

COLORADO WATER PLAN

COLLABORATIVE WATER MANAGEMENT

The Colorado Water Plan is built on decades of evolving water policy and collaboration. Our water challenges demand united focus and innovation. The institutional system governing how much water Colorado can use and consume within its boundaries is based on nine interstate compacts, two equitable apportionment decrees, and Colorado water law (called prior appropriation). State and local governments also govern water use and management with regulations, ordinances, and codes. These governing systems working together have allowed Colorado's water users and stakeholders to develop strong relationships across regional divides.

COLORADO WATER VALUES

The spirit of collaboration that underscores our four core values, will be more critical than ever to achieve the collective vision for Colorado's water future. These values include: 1) A productive economy that supports vibrant and sustainable cities, agriculture, recreation and tourism; 2) An efficient and effective water infrastructure system; 3) A strong environment with healthy watersheds, rivers, streams and wildlife; 4) An informed public with creative, forward-thinking solutions that are sustainable and resilient to changing conditions and result in strong, equitable communities that can adapt and thrive in the face of adversity.

The 2023 Water Plan organizes the values above into four action areas that connect to cities, farms, streams and people. These action areas organize the plan and direct readers to different water uses and planning needs. However, the four action areas are integrated, interdependent, and need equal support.

VIBRANT
Communities

counties, municipalities, utilities, cities, towns, businesses, large industries, large/ small urban and rural communities, etc.

ROBUST
Agriculture

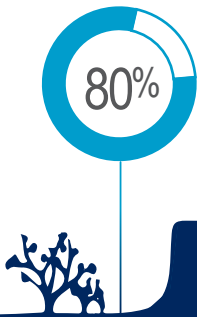
established crops and farms, local food, orchards, ranching, ditch companies, acequias, urban agriculture, etc.

THRIVING
Watersheds

environment and recreation, river health, watershed health, forest health, wildfire mitigation, wildlife and aquatic species protection, etc.

RESILIENT
Planning

climate adaptation, planning for climate extremes, embracing equity, diversity, and inclusivity, education, outreach and engagement, supportive government, etc.



WATER FALLS WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

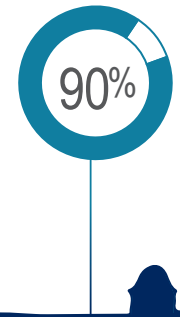
24.5 MILLION ACRES OF FORESTS AND 150 WATERSHED GROUPS

2 FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES
8 MAJOR RIVER BASINS
9 BASIN ROUNDTABLES
9 COMPACTS
64 COUNTIES
27 TUNNELS & DITCHES MOVE 500,000 ACRE-FEET OF WATER FROM WEST TO EAST EACH YEAR

WATER USE BY SECTOR

91% AGRICULTURE
7% MUNICIPALITIES
2% LARGE INDUSTRY

740 THOUSAND ACRE FOOT MUNICIPAL GAP AND OTHER RISKS FOR AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT



PEOPLE LIVE EAST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

5.8 MILLION PEOPLE AND 5% REDUCTION IN WATER USE DESPITE GROWTH

To learn more, visit engagecwcb.org



COLORADO
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Department of Natural Resources

THE WATER PLAN IS A BRIDGE TO ACTION

Meeting Colorado’s water challenges will take the whole state pulling together, with stakeholders working at the local level on projects and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) providing support through tools and grant funding through the Colorado Water Plan Grant Program. Actions in the Water Plan are divided between partner and agency actions as explained below.

50 While the list of partner actions is limitless, the Water Plan describes about 50 project ideas that could be supported by Water Plan grants.

PARTNER ACTIONS

- Increased personal conservation
- Starting a new water initiative/project
- Developing collaborative solutions

50 The Water Plan lists 50 actions CWCB and collaborating agencies will take to support local projects, conservation and wise-water development.

AGENCY ACTIONS

- Developing frameworks and convening groups
- Advancing research and science
- Creating support tools

WATER PLAN GRANTS HELP FUND PROJECTS

The legislature created the Water Plan Grant Program categories for CWCB to fund local multi-beneficial water projects.



Agriculture



Conservation & Land Use



Engagement & Innovation



Watershed Health & Recreation



Water Storage & Supply

COLORADO WATER PLAN TIMELINE

2015

Inaugural Water Plan Released

2017

Technical Advisory Groups Convened

2019

Basin Planning Group Convened
Technical Update Completed

2021

Project Database Developed
Water Plan Scoping Workshops

2022

Basin Plans Completed
Water Equity Task Force Concludes

Water Plan Draft Released for Comment

2023

Final Draft to CWCB Board

COMMENT. COMMIT. SHARE.

Visit engagewcb.org to read the plan and share your comments or provide input at one of four online listening sessions from 4 :00 - 6:00 p.m. on the following dates:

- July 27
- August 10
- September 1
- September 28

Commit to taking action to build a more water-secure future by submitting your idea for how to save water. Share a story of a water project that’s helping make Colorado more resilient to its water challenges. The top stories shared may be featured on CWCB’s website along with the final Water Plan!



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