



## Clean Water

Clean water supports many of the activities important to Colorado's status as a highly desirable place to live and work. Water bodies are classified for designated uses according to national standards to protect drinking water supply, recreation, aquatic life, agriculture and wetlands under federal and state regulatory frameworks. Protecting and restoring water quality while balancing the competing demands on this limited resource for current and future generations is important for public health, the environment, the welfare of citizens and the economic well-being of Colorado.

Uranium and radium are radioactive metals that occur naturally in Colorado's mineral-rich rock, and can dissolve into groundwater wells used for drinking water. Long-term exposure to uranium and radium in drinking water can lead to cancer and may also cause toxic effects to the kidneys. The levels of these metals in drinking water exceeded health standards in 28 Colorado communities, making this the largest, most wide-spread health risk from drinking water in the state. The Clean Water Winnable Battle focuses on improving and protecting natural water bodies and ensuring residents have access to drinking water that meets health standards for uranium and radium.

**STATEWIDE GOAL: Protect all designated uses for water bodies and drinking water by attaining water quality standards and restoring impaired water quality to attainable standards.**

### STATE STRATEGIES:

**1. Improve water quality by expanding water body characterization, restoring impaired water bodies and maintaining water quality status with continued population growth.**

**Objective 1:** By 2019, expand water body characterization by increasing the number of streams/river miles assessed to 80 percent and lake/reservoir acres to 45 percent.

**Baseline:** 78 percent stream/river miles and 42 percent lake/reservoir acres assessed in 2012

**Objective 2:** By 2019, improve water quality by increasing the number of assessed water bodies that meet standards and support designated uses to 70 percent stream/river miles and 40 percent lakes/reservoirs.

**Baseline:** 63 percent stream/river miles and 28 percent lakes/reservoir acres in 2012

**Objective 3:** By 2019, restore impaired water bodies so that among those assessed, 15 percent of impaired stream/river miles and 15 percent of impaired lake/reservoir acres meet attainable standards.

**Baseline:** 9 percent stream/river miles and 9 percent lakes/reservoir acres in 2012

**Coordinating Agency:** CDPHE

**Partners in Implementation:** Federal, state, and local government agencies, performance partners such as permitted discharge facilities, local watershed groups, citizens, special interest groups.

**2. Work with public drinking water systems that do not meet standards for uranium or radium to assist with financing opportunities, install drinking water treatment processes or identify alternate drinking water sources.**

**Objective 1:** By 2016, increase the number of water systems that have received affordable financing (grants or subsidized loans) to resolve uranium or radium in their water supply to 16 systems serving 4,116 people.

**Baseline:** Three systems serving 1,066 people in 2014

**Coordinating agency:** CDPHE offers several grant programs to assist with capital construction for water related projects. In addition, CDPHE partners to offer a federal subsidized loan program for water-related capital improvements.

**Partners in implementation:** Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado Water Resources and Power Development authority, United State Department of Agriculture Rural Development

**Objective 2:** By 2020, decrease the number of people served by public drinking water system that are not in compliance with uranium or radium standards to 4,135 people served by 12 systems.

**2016 Target:** 5,000 people served by 19 systems

**Baseline:** 6,045 people served by 25 systems in 2014

**Partners in implementation:** CDPHE, communities with elevated uranium and radium levels in drinking water supplies, local and federal agencies supporting the Arkansas Valley Conduit that will bring fresh, clean water to affected areas.

**LOCAL STRATEGIES:**

Local public health agencies and community partners throughout Colorado have many efforts underway that contribute to clean water. The following are strategies for improving water quality chosen by local communities to address in local public health improvement plans; they do not represent all local efforts that contribute to clean water.

- Build local capacity for provision of environmental health services.
- Obtain, maintain, communicate and educate about water quality data.
- Promote local ordinance adoption to protect designated uses.
- Increase awareness and knowledge of drinking water safety and quality and well testing and increase the number of families who have their well tested.

Many communities have also developed storm water management plans to educate the public and minimize impacts to water quality from car washing, pharmaceutical and personal care products, household hazardous waste, construction sites, landscaping, pet waste, sewage, livestock, street sand and more. In addition, many communities are looking for ways to bolster their water supplies through water reuse and are identifying the potential water quality issues that need to be addressed with this strategy. Communities are also exploring the concept of green infrastructure for both wastewater treatment facilities and storm water best management practices. Finally, watershed and other interest groups are pursuing ways to reduce nonpoint source or diffuse sources of pollution such as runoff from agricultural fields or abandoned mines.