



# RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER

VOL 2. ISSUE 1

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2018 Summer Tour Series

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, August 14, 2018  
Rio Grande Basin Tour  
Location & Time TBA

### OTHER:

SEPT. 8, 2018

CPAC Potato Festival  
Chapman Park, Monte Vista

SEPT. 15, 2018

RiGHT Headwaters Hoedown  
Cross Arrow Ranch, Conejos

PLEASE SEE THE LIST OF UPCOMING  
BASIN TOURS ON PG. 5!

## WELCOME!

For more information on the Rio Grande  
Basin Roundtable, visit [rgbrt.org](http://rgbrt.org)

### THE COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Written by Helen Smith  
Edited by Bethany Howell

The Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is the leading water policy agency in the State of Colorado. Established over 75 years ago by the Colorado Legislature through Senate Bill 106, the agency was tasked with providing direction on water policy issues.

With a staff of over 40 people, the CWCB oversees efforts to protect Colorado's rivers and streams, improve water conservation, implement flood mitigation, complete stream restoration and watershed protection, plan for droughts and state water supply management, and finance construction projects, in addition to working with other western states on the protection of Colorado's water apportionments.

The CWCB has played a key role in several major water policy initiatives. Two of the most notable efforts have been implementing the Water for the 21st Century Act and creating the Colorado Water Plan. Both initiatives have changed the landscape of water management in Colorado and are shaping the state's water future.

**THE WATER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY ACT** established the Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC). The purpose of the IBCC is as a forum to facilitate conversations among Colorado's river basins in order to address statewide water issues. The IBCC is made up of twenty-seven stakeholders who participate in their basin roundtables. The goal of the IBCC is to empower those living in the basins through locally driven decisions. The basin roundtables were also established to foster the local decision-making process to encourage citizen solutions. Each of the state's eight basins, along with the Denver-metropolitan area, have a roundtable that consists of designated members, at-large members, non-voting members, and agency representatives. The roundtable members work together to reach common goals and find needed solutions to water management issues.

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**THE COLORADO WATER PLAN** effort began with an Executive Order in 2013 from Governor John Hickenlooper, who noted that Colorado needed to have a plan to prepare for future water management and provide water for Colorado's rapidly growing population. The Basin Roundtables, IBCC, and CWCB Board and staff worked diligently to complete the plan by November of 2015. The Colorado Water Plan focuses on collaborative solutions, acknowledges that Colorado's water future will face bigger challenges than any one basin or entity can meet, and emphasizes that statewide cooperation will be needed to find viable solutions. The plan expresses a commitment to the preservation of Colorado values, which include thriving a productive economy, efficient and effective water infrastructure, thriving agriculture communities, healthy watersheds and rivers, and robust recreation opportunities. The CWCB Board and staff have made implementation of Colorado's Water Plan a top priority.

For decades, CWCB has taken a lead role in financing water projects across the state through both loans and grants. Some of those mechanisms include the Water Supply Reserve Fund, which funds projects brought forward through the roundtable process.

A new challenge for the CWCB is the statewide reduction in severance tax dollars. Severance taxes are the monies obtained through taxes on the oil and gas industry.

In addition to a lag in severance tax revenues, the State of Colorado is in the process of paying a settlement to British Petroleum (BP) resulting from a lawsuit in which the Court determined that BP had been over taxed. This has created a funding shortfall for many CWCB programs. The CWCB Board and staff have worked very hard to find ways to keep funding programs viable.

**At the January 2018 Board meeting, the Board recommended \$11 million from the CWCB construction fund be allocated to other programs such as the Colorado Water Plan Grant Program and Water Supply Reserve Fund for the fiscal year 2018-2019.**



(above) An acequia system in Costilla County

(below) Students from San Luis participate in an aquatic ecology workshop.



## **COLORADO WATER PLAN (CWP) GRANT PROGRAM**

Even in the face of revenue shortages, CWCB has developed a Colorado Water Plan (CWP) Grant program to assist in funding projects that support the goals of the Plan. The CWP funds can be used for both consumptive and non-consumptive water projects that make progress toward reaching the CWP's measurable objectives. Grants are available for the following project types:

**SUPPLY AND DEMAND GAP PROJECTS:** Multi-beneficial projects and projects identified in Basin Implementation Plans to address the water supply and demand gap.

**WATER STORAGE PROJECTS:** Projects that facilitate the development of additional storage, artificial recharge into aquifers, and dredging existing reservoirs to restore full decreed storage capacity.

**CONSERVATION & LAND USE PROJECTS:** Activities that implement long-term strategies for conservation, land use, and drought planning.

**ENGAGEMENT & INNOVATION:** Activities that support water education, outreach, and innovation efforts.

**AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS:** Projects that provide technical assistance or improve agricultural efficiency.

**ENVIRONMENTAL & RECREATION PROJECTS:** Projects that promote watershed health, environmental health, and recreation.

The Rio Grande Basin has benefited greatly from CWCB loan and grant funds, which have supported rehabilitation of area dams, repair and construction of irrigation structures, river restoration and riparian habitat improvement projects, feasibility studies, conservation easements, and education.

## OTHER FUNDING THROUGH THE CWCB

**WATER PROJECT LOAN PROGRAM:** Provides low-interest loans to agricultural, municipal and commercial borrowers for the design and construction of raw water projects in Colorado.

**WATER EFFICIENCY GRANTS:** Provides financial assistance to communities, water providers and eligible agencies for water conservation-related activities and projects.

**WATER SUPPLY RESERVE FUND GRANTS:** Provides grants and loans to assist Colorado water users in addressing their critical water supply issues and interests.

**SEVERANCE TAX TRUST FUND OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT GRANTS:** Provides grants for regional water resource planning studies and associated demonstration projects.

**COLORADO WATERSHED RESTORATION GRANTS:** Provides grants for watershed/stream restoration and flood mitigation projects throughout the state.

### **AGRICULTURAL EMERGENCY DROUGHT RESPONSE**

**PROGRAM:** Provides loans or grants for emergency drought-related water augmentation purposes to Colorado's agricultural water users.

### **ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURAL WATER TRANSFER METHODS**

**GRANTS:** Assists in developing and implementing creative alternatives to the traditional purchase and transfer of agricultural water.

**FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES FUND GRANTS:** Provides grant money to existing water supply facilities to help preserve a balance between development of the state's resources and the protection of the state's fish and wildlife resources.

**WEATHER MODIFICATION GRANTS:** Provides state grants to water providers and local governments to assist in funding ground-based wintertime operational cloud seeding programs.



*Funding cont.*

**NON-REIMBURSABLE PROJECT INVESTMENT GRANTS:** Funds water-related projects or studies of statewide impact or importance and Feasibility Studies and projects designed to address statewide, region-wide or basin-wide water issues.

**INVASIVE PHREATOPHYTE CONTROL PROGRAM:** Provides cost share assistance to eligible entities to control and/or eradicate riparian invasive phreatophytes.

**WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS FUND:** Provides information about obtaining funds for developing alternatives to wild and scenic river designation.

**STREAM RESTORATION ACCOUNT OF THE FLOOD & DROUGHT RESPONSE FUND (DEBRIS REMOVAL BILL):** Funds watershed cleanup and stream restoration in areas affected by the September 2013 flood.

**RESERVOIR DREDGING PROGRAM GRANTS:** The Program provides grants for recovery of reservoir storage volume by conducting a dredging construction project.

For more information on funding opportunities through the CWCB, go to:

<http://cwcb.state.co.us/LoansGrants/Pages/LoansGrantsHome.aspx>

# CWCB GOVERNANCE

The CWCB is governed by a board that consists of fifteen members. These include eight voting members who represent the state's major river basins: South Platte, North Platte, Arkansas, Rio Grande, Gunnison/Uncompahgre, Colorado Mainstem, Yampa/White, and the Southwest Basin. One voting member represents the City and County of Denver and the tenth Ex-Officio voting member is the Executive Director of the Department of Natural Resources. There are also non-voting members who inform and advise the Board on water issues as they relate to or impact their agencies. These five members consist of the Director of the CWCB, the State Engineer, the Attorney General, the Director of Colorado Parks & Wildlife, and the Commissioner of Agriculture.



Current CWCB Board of Directors

## IF YOU'RE ASKING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, THEN YOU NEED TO CHECK OUT THE COLORADO WATER PLAN!

[COLORADO.GOV/PACIFIC/COWATERPLAN](http://COLORADO.GOV/PACIFIC/COWATERPLAN)

Why did the state of Colorado create the Water Plan?

Does it interfere with local control or authority?

What is the role of the Basin Roundtables in the Water Plan, and how do Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs) fit into it?

What is the Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) and how does it fit into the plan?

How will the legislature be involved?

How was the state engineer involved?

How does the plan address the water quality of rivers and streams?

Any others? Find out more online!

To learn more about the CWCB, its board, and its programs, visit

[CWCB.STATE.CO.US](http://CWCB.STATE.CO.US)

## MEET OUR RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE REPRESENTATIVE

Heather Dutton, 32, is the manager of the San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District. She was appointed to the CWCB by Gov. Hickenlooper in June 2017, after Travis Smith stepped down.



*"There is a sense of urgency within the CWCB to facilitate and support projects that uphold Colorado's values, which include protecting agriculture, providing clean drinking water, maintaining quality recreation, and protecting watersheds and rivers."*

*-Heather Dutton*

Smith served 12 years (4 terms) on behalf of the Rio Grande Basin.

Dutton is a native of the San Luis Valley, graduating from Sargent High School in 2004. She went on to earn two degrees in natural resources management and rangeland ecology with a concentration restoration ecology in 2008 and her master's degree in agriculture in 2010, both from Colorado State University. She worked with the Rio Grande Headwaters Restoration project from 2009-2016 and became involved with the Roundtable in that capacity early on. Dutton pointed out that those who serve on the Roundtable are participating because they care about the future.

"Working together through challenges will help us be more resilient," she said.

# THE RIO GRANDE BASIN ROUNDTABLE 2018 SUMMER TOUR SERIES

## **JULY 26TH WATER IN THE UPPER ARKANSAS BASIN**

Come see the Multi-Use Project at Trout Creek Ranch, Helena Diversion Structure/Buena Vista Boat Chute, and the Voluntary Flow Management on the world's most rafted river. View the Parkville Water District's Evan Reservoir Bypass Flume Replacement Project

## **AUGUST 14TH RIO GRANDE RIVER BASIN TOUR**

Meet the projects that are helping the Rio Grande Basin meet state and basin water plans. From the projects you have funded to the great partnerships that make this such a dynamic landscape - learn about reservoirs and flow regimes, amazing structures and habitat management. We will invite basins from around the state!

## **SEPTEMBER 27TH MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL WATER - FRONT RANGE STYLE**

Understand how major metropolitan water entities address providing water for the masses and conservation, all while working to benefit agriculture. The tour will look at how the Southern Metro Water Supply Authority and its partners implement the Water Infrastructure and Supply Efficiency (WISE) Partnership.

## **OCTOBER 2018 TBD**

## **MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL WATER NEEDS IN THE RIO GRANDE**

Learn how municipal and industrial needs in the Rio Grande Basin are being met and how future planning is helping to sculpt our growing municipal needs.

For more information about the tours and to sign up, please contact Judy Lopez at 719.580.5300 or email [jlopez@coloradoopenlands.org](mailto:jlopez@coloradoopenlands.org)

**Tours are limited to the first 30 sign ups!**