Food Grows Where Water Flows

The Drought in Colorado
- Colorado is experiencing a crisis in agriculture today due to a prolonged drought.

The Impacts on Agriculture
- The agri-business sector is a $16 billion industry in Colorado.
- Agriculture is more dependent on water than any other industry.

Conflict between groundwater users and surface owners
- Court rulings limiting the state engineers authority to manage the river
- Desire to get the maximum benefit from our water without upsetting our prior appropriations system
Possible Legislation that will affect ag & water

Bills that give the state engineer more authority to manage the river

Issues to look for affecting agriculture

Bills to forgive past depletions by ground water users

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Bills to restrict the movement of water in Colorado

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Impacts on Water

- Colorado’s population is growing dramatically, increasing the demand for more water in the urban centers.
- This increases the pressure to transfer more water out of agricultural uses to municipal uses.

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Colorado Must

- Protect existing water rights when interbasin water transfers occur
- Allow the free market system to work in the pricing of water.
Potential Statewide Water Development Opportunities

Develop unappropriated supplies. At least 450,000 to as much as 1.2 million acre-feet have been identified as new developable surface water supplies.

Opportunity #2

Develop alternatives for further funding, both private and public, for water project development.

Opportunity #3

Mitigate the purchase or lease of agricultural water rights for municipal & industrial use.

Opportunity #4

Encourage true conservation and carry out programs to educate the public and water user entities about the importance of water efficiency and the importance of water resource development to the state’s economy.

Opportunity #5

“Conservation means development as much as it does protection. I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.”

—President Theodore Roosevelt

Develop additional water supplies by supporting large and small water projects, wastewater reuse, and groundwater recharge programs.
Challenges to Water Supply Development

- Unpredictability of weather-related or catastrophic events
- Additional federal and state environmental regulations
- Exportation of water from the Western Slope to the Front Range

Population vs Water in Colorado

- Colorado Population (West Slope Population 11%, East Slope Population 89%)
- Colorado Water (East Slope Water 13%, West Slope Water 67%)

East Slope invites West Slope Cooperation

Fun Facts about TMD’s

- 12 major trans-mountain diversions remove 450,000 to 650,000 acre-feet/year from the Colorado River basin east of Glenwood Springs.
- 65% of all the surface water in Grand County is taken through the divide. May wind up being 85%.
- Denver Water is not the biggest TMD. NOWCD takes over twice as much water as Denver through the Adams’ Tunnel under RMNP.
- Denver Water’s Roberts Tunnel carries water over 23 miles underground – longer than the Channel between England and France

Regional Attempts to Stop Transfers

- Basin of origin
- Area of origin
- Water quality standards
- Claim that there is no water to appropriate
- County 1041 powers
Statewide legislative priorities for water
Finding ways to expand storage

- Building new projects
- Increasing capacities of existing storage
- Using closed basins for underground storage

All in an effort to keep Colorado's water in Colorado!

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Questions & Comments