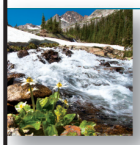
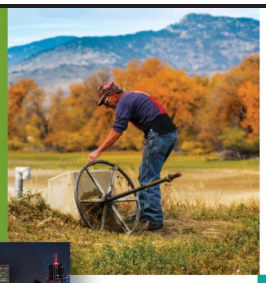
July 2015





COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

NEWS & UPDATES

Defining Success for Colorado's Water Plan

As we move into the final phase of development of Colorado's Water Plan, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) would like to express gratitude for the tens of thousands of people across the state who participated in the process. The high level of engagement during development of the plan and the monumental shift toward collaboration within the water community are reflected in the second draft of the plan. Although there's still more work to do, Colorado's ability to understand and confront the water supply gaps that exist at the local level is already improved. The draft plan explores how to make water laws and regulations more agile so that we can maximize limited water supplies for the benefit of agriculture, Colorado's cities and towns, the environment and recreation. The development process itself is proving successful, as outlined in the bullets below.

- Together we're creating a clear path forward and actionable next steps are apparent.
- The plan brings together work from water interests across the state on actions needed to secure Colorado's water future.
- The public is clearly engaged and their comments are reflected in the plan.
- Agencies are collaborating. State, local, federal, and private water interests and resources are aligning to better respond to changing conditions and support the values of the water plan.
- Some basin roundtables (Arkansas, Gunnison, South Platte/Metro, Yampa/White/Green) are already working to implement the Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs).

As the implementation phase draws near, it is important that we consider exactly how to continue to ensure measurable success. There are many components and actions detailed throughout the plan, and using these to measure success will be important in the coming years. However, it's also important that we continue to measure success across the entire plan in the coming years. Some elements of success can be gauged now or in the near future, and others will have to be determined over time. The list below presents just some of the questions that need to be considered as the plan moves forward.

- Do basin roundtable members believe the plan is an accurate reflection of the BIPs and Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC) recommendations?
- Are the basin roundtables making progress on the measurable outcomes set forth in the BIPs?
- Is funding as recommended in Colorado's Water Plan falling into place?
- Are the actions outlined in Chapter 10 of Colorado's Water Plan moving forward?
- Is this a plan/process that can continue to adapt and improve as circumstances change?
- Is public awareness and engagement on water issues improving?

The development of Colorado's Water Plan is just the first step toward successfully managing our water resources for future generations. Ultimately, Colorado's Water Plan will continue to succeed if it facilitates ongoing implementation of the projects and methods identified in the BIPs and the actions identified throughout the plan at the statewide, basin, and local level.

Final Comments due September 17, 2015

The CWCB will accept public comments through September 17, 2015 for consideration in the final version of Colorado's Water Plan. After the plan is finalized it will continue to be a living document that will be updated periodically in the future. Visit **www.coloradowaterplan.com** to learn more and submit your comments.

COLORADO'S WATER PLAN 2015 TIMELINE

(**CWP** = Colorado's Water Plan)

2015

2nd Draft CWP Released for Public Review
July 7

Final Public Comment Deadline
September 17

All comments received by this date will be considered in the final Colorado's Water Plan.

Final 2015 CWP Submitted to Governor by December 10, 2015

What Changed in the Second Draft of Colorado's Water Plan

The second draft of Colorado's Water Plan, released on July 7, 2015, reflects a significant collaborative effort to revise and enhance the first draft. We, the CWCB, worked with partners and stakeholder groups statewide, and considered over 24,000 public comments to put together the second draft of the plan. Details regarding the changes between the first and second drafts are outlined below. The final Colorado's Water Plan will be delivered to the Governor no later than December 10, 2015. For more information or to submit comments before the September 17th deadline, please visit **www.coloradowaterplan.com**.

HIGHLIGHTED CHANGES

Critical Action Plan

We turned Chapter 10, originally envisioned as a list of legislative recommendations, into a strategic action plan that summarizes all the critical actions. Chapter 10 specifies the methods by which the actions will be achieved, such as through legislation or changes in agency policies. Chapter 10 will also be used as a standalone document to guide future implementation of Colorado's Water Plan.

Basin Implementation Plans

We updated several sections of the plan based on the final BIPs. Within the final BIPs, many of the basin roundtables developed priority lists of projects or refined their pre-existing lists. We now have an in-depth and multifaceted suite of options for each basin. The direct result of this work is that we can close many of our identified water supply gaps strategically, while minimizing the negative impacts.

Municipal Water Conservation and Efficiency

We added a municipal and industrial conservation stretch goal to Section 6.3.1, which aims to responsibly reduce Colorado's projected 2050 municipal water demands by 400,000 acre-feet through active conservation. To support these efforts, several actions were added, such as the need to explore a tax credit for outdoor conservation practices, and to require integrated water resource planning in order to receive state support of an identified project or method.

Water Reuse

We expanded Section 6.3.2 to explore the need for regional reuse options and to clarify the regulatory environment. Additionally, we updated this section to incorporate the work of the Water Environment Research Foundation, which was funded by the CWCB.

Water and Land Use

We expanded the section on the integration of land use and water resources planning based on Senate Bill 15-008, public comment, updated BIPs, and the Colorado Water and Growth Dialogue. Section 6.3.3 also now includes content regarding the need for training on water and land use and the incorporation of land use practices into water conservation plans.

Environmental Resiliency

We incorporated environmental resiliency more fully into the plan and strengthened the discussion about stream management plans. Within the actions in Section 6.6, we identified the need for common metrics to measure the health and resiliency of watersheds, rivers and streams. We also added an explanation of the need to move forward with near-term projects and methods that address high priority environmental and recreational needs.

Agricultural Viability

We explored agricultural viability further in Sections 6.3.4 and 6.5. We added new actions to investigate opportunities for ditch-wide and regional planning, support for voluntary flow agreements that use water efficiency practices to increase environmental flows, establishment of an agriculture education and assistance program, and the development of an agricultural transfer evaluation.

Climate Change

We added more detail concerning climate change to Chapter 4 and additional actions to Sections 7.2, 6.5, and 6.6 to proactively identify and address regulatory barriers to climate adaptation and incorporate potential climate change effects into planning for projects and methods.

Groundwater Sustainability

In Chapter 4, we further described Colorado's groundwater resources and issues.

Permitting

We added an action item to Section 9.4 that calls for a series of lean events among state and federal agencies and stakeholders in order to improve the efficiency of the permitting process by eliminating duplication and eliminating redundant review efforts. We included clarification regarding the path to state endorsement, and content regarding the need to determine a lead state agency for each major category of issues related to water project permitting. The section explores the creation of a permitting handbook, and we added an action to ensure that state agencies will actively participate as cooperating agencies from the outset of the regulatory process.

Funding

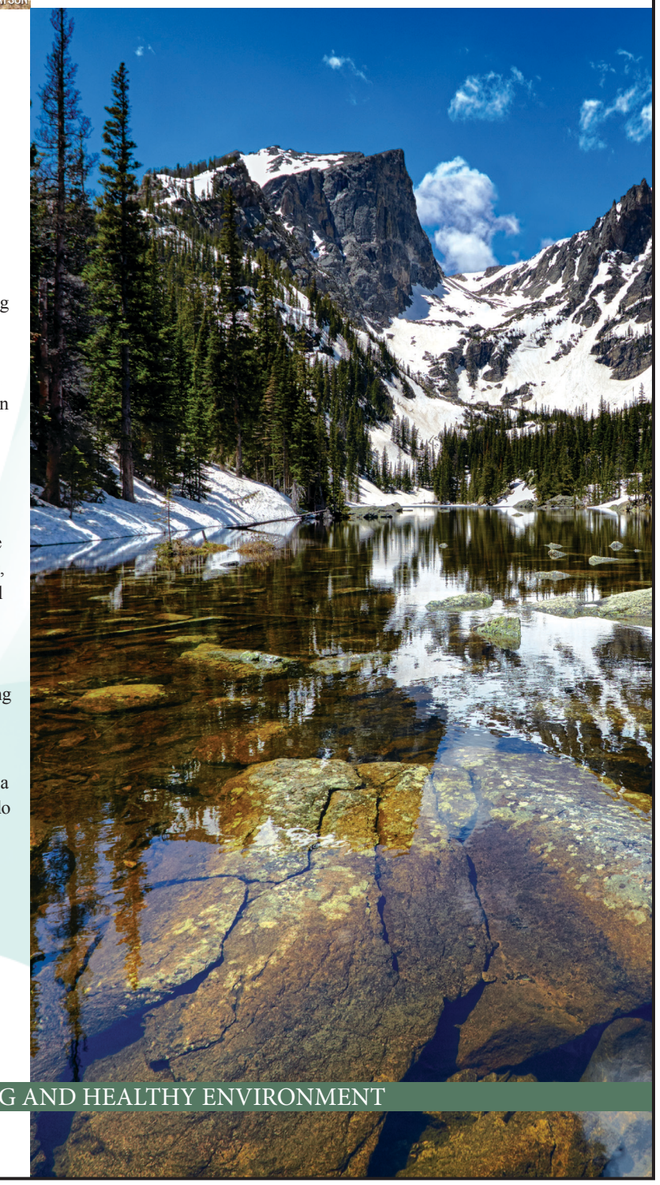
We updated Section 9.2 based off the work of the newly created Water Investment Funding Committee. The section now defines the need to explore a specific multi-purpose funding program that provides benefits to education, the Water Supply Reserve Account grant program, conservation, agricultural viability, ATMs, municipal and industrial projects through a guaranteed repayment fund, and environmental and recreational projects through green bonds. Additionally, we added opportunities to promote public-private partnerships. The Water Investment Funding Committee explored several funding mechanisms during revision of the draft plan and this work will continue.

Colorado River Collaborative Program

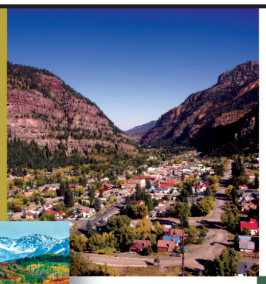
We added a new section within Section 9.1 that describes the need to initiate a program that seeks to prevent a compact deficit from occurring on the Colorado River System. Continued efforts on developing the Conceptual Framework are underway and will be incorporated into the final Colorado's Water Plan.

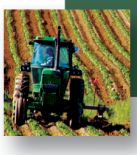
Outreach and Education Plan

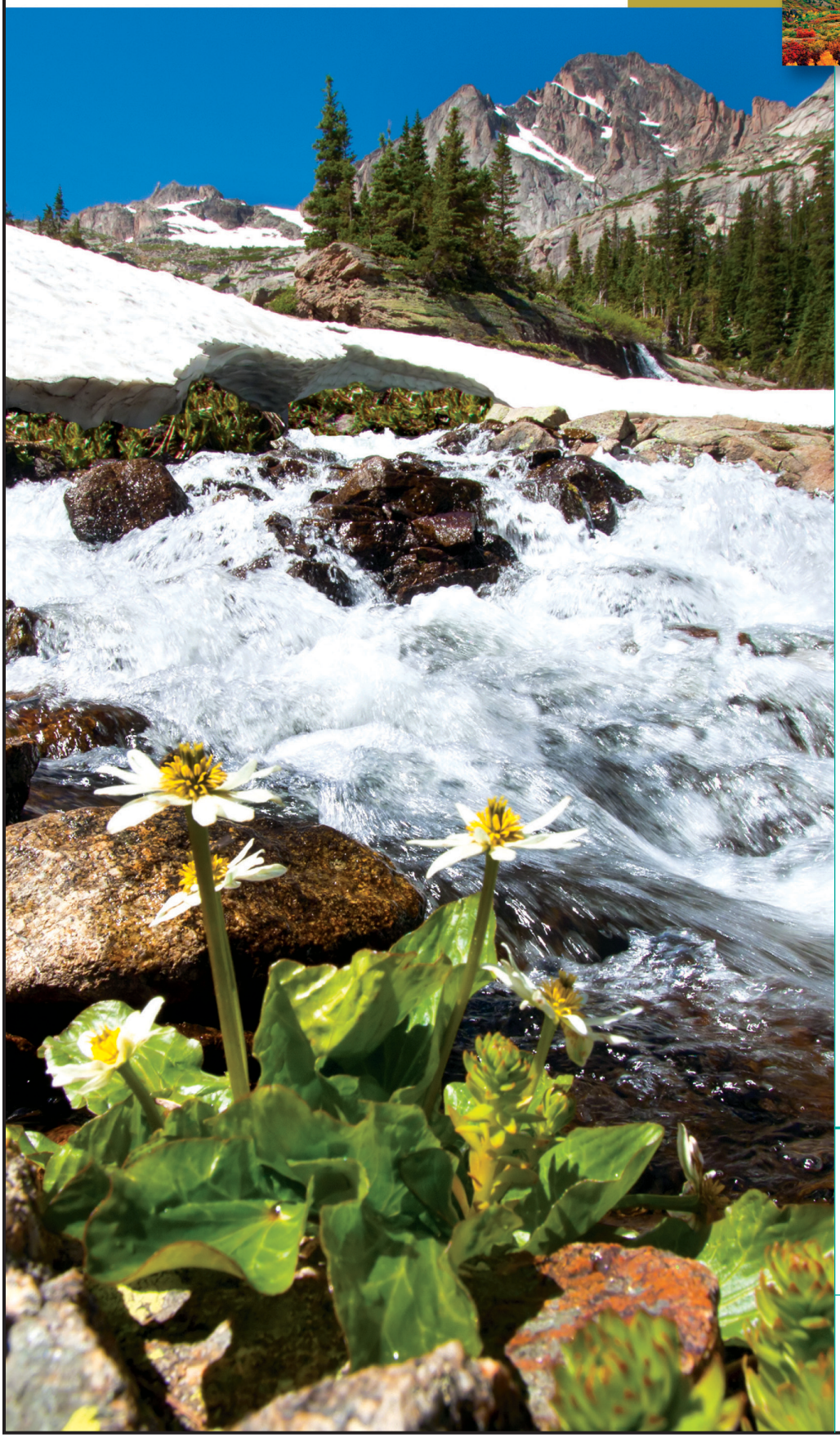
We revised and clarified the actions in Section 9.5 to include creation of a data-based water education plan. We also updated BIP information within this section to highlight key outreach and education strategies and actions employed by the basin roundtables, and the section now outlines long-range strategies for sustaining those activities statewide.



NEWS & UPDATES







Questions?

Contact us at cowaterplan@state.co.us and visit us online at www.coloradowaterplan.com.

Find Colorado's Water Plan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter — @COWaterPlan

COLORADO'S WATER PLAN

COLLABORATING ON COLORADO'S WATER FUTURE

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Department of Natural Resources