

Colorado Basin Roundtable Basin Implementation Plan

Water Resources Review Committee
August 21, 2014

Who we are

- Mesa County – senior ag users
- Garfield County – mid-river interests
- Pitkin County – headwaters, TMD location
- Eagle County – mid-river and headwaters (TMD)
- Summit County – headwaters, TMD location
- Grand County – headwaters, TMD location

Diversity in Planning: 7 Regions

- Grand County
- Summit County
- State Bridge
- Eagle River
- Middle Colorado
- Roaring Fork
- Grand Valley

What our plan is

- At its very root, our plan is a first-time aggregation of all the projects, ideas and conditional water rights out there
- Conditional water rights in the Basin total as much as 50,000 cfs, many filed for energy purposes
- The aggregation is not an attempt to argue against a TMD

Outreach

- 7 Town Halls
- 20 Roundtable Project Leadership Team discussions that included many new participants (Ag, Policy, Nonconsumptive, Water Providers)
- 30 interviews of water providers
- 45 presentations to elected officials
- Connecting with 900 citizens across seven regions in the Basin

Critical math

- TMDs already divert between 450,000 af and 600,000 af annually
- Existing and prospective agreements contemplate 140,000 af of more transmountain water
- That's like another TMD
- Projects include Eagle River MOU, Colorado Springs Blue Lakes, CRCA, Windy Gap, further use of Denver's system/Colo. River Cooperative Agreement

Critical math

- The Colorado River Water Supply and Demand Study predicts a gap between supply and demand of 3.2 maf by 2060
- 2000-2013 12.2 MAF @ Lee Ferry
- 1988-2007 13.1 MAF @ Lee Ferry
- Combined 34 yrs 12.7 MAF @ Lee Ferry
Includes 21 yrs of 11.7 MAF @ Lee Ferry

Chief findings

- An additional big TMD in the Basin would be damaging to a recreation-based economy, agriculture and the environment
- Overdevelopment of the river system poses a huge risk to water users on both sides of the Continental Divide in the face of current operational issues at Powell and Mead and a compact curtailment
- High conservation, reuse and linking water supply to land use are in the best interest of Colorado

Chief findings

- The Shoshone Hydro Plant is the basis for consistent, dependable river administration and streamflows. The Basin should investigate ways to protect it. (Current talks are underway under the aegis of the CRCA).
- The senior Grand Valley irrigation rights also provide flows and dependability.
- Recreational, environmental and water provider benefits stem from these suites of rights.

In-Basin Issues

- Currently an ag shortage of 100,000 af between crop demand and supplies
- M&I gap between 22,000 and 48,000
- Finding: water providers are interested in small, multi-purpose reservoirs above their intakes for drought and climate change protection and to provide environmental releases
- Agriculture is calling for storage (undefined)

In-Basin Issues

- Environmental concerns loom large, stemming chiefly from TNMD-influenced low flows but also from the legacy of hard-rock and dredge boat mining
- Some 75 projects are called out or are underway in headwaters
- The Roundtable and the Statewide Water Reserve Supply Accounts are funding nearly \$1.5 in completed and ongoing projects related to the environment and recreation

In-Basin Issues

- Finding: Roundtable will advocate for a Basinwide Streamflow Management Plan that employs the Flow Evaluation Tool
- Other solutions: Opportunistic projects and grants, the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement, Windy Gap Agreement and the Wild & Scenic Stakeholders Alternative Management Plan offer opportunities for environmental work

Six themes/findings

- Protect and restore healthy streams, rivers, lakes and riparian areas
- Sustain agriculture
- Secure safe drinking water
- Develop local water-conscious land use strategies
- Assure dependable basin administration
- Encourage a high level of basinwide conservation

Next Steps

- Refine consumptive gap using recent water-provider data received on deadline
- Quantify environmental and recreational flows and other parameters needed to support healthy eco systems
- Define the unique agricultural needs for sustaining the ag economy

Next Steps

- Continue Project Leadership Teams to focus on implementation strategies for supporting the identified top projects – emphasizing multi-purpose objectives
- Work on a funding structure for future projects and methods
- Coordinate with other West Slope Roundtables

Next Steps

- Coordinate with all other Roundtables for advocating of no-regrets solutions
- Monitor IBCC process for how it identifies a structure to address discussions about “New Supply”