA. This meeting provided many employees of the Division of Water Resources from around the State with communications training.

The Division Engineer for Division III continues to serve as the Colorado Engineer Adviser for both the Rio Grande and Costilla Creek Compacts. While the Costilla Creek Compact did not take up much time in 1995, it was an extremely busy year for the Rio Grande Compact.

On the Costilla Creek Compact a full water supply was had by all users on the system. Costilla Reservoir spilled during the runoff. Now that Costilla Reservoir has been repaired, the water supply for both New Mexico and Colorado should be enhanced. We continue to struggle to get the reservoir accounting nailed down properly, but the Engineer Advisers are continuing to work to improve it as time goes along.

The Rio Grande Compact was a different matter in 1995. A most unlikely scenario is playing out wherein there has been a spill of Project storage six out of the last eleven years. There was no spill from 1942 to 1985 and now, at least for the last

decade, it seems to be the norm. The Commission determined a spill of usable water occurred May 31, 1995, after approximately 150,000 acre feet of credit water had spilled from storage. Additionally, about 25,000 acre feet of excess release of usable water was made before the spill stopped.

The accounting for spill, coordination with many agencies responsible for river management, endangered species issues, the Rio Grande Project Operation Study, and a Rio Grande operations model being done by five Federal agencies are all very time consuming issues which have created a real challenge in time management. The Division Engineer spends much time in New Mexico trying to protect Colorado's interest in the Basin. These issues all remain active and will continue to be for some time.

Staff from Division III continued to be involved in the Rio Grande National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) program. This program is intended to gather baseline information about the surface and ground water quality for the Rio Grande Basin from the headwaters down to El Paso, Texas. After five years of program startup and intensive field investigations, the program is now moving into a low-level maintenance and report writing phase. As a result, Division personnel had little involvement in 1995 with the NAWQA program.

Another special project which did not see much activity this year was the recharge program being conducted by the San Luis valley Water Conservancy District. While substantial work was done on this project over the last few years, the efforts of the District were focused in other areas in 1995. We hope that this very important project will see more activity in 1996.

While not a special project, one of the most special events of the year for us is the selection of the Water Commissioner of the Year at our Fall Meeting. For 1995, the Water Commissioner of the Year was Joe McCann, the deputy in Water District 21. Joe is responsible for administering the ditches on the upper reaches of the Alamosa River and La Jara Creek. He also has responsibility for the two reservoirs in the District. In addition to his regular duties, Joe has volunteered to serve on the Alamosa River Watershed Committee and on the Summitville Technical Advisory Group. Joe has done an exemplary job since joining the Division in April 1992. Although Joe has the least number of man-months of any of our part-time Commissioners, he is a very dedicated and conscientious employee.

Two other awards were given out at our Fall Meeting. The first was given to Paul Pickett as the Ditch Superintendent of the Year. Paul manages the Terrace Irrigation Company, located on the Alamosa River, as well as being responsible for Terrace Reservoir. Paul is a very dedicated employee of the Terrace Company and has always worked very closely with our Commissioners to help make administration on the Alamosa River as easy as possible. We greatly appreciate Paul's efforts and help.

The second award, which was for Water Manager of the Year, went to Bill Kopfman. Bill is the President of the Rio Grande Water Users Association and also the President of the San Luis Valley Irrigation District. Bill has been very active in the Valley over the years when it comes to water issues. His support has helped resolve many issues on the mainstem of the Rio Grande without resorting to litigation. He has been a friend to the Division and we were very happy to recognize his efforts to help solve the

difficult problems that the Valley faces.

2. Water Issues

With the abundant runoff which we experienced this year, it seems that many of the issues we normally encounter did not occur. Still, there were many concerns which needed to be dealt with.

One of the big ongoing issues in the Division is the lawsuit filed against our office by the Trinchera Irrigation Company in late 1994. We fully anticipated that the lawsuit would be actively litigated in 1995. As it turned out, except for a series of depositions of the Trinchera Irrigation Company Board of Directors and of a couple of water users, nothing much happened this year. We understand that negotiations are continuing between the other parties in the case. Our position is that the administrative scheme on the Creek, that we have followed for many years, will continue until changed by mutual agreement or by order of the Water Court.

Another issue which is a carryover from late 1994 is the filing for an instream flow right on East Middle Creek, a tributary of Saguache Creek, by the US Forest Service. This filing caused a great deal of concern with both the State and other water user organizations around the State. The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) filed a statement of Opposition against the Forest Service application and cross-filed their own instream flow filing for the same stream segment. Negotiations are continuing between the parties to reach agreement on how the needs of each can be achieved while recognizing that by statute only the CWCB can apply for instream flow rights.

The disputes in District 26 over the administration of Saguache Creek,

which surfaced in 1994, did not occur in 1995. Certainly the big runoff helped, but we also took great pains to address the concerns raised by the water users. Many ditches were issued headgate orders and the tributaries of Saguache Creek were actively administered. It appears that the efforts expended this year were favorably received by the users and we will strive for continued vigilance in this area.

Direct flow storage on the Conejos and Rio Grande continue to be issues of concern. The Conejos Water Conservancy District has been working on getting a decree which would allow a portion of direct flow surface rights to be stored in Platoro Reservoir. Hydrosphere Resource Consultants, Incorporated, has been working on a computer model to support the District's application. We have met with Hydrosphere several times to discuss the results of the model and are hopeful that this case will be concluded in the near future.

Another major direct flow case was filed in 1995 by the Commonwealth Irrigation Company. This case deals with the Empire Canal on the Rio Grande. The Commonwealth wants to store part of their direct flow surface rights in Rio Grande Reservoir for use later in the irrigation season. The major objector in the case is the Rio Grande Canal. We have had several meetings this year with both parties trying to fashion terms and conditions which would prevent injury to other water rights, satisfy Rio Grande Compact concerns and allow the applicant to maximize the use of their water rights. As of the end of the year, negotiations on this case continued.

The participation of the Division Engineer on the Recovery Team of the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow took a considerable amount of time. There were several

meetings of the Recovery Team in 1995, most of them in Albuquerque, New Mexico. After a somewhat volatile start, subcommittees were formed to look at the various aspects of the plan. As of the end of the year, a draft biological report had been done, as well as the hydrology study. Work on the Recovery Plan will continue into 1996, when it is scheduled for completion.

Another major concern which started to be addressed this year was the investigation of the historical operation of the Districts in the lower Rio Grande. The CWCB authorized a \$75,000 study grant to examine the historical operations of Elephant Butte Irrigation District and the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1. The initial phase of the study was a scoping analysis to examine what areas to focus on in the main study phase. Besides the study grant from the CWCB, the Conejos Water Conservancy District, the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, and the Rio Grande Water Users Association also contributed money to help pay for the scoping portion of the analysis. In January 1996, the Division Engineer accompanied Duane Helton of Helton & Williamson on a trip to El Paso to see the lower end of the Rio Grande Project area. Based on information obtained during this trip, the main study is now being formulated.

As previously mentioned, Elephant Butte Reservoir spilled on May 31, 1995, relieving Colorado of any Compact obligations for the year. With the above average runoff, Elephant Butte remained near full for most of the year spawning hopes of an early spill in 1986. As the end of the year approached, reports began to reach our office that Texas might try to prevent a spill by starting diversions at an earlier than normal date. These reports were of great concern. Not only was the early season snowpack well below

normal, but the potential change in historic operations in the lower Rio Grande could have far reaching effects on Colorado. This situation requires continuing diligence on our part and is directly related to the Rio Grande Project Operations Study mentioned in the previous paragraph.

3. Involvement in the Water User Community

In 1995 we continued to try to expand our involvement in the water user community. We regularly attended the monthly meetings of the Conejos Water Conservancy District, the quarterly meetings of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District, and as many of the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District meetings as possible.

In addition to these regular board meetings, we participated in meetings with the Saguache Creek Water Users Association, and the Alamosa - La Jara Water Conservancy District. We also attended as many of the Rio Grande Water Users Association meetings as we were invited to.

We also kept involved by providing information to groups and the public through structured presentations. As an example, Dennis Felmlee spoke to various area realtors this past year explaining the types of well permits being issued in the Division and answering questions on the permitting process. In 1995, Steve Vandiver participated as a speaker at a meeting sponsored by the Conejos Water Conservancy District regarding water issues on the Conejos River, and the Rio Grande Headwaters Conference sponsored by the Rio Grande Water Conservancy District.

In keeping with the goals of our long range plan, we are encouraging our

Water Commissioners to attend water user meetings in their Districts. We are also striving to have one of our staff at every water conservancy and conservation district meeting, if possible.

In March, our staff put on a training seminar for ditch riders and superintendents. The seminar was intended to provide training and answer questions regarding administrative issues. Areas which were covered during this seminar included the Rio Grande Compact, duties of the hydrographic branch, responsibilities of the ditch riders, how to change recorder charts, and other relevant topics. About 50 people attended the seminar. We feel it was very well received and hope to repeat the presentation in the future.

In addition to dealing with the more traditional water user community, we find ourselves interacting with more groups each year. It seems we are regularly meeting with the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and environmental groups. Our involvement in these meetings was to provide factual information about the physical availability of water and the constraints that exist because of the statutes, court decrees, and the Rio Grande Compact.

4. Water Issues Not Addressed

Virtually all water issues that we were aware of which demanded attention were addressed at least in part during the year. Many of the items mentioned above in I.A.2., have not been completed and will be ongoing issues which will be addressed over a period of time. We intend to address all of these issues, but many are large and involved and will take some time to complete.

5. Workload Changes/Administration/Personnel Changes

There were no changes in our personnel or staffing this year. Table III-A is a listing of the personnel assigned to Division III and their work locations. Table III-B is a summary of the activities of the Division for the 1995 Calendar Year. Table III-C is a summary of the activities of the Division for the 1994-95 Fiscal Year.

One of the areas which continued to be of concern this year was the operating budget. As discussed in previous reports, our operating budget has been essentially the same for the last five years. While we did see an increase in mileage for Water Commissioners, this was offset by the elimination of SB200 funds for mileage associated with well inspections. As the costs of supplies, telephones, and postage continue to increase, our budget stays flat. We have been able to absorb these increases in the past by some cost savings associated with greater use of lease vehicles and prudent purchasing of office supplies. These areas of cost savings have now been exhausted. Hard decisions are going to have to be made in the future about how we operate.

To compound this situation, one of the recent technological advances is going to directly effect our operating budget. Along with the Water Commissioner tool kits came the costs associated with printer supplies and paper. The estimated cost to the Division for purchasing these supplies ranges from \$250 to \$500 per year. When these costs are added to the costs the Division has absorbed for the printer supplies in the Division office, the total costs are somewhere around \$1,000. These costs were handled by Technical Services, back in the days of dot matrix printers. Now, with laser and bubble jet printers, and the associated high costs of replacement cartridges, all of these costs

come out of our operating budget. We have done our best to live within our budget and will continue to look for areas of savings and ways to be more efficient. Hopefully, there are still some overlooked areas where cost savings can be found.

The bi-weekly timesheets continue to be an area of frustration for the Commissioners. Hopefully, with the distribution of the Water Commissioner tool kits and the programs developed by Division I to automate timesheets, this will be less of a problem in the future.

The continuing deterioration of our overtime hours is a very serious administrative problem. When our overtime funds were first allocated to Division III, they represented 55 percent of our request. Through reclassification of the Water Commissioner positions and anniversary increases, our ability to fund overtime continues to diminish. In Fiscal Year 1995 we were able to fund 1453 hours of overtime pay. For Fiscal Year 1996 we estimate that the available funds will cover 1300 overtime hours. This will continue to be a problem until additional funding can be obtained.

Our staff continues to work on updating our records and databases as time permits. We have an ongoing program to review and update the databases for the various Districts as well as reviewing our historic diversion records. Unfortunately these programs must be worked on within our available man power allocation. While progress is slow, we are moving ahead and will continue to do so.

B. Key objectives and goals

Key objectives and goals have been identified for the coming year. Many of those are the same as in the past years and they are as follows:

1. Administer the Rio Grande Compact in a manner that ensures Colorado obligations are met under the Compact and the entitlements of the Colorado users under the Compact are utilized fully. This is always a challenge in that delivery obligation is on a calendar year basis and the ability to predict what is going to happen with the river and the conditions downstream is quite difficult.

2. Improve the quality of our hydrographic and diversion records each year by identifying areas that need improvement and work in those areas to ensure that we are always improving our records and the ability of the public to continue to depend upon them. Meet all deadlines for the completion and submittal of final hydrographic records.

3. The efforts to coordinate with the water user groups and other agencies in many key areas will be undertaken at every opportunity. Issues such as endangered species, instream flows, special use permits, Compact administration and new decrees being granted by the Water Court requires that we work hand in hand with almost every other affected agency and group to be able to accomplish what is required of us.

4. Operate the Division III office in a manner that allows us to stay within our budget.

5. Employee training will be sought at every opportunity to ensure that our employees are trained to do their jobs and to allow them to experience other duties in which they may be interested, in order to be better and more well-informed employees.

6. Implementation of the Long Range Plan will take a great deal of planning and prioritization. The tasks that are required of the Division offices for 1995 will take time and a great deal of thought. Fitting those duties into our normal workload will be difficult. We

intend to start that process at our spring meeting to ensure that they can be completed as the timelines require.

7. Prepare the Division staff for the responsibilities and duties associated with well decentralization which will take place in Division III during 1996.

8. Continue to train the Water Commissioners in the use of the programs contained in the Water Commissioner tool kits, including the telecommunications capabilities.

9. Pursue the possibility of establishing an office in Saguache for the Water Commissioners in District 25 and 26.

C. Major Activities for 1996

Several activities are anticipated to effect the workload of the Division in the coming year. The participation of the Division Engineer on the Rio Grande Silvery Minnow Recovery Team will require an ever increasing amount of time as the Recovery Plan is prepared. Also, his participation in the Rio Grande Operations Study will require a great deal of time, including the possibility of additional trips to the El Paso area.

The Division III office is scheduled to assume some well permitting activities as part of the plan to decentralize groundwater permitting. Several of our staff will be receiving training in the permitting process and we will have to restructure part of our office operations in order to accommodate these new activities. We look forward to taking on these responsibilities since we believe the end result will be overall savings in time and greater customer satisfaction. Hopefully, the additional man months, which are part of the overall reallocation of resources association with the decentralization, will offset the

additional workload on our existing staff.

Another activity which could potentially affect our workload in 1996 is Stockman's Water Company. The Baca Grant was recently purchased by Mr. Gary Boyce. He has formed Stockman's Water Company with the intent of changing the water rights on the ranch and marketing the water. We fully expect that some type of application will be filed with the Water Court before the end of 1996. Depending on when an application is filed and what form the application takes, it could require a great deal of staff time and resources.

Perhaps the most imposing situation facing our office in 1996 is the very low snowpack which exists across the Division. As of this date, we are looking at a snowpack that is only about 62 percent of average. Unless we are lucky enough to experience late spring storms, the runoff season is going to be bleak. Associated with this much below average snowpack is the possibility of a much higher level of administration. We anticipate that many of the Water Commissioners will have additional travel miles and that their allocation of overtime hours will be stretched to the limit.

D. Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge all the efforts of my staff in 1995 to keep the office running smoothly and to serve the public. I want to thank each Water Commissioner for their dedication and service. They are the front line troops and seldom receive the recognition they so truly deserve.

I would also like to thank Jerri Baker for her diligent efforts to keep the Division

running smooth, Dennis Felmler for answering all those well related questions, Pat McDermott for handling our Water Court case review and Compact computations so competently, and Craig Cotten and the hydrographic staff for the excellent job they did with the field work and records, and Bob Plaska for keeping the “nuts and bolts” sorted out.

II. WATER ADMINISTRATION DATA SUMMARIES

A. Transmountain Diversion Summary - Inflows/Outflows

1. TRANSMOUNTAIN DIVERSION SUMMARY - INFLOWS

Recipient												
WD	ID	Name	Stream	10-Year Average		Current Year		Source				
				AF	Days	AF	Days	WD	ID	Stream		
20	N/A	Weminuche Pass Ditch	Weminuche	874	45	0	0	31	4,637	Rincon LaVaca		
20	N/A	Pine River	Weminuche	525	77	639	102	31	4,638	N.F. Los Pinos		
20	N/A	Williams Creek Squaw Pass	Squaw Creek	325	67	375	97	78	4,672	Williams Creek		
20	N/A	Tabor	Trib Clear Creek	874	146	1,242	143	62	774	Cebolla Creek		
20	N/A	Don LaFont #1 Ditch	Trib Red Mtn Creek	48	41	0	0	78	4,670	Trib Piedra River		
20	N/A	Don LaFont #2 Ditch	Trib Red Mtn Creek	249	84	38	20	78	4,671	Trib Piedra River		
20	N/A	Treasure Pass Ditch	S.F. Rio Grande	113	29	0	0	29	4,669	Wolf Creek		
26	N/A	Tarbell	Saguache Creek	140	25	68	15	28	4,656	Cochetopa Creek		

2. TRANSMOUNTAIN DIVERSION SUMMARY - OUTFLOWS

16	N/A	Hudson Branch Ditch	Huerfano	141	42	0	0	35	657	Medano
16	N/A	Medano Ditch	Huerfano	1,050	59	1,137	44	35	658	Medano

II. WATER ADMINISTRATION DATA SUMMARIES

B. Storage Water

RESERVOIR STORAGE SUMMARY
IRRIGATION YEAR - 1995

Amount in Storage (AF)										
WD	ID	RESERVOIR NAME	SOURCE STREAM	MINIMUM		MAXIMUM				
				AF	DATE	AF	DATE	AF	DATE	END OF YEAR
20	3532	Beaver Park	Beaver Creek	3,483	5/30/95	4,579	7/1/95	53,980	6/26/95	37,913
20	3554	Rio Grande	Rio Grande	8,946	11/01/94	24,701	7/21/95	16,080	6/18/95	6,746
20	3558	Santa Maria	North Clear Creek	3,083	11/01/94	13,330	7/8/95	7,210	6/13/95	4,750
20	3536	Continental	North Clear Creek	3,148	11/01/94	54,910	7/11/95	57,812	7/26/95	45,682
21	3583	Terrace	Alamosa River	4,785	10/31/95	3,166	11/01/94	13,067	7/3/95	6,115
21	3582	La Jara	La Jara Creek	2,836	4/3/95	2,205	11/01/94	6,202	6/30/95	4,390
22	3574	Platoro	Conejos River	19,828	5/21/95					
24	3576	Sanchez	Culebra Creek	34,847	11/01/94					
35	3529	Mt. Home	Trinchera Creek	3,166	11/01/94					
35	3530	Smith	Trinchera Creek	2,205	11/01/94					

II. WATER ADMINISTRATION DATA SUMMARIES

C. WATER DIVERSIONS

WATER DIVERSION SUMMARY
IRRIGATION YEAR -- 1995

WD	Structures Reporting		Others			To Irrigation					
	With Record	No Water Available	No Water Taken	No Information Available	Ditches and Reservoirs with No Record	Estimated Number of Water Commissioner Visits	Total Diversions -AF-	Total Diversions to Storage -AF-	Total Diversions -AF-	Number of Acres Irrigated	Average AF per Acre
20	334	1	45	45	173	7,897	866,093	18,754	813,920	340,290	2.39
21	97	0	5	1	19	4,867	248,519	12,740	195,713	59,118	3.31
22	123	0	19	8	42	5,491	330,360	15,420	304,776	122,080	2.50
24	73	0	8	10	4	2,920	117,315	36,255	80,148	36,021	2.23
25	63	4	36	45	47	959	67,925	0	66,260	18,334	3.61
26	90	2	59	18	108	1,227	52,548	0	52,548	21,000	2.50
27	36	3	8	5	18	1,022	23,325	0	21,276	5,300	4.01
35	84	2	59	15	15	4,220	123,799	18,684	81,238	23,808	3.41
Totals	900	12	239	147	426	28,603	1,829,884	101,853	1,615,879	625,951	

II. WATER ADMINISTRATION DATA SUMMARIES
D. WATER DIVERSION SUMMARIES FOR VARIOUS USES - IRRIGATION YEAR 1995

WD	TRANS-MOUNTAIN OUTFLOW	TRANS-BASIN OUTFLOW	MUNICIPAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	RECREATION	FISHERY	DOMESTIC & HOUSEHOLD	STOCK
20	0	32,451	7,417	289	0	0	1,407	65	248
21	0	0	0	0	582	218	0	0	0
22	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	7,312	0
24	0	0	646	0	266	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35	1,137	0	346	30	816	0	0	16	278
Total	1,137	32,451	9,409	319	1,664	218	1,407	7,393	526

WD	AUGMENTATION	EVAPORATION	GEO THERMAL	SNOW-MAKING	MINIMUM STREAMFLOW	POWER GENERATION	WILDLIFE	RECHARGE	OTHER
20	6,248	19	0	0	0	445	11,786	11,743	0
21	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	335	38,915
22	761	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,851
24	221	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,665
26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,049	0
35	572	0	0	0	0	0	0	589	20,096
Total	7,818	19	0	0	0	445	11,786	14,716	62,527

II. WATER ADMINISTRATION DATA SUMMARIES

E. RIVER CALLS

IRRIGATION YEAR - 95

District	Most Senior Priority Curtailed	Most Junior Priority Served	Calling Right in Spring
20 Rio Grande	#216A Rio Grande Canal	12/31/1991 Tres Rios No. 4	#216A Rio Grande Canal
21 La Jara	#6 Garcia Ditch No. 1	#1957-18 L.E. Shawcroft & Sons Ditch	#6 La Mita no. 2
21 Alamosa	#1 El Viejo Ditch	#113A San Jose Ditch No. 2	#1 El Viejo Ditch
22 Conejos	#1 Guadalupe Main	12/31/1974 Platoro Reservoir	#13 San Rafael Ditch
22 San Antonio	#7 Los Pinos Ditch	All Rights	#24 Rincones
24 Culebra	No Curtailment	All Rights	#2 San Pedro Ditch
26 Saguache	#8 Russel Ditch No. 4	All Rights	#14 Hearn Ditch
27 LaGarita	#4 Home Ditch 1	12/31/1988 Juan Trujillo Ditch	#14 Biedell Ditch No. 10
27 Carnero	#12 Holland Ditch	12/31/1988 Wadsworth Overflow Ditch	#28 Green Ditch No. 1
35 Trinchera and Tributaries	#9 Trinchera Highline Canal	#99 Bryant Ditch	#70 Indian Creek Ditch

Because of the idiosyncrasies of the administration scheme in District 25, no such information could be obtained which made sense.

II. WATER ADMINISTRATION DATA SUMMARIES

F. Compact Administration

1995 RIO GRANDE COMPACT REPORT

Preliminary Figures

1. Adjusted Rio Grande Index 830,600 a.f.
 *Adjusted Rio Grande Delivery 290,600 a.f.
 Required Rio Grande Delivery 273,400 a.f.
 (Less 5,000 a.f. per agreement)

2. Adjusted Combined Conejos Index 469,100 a.f.
 **Adjusted Conejos Delivery 237,100 a.f.
 Required Conejos Delivery 244,600 a.f.
 (Less 5,000 a.f. per agreement)

3. ***Total Delivery at Lobatos 527,900 a.f.
 Total Required Delivery at Lobatos 518,000 a.f.
 [Less 10,000 af (See Compact)]
 Margin N/A
 As a result of the spill at Elephant Butte Reservoir May 31, 1995, no
 Compact obligation is required for 1995.

4. Rio Grande Curtailment

Delivery Target	% of Index	Estimated Curtailment of Ditches	% of Index
January 1 - March 5	100	January 1 - March 5	100
March 6 - May 31	15	March 6 - December 31	0
June 1 - December 31	0		

5. Conejos Curtailment

Delivery Target	% of Index	Estimated Curtailment of Ditches	% of Index
January 1 - March 31	100	January 1 - March 31	100
April 1 - May 31	40	April 1 - December 31	0
June 1 - December 31	0		

*Includes 6,108 a.f. of the creditable Closed Basin Project production.

**Includes 4,072 a.f. of the creditable Closed Basin Project production.

***Includes all the creditable Closed Basin Project production (10,180 a.f.)

III. OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND WORKLOAD MEASURES
A. PERSONNEL

1995
 DIVISION III

Office Staff

Steven E. Vandiver	Division Engineer Professional Engineer IV
Robert M. Plaska	Assistant Division Engineer Professional Engineer III
Jerri L. Baker	Administrative Assistant III
Patrick J. McDermott	Engineer-in-Training II
Craig Cotten	Engineer-in-Training II
Scott Veneman	Engr/Physical Science Tech II
Dennis Feilmlee	Engr/Physical Science Tech II
Stanley Ditmars	Engr/Physical Science Tech I

Water Commissioners and Deputies

Steve Baer	Engr/Physical Science Tech III, District 20
Ben Cannon	Engr/Physical Science Tech II, District 20
Perry Alspaugh	Engr/Physical Science Tech II, Districts 20/27
Jim Sellers	Engr/Physical Science Tech II, District 21
Joe McCann	Engr/Physical Science Assistant II, District 21
Paul Clark	Engr/Physical Science Tech III, District 22
Jim Horton	Engr/Physical Science Tech II, District 22
Charlie Quintana	Engr/Physical Science Tech II, District 24
Art Rivale	Engr/Physical Science Tech I, District 25
Timothy Lovato	Engr/Physical Science Tech I, District 26
Wayne Williams	Engr/Physical Science Tech II, District 35

III. OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND WORKLOAD MEASURES

B. ACTIVITY SUMMARY

WATER DIVISION III

1995 CALENDAR YEAR

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Professional and Technical Staff	7.00
Clerical Staff	1.00
Water Commissioner FTE (Full/Part-Time)	4/5.5
Decreed Surface Water Structures	2,516
Surface Rights Administered (water diverted this year)	900
Number of Decreed Wells	12,642
Consultations with Referee	195
Water Court Appearances	35
Meetings with Water Users	323
Meetings to Resolve Water Related Disputes	133
Contacts to Give Public Assistance on Water Matters	31,138

III. OFFICE ADMINISTRATION AND WORKLOAD MEASURES

C. ACTIVITY SUMMARY

WATER DIVISION III

1994-95 FISCAL YEAR

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Professional and Technical Staff	7.00
Clerical Staff	1.00
Water Commissioner FTE Assigned (Full/Part-time)	4/5.50
Decreed Surface Rights	*
Surface Rights Administered	*
Wells	*
Consultations with Referee	56
Water Court Appearances	21
Meetings with Water Users	354
Meetings to Resolve Water Related Disputes	66
Contacts to give Public Assistance on Water Matters	31,288

*See Calendar Year Activity Summary

APPENDIX A
WATER COURT
ACTIVITIES

1995

WATER COURT ACTIVITIES
January 1 Through December 31, 1995

Number of applications received from January 1, 1995, through December 31, 1995: 95CW01 through 95CW47.

Types of claims received:

25	Wells
21	Ditches
4	Springs
6	Reservoirs
2	Storage
1	Canal
1	Transmountain
1	Drain
5	Culverts
1	Pipeline
1	Instream
1	Creek
1	Siphon
<u>2</u>	<u>Ditches w/2 points of diversion (2 count)</u>
73	TOTAL

Number of cases terminated: 51

Number of cases pending as of December 31, 1995: 79