



Rio Grande Basin Water Plan

Rio Grande Basin Roundtable

Rio Grande Basin Water Plan

Special points of interest:

- *Agriculture*
- *Water Administration*
- *Environmental & Recreational*
- *Municipal and Industrial*
- *Education and Outreach*

Get Involved!

- 1) Attend the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable monthly meetings. These meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District office at 623 Fourth Street in Alamosa, Colorado.
- 2) Send your comments directly to us online at www.riograndewaterplan.com or mail to 623 4th Street, Alamosa, Co 81101
- 3) Attend any one of the BIP subcommittee meetings that can be found on the BIP website.

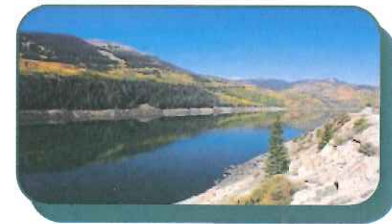
For more info contact

Tom Spezze at tom@dinatalewater.com.

The Rio Grande Basin Water Plan Draft has been developed by DiNatale Water Consultants, as a contractor for the Rio Grande Inter-basin Roundtable.

Using considerable input from a variety of constituents from across the basin. We estimate that a total of 2000 volunteer hours have gone into the draft process so far. The Draft Plan details past priorities and efforts of the Roundtable, known water needs, identified projects, and future priorities

for the Rio Grande Basin. The Plan incorporates consumptive and non-consumptive needs and emphasizes the importance of benefiting as many water uses as possible in each water project. The final Rio Grande Basin Water Plan is due to the Colorado Water Conservation Board in April of 2015.



Goals, Measureable Outcomes and Actions

The Rio Grande Basin encompasses approximately 8,000 square miles, including the San Luis Valley. This high mountain valley extends approximately 100 miles from north to south and 50 miles from east to west.

Water in the Rio Grande Basin is currently over appropriated (and has been since the 1890s). All of the waters of the Rio Grande and Conejos River and their tributaries are subject to the terms of the Rio Grande Compact, which means all

irrigators are continually subject to an average 30-40% curtailment.

The Valley's groundwater resources have been over drafted and the areas face depleted groundwater levels throughout much of the basin. By 2050, a total shortfall of 180,000 acre feet (AF) is expected, of which 160,000 AF is the agricultural groundwater shortage to be addressed by pending rules and regulations and fallow land via the Groundwater Sub-district.

The Basin's Water Plan will help address these issues. And will help define sets of goals that address five key areas:

- *Agriculture*
- *Water Administration*
- *Environmental and Recreational*
- *Municipal and Industrial*
- *Education and Outreach*

The goals are identified and measureable outcomes have been developed. Along with a portfolio of actions that have been established to help the basin reach its water sustainability goals.

Rio Grande Basin Implementation Plan Goals



The following are the Rio Grande Basin goals, each accompanied by a list of the subcommittees that identified the goal (Ag = Agriculture, M&I = Municipal and Industrial, Env&Rec = Environmental and Recreational, WAdm = Water Administration). The list also corresponds to the needs that are met by the goal.

1. Protect, preserve and/or restore the sustainability of the Rio Grande Basin watersheds by focusing on the watershed health and ecosystem function. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
2. Protect and preserve the doctrine of prior appropriation and vested water rights and fully utilize Colorado's compact entitlements as specified under the Rio Grande and Costilla Creek compacts. Ag, M&I, WAdm
3. Sustain the confined and unconfined aquifer in accordance with Senate Bill 04-222 and operate within the State Engineer's new Rules and Regulations for the San Luis Valley. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
4. Operate, maintain, rehabilitate and create necessary infrastructure to meet the Basin's long-term water needs, including storage. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
5. Manage water use to sustain optimal agricultural economy throughout the Basin's communities. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
6. Support the development of projects and methods that have multiple benefits for agricultural, municipal and industrial, and environmental and recreational water needs. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
7. Meet new demands for water, to the extent practicable, without impacting existing water rights and compact obligations. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
8. Establish a long-term education and outreach effort for water use and needs in San Luis Valley/Rio Grande Basin. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
9. Make progress toward meeting applicable water quality standards throughout the Basin. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec
10. Promote water management and administration practices that are adaptive, flexible and responsive to optimize multiple benefits. Ag, M&I, Env&Rec, WAdm
11. Protect, preserve and enhance terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitats throughout the Basin. Env&Rec
12. Conserve, restore and maintain wetlands and riparian areas for the benefit of a healthy watershed. Ag, Env&Rec
13. Work to establish active river flows throughout the year in cooperation with water users and administrators to restore and sustain ecological function of the rivers and floodplain habitats within the context of existing water rights and compact obligations. Env&Rec
14. Maintain and enhance water-dependent recreational activities. Env&Rec



[View the full Rio Grande Basin Water Implementation Plan](http://www.riograndewaterplan.com)

[On Our Website: www.riograndewaterplan.com](http://www.riograndewaterplan.com)

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www.coloradwaterplan.com



Agriculture

It is safe to say that Agriculture is a big deal in the Rio Grande Basin. It is for that reason the preservation of Agriculture's water is being addressed in Colorado's Water Plan. The Water Plan will leverage and incorporate nine years of work that has been done by Colorado's Basin Roundtables, the Inter Basin Compact Committee, and Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB).

The goal of the plan will be to determine how to implement water supply planning solutions that meet agriculture's future water needs. Meeting these needs will mean that we find solutions that sustain the confined and unconfined aquifer.

To get this done the basin will need to explore the implementation of alternative agriculture practices, as they become available. Such practices could include maintaining or increasing water storage, fallowing, cover crops and the improvement of soil health. All with the objective of maintaining the basin's vibrant agricultural economy.



Water Administration

"WHEN THE WELL IS DRY WE KNOW THE VALUE OF WATER"
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

If there is an issue that touches every resident in the San Luis Valley it is Aquifer Sustainability.

The basin's water is under constant curtailment as the basin works to meet Compact

Compliance. This is why water users in the Rio Grande Basin keep water inventory current and are taking steps to ensure reservoirs can store up to their constructed volumes.

The Rio Grande Basin Plan will

provide a variety of tools that all water administrators will use to preserve the social, cultural and economic resilience of the Rio Grande Basin.



Non-Consumptive Uses

The Basin Plan will provide a tool kit that will help our Non-Consumptive uses by keeping key species off the endangered

or threatened species list. The plan will insure adequate physical and legal water supply for fish, wildlife habitat and recreational uses.



Municipal and Industrial

The Rio Grande Basin Plan will help municipal uses meet the future demand reliably. The Basin Plan will help municipal uses meet the future demand reliably. The Basin Plan

to augment their water usage while improving delivery infrastructure on a long term basis. The plan will work to educate municipal

users, so that water restrictions will have minimal impact on local communities.

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