

Overview Southwest Basin Implementation Plan
Michael Preston, Water Resources Review Committee Hearing
Durango Colorado, August 27, 2014

Southwest Basin includes 9 Sub-basins with 8 rivers joining the main-stem San Juan River in New Mexico and Colorado River in Utah. (See Southwest Basin Map)

Compacts and Agreements:

- La Plata River Compact with New Mexico
- Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement
- Animas La Plata Compact
- San Juan-Chama Transbasin Diversion
- Colorado River Compact
- Colorado and San Juan Recovery Programs

Goals and Measurable Outcomes Grouped into the following Categories

- A. Balance All Needs and Reduce Conflict**
- B. Maintain Agriculture Water Needs
- C. Meet Municipal and Industrial Water Needs
- D. Meet Recreational Water Needs
- E. Meet Environmental Water Needs
- F. Preserve Water Quality
- G. Comply with CO River Compact and Manage Risk

One Project (IPP) List for Consumptive/Non-Consumptive (65/65): Organized by Sub-Basin – History of Cooperation, Priority on Multi-Benefit Projects. “Colorado’s Southwest Basin Map” and “Map Key” highlight 25 IPPs (Identified Projects and Processes) occurring in each of the nine sub-basins ordered from East to West.

Basin Implementation Plan Consideration of Colorado Water Plan Issues

In addition to addressing goals, strategies and specific projects to meet Southwest Basin needs over a 50 year horizon, the Roundtable planning process also involves consideration of key state-wide issues. Below are the results of ongoing Roundtable discussion in three areas that involve a state-wide context:

Limit Conflicts and Promote Collaboration within the Framework of State, Tribal and Federal Plans, Policies, Authorities and Rights:

“In Colorado, the authority to establish water policies of the state, determine the beneficial uses of the water resources, and the administration of water rights pursuant to the Doctrine of Prior Appropriation fall under the jurisdiction of state government. It is recognized that there is a significant amount of land administered by the federal government in Colorado, which creates the potential for conflicts between state and federal laws and policies. Federal policies and actions could affect existing and future water supplies and planning efforts in southwestern Colorado.

Therefore, the Southwest Basin Roundtable encourages and supports creative solutions sought through collaborative efforts, renewal of State-Federal MOUs, and the full recognition and use of tribal rights under the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement to limit conflicts between state, tribal and federal policies, laws, and land management plans. Maintaining opportunities that allow for management solutions that

provide for multiple beneficial uses and are protective of environmental and recreational values are critical for the planning and strategic development of the water resources in the State of Colorado.”

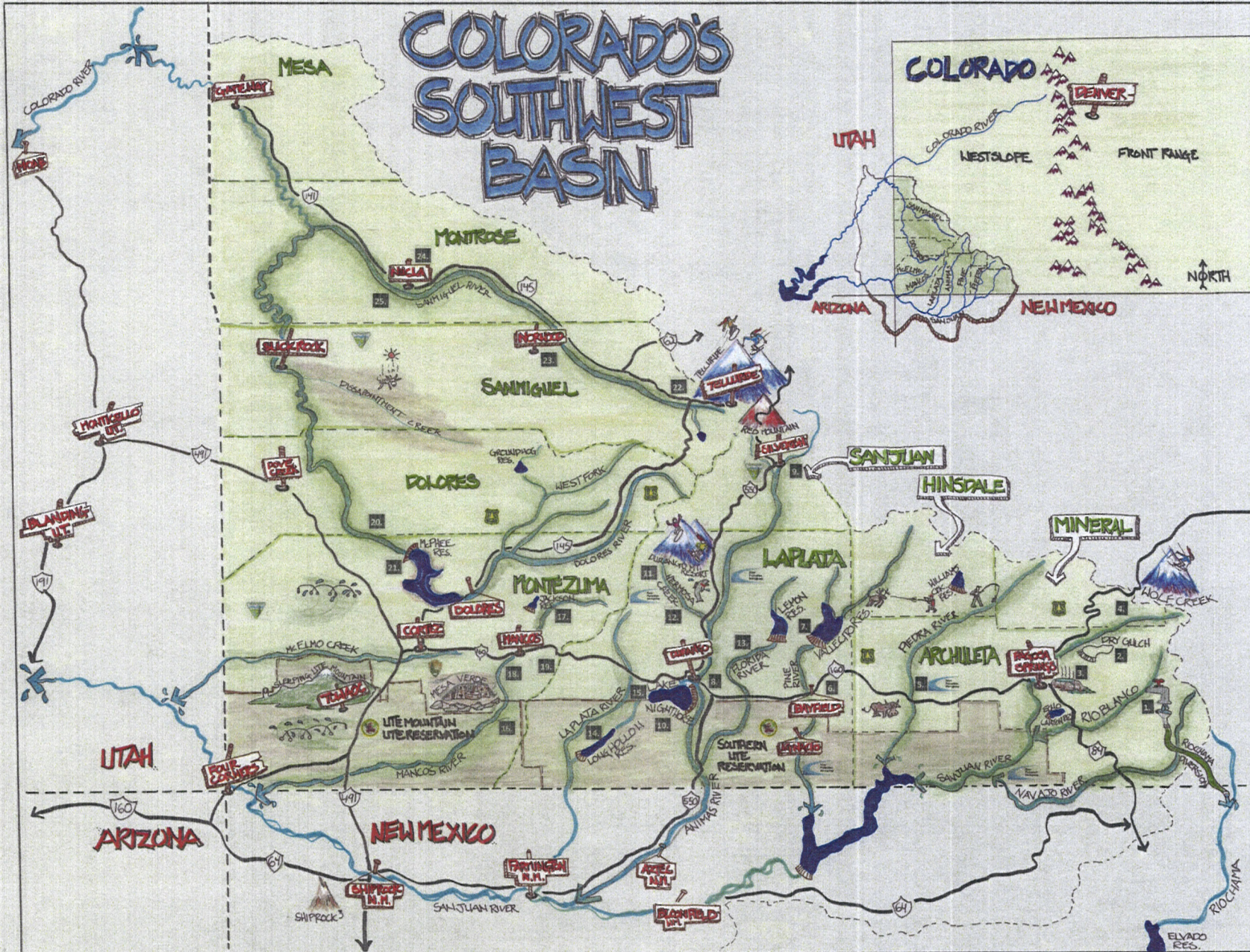
Water Conservation:

The SWBRT supports the idea that on a statewide basis we all need to be more efficient with our water use and achieve high conservation. Recognizing that municipal demand is one of the driving forces behind agricultural dry-up and that outdoor urban irrigation is one of the highest consumptive uses of municipal water, therefore, the Basin agrees that before it will consider a new TMD, outdoor irrigation by water providers using agricultural buy-up and dry-up and/or pursuing a TMD should meet the higher goal of 70/30 ratio of inside to outside use of municipal water by the year 2030.

The Southwest Basin Roundtable Statement of Importance (Adopted 1/8/14):

- *Intends to develop, use, and maintain the Basin Implementation Plan as a living document.*
- *Agrees that all water uses are important to the future of this region.*
- *Identifies specific and unique projects that are important to maintaining the quality of life in this region and should accommodate the development and maintenance of flows, including domestic supplies, environmental needs, agriculture, recreation, and commercial/industrial needs to provide for further economic development.*
- *Supports multi-purpose projects when possible and when they can be accomplished in a manner that is protective of the values present.*
- *Recognizes and upholds the unique settlement of tribal reserved water rights claims in the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Final Settlement Agreement of December 10, 1986, as authorized by Congress in the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement Act of 1988, Pub. L. No. 100-585, and as amended by the Colorado Ute Settlement Act Amendments of 2000, Pub. L. No. 106-554 and Pub. L. No. 110-161 (2007); and the 1991 Consent Decrees.*
- *Recognizes and addresses the downstream challenges faced by water users in southwest Colorado due to continued development and pressures from users in the State of New Mexico; protect interests in southwest Colorado, while complying with existing Compact obligations. The entitlement to Colorado River flows for New Mexico will be based on deliveries from southwest Colorado.*
- *Intends to preserve the Southwest Basin's ability to develop Colorado River Compact entitlements and to meet our water supply gaps.*
- *Recognizes and addresses the challenges to all water uses that future drought and/or climate variability may bring.*
- *Recognizes that the flows necessary to support the full complement of values are not currently well understood.*
- *Limit Conflicts and Promote Collaboration within the Framework of State, Tribal and Federal Plans, Policies, Authorities and Rights.*

COLORADO'S SOUTHWEST BASIN




Southwest Basin Roundtable: Basin Implementation Plan
Map Key for IPPs (Identified Projects and Processes)
Highlights by Sub-Basin from East to West

San Juan River Sub-Basin:

- 1.** San Juan Chama Diversion – 89,832AF (Acre Feet) per year provided to New Mexico under Colorado River Compact. Extensive restoration – Blanco River
- 2.** Dry Gulch Water Storage Project – 11,000AF of Off-stream storage for future M&I (Municipal & Industrial) needs and other recreational and environmental purposes
- 3.** Geothermal Greenhouse Partnership – K-12 science education, test site for commercial organic crops: high altitude, geothermal, year round food production
- 4.** San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership – Collaborative approach to improving long term resilience of mixed conifer forests and nearby communities

Piedra River Sub-Basin

- 5.** River Protection Workgroup(s) (RPWs) –  Workgroups formed in 5 Sub-basins tributary to the San Juan River and 4 tributaries (San Juan, Piedra, Pine, Animas and Hermosa Creek) to involve public in protecting values while allowing future water development. Piedra values included: ranching, fishing hunting, hiking, boating.

Pine River Sub-Basin

- 6.** La Plata Archuleta Water District – To meet residential and commercial water needs that have outstripped groundwater capacity and quality. Will build out to 200 miles of pipeline, multiple storage tanks, water loading stations and other infrastructure.
- 7.** Vallecito Reservoir – Spillway repairs. Flow donation agreement for instream flow and other purposes. New water right would allow “exchange water” for users outside of PRID service area such as upstream of Vallecito Reservoir.

Animas River Basin

- 8.** La Plata Archuleta Water District – To meet residential and commercial water needs that have outstripped groundwater capacity and quality. Will build out to 200 miles of pipeline, multiple storage tanks, water loading stations and other infrastructure.
- 9.** Vallecito Reservoir – Spillway repairs. Flow donation agreement for instream flow and other purposes. New water right would allow “exchange water” for users outside of PRID service area such as upstream of Vallecito Reservoir.

Animas River Basin

- 10.** La Plata Archuleta Water District – To meet residential and commercial water needs that have outstripped groundwater capacity and quality. Will build out to 200 miles of pipeline, multiple storage tanks, water loading stations and other infrastructure.
- 11.** Vallecito Reservoir – Spillway repairs. Flow donation agreement for instream flow and other purposes. New water right would allow “exchange water” for users outside of PRID service area such as upstream of Vallecito Reservoir.
- 12.** Lake Nighthorse Recreation – Open Lake Nighthorse for boating, fishing and swimming
- 13.** Hermosa Watershed Protection Act of 2013 – Introduced in Senate by Senator Bennet, Co-Sponsor Senator Udall. Companion Legislation (H.R. 1319) introduced by Congressman Tipton. Bill a result of the Animas River Protection Workgroup process involving water users, ranchers, business leaders, mountain bicyclists, dirt bikers and community officials.
- 14.** Hermosa Creek Cutthroat Trout Meta-population Project – Some native trout barriers installed. Next comes non-native removal and re-linkage with tributary mainstem.
- 15.** Lemon Reservoir and Florida Mesa Ditch Companies – FWCD has acquired a 2,500AF water right for multiple purposes within the Florida Basin (M&I, wildlife, wetlands, exchange, augmentation, hydropower, and irrigation). Voluntary program for ditch companies to conserve water and firm up irrigation deliveries to provide for above uses through reduction in delivery system losses (3 miles of ditch lining to date).

La Plata River Sub-Basin

- 16.** Long Hollow Reservoir – 5,400 AF reservoir near state line to meet New Mexico compact compliance, irrigation supply by exchange and potential exchange/ augmentation of domestic wells. Reservoir complete. Operational practices being evaluated.
- 17.** La Plata West Water Authority – Provide western La Plata County with safe dependable water in the face of declining groundwater. Source: Lake Nighthorse.

Mancos River Sub-Basin

- 18.** Ute Mountain Tribe Water Conservation and Management Plan – Process to discuss UMUT water rights in the Mancos sub-basin including possible development with non-Tribal partners.
- 19.** Jackson Gulch Reservoir Enlargement – 5 feet added to dam height would equate to 1,000AF of new storage to meet M&I growth without diminishing irrigation.
- 20.** Mancos River Habitat Diversion Project, Phase II – Restore aquatic habitat and efficiency of 4 diversions downstream of the Town of Mancos to improve irrigation diversions while allowing fish and sediment passage and promoting channel stability
- 21.** Weber Ditch Piping – Piping of ditch in areas compromised by the Weber fire regarding safety and seepage

Dolores River and McElmo Creek Sub-Basins

- 20.** Dolores River Dialogue (DRD) – A collaborative process, ongoing since 2004 to protect water rights, Dolores Project allocations, community water supplies and the continued enjoyment of boating and fishing. The DRD appointed the Lower Dolores Working Group to find alternatives to Wild and Scenic Suitability. The Work Group appointed a Legislative Subcommittee which is developing NCA legislation to protect water rights and downstream values. The Legislative Subcommittee commissioned “A Way Forward” scientific evaluation of opportunities to improve the status of 3 sensitive native fish species (roundtail chub, flannemouth sucker and bluehead sucker) guided by a Native Fish Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, overseen by a broad based Implementation Team. All of these features are part of the proposed “Dolores River Canyon National Conservation Area” legislation, intended for Congressional introduction in 2015. The DRD Steering Committee completed a Watershed Plan with significant historic appendices in 2013.
- 21.** Optimization Study – Given the multiplicity of stakeholders with water stored or passing through McPhee Reservoir, fully appropriated water rights, and extremely tight water supplies in the dry end of the hydrologic cycle, the Optimization Study is intended to evaluate the most effective use of existing facilities and potential delivery system improvements to optimize benefits and improve drought resilience within the framework of Colorado water rights and Dolores Project contracts.

San Miguel River Sub-Basin

- 22.** San Miguel Watershed Coalition – Formed to involve the whole community to advance the ecological health and promote the economic vitality of the watershed by collaborative efforts. The coalition periodically compiles the San Miguel Watershed Report Card.
- 23.** Town of Norwood – Holds water rights for future municipal needs by diverting San Miguel water rights into a small storage reservoir.
- 24.** Montrose County Firing Project Phase 1 – To provide a water source for M&I demand 50 years into the future, including the growth of the Towns of Nucla and Naturita. Engineering feasibility studies are being undertaken on a variety of potential reservoir sites and a number of infrastructure expansion opportunities
- 25.** Instream Flows – Have been decreed on the San Miguel River and are being evaluated on Naturita Creek which is considered spawning habitat for flannemouth sucker, bluehead sucker and roundtail chub.