



The Southwestern Water Conservation District  
The West Building, 841 E Second Avenue  
Durango, CO 81301

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN FOR  
**SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S**  
Regular Board Meeting

**Location**

SWCD Office & Via Zoom

841 E 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Durango CO, 81301

**Date and Time**

10/09/24 & 10/10/24

**Remote Connection**

[Click here to join via Zoom](#)

Meeting ID: 835 9975 3537

Passcode: 474186

Phone Number: (346) 248 – 7799

To be recognized by the chair, please raise your hand. To raise your hand by phone, dial\*9. To mute and unmute by phone, dial \*6.

**Other Details**

Posted and Noticed Tuesday, October 08, 2024

Please email Mo Rock at [morock@swwcd.org](mailto:morock@swwcd.org) if you have difficulty attending the meeting.

*Except the time indicated for when the meeting is scheduled to begin, the times noted for each agenda item are estimates and subject to change. The Board may address and act on agenda items in any order to accommodate the needs of the Board and the audience. Agenda items can also be added during the meeting at the consensus of the Board.*

*Agenda items may be placed on the Consent Agenda when the recommended action is non-controversial. The Consent Agenda may be voted on without reading or discussing individual items. Any Board member may request clarification about items on the Consent Agenda. The Board may remove items from the Consent Agenda at their discretion for further discussion.*



The Southwestern Water Conservation District  
The West Building, 841 E Second Avenue  
Durango, CO 81301

## SWCD Regular Board Meeting Agenda October 09 & 10, 2024

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 09, 2024

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### **1 Call to Order – Roll Call, Verification of Quorum**

1:00 P.M.

1.1 Review and Approve the Agenda

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### **2 Approve and/or Remove Consent Agenda Items**

1:03 P.M.

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### **3 Consent Agenda**

1:04 P.M.

- 3.1 Approval of Minutes (06/12-13/2024; 09/12/2024; 09/23/2024)
  - 3.2 Acceptance of Treasurer's Report (August 2024)
  - 3.3 Water Information Program 2025 Contract
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### **4 Staff Reports**

1:05 P.M.

- 4.1 Proposed 2025 SWCD Employee Health Plans
  - 4.2 Proposed 2025 SWCD Meeting & Holiday Schedule
  - 4.3 Draft Assigned Funds Policy
  - 4.4 Approval of Updates to Strategic Plan
  - 4.5 Directors with Expiring Terms (Dolores County, Heldman, Hinger)
  - 4.6 Update and Invitation to SWCD's Water Connections Event
  - 4.7 Proposed Changes to SWCD's Capital Asset Threshold
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### **5 General Counsel Legal Report**

2:00 P.M.

- 5.1 Update on Draft Division 7 Measurement Rules
  - 5.2 Review Scope of Work for SWCD's Consulting Service Agreements
  - 5.3 Monthly Water Court Resume Review
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**6 UPDATE ON SWCD'S WATER CONSERVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIP**

2:30 P.M.

6.1 Update on B2E Grant Application

6.1.1 Projects and Process - Carrie Padgett

6.2 Review of Staffing Needs if Grant Awarded

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**7 Director Updates and Items for Discussion**

2:50 P.M.

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**8 Partner and Contractor Updates**

3:00 P.M.

8.1 Water Information Program Report - Elaine Chick

8.2 Southwest Basins Roundtable & IBCC Report  
- Ed Tolen & Ken Curtis

8.3 Harris Water Engineering - Carrie Padgett

8.4 Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe – Letisha Yazzie

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**9 Questions and/or Comments from the Public**

3:30 P.M.

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**Break**

**3:45 P.M**

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**10 Executive Session**

4:00 P.M.

10.1 Proposed extension of C.R.S. § 37-92-305(3)(c) to Water Division 7

10.2 Water Supply Planning within SWCD

10.3 August Water Court Resumes for Water Divisions 3, 4 and 7

10.4 Update on Draft Division 7 Measurement Rules

10.5 Colorado River Compact, Interstate and Intrastate negotiation matters, including re-negotiation of the interim guidelines

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**11 Summary and Action Items from Executive Session**

5:15 P.M.

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**12 Adjourn**

**5:20 P.M.**

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2024

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**13 Call to Order – Roll Call, Verification of Quorum**

**8:30 A.M.**

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**14 Review and Approve Agenda**

8:32 A.M.

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**15 Legislative Affairs**

8:34 A.M.

15.1 Federal Affairs Update – Christine Arbogast

15.2 State Affairs Update - Garin Vorthmann

15.2.1 Legislation from Water Resource and Agriculture Review Committee

15.2.2 Dredge and Fill and Other Matters – Peter Butler

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**16 Comments from Senator Cleave Simpson**

9:00 A.M.

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**17 Hydrology Update**

9:30 A.M.

17.1 Hydrology and Other Updates for Divisions 4 & 7 from Division Engineers  
-Bob Hurford & Rob Genualdi

17.2 Colorado River Basin Update -Steve Wolff

17.3 Colorado Airborne Snow Observatory - Jeff Deems

17.4 United States Geological Survey Update -Trisha Solberg, Bryan Moore,  
& Kevin Murphy

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**18 Public Comment**

10:15 A.M.

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**Break**

**10:20 A.M.**

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**19 2025 Budget discussion**

19.1 Review of SWCD's Draft FY2025 Budget, Draft Budget Message and Related Topics

**20 Potential Sale of Running Iron Ranch on the Initiative of the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District – Jeff Kane (San Juan WCD)**

10:30 A.M.

**21 Upcoming Meetings and Announcements**

11:55 A.M

- October 23, 2024 Fall Connections Event – Fort Lewis College
- November 13, 2024 SWCD Special Board Meeting (if needed)
- December 11-12, 2024 SWCD Regular Board Meeting (Budget Hearing)
- February 2025 Joint Meeting with CRWCD?

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**22 Adjournment**

12:00 P.M.

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# Staff Reports





**THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
Developing and Conserving the Waters in the  
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES  
West Building – 841 East Second Avenue  
DURANGO, COLORADO 81301  
(970) 247-1302

**BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Mo Rock & Steve Wolff  
**Subject:** Selection of 2025 Employee Health Plans  
**Date:** 10/03/2024

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In 2020, the SWCD board conducted a thorough review of health insurance plans on the market and restructured SWCD’s health insurance benefits for employees. Since then, SWCD has offered the following health plans for employees:

- **PPO4** – current \$790/month, 2025 rates **\$897/month (employee only)**
- **PPO6** – current \$699/month, 2025 rates **\$759/month (employee only)**
- **HDHP3** (high deductible plan with an HSA option)

SWCD also offers the following dental, vision, and life insurance plans:

- Dental Plan A
- Vision Plan A
- Life insurance (100% covered by SWCD)

Annually, SWCD must review their health plans and renew selected coverage with the Colorado Employer Benefit Trust (CEBT). The deadline to select 2025 employee health insurance plans CEBT is Friday, October 11, 2024. Premiums will increase by 13.5% from 2024 to 2025.

Currently, SWCD pays up to \$1,200 per month for an employee’s health, dental, and vision plan premiums. SWCD pays 100% of employee life insurance premiums as required by CEBT.

If an employee selects the HDHP3 plan (a high deductible option that is eligible for a Health Savings Account), SWCD will contribute \$150 per month to an employee's HSA and up to \$1,050 per month toward an employee’s health, dental, and vision plan premium. Neither Steve nor Mo has selected this plan historically, nor do they plan to do so in 2025.

Staff would like the board to consider switching out the PPO6 plan for the PP02 offered by CEBT to better accommodate the needs of present-day staff. Currently, the best plans an employee could opt for (smallest deductible and most coverages) are PPO4, Dental A, and Vision A; for employees without dependents, opting for all these totaled \$843.48/month in 2024. In 2025, these same plans will total \$944/month. The District has committed to offering healthcare to employees for up to \$1,200/month, but fully utilizing this contribution is unachievable for employees without dependents.

With this in mind, we ask that the board consider offering a different health plan to better meet the needs of employees without dependents. We are asking the board to consider offering PPO2 (replacing PPO6). This would provide staff with the most comprehensive coverage possible and let them maximize the healthcare benefits that the District has already allocated.

- PPO2 - \$1,182/month
- Vision Plan A – \$5/month
- Dental A - \$42/month
- Total: \$1,229/month

This would make available to employees a low deductible plan at a minimum cost to the employee.

**For the District to try and be competitive in future staff hiring and retention, we do believe a broader discussion of health insurance and other employee benefits may be necessary in 2025.**

Please refer to the following attachment for more information on all of the plans offered by CEBT.



**Southwestern Water Conservation District**

Renewal and Optional Monthly Rates Effective January 01, 2025

**Current Plans: PPO4; PPO6; HDHP3; Dental A; Vision A; Life A; Dep Life A; EAP Active**  
**Current Network: United Choice Plus**  
**Life Coverage: 1\*Salary**

		<b>EE Only</b>	<b>EE +Spouse</b>	<b>EE +Child</b>	<b>EE +Children</b>	<b>EE +Family</b>	<b>Percent change</b>
<b>Medical (PPO2)</b> <b>(\$500 deductible)</b>	current	\$1,041	\$2,291	\$2,188	\$2,188	\$2,609	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$1,182</b>	<b>\$2,600</b>	<b>\$2,483</b>	<b>\$2,483</b>	<b>\$2,961</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (PPO3)</b> <b>(\$1,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$860	\$1,889	\$1,803	\$1,803	\$2,150	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$976</b>	<b>\$2,144</b>	<b>\$2,046</b>	<b>\$2,046</b>	<b>\$2,440</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (PPO4)</b> <b>(\$1,500 deductible)</b>	current	\$790	\$1,736	\$1,658	\$1,658	\$1,974	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$897</b>	<b>\$1,970</b>	<b>\$1,882</b>	<b>\$1,882</b>	<b>\$2,240</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (PPO5)</b> <b>(\$2,500 deductible)</b>	current	\$725	\$1,600	\$1,528	\$1,528	\$1,817	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$823</b>	<b>\$1,816</b>	<b>\$1,734</b>	<b>\$1,734</b>	<b>\$2,062</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (PPO6)</b> <b>(\$3,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$669	\$1,473	\$1,403	\$1,403	\$1,674	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$759</b>	<b>\$1,672</b>	<b>\$1,592</b>	<b>\$1,592</b>	<b>\$1,900</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (PPO7)</b> <b>(\$4,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$615	\$1,355	\$1,292	\$1,292	\$1,539	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$698</b>	<b>\$1,538</b>	<b>\$1,466</b>	<b>\$1,466</b>	<b>\$1,747</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (PPO8)</b> <b>(\$5,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$585	\$1,288	\$1,226	\$1,226	\$1,460	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$664</b>	<b>\$1,462</b>	<b>\$1,392</b>	<b>\$1,392</b>	<b>\$1,657</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (EPO3)</b> <b>(\$1,000 hospital copay)</b>	current	\$790	\$1,736	\$1,658	\$1,658	\$1,974	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$897</b>	<b>\$1,970</b>	<b>\$1,882</b>	<b>\$1,882</b>	<b>\$2,240</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (EPO4)</b> <b>(\$1,500 hospital copay)</b>	current	\$717	\$1,576	\$1,504	\$1,504	\$1,786	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$814</b>	<b>\$1,789</b>	<b>\$1,707</b>	<b>\$1,707</b>	<b>\$2,027</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (EPO5)</b> <b>(\$2,500 hospital copay)</b>	current	\$681	\$1,496	\$1,431	\$1,431	\$1,698	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$773</b>	<b>\$1,698</b>	<b>\$1,624</b>	<b>\$1,624</b>	<b>\$1,927</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (EPO6)</b> <b>(\$3,000 hospital copay)</b>	current	\$654	\$1,437	\$1,373	\$1,373	\$1,630	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$742</b>	<b>\$1,631</b>	<b>\$1,558</b>	<b>\$1,558</b>	<b>\$1,850</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (HDHP2)</b> <b>(\$2,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$677	\$1,491	\$1,423	\$1,423	\$1,693	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$768</b>	<b>\$1,692</b>	<b>\$1,615</b>	<b>\$1,615</b>	<b>\$1,922</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (HDHP25)</b> <b>(\$2,500 deductible)</b>	current	\$661	\$1,457	\$1,390	\$1,390	\$1,654	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$750</b>	<b>\$1,654</b>	<b>\$1,578</b>	<b>\$1,578</b>	<b>\$1,877</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (HD2800)</b> <b>(\$2,800 deductible)</b>	current	\$656	\$1,445	\$1,379	\$1,379	\$1,640	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$745</b>	<b>\$1,640</b>	<b>\$1,565</b>	<b>\$1,565</b>	<b>\$1,861</b>	<b>13.50%</b>

<b>Medical (HDHP3)</b> <b>(\$3,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$647	\$1,423	\$1,359	\$1,359	\$1,616	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$734</b>	<b>\$1,615</b>	<b>\$1,542</b>	<b>\$1,542</b>	<b>\$1,834</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (HD3500)</b> <b>(\$3,500 deductible)</b>	current	\$610	\$1,343	\$1,281	\$1,281	\$1,526	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$692</b>	<b>\$1,524</b>	<b>\$1,454</b>	<b>\$1,454</b>	<b>\$1,732</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (HDHP4)</b> <b>(\$4,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$592	\$1,303	\$1,244	\$1,244	\$1,481	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$672</b>	<b>\$1,479</b>	<b>\$1,412</b>	<b>\$1,412</b>	<b>\$1,681</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Medical (HDHP5)</b> <b>(\$5,000 deductible)</b>	current	\$559	\$1,231	\$1,175	\$1,175	\$1,398	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$634</b>	<b>\$1,397</b>	<b>\$1,334</b>	<b>\$1,334</b>	<b>\$1,587</b>	<b>13.50%</b>
<b>Dental Plan A (w/ortho)</b> <b>(\$2,000 annual max)</b>	current	\$40	\$82	\$102	\$102	\$138	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$42</b>	<b>\$85</b>	<b>\$106</b>	<b>\$106</b>	<b>\$144</b>	<b>4.00%</b>
<b>Dental Plan B (w/ortho)</b> <b>(\$1,500 annual max)</b>	current	\$32	\$66	\$90	\$90	\$122	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$33</b>	<b>\$69</b>	<b>\$94</b>	<b>\$94</b>	<b>\$127</b>	<b>4.00%</b>
<b>Dental Plan C (w/o ortho)</b> <b>(\$1,500 annual max)</b>	current	\$32	\$66	\$67	\$67	\$99	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$33</b>	<b>\$69</b>	<b>\$70</b>	<b>\$70</b>	<b>\$103</b>	<b>4.00%</b>
<b>Vision Plan A (UMR)</b>	current	\$5	\$8	\$9	\$9	\$13	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$5</b>	<b>\$8</b>	<b>\$9</b>	<b>\$9</b>	<b>\$13</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Vision Plan B (VSP)</b> <b>(12/12/24)</b>	current	\$6	\$11	\$12	\$12	\$20	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$6</b>	<b>\$11</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>\$12</b>	<b>\$20</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Vision Plan C (VSP)</b> <b>(12/12/12)</b>	current	\$7	\$13	\$14	\$14	\$24	
	<b>renewal</b>	<b>\$7</b>	<b>\$13</b>	<b>\$14</b>	<b>\$14</b>	<b>\$24</b>	<b>0.00%</b>

**Employee Life Rate:0.1414**

**(Per \$1,000 in Coverage)**

**Dependent Life Rate:0.96**

**(\$5,000/Spouse & \$2,000/Child)**

**SDB7**

**CEBT PLAN SUMMARY**  
**Southwestern Water Conservation District**

**Current Plans Offered:** PPO4; PPO6; HDHP3; Dental A; Vision A; Life A; Dep Life A; EAP Active  
**Group Life Coverage:** 1\*Salary

Please renew by October 11th, 2024. This should be done in the CEBT Community Portal under the Renewal tab.

To begin your renewal, please select the **"Ready to Renew"** button and follow the steps outlined below:

- Accept the attestation which states that you have reviewed and accept the terms of the renewal as presented in the Renewal Packet.
- On the following page, you will see all available plans with your current plans checked. Please use the list of available plans outlined below as a reference when choosing your renewal plan selections.
- If you do not want to make changes to your plan offerings for the next renewal year, please select "No Plan Changes."
- If you do want to make plan changes, please ensure that all plans you wish to offer are checked. To do this you will uncheck any plans you intend to drop and check, or select, any plans you want to keep and/or add.
- You will then proceed to the signature section. Select the appropriate signer's name from the drop-down list. If you are signing on behalf of an approved signer, please select that person's name and then submit.
- Once submitted the renewal is complete and will be returned to WTW for processing.

**OPEN ENROLLMENT**

- Dates are determined by the employer group and should be held sometime between October and mid-November.
- To ensure ID cards are received on or before **January 1st, 2025**, enrollment changes should be returned to WTW no later than **November 15th, 2024**.
- Once your renewal has been submitted, open enrollment supplies will be updated online in the Resource Center of the CEBT Community portal.
- Printed Supplies will be sent on a request-only basis and can be done by clicking on the "Request Supplies" link in the Renewals tab or the Resource Center tab.

**In accordance with your participation agreement, written notice of termination must be received by November 1st, 2024, or run-out claims will not be paid by CEBT.**

**\* For upcoming plan changes, please refer to the CEBT Benefit & Administrative Changes Document**

MEDICAL PLAN	OFFICE CO-PAY (primary/specialist)	HOSPITAL CO-PAY	DEDUCTIBLE (single/family)	MAXIMUM OOP (single/family)
<b>PPO Medical Plans (UMR)</b>				
PPO2	\$30/\$30	N/A	\$500/\$1,000	\$2,000/\$4,000
PPO3	\$35/\$35	N/A	\$1,000/\$2,000	\$3,000/\$6,000
PPO4	\$40/\$40	N/A	\$1,500/\$3,000	\$4,000/\$8,000
PPO5	\$45/\$45	N/A	\$2,500/\$5,000	\$4,500/\$9,000
PPO6	\$50/\$50	N/A	\$3,000/\$6,000	\$5,000/\$10,000
PPO7	\$55/\$55	N/A	\$4,000/\$8,000	\$5,000/\$10,000
PPO8	\$55/\$55	N/A	\$5,000/\$10,000	\$5,000/\$10,000
<b>EPO Medical Plans (UMR)</b>				
EPO3	\$40/\$55	\$1,000	N/A	\$5,000/\$10,000
EPO4	\$45/\$60	\$1,500	N/A	\$5,500/\$11,000
EPO5	\$50/\$65	\$2,500	N/A	\$6,000/\$12,000
EPO6	\$55/\$70	\$3,000	N/A	\$6,500/\$13,000

High Deductible Health Plans (UMR)				
HDHP2	N/A	N/A	\$2,000/\$4,000 (Non-Embedded)	\$4,000/\$8,000
HDHP25	N/A	N/A	\$2,500/\$5,000 (Non-Embedded)	\$4,500/\$9,000
HD2800	N/A	N/A	\$2,800/\$5,600 (Non-Embedded)	\$5,000/\$10,000
HDHP3	N/A	N/A	\$3,000/\$6,000 (Non-Embedded)	\$5,000/\$10,000
HD3500	N/A	N/A	\$3,500/\$7,000	\$5,000/\$10,000
HDHP4	N/A	N/A	\$4,000/\$8,000	\$5,000/\$10,000
HDHP5	N/A	N/A	\$5,000/\$10,000	\$5,000/\$10,000
Dental Plans (Delta Dental of Colorado)				
Plan A   \$2,000 annual benefit maximum/ \$2,000 Ortho lifetime maximum (includes adult ortho)				
Plan B   \$1,500 annual benefit maximum/ \$1,500 Ortho lifetime maximum (child only)				
Plan C   \$1,500 annual benefit maximum/ No Ortho				
Vision Plans (UMR & VSP)				
Plan A   (UMR) 12/24/24 \$150 frames, no network				
Plan B   (VSP) 12/12/24, \$160 frames, \$15 copay at VSP providers				
Plan C   (VSP) 12/12/12, \$175 frames, \$10 copay at VSP providers				
Life Insurance Plans (The Standard Insurance Company)				
Basic Group Life (Life A)   Volume \$20k min to \$450k max (Employer Paid)				
Dependent Group Life (Dep Life A)   Volume \$5k Spouse, \$2k Child (Employer Paid)				
Voluntary Life (Supp Life)   Volume \$500k max Employee, \$250k max Spouse, \$20k max Child				



## THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Developing and Conserving the Waters in the  
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES  
West Building – 841 East Second Avenue  
DURANGO, COLORADO 81301  
(970) 247-1302

### BOARD MEMORANDUM

**From:** Mo Rock and Steve Wolff  
**Subject:** 5.2 Board Calendar  
**Date:** 10/03/2024

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This memorandum is to present a draft calendar for 2025 to the SWCD Board of Directors for consideration. We plan to continue with bi-monthly regular Board meetings moving forward. SWCD staff recommend continuing this structure, as it allows timely updates to the board. It also allows flexibility to adjust board meetings as necessary (such as opting for 1-day meetings when the agenda allows). The District also holds special board meetings during the legislative session and as needed during other times of the year. SWCD offers staff ten holidays, including 1 ‘floating’ holiday, which SWCD staff recommend to the Board. For 2025, we are suggesting the floating holiday be on December 26, 2025

The draft calendar can be found attached to this memo. In addition, we have identified the following dates to below for your information:

- January 29-31 CWC Annual Convention
- April 28-30 NWRA DC Policy Conference
- **May 5 – 16: Steve and Mo are out of the Office**
- August 6-8 NWRA Western Water Seminar
- August 19-21 CWC Summer Conference
- November 5-7 NWRA Annual Conference
- December 16-18 CRWUA

# Southwestern Water Conservation District **Draft** 2025 Calendar

Confidential - Board Only

January						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

SWCD October Board Meeting Packet

May						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July						
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27	28	29	30	31		

August						
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31						

September						
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28	29	30				

October						
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November						
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December						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

- Regular Board Meetings
- Special Board Meetings
- SWCD Seminar

- Holiday/SWCD Closed
- Jun 30 Audit Submission Deadline
- Oct 15 Budget Notice
- Dec 15 Mill Levy Certification

**SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**POLICY REGARDING  
THE USE AND EXPENDITURE OF THE DISTRICT'S  
ASSIGNED FUNDS; WATER DEFENSE AND WATER  
DEVELOPMENT**

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**I. PURPOSE**

In late 2020, the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board of Directors (Board) created two assigned funds from the District's cash reserves. The two assigned funds include "SWCD Water Defense" and "SWCD Water Development". At the end of each year, the Board assigns funds that went unspent from the previous year's appropriated budget to each of these assigned funds, typically allocating 60% to Water Defense and 40% to Water Development.

This policy is meant to provide details regarding the continued development, use and expenditure of these two funds.

**II. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNED FUNDS**

WATER DEFENSE: The Water Defense assignment is to be used to protect and defend the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins, including but not limited to those water rights held by the District. The District already allocates a portion of its annual revenue to maintain contracts with various consultants for legal, technical and lobbying services that work to defend these water resources. However, additional legal, policy, and/or technical services would be needed if the District were ever to be engaged in any significant litigation, rulemaking, negotiations, or take on a special project. Moneys set aside in the Water Defense assignment are intended to assist the District in paying these costs and expenses.

The most obvious scenario (though certainly not the only one) is if interstate litigation ever occurred within the Colorado River basin involving the 7-basin states and the federal government. Under this scenario, the District would likely act to assist the State of Colorado in protecting its Compact entitlements.

WATER DEVELOPMENT: The Water Development assignment is allocated to be used to facilitate the use and development of the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins. The Board currently envisions these funds may be used to facilitate development of one or more infrastructure projects or water management plans (e.g., umbrella plan for augmentation) that help maximize the beneficial use of water, including for non-consumptive purposes, within the District's boundaries.

### III. INVESTMENT OF ASSIGNED FUND BALANCES

The majority of the sums of money assigned to the Water Defense and Water Development funds are currently invested in interest-bearing certificates of deposit with varying maturity dates, as well as government approved securities. The result is that the entire balance of either fund typically is not available immediately (at least without significant penalty to the District). Recognition should also be made to the fact that the interest earned from these investments does serve as a small annual revenue stream to the District.

### IV. GUIDANCE AS TO THE EXPENDITURE OF ASSIGNED FUNDS

The District's statutory mandates, as well as the SWCD Strategic Plan, should always be used as guidance when considering the expenditure of any assigned fund balances. In other words, does the expenditure help to protect, conserve, use, and develop the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins for the welfare of the SWCD and to safeguard for Colorado all waters to which the state is entitled?

WATER DEFENSE: Any expenditures made from the Water Defense assignment shall be made for the purposes of: (1) to protecting or maintaining water rights now owned or subsequently acquired by District; or (2) to assist the District's participation in intra- and inter-state litigation, rulemaking or negotiations that the Board deems necessary to safeguard waters apportioned to Colorado and District water users, which cannot be absorbed within the amounts typically allocated for legal, technical and other related services.

WATER DEVELOPMENT: Any expenditures made from the Water Development assignment should ensure they help to conserve, use and/or develop the water resources within the District and should aim to maximize and diversify project benefits. Such expenditures should only be made for a project in which the District is the sole or a prime proponent. Funds should not be used to provide funding to other entities in SW Colorado.

This policy is meant to serve as guidance on the expenditure of assigned funds. The Board will review and revise this policy on an as-needed basis, but no less than every five years.

**AUTHORITY:**

Approved by the Board on





## THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Developing and Conserving the Waters in the  
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES  
West Building – 841 East Second Avenue  
DURANGO, COLORADO 81301  
(970) 247-1302

### BOARD MEMORANDUM

**From:** Steve Wolff and Mo Rock  
**Subject:** 4.4 - Approval of Strategic Plan Update  
**Date:** October 4, 2024

---

At our June 2024 meeting, staff presented some proposed updates to the Strategic Plan. The main impetus for the changes to the Strategic Plan was to incorporate the Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership Program into the document. Other updates include:

- Updated dates and revenues to show 2024 amounts
- Updated indicators as necessary and to show completed tasks and in progress tasks

At the Board meeting, some additional changes were proposed by Board members, and we have received a few additional changes since the June meeting. All changes have now been incorporated into the plan.

We see these changes as minor, and this effort does not encompass a full review of the District's Strategic Plan. We assume a complete review and update of the plan will occur in 2027 which will be 5-years after the original adoption. **We recommend the Board accept these changes and approve the updated plan as revised.**



*“To protect, conserve, and develop waters of the San Juan and Dolores Rivers and their tributaries in Southwestern Colorado, and safeguard for Colorado all waters of the basin to which the state is entitled.”*

## Southwestern Water Conservation District

Strategic Plan: 2022 – 2026

Adopted: February 17, 2022 – Updated May 2024

### Background

The Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) was created on April 16, 1941 by the Colorado General Assembly through House Bill #795 ([CRS 37-47-101 et seq.](#)). SWCD is comprised of all or part of nine counties in southwestern Colorado: Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan, San Miguel, and parts of Hinsdale, Mineral, and Montrose. Each Board of County Commissioners appoints one representative to the SWCD Board of Directors, which currently meets at least every other month.

SWCD’s statutory authority is to protect, conserve, use and develop the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins (Figure 1) for the welfare of the SWCD, and safeguard for Colorado all waters to which the state is entitled. Following this mandate, SWCD has assumed a broad strategic role on behalf of its diverse constituents for more than 80 years. That history is an important part of SWCD, and we plan to document the details of that history in a stand-alone document to be prepared in the future.

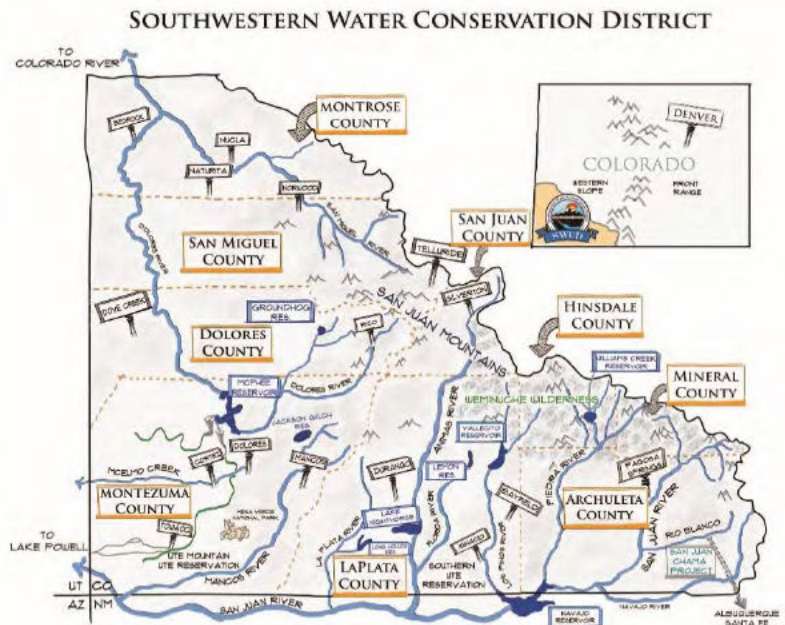


Figure 1. Map of the Southwestern Water Conservation District.

SWCD carries out this essential work thanks to a small tax levied on property within SWCD. For 2024, the Board of Directors adopted a budget showing total revenues of \$2,119,612 with \$2,063,286 in proposed operating expenses. SWCD’s ending fund balance for fiscal year 2023 was \$4,986,893. SWCD currently employs two full-time staff; a general manager, and a programs coordinator. SWCD contracts out for legal, engineering, and other needed professional services.

In 2019, the SWCD Board of Directors initiated discussions about the need to develop a strategic plan. Subsequently, the Board and SWCD staff, with support from Wellstone Collaborative Strategies, have worked to develop this plan.

## Strategic priorities

### 1. In coordination with the appropriate partners, ensure SWCD remains engaged in obtaining, updating and analyzing water supply, demand and quality data necessary to address the water management challenges facing southwest Colorado

**Overview:** As the demand for water resources increases and supplies simultaneously decline, more innovation and cooperation will be required to continue to manage our water effectively. At the forefront of this is the need for the best possible information on the quantity and quality of our supplies and the demand for those resources. Furthermore, in the face of reduced supplies, SWCD must prepare for inevitably tighter water administration, which only heightens the need for better water data.

SWCD is at ground zero when it comes to climate change and drought in the western United States, necessitating adaptation and resiliency in the face of increasingly hotter and drier conditions. Drought and climate have already impacted agriculture, municipal water supplies, and the environment.

- **Goal 1:** Through SWCD sponsorship and related partnerships, ensure ongoing data collection efforts on water supply, demand, and quality.
  - *Indicator 1:* In 2023, SWCD completed work to better understand intra-district water supply, demand and risks. We now will be working to initiate discussions with local water user entities on future needs and issues based on those findings.
  - *Indicator 2:* Continue to fund and support accurate and increased data collection on water quantity and quality in southwestern Colorado to encourage a common foundation of information for decision-making among diverse interests.
  - *Indicator 3:* By 2024, enhance funding partnerships (state, federal, local, or other) that support drought planning and implementation efforts.
  - *Indicator 4:* By 2026, SWCD is supporting the implementation/development of two to three regional water supply planning efforts for water users and providers at a sub-basin scale.
  
- **Goal 2:** SWCD and its stakeholders have the necessary data, tools, and agreements in place to understand, adapt to and be resilient in the face of extended drought and climate change.

- *Indicator 1:* Where needed, work to develop or support regional augmentation plans in water-short areas that can be utilized as a tool for climate and drought planning.

## 2. Lead advocacy for southwest Colorado in Colorado River, interstate, and transmountain issues

**Overview:** SWCD has a unique and important role to play as one of three entities in state with the statutory charge to safeguard the waters of the Colorado River Basin. As such, a primary goal of SWCD is to protect water for future generations, and interstate Colorado River issues may be one of the greatest threats to water supply certainty. Much of the water development activities in southwest Colorado are relatively recent as compared to some other river basins in Colorado, and there is concern how that may impact those water users. There is uncertainty how that could impact southwest Colorado water users.

Colorado River Basin issues are further exacerbated by a drier future with a decrease in supplies and an imbalance between supply and demand across the entire Colorado River Basin and in several places within SWCD. This priority points directly to our statutory charge to protect, conserve, use and develop the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins for the welfare of SWCD, and safeguard for Colorado all waters to which the state is entitled.

- **Goal 1:** Waters within SWCD, to the extent possible, are protected for current and future uses.
  - *Indicator 1:* SWCD continues to be engaged and helping to inform Colorado River Basin discussions at the SWCD, state, interstate, and federal levels to protect and advocate for southwestern Colorado's unique risks while leveraging similarities with other river basins in Colorado.
  - *Indicator 2:* Any newly negotiated Colorado River Basin operational guidelines are a product SWCD can support.
  - *Indicator 3:* Continue to monitor activities related to transmountain diversions that may impact the water supply within SWCD's boundaries. Respond accordingly and proportionately.
- **Goal 2:** Continue supporting both the Upper Colorado River and San Juan River Endangered Species Recovery Implementation programs (RIPs).
  - *Indicator 1:* Support the ongoing reauthorization and funding processes for the continued operations of the RIPs for 2024–2031.
  - *Indicator 2:* As appropriate, help facilitate the continued success of both RIPs into the future by remaining an active participant in both programs.

### 3. Balance meeting multiple water needs amongst a diverse set of priorities, especially when there is potential for conflict or mutual benefit

**Overview:** Water needs within SWCD are diverse and, in some cases, in conflict. Rather than advocating for any one water interest, SWCD supports balancing needs, being proactive, and identifying opportunities for win-win situations. Specific needs that SWCD hopes to help address through multi-purpose projects and collaborative water management include:

- **Tribal:** Support partnerships to help facilitate meeting tribal water needs.
- **Municipal / domestic water use, especially in small communities:** Try to serve as a resource to smaller communities that have a less certain water supply and/or are in the face of increasing demands.
- **Agriculture:** Agricultural water supplies have also dwindled in some basins due to drought. In addition, some irrigated lands have been subdivided, and the water rights are not being exercised as they were historically. Similarly, there is not as much farming and agricultural water use as there used to be due to generational shifts. There is a need to preserve historic agricultural rights and improve agricultural water conservation tools.
- **Environment:** Having a healthy environment and ensuring that native fish have sufficient clean water to survive is important. The endangered fish species recovery programs and CWCB's instream flow program need to be monitored and supported where appropriate, all the while considering future water development needs. The consumptive needs of the environment, such as cottonwoods and willows, are also important to the region's ecology.
- **Recreation:** The recreational economy, such as boating and fishing, is critical to southwest Colorado communities.
- **Water Quality:** Mine drainage, sediment, and temperature exceedances are specific areas of concern that must be addressed on some stream segments within SWCD.
- **Economic Viability of Local Communities:** Ensure the long-term, sustainable economic viability of our local communities and southwestern Colorado.

**Goal 1:** Work with and support all stakeholders in water management discussions. Always seek consensus and attempt to minimize potential conflicts through active planning and engagement.

- *Indicator 1:* Support integrated water planning efforts through funding and engagement. As appropriate, meet regularly with local water users to discuss and plan for future water needs. This effort includes understanding the water supply, water rights and water demands in SWCD to meet multiple needs. Scenarios identified in the Southwest Basin Implementation Plan may help guide this effort.
- *Indicator 2:* SWCD will seek to strengthen relationships with the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute Tribes and identify opportunities to partner with on water management issues. Establish regular coordination efforts with Tribal Councils.

- *Indicator 3:* Work collaboratively with the diverse partnerships present in the San Juan and Dolores River basins to support ways to address the multiple sets of water quantity and quality priorities.
- *Indicator 4:* Continue lead role for the Southwest Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership efforts.

## 4. Support investment in improvements to existing and development of new infrastructure and conservation projects for multiple uses and users in southwest Colorado

**Overview:** There is a significant amount of aging infrastructure that requires evaluation, rehabilitation, and reinvestment. The challenges and costs to rebuild and repair are considerable. Yet it is important for maximizing storage, ensuring agricultural deliveries, enhancement of native fish and ecological restoration needs, and supplying municipal needs for communities that this infrastructure be restored and maintained.

Deteriorating agricultural ditches, diversions, and reservoirs need to be repaired and improved. Moreover, efficiency in agricultural water deliveries is a critical issue in record dry hydrologic conditions.

Municipal infrastructure must upgrade water and wastewater treatment to keep up with new water quality regulations. In addition, some municipal water supplies needed for future growth are not fully secured. Several small rural municipalities in southwest Colorado do not have adequate domestic water supply for dry summers. SWCD can support these communities evaluate their supply gaps, implement strategies to address their needs, and seek state funding.

Additional water storage may be a valuable tool for southwestern Colorado, particularly in drier hydrologic conditions. Maximizing existing storage within SWCD can involve activities such as dredging, expanding storage at existing reservoirs, rehabilitating existing dams that have fallen into disrepair or no longer meet public safety standards, and securing and constructing new storage facilities. Several aging reservoirs within SWCD are under storage restrictions to protect the public, and the costs for their repair and rehabilitation are major challenges to continue their operation. SWCD should serve as a key local advocate for state and federal funding to support these much-needed projects.

And finally, under a severe climate scenario, southwest Colorado's risk for natural disasters is greatly increased. Forest fires can have devastating impacts on reservoirs, run-off, and water quality. Southwest Colorado is expected to experience increased damage due to wildfires. SWCD must remain involved in forest health discussions, to support the connections to water supply conditions.

- **Goal 1:** Water infrastructure restoration needs, water supply planning, conservation and protection opportunities are identified.
  - *Indicator 1:* Ensure that opportunities brought by the 2021 infrastructure bill are realized, which will entail working with federal, state and local entities to identify and develop projects worthy of funding
  - *Indicator 2:* Ensure SWCD’s grant program prioritizes use of funds to leverage state and federal dollars to maximize the benefit of our resources to meet the goals of SWCD.
  - *Indicator 3:* *Indicator 4:* Continue lead role for the Southwest Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership efforts.

## 5. Strengthen the continued professional and efficient operation of SWCD while building a culture of mutual trust and respect

**Overview:** Building and maintaining a culture of mutual trust and respect among SWCD staff, Board members, consultants, and stakeholders is essential to developing consensus around unifying goals, enhancing partnerships, engendering the engagement of relevant stakeholders, and ultimately advancing SWCD’s mission. SWCD’s internal culture must serve as an example of how our partners, stakeholders, and even adversaries are treated. SWCD’s internal operations must be trustworthy as well, with continued responsible fiscal management, a culture of public transparency in our operations, and a constant effort of “customer service”.

Professionalism is the foundation for building an internal culture of respect and trust, as it empowers SWCD representatives to stay focused on their common goals, undeterred by unrelated issues that derail progress and distract from the SWCD’s statutory obligations to its constituents. For example, having clear staff job descriptions, director responsibilities, and fluid communication with SWCD consultants ensures that expectations of each team member’s contributions are clear.

With SWCD’s lean budget and limited capacity, Board, staff, and consultant commitment to efficiency is critical to achieving SWCD’s other strategic priorities. Improving operational efficiency starts with the development of this strategic plan, which will guide the SWCD team in focusing its efforts and budgeted resources toward identified priorities and related outcomes. Efficiencies can also be sought in small ways, such as seeking improved, cost-effective office management techniques or implementing standing policies to guide financial management so the Board can focus on water policy and advocacy.

- **Goal 1:** Increase professionalism by establishing clear expectations for the SWCD’s team.
  - *Indicator 2:* By 2025, adopt director responsibilities and board code of conduct.
  -
- **Goal 2:** Align SWCD resources and activities with strategic plan priorities.
  - *Indicator 1:* Board and staff annually review and update, as needed, strategic plan.
  - *Indicator 2:* Continue to evaluate SWCD staffing needs with the Board.

- *Indicator 3:* Ensure budgeted resources are directed towards strategic plan priorities.
- *Indicator 4:* Further improve coordination and utilization of SWCD consultant team to ensure agility and efficiency.
- **Goal 3:** Facilitate inclusive conversations, prioritize transparency, and seek active stakeholder input for strategic Board decisions.
  - 
  - *Indicator 1:* SWCD Board meetings will be led by the president in a clear fashion that encourages Board engagement, allows space for public participation, and facilitates board consensus on key decisions.
  - *Indicator 2:* SWCD staff will ensure that Board agendas and materials (as appropriate) are available for public review and time allowed for public comment and participation.



## 6. Cultivate SWCD credibility with decision-makers and public through targeted outreach efforts

**Overview:** SWCD’s policy efforts are effective when its voice and mission are easily identified by local and state decisionmakers, as well as its constituents. Building SWCD’s name recognition and credibility will require prioritizing public outreach to brand SWCD as southwest Colorado’s water expert and the “go-to” on water policy in our corner of the state. While the SWCD maintains a group of interested supporters, focused outreach can expand our base constituency, increase communication and collaboration with key partners, and generally improve visibility of SWCD’s work with the public. Moreover, strengthening SWCD’s digital communication infrastructure will prepare its efforts to convey advocacy messages or other urgent information to key leaders and constituents.

Furthermore, any public entity should be able to clearly justify to taxpayers its value and need. In that sense, public outreach reinforces SWCD accountability to constituents by regularly reporting SWCD activities, policy positions, and goals directly to them. Increased outreach would also seek to meet the public’s expectations regarding accessibility in the digital age by entering the communications spaces they engage with regularly. Finally, should a future board wish to request a tax increase from voters, SWCD will be better positioned having already implemented key outreach strategies.

- **Goal 1: Increase** SWCD mission recognition and credibility with target audiences.
  - *Indicator 1:* By 2025, SWCD staff have developed and presented to the Board for consideration an “elevator speech” and tagline that adequately summarizes SWCD’s work.
- **Goal 2: Develop** and operate a SWCD outreach program that can provide information, education and support to water users across the basin.
  - *Indicator 1:* Continue to provide educational opportunities and information on targeted topics to the public via the Annual Water Seminar, Fall Connections Program, Children’s Water Festival, Nine Basins Bulletin and other avenues.



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(970) 247-1302

**BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**From:** Steve Wolff & Mo Rock  
**Subject:** 2025 SWCD Director Terms Expiring (*Informational*)  
**Date:** October 03, 2024

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As occurs each year, the terms of three SWCD Directors will expire on the day of the first regular SWCD Board meeting in 2025. For 2025, this includes:

Dolores County  
Kenny Heldman, Montrose County  
Rusty Hinger, Mineral County

In mid-November, SWCD staff will send notice letters to each of these counties requesting they reappoint the current director or appoint a new individual. Any appointee must have been both a resident of the county for at least two years prior to the date of his or her appointment and an owner of real property in the county who has paid property taxes in that county in the last calendar year. Appointments are for a term of three years and, according to statute, **must be made at the first Board of County Commissioner meeting in January 2025.**

Once an appointment has been made, the county must complete a Notice of Appointment and have the appointee sign and have notarized the Oath of Office. Any appointee may not commence duties as a District director until these documents have been received.



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**BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**From: Mo Rock**

**Subject: 4.8 Update and Invite to SWCD’s Water Connections Event**

**Date: October 06, 2024**

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This memorandum updates the SWCD Board on SWCD’s annual Water Connections Event. This year, SWCD is partnering with SGM, Fort Lewis College, and Rocky Mountain PBS (New) for their annual water connections event. The event will kick off with a happy hour, with appetizers and drinks, followed by Rocky Mountain PBS’ film (produced by Christi Bodi) titled: “The Ute Water Legacy”. After the film, we will host a panel and facilitate discussion with the audience.

The Panel:

- Manuel Heart, Chairman, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Council
- Lorelei Cloud, Vice Chairman, Southern Ute Indian Tribe and and CWCB Board Member
- Christine Arbogast, Kogovsek & Associates and Vice-President of the Colorado Water Congress
- Trent Taylor, Local Ag Producer
- Moderator: TBD

The event will take place on October 23, 2024 during Fort Lewis’ water week at 5:00 p.m.

# SAVE THE DATE



## A FORT LEWIS COLLEGE WATER WEEK 2024 EVENT

Join us for a reception and special film screening of **“The Ute Water Legacy”**  
A new Rocky Mountain PBS Colorado Experience episode  
from local filmmaker Christi Bode

**Panel discussion to follow:**

Vice Chairman Lorelei Cloud - Southern Ute Indian Tribe

Chairman Manuel Heart - Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Christine Arbogast - Colorado Water Congress

Trent Taylor - Owner, Blue Horizon Farms, Hesperus, CO

**Moderator:** Becky Mitchell - Upper Colorado River Commissioner

**This event is free and open to the public!**

**Wednesday, October 23rd 2024**  
**Fort Lewis College Student Union Ballroom**  
Reception: 5-6 PM | Program: 6-8 PM

For additional details or questions, email [water@fortlewis.edu](mailto:water@fortlewis.edu)



## THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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### BOARD MEMORANDUM

**From:** Mo Rock

**Subject:** 4.9 Request to Increase the Capitol Asset Threshold

**Date:** October 03, 2024

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During the 2023 Audit, FZA recommended SWCD increase the threshold for capital assets. Currently, the District lists any purchase of or exceeding \$1,000 as a capital asset, which then must be depreciated over time. FZA recommended anything in the \$2,500 to \$5,000 would be more appropriate. **SWCD staff is recommending the SWCD Board of Directors increase the capitol asset threshold to \$2,500.**

# Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership Update





**THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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**BOARD MEMORANDUM**

**From: Mo Rock & Steve Wolff**

**Subject: 6.1 SWCD Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership B2E Update**

**Date: October 06, 2024**

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This memorandum updates the SWCD board on the current status of the SWCD Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership’s (Partnership) application to the Bureau of Reclamation’s Bucket 2E grant program. SWCD, Strategic by Nature, the Theodore Conservation Partnership, and Harris Water Engineering have been diligently gathering the required information for their B2E application. Currently, SWCD is on track to submit the application by October 14<sup>th</sup> (the original deadline), even though this deadline was recently extended to November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Some additional information on specific projects being submitted as part of this application follows this memo.

The announcement on the B2W grant (“durable water conservation projects”) is still expected to be released this fall but appears to be delayed due to ongoing discussions between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Upper Division States.



SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S

## WATER CONSERVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERSHIP

# Southwestern Water Conservation District's Upper Basin Environmental Drought Mitigation Application through their Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership

## Project Summary Details

### Background

SWCD's Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership (Partnership) is a robust collaboration led by SWCD and involves over 30 active entities throughout Southwest Colorado; this partnership focuses on increasing the capacity in Southwest Colorado by implementing a community navigator and bundling partner projects together to better access the unprecedented funding currently available.

On behalf of the partnership, SWCD is requesting B2E funding for a bundle of multi-benefit projects that restore ecosystems and habitats impacted by drought in southwestern Colorado. Project sites include the Dolores River, Yellowjacket Creek, Mancos River, Animas River, Uncompahgre River, and the San Juan River which are part of the Upper Colorado River Basin. Project work will include bank stabilization, invasive species removal, riparian and process-based restoration, fish passage and habitat connectivity, erosion control, and fen and wetland restoration. These projects were selected based on their impact, feasibility and readiness, and level of stakeholder/community engagement in the region.

### Project Partners

The following project supports are expected to provide a letter of support.

- Animas Watershed Partnership
- Archuleta County
- Bureau of Land Management
- City of Durango
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Division of Water Resources
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Dolores River Restoration Partnership
- Dolores Watershed Partnership
- Fort Lewis College, 4Corners Water Center
- J-U-B Engineers
- La Plata County
- Mancos Conservation District
- Mesa Verde National Park
- Montrose County
- Montezuma County
- Ouray County
- Private Landowners
- Colorado River Water Conservation District
- San Juan County
- San Juan National Forest
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Southwest Conservation Corps (Conservation Legacy)
- Town of Mancos
- Town of Silverton
- Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



## Budget Details

For project detailed budgets please see the B2E Application Budget, [found here](#).

*\*BOR Request Amount is the total amount requested by the project proponent and a 10% inflation contingency. This amount does NOT include in-direct costs.*

**Table 1.1 – Total Project Budget by Categories**

Project Category	No. of Projects	BOR Request Amount
Invasive Removal	5	\$5,404,736
Erosion Control and Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration	9	\$5,450,377
Habitat Connectivity and Fish Passage	4	\$11,455,093
<b>SWCD In Direct Costs (10%)</b>		\$2,231,021
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>\$25,036,042</b>

**Table 1.2 – Detailed Project Budget by Categories**

Project Category	Project Amount	Match Amount	Inflation Contingency	Total Project Budget
Invasive Removal	\$4,913,396	\$250,000	\$491,340	\$5,654,736
Erosion Control and Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration	\$4,954,888	\$1,852,500	\$495,489	\$7,302,877
Habitat Connectivity and Fish Passage	\$10,413,721	\$880,775	\$1,041,372	\$12,335,868
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$20,282,005</b>	<b>\$2,983,275</b>	<b>\$2,028,201</b>	<b>\$25,293,481</b>

## Project Details

For more project details please see the Project Criteria Checklist and Details, [found here](#).

*Budgets are rounded and based on current information, they continue to be updated and refined. The values highlighted are estimates only without detailed budgets. The current total REQUEST AMOUNT is \$28,019,317 including in-direct cost assumptions and inflation contingency (does NOT include all TBD and confidential projects).*

*\*Request Amount is the total BOR Project request including inflation contingency.*

*\*\*Projects are waiting for proponent approval - DO NOT REFERENCE AT THIS TIME but you could mention project type in summaries.*

**Table 2.1 – Project Details**

<b>ID</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Project Proponent</b>	<b>Priority Benefit</b>	<b>Basin</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Request Amount*</b>
<b><i>Project Category: Invasive Removal</i></b>						
1	Invasive Phreatophyte Control (Montezuma County)	Mancos Conservation District	Invasive removal	Mancos	Montezuma	\$347,429
2	Invasive Phreatophyte Control (La Plata County)	Mountain Studies Institute	Invasive removal	Animas	La Plata	\$623,943
3	Yellowjacket Creek Stream Restoration	Bureau of Land Management	Treat entire sub-basin for invasives, endangered fish downstream	McElmo	Montezuma	\$1,320,000
4	Dolores River Restoration Partnership	RiversEdge West	Support 3 species agreement and downstream endangered fish	Dolores	Mesa, Montrose, San Miguel	\$2,232,761
5	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b><i>Project Category: Erosion Control and Low Tech Process-Based Restoration (LTPBR)</i></b>						
6	Animas River Bank Stabilization	Animas Watershed Partnership	Bank stabilization	Animas	La Plata	\$2,773,650
7	Beaver deceivers/flow devices in the Mancos Watershed	Mancos Conservation District	LTPBRs	Mancos	Montezuma	\$19,360
8	Mancos Canyon Road Erosion Control (WAITING CONFIRMATION)**	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	LTPBRs	Mancos	Montezuma	\$495,000
9	Mancos River System Restoration	Mancos Conservation District	LTPBRs	Mancos	Montezuma	\$222,420
10	Ironton Park Restoration*	Mountain Studies Institute	Fen restoration	Uncompahgre	Ouray	\$712,643
11	Animas Headwaters Wetland and Stream Restoration	Mountain Studies Institute	Fen restoration	Animas	San Juan	\$794,792

12	Cement Creek Restoration	Mountain Studies Institute	Fen restoration	Animas	San Juan	\$219,529
13	Snow Spur Creek Restoration	San Juan National Forest & National Forest Foundation	Colorado Cutthroat Trout	Dolores	Dolores	\$49,500
14	Mancos Canyon Stream Restoration (WAITING CONFIRMATION)**	Ute Mountain Ute Tribe	LTPBRs	Mancos	Montezuma	\$163,482
<b><i>Project Category: Habitat Connectivity and Fish Passage</i></b>						
15	Park Ditch Diversion Restoration and Stream Restoration	Upper San Juan Watershed Enhancement Partnership	connectivity	San Juan	Archuleta	\$2,232,952
16	Mancos River Improvements through the Town of Mancos	Mancos Conservation District	connectivity	Mancos	Montezuma	\$553,620
17	Wines Ditch Diversion Restoration and Fish Passage	Colorado Parks and Wildlife	Support 3 species agreement and downstream endangered fish	Dolores	Mesa	\$6,526,520
18	Webber Ditch Diversion Restoration and Fish Passage	Webber Ditch Company	connectivity	Mancos	Montezuma	\$2,142,001

**DRAFT**  
**SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**FINANCIAL OPERATIONS & GRANTS COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:** Financial Operations & Grants Coordinator

**Reports to:** General Manager

**Type of Position:** Full-time

**Hours:** Approximately 40 hrs/week

**Status:** Non-exempt

**Effective Date:**

**Summary of Job Description:**

The Financial Operations & Grants Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the financial activities of the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD). This includes reviewing and submitting payroll for approval, accounts payable/receivable, budgeting, financial reporting, supporting the annual audit and coordinate grant reimbursements for the SWCD Grant Program.

Additionally, the Coordinator manages funding and compliance activities associated with the **SWCD Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership (Partnership)**.

**SWCD Financial Duties and Responsibilities – 40%**

**Accounts Payable and Receivable**

- Process invoices, reconcile vendor statements, and follow up on past-due payments.  
Accounts
- Handle accounts receivable, including tax disbursements from nine counties and interest income from investments

**Recording Financial Transactions:**

- Posting daily transactions such as sales, purchases, receipts, and payments into accounting software

**Budget Management**

- Collaborate with the General Manager to draft and monitor the annual SWCD budget.
- Coordinate with nine counties on mill levy certifications and ensure compliance with statutory budget requirements.
- Draft and monitor the annual budget for the Water Information Program (WIP).
- Manage the general ledger for the recording of day-to-day financial activities

**Financial Reporting & Reconciliation**

- Reconcile SWCD accounts and generate regular financial reports for the Board.
- Maintain accurate financial records for the District and ensure timely financial reporting.
- Generate expenditure tracking reports and program budget analyses as required.

Draft – 10/4/24

### **Annual Audit Support**

- Assist with the annual audit process by preparing required financial documents.
- Work directly with external auditors to provide necessary financial data and ensure compliance with audit procedures.

### **Payroll and Employee Benefits Administration**

- Oversee payroll processing, including leave accounting and benefit programs such as insurance and retirement plans.
- Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local employment laws as they relate to payroll and financial operations.

### **Financial Planning and Analysis**

- Assist the General Manager in financial forecasting and planning to ensure long-term financial sustainability for SWCD.
- Support the General Manager in analyzing financial performance and identifying cost-saving opportunities.

### **Bill Payments & Invoicing for SWCD Programs**

- Work closely with the Programs Coordinator and General Manager to ensure that all program-related bills are paid in a timely manner and that invoices are sent out correctly.
- Track incoming payments for services rendered under SWCD programs, including the collection of outstanding balances.
- Maintain accurate financial records related to invoicing and payments and generate periodic financial reports for the Board.
- Ensure that program expenditures align with approved budgets and provide regular updates on the financial status of programs to the General Manager.
- Establish a tracking document to manage SWCD programs, and coordinate contract invoices and payments are sent to the District in a timely manner.

### **Miscellaneous Financial Duties:**

- Process and distribute incoming and outgoing mail related to financial matters.
- Provide financial documentation and support for special projects as requested by the General Manager or Board.
- Ensure adherence to SWCD's financial policies and compliance with applicable financial regulations.
- Provide financial support to the SWCD Grants Program

## **SWCD's Water Conservation and Infrastructure Partnership – 60%**

### **Grant Application and Proposal Development**

- Assist the Partnership team with establishing budget estimates for projects within grant proposals
- Collaborate with stakeholders and funding partners to secure water conservation and infrastructure project contributions.

### **Grant Disbursement to Sub-Award Recipients**

- Manage the grant award process and ensure compliance with grant guidelines.
- Work closely with the Programs Coordinator and General Manager to review grant documentation and ensure all reporting and financial requirements are met before disbursement.
- Process and disburse grant reimbursements for the Partnership.
- Ensure that all required documentation, such as contracts and agreements, are complete and accessible for auditing purposes.

### **Grant Management**

- Communicate with grantors and funding partners to address any discrepancies or changes in grant spending or project scope.
- Track and maintain records of grant reimbursements and ensure compliance with grant guidelines.
- Monitor and track grant spending to ensure budget and funding guidelines adherence.
- Maintain accurate and organized records of all grant activities, from application to project closeout.
- Establish and maintain systems for tracking grant expenses, budgets, and reporting deadlines.
- Monitor grant-funded projects for progress, making sure all activities comply with the terms and conditions of the grant.

### **Financial Management and Reporting**

- Prepare, review, and submit financial reports to federal agencies according to grant requirements.
- Prepare and present periodic grant reports to the Board, outlining the financial status and overall performance of grants related to water conservation and infrastructure projects.
- Prepare periodic grant reimbursement reports for the Board, outlining disbursement status and any outstanding grant obligations.
- Provide regular status updates to the Partnership and the SWCD Board.

### **Compliance and Audits**

- Ensure adherence to all grant reporting requirements, including timely submission of financial reports, progress updates, and other required documentation to funding agencies.
- Maintain detailed records of grant expenditures, ensuring all spending complies with grant guidelines and budget allocations.
- Ensure that all required documentation, such as contracts, agreements, and reports, is complete and accessible for auditing purposes.
- Work with external auditors or grant evaluators to provide necessary financial and progress reports for grant compliance reviews.

# Partner Updates





## Elaine Chick - WIP Update – October 9 - 10, 2024

- **Water Law in a Nutshell Course** – WIP is presenting another in-person eight-hour Water Law in a Nutshell course taking place Thursday, October 17, 2024 at the Lone Cone Library in Norwood. WIP covers all the expenses, and we do charge for registration. Aaron Clay will be facilitating this eight-hour course. At this time, we have 25 people registered. I am hoping for 40. The course offers 8 CE for Realtors, 8 CLE for Lawyers, and 4 CE for appraisers. Please see the attached flyer.

Please help spread the word.

- **WIP Year End Partner Meeting**  
The WIP year-end partner/steering committee meeting was held on September 25, 2024. There were seven WIP partners in attendance. Elaine provided an overview of all activities completed in 2024. The WIP contract, scope of work, and 2025 budget were reviewed and approved. The partners in attendance motioned to recommend the contract, scope of work, and 2025 budget for SWCD's review and final approval.
- **SWCD/WIP Steering Committee Policy** – Partners who wish to be part of the WIP Steering Committee will need to have a contribution no less that \$500.
- **WIP Website – New Construction for ADA Compliance**  
Elaine is collaborating with Streamline to redevelop a new ADA-compliant WIP website. She will be reviewing all files, links, and necessary updates, while actively working with Streamline on the site's design and development.
- **Southwest Basins Roundtable Website is Now Live!**  
As I may have mentioned before, the SW Basins Roundtable website is live. Please check it out. The link is: <https://swbasinsroundtable.org/>
- **WIP/PEPO Educational Video:**  
Elaine spent considerable time on the coordination and preproduction of the Agricultural video that was proposed between WIP and PEPO. Elaine was collaborating with the Dolores Water Conservancy District to identify identified three key priorities they would like to be included in the video's content as well as identify local farmers and ranchers to interview. Unfortunately, due to delays in getting the information in a timely manner and trying to contact ranchers and farmers to agree to participate, combined with a very wet summer, we ran out of time with our videographer, Christi Bode, to proceed with the video this year. Christi had other commitments and projects that had been confirmed, so she could no longer commit and wait for us to move forward. We are looking forward to continuing with this next spring. Hopefully.



The Water Information Program Presents



# Water Law in a Nutshell



*facilitated by Mr. Aaron Clay, Attorney at Law and former 26-year  
Water Referee for the Colorado Water Court, Division 4*

**Thursday, October 17, 2024**  
**8:30 AM to 5:00 PM**

**Location: Lone Cone Library, Norwood, CO**

**Continuing Education Credits Available:**

Realtors CE: 8 hours  
Assessors CE: 4 hours  
Attorneys: 8 hours CLE

We are pleased to once again present this in-person, full day water law course. Don't miss this rare opportunity to learn with Aaron Clay in Norwood, CO! The last full day course sold out!

This full day seminar will cover all aspects of the law related to water rights and ditch rights as applied in Colorado. Subject matter includes the appropriation, perfection, use, limitations, attributes, abandonment and enforcement of various types of water rights. Additional subject matter will include special rules for groundwater, public rights in appropriated water, interstate compacts, and more.

**Even if you have done this course or one of the on-line short courses, it is a great refresher as there is so much information to absorb!**

We welcome EVERYONE, from anywhere in Colorado, including landowners, realtors, lawyers, water district employees, teachers, and anyone else interested in water law.

For 26 years as water referee at the Colorado Water Court, Clay brings his wealth of knowledge that earned him a reputation as one of the top experts in water law, to this 8 hour "Water Law in a Nutshell" course.

**Registration fee is \$125.00 which includes lunch and course materials. \*\*\$160.00 if you wish to receive Continuing Education Credits (includes lunch and course materials)**

***Pre-registration is required!***

**To register or for more information, click here  
or visit our website: [waterinfo.org](http://waterinfo.org)**

# MEMO



**COLORADO**

**Colorado Water  
Conservation Board**

Department of Natural Resources

To: SWCD Board of Directors and Staff  
From: Laura Spann, CWCB  
Contact: 720.916.7723, [laura.spann@state.co.us](mailto:laura.spann@state.co.us)  
Subject: Brief CWCB Funding Update  
Date: September 25, 2024

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## Local Capacity & Technical Assistance Programs **Deadline - Oct 15**

- ~\$500,000 is still available to help project proponents submit a federal grant request.
- Awards must be made and contracts executed by December 31, 2024.
- Please reach out to me or Michael Regan, [michael.regan@state.co.us](mailto:michael.regan@state.co.us), with questions.

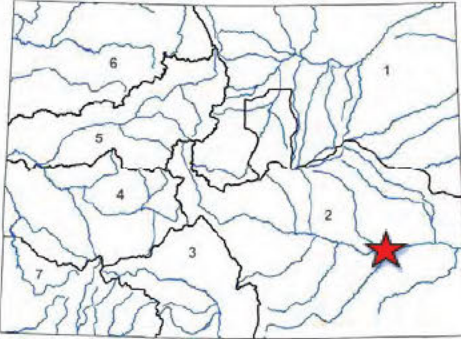
## Water Plan Grant Program **Deadline - Dec 1**

- ~\$14.0 million available for Dec 1 Water Plan Grant applications and awards
- In September, 32 Water Plan Grant applications totaling \$9.3 million were approved, two of which from southwest Colorado (Animas River Plan Phase II, Big Stick Ditch Company). Several other awards are for projects partially conducted in southwest Colorado or statewide.
- Replicable idea? The Colorado Canal Company (Arkansas basin) was awarded \$95,975 for a “strategic water plan” for their ditch company, which has municipal and agricultural water users, infrastructure needs, and wants to map its future. See the attached summary.

## Water Supply Reserve Fund (WSRF) for Southwest Colorado **Deadline - Dec 23**

- Current WSRF Southwest Basin Account Balance \$463,214, FY 24-25 allocation will be made this month (September), increasing balance to \$750,000
- Current WSRF Statewide Balance - \$5.6 million
- Next WSRF deadline - December 23 for review at the January 23 Southwest Basins Roundtable meeting in Cortez.

## Water Plan Grant Program Application



LOCATION	
County/Countries:	Crowley, Pueblo
Drainage Basin:	Arkansas

DETAILS	
Total Project Cost:	\$127,975.00
Water Plan Grant Request:	\$95,975.00
Recommended amount:	\$95,975.00
Other CWCB Funding:	\$0
Other Funding Amount:	\$0
Applicant Match:	\$32,000.00
Project Type:	Design & Engineering
Project Category:	Agriculture
Measurable Result:	120 Coloradans impacted by engagement activities

Colorado Water Plan Grant funding will support the development of a strategic water management plan to assess opportunities for improving and sustaining operations by modernizing infrastructure and implementing new water management strategies. The resulting plan will clarify the most effective ways to ensure the long-term sustainability of irrigated agriculture for company shareholders.

The Colorado Canal Company operates a water collection, delivery, and storage system as part of a larger system that includes the Twin Lakes Reservoir and Canal Company, Lake Meredith Reservoir, and Lake Henry Reservoir near Ordway. The proposed strategic planning project aims to evaluate the most sustainable and resilient future for the Colorado Canal Company and its shareholders, addressing challenges like aging infrastructure and the future of agricultural production in the region.

The project will include the following components: review of ditch system operations to identify water delivery service needs, survey of farm shareholders about company operations and future direction, economic analysis of current farm operations in the company service area, analysis of capital projects and operational concepts that provide water and economic benefits to the company and the development of a strategic plan to guide the company's efforts and investments.

The majority of Water Plan Grant dollars would go toward engaging farm stakeholders in the analysis of current operations, identifying capital infrastructure enhancements and developing new water management strategies to improve water deliveries and ensure economic viability for company shareholders.

This project demonstrates a commitment to collaboration by including agricultural and municipal shareholders. Creating a strategic plan for continued farming operations in the face of multiple water challenges is in alignment with the goals of the Colorado Water Plan and the Arkansas Basin Implementation Plan. This project represents an innovative, scalable, and replicable approach to agricultural water management planning.

### Funding Recommendation:

Staff recommends full funding of \$95,975.00 to the Colorado Canal Company for the Colorado Canal Company Strategic Water Plan.

# Legislative Affairs



## **2024 Interim Legislative Report – September 30, 2024**

### **Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee**

The WRARC held its final meeting for 2024 on September 18 and voted on what bills to forward to Legislative Council as interim committee bills. The committee approved eight bills, 3 of which have a water nexus.

#### **Bill 4: Mining Reclamation & Interstate Compact (aka, “Legacy Mining and Modernization Act)**

The bill creates a new permit type in the Department of Natural Resources for the removal of mining waste and refuse, updates forfeiture and warranty procedures related to mining operations, and ratifies Colorado as a full member of the Interstate Mining Compact.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_4\\_25-0157.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_4_25-0157.01.pdf)

#### **Bill 9: Backflow Prevention Devices Requirements**

The bill specifies that backflow device inspection, testing, or repair does not require plumbing occupational licensure from the Department of Regulatory Agencies. This corrects unintended consequences of changes made in a Plumbing Board Sunset provision (HB24-1344) last session.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_9\\_25-0162.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_9_25-0162.01.pdf)

#### **Bill 12: Future of Severance Taxes & Water Funding Task Force**

This bill creates a task force concerning the future of severance taxes and water funding, which will work with a third party to conduct a study on severance taxes and water funding and develop recommendations for ways to continue funding water needs in the face of decreasing severance taxes.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_12\\_25-0165.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_12_25-0165.01.pdf)

The committee discussed two other bills related to water but the proponents pulled them from consideration and the bills. Both bills were very controversial and had a lot of opposition as drafted.

#### **Bill 8: Revegetation Requirements Water Rights Holders**

This is being brought forward by Rep. Karen McCormick, which outlines some *reasonable provisions* within current law requiring a water court ruling approving a change from agricultural irrigation purposes to other beneficial uses to include “reasonable provisions designed to accomplish revegetation and noxious weed management form with irrigation water is removed.

The bill requires reasonable provisions include:

- A revegetation standard to be met along with a methodology to evaluate the completion of revegetation standard and that other reasonable provisions:
  - Are the responsibility of the applicable water rights holder

- Are completed no later than five years after the issuance of the ruling or decree that establishes the reasonable provisions; or no later than five years after the cessation of irrigation (whichever is later)
- Are certified complete by and independent third party with expertise in revegetation

It will also allow water courts to:

- Reverse a change of use of a ruling should the water rights holder not comply with the reasonable provisions
- Reinstate a change of ruling when the completion of reasonable provisions are achieved and demonstrated through an independent third party.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_8\\_25-0161.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_8_25-0161.pdf)

**PULLED FROM CONSIDERATION/UNCLEAR IF IT WILL COME BACK DURING THE REGULAR SESSION**

#### **Bill 10: Transparency in Water Right Transactions**

The bill required the Division of Water Resources to create an online database of information detailing the sale and purchase of all water rights in the state. The division must create an online form and instructions for buyers and sellers of a water right to submit information to the division. The bill details specific information that buyers and sellers must file. The requirement to file water rights purchase information begins January 1, 2026. The State Engineer may adopt any rules necessary to implement the online database, and create a fee schedule to cover the direct and indirect costs of maintaining the database, including costs to support the public's use of all forms and displays. Fee revenue is deposited in the Water Resources Cash Fund. Current law exempts the transfer of ownership of company stock constituting a water right from the general procedures required of real estate transactions. The bill removed this exemption, and required that these water right transfers follow the same procedures and formalities that are required for other real estate transactions.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_10\\_25-0163.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_10_25-0163.pdf)

**PULLED FROM CONSIDERATION/UNCLEAR IF IT WILL COME BACK DURING THE REGULAR SESSION**

### **American Indian Affairs Interim Study Committee**

The American Indian Affairs Interim Study Committee held its final meeting on September 26. The committee discussed five bill drafts and approved 3 to move forward as interim committee bills.

#### **Bill 1: American Indian Affairs Interim Committee**

This bill creates the American Indian Affairs Interim Committee as a permanent interim committee through the 2029 legislative interim.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_1\\_25-0202.01pdf.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_1_25-0202.01pdf.pdf)

#### **Bill 2: Federally Recognized Tribes & Construction of Laws**

The bill clarifies which laws passed by the General Assembly do and do not apply to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_2\\_25-0203.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_2_25-0203.01.pdf)

## **PULLED FROM CONSIDERATION**

### **Bill 3: Protect Wild Bison**

The bill classifies bison as big game wildlife unless the bison is livestock, and makes it illegal to hunt bison unless authorized by the state.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_3\\_25-0204.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_3_25-0204.01.pdf)

### **Bill 4: Cultural Competency Continuing Education Requirement**

The bill requires continuing medical education requirements to include one credit hour on American Indian Cultural Competency as determined by a stakeholder process.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_4\\_25-0205.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_4_25-0205.01.pdf)

## **PULLED FROM CONSIDERATION**

### **Bill 5: Recognition of Tribal Court Orders**

The bill requires state courts, law enforcement, hospitals, behavioral health facilities, and health care providers to recognize and enforce tribal court orders, arrest warrants, and civil commitment orders.

[https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill\\_5\\_25-0206.01.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/bill_5_25-0206.01.pdf)

## **Reg. 87 - Colorado Dredge and Fill Program Implementation (HB24-1379)**

On May 30, 2024, House Bill (HB) 24-1379 was signed into law. The intent of the legislation is to ensure that state waters are protected from the impacts of dredge and fill activity after the U.S. Supreme Court drastically limited the scope of federal protection under the Clean Water Act through its decision in *Sackett v. EPA*.

HB24-1379 directs the Water Quality Control Division to develop a dredge and fill authorization program and the Water Quality Control Commission to establish permitting and mitigation rules by Dec. 31, 2025. The outcome will be Regulation No. 87, a control regulation for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating the impacts of dredge and fill activity.

### **2024 scheduled meetings**

- Wednesday, Sept. 4, 2024 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024 | 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2024 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

### **2025 scheduled meetings**

- Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, March 20, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, April 16, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, May 22, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, June 18, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, July 23, 2025 | 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.



- Thursday, Aug. 21, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 18, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Thursday, Oct. 23, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025 | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

## **Ballot Initiative Update**

There will be 14 statewide ballot initiatives on the ballot this year. A couple of them are of interest to SWCD.

Amendment G expands eligibility for reduced property taxes under the homestead exemption for veterans. This could result in lower property tax revenues, which could have impacts to special district funding.

Proposition JJ allows the state to keep excess revenue from the sports betting tax, which passed in 2019. This additional revenue would go toward the state's water plan implementation cash fund and water conservation projects. The excess revenue is projected to be between \$2.8 to \$7.2 million over the next three years.

The CLS newsletter summarizing all of the ballot initiatives is attached.

## **Upcoming Important Dates**

October 11-18 – Ballots mailed out to voters

November 5 – General Election

January 8 – 2025 General Assembly convenes

CLS will send out periodic updates regarding important election information, including a report and analysis of the general election results, including ballot measure results. We will also send out updates following quarterly state budget forecasts.





## **COLORADO LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES NEWSLETTER**

### **September Economic & Revenue Forecast**

**September 20, 2024**

#### **Introduction**

As the leaves begin to change so do the economic and revenue forecasts for the state. Four times a year (September, December, March, and June) the Joint Budget Committee hears updated presentations on what economists are currently predicting for the economy in general and state revenue and budget implications specifically. The September forecast signifies the beginning of the upcoming year budget cycle.

Unfortunately, next year's budget is starting off looking ugly. Both forecasts expect general fund revenue to grow but not enough to cover the growing expenditures in the state budget. When those growing expenditures are factored in it looks like the state budget is starting with an overall shortfall of nearly a billion dollars.

While there are several factors driving this budget shortfall, committee members directed much of their ire at the state's Medicaid office (HCPF, the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing) because it was revealed they have an over expenditure of \$154 million.

Other gloomy news included the risk of a recession going up from 25 to 33 percent. Additionally, while we are still in TABOR surplus right now, the reduced expectations for the TABOR surplus make it more likely that revenue could fall below the Ref C cap in the near future and eliminate the TABOR refunds that people have grown accustomed to getting every year.

In short, it's going to be a very tight budget coming up with some hard decisions about what to fund and where to cut. Read on for a deeper dive into the economic and revenue forecasts, all charts used are from the Legislative Council Staff presentation, and links to all of the forecast documents and some media coverage of the forecast are at the very end.

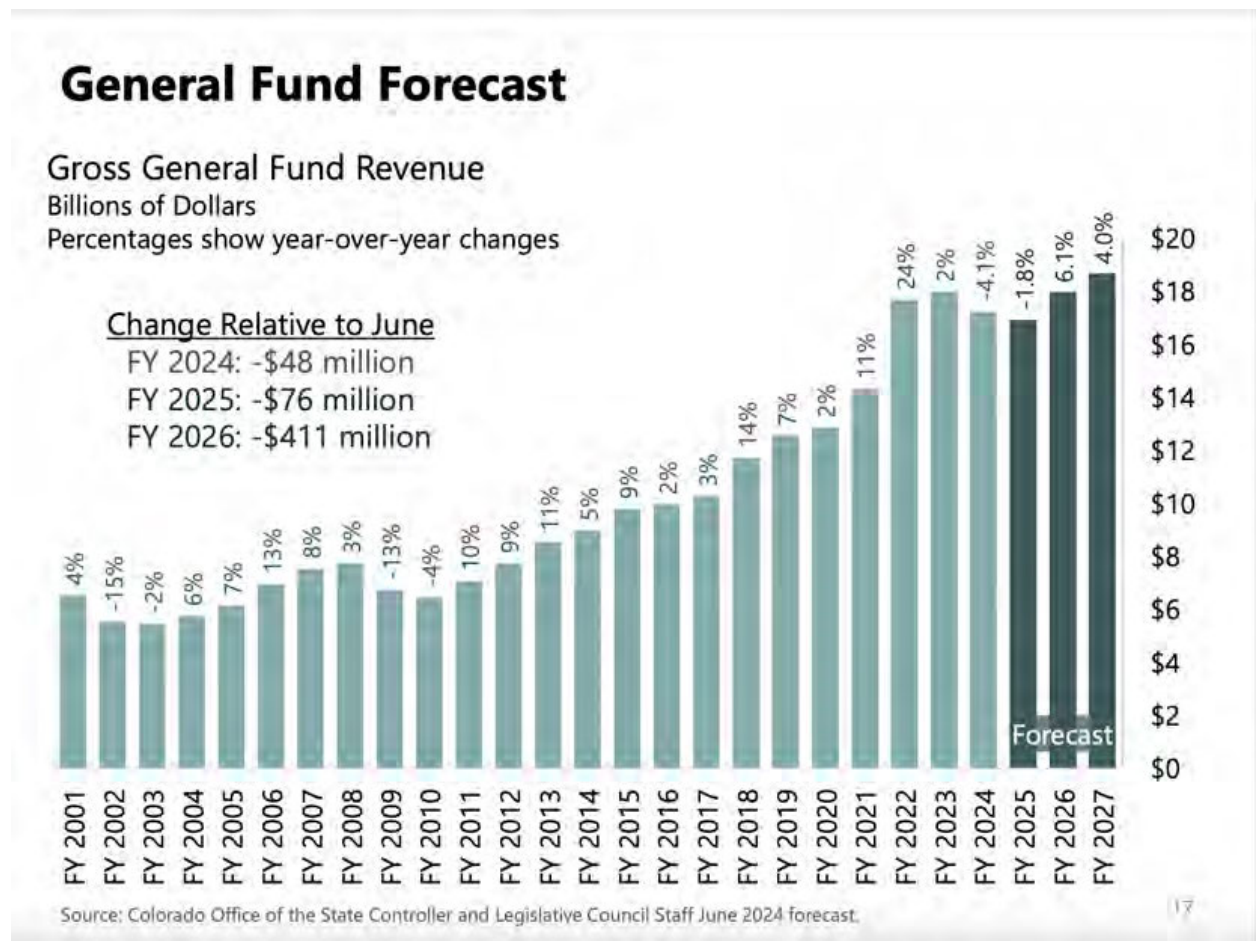
#### **Economic Forecast**

On the economic side, inflation has continued to slow, with 2.5 percent inflation across the U.S., and 1.9 percent inflation in Colorado. Unemployment has started to tick upwards in the U.S. and in

Colorado, with Colorado’s unemployment rate at 3.9 percent. Household savings have decreased and consumer debt has increased, especially for low-income consumers. The economic forecast expects risks that are slightly more threatening than in previous forecasts with uncertainty related to the consumer landscape, decreases in household finances, and deteriorating labor market conditions.

**Revenue Forecast**

The General Fund forecast has been slightly downgraded since the June forecast, with General Fund revenue projected to decline by 1.8 percent in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, but is expected to grow by 6.1 percent in the following year. The decrease is due to revenue from the 2023-2024 fiscal year being slightly lower than what was anticipated in June. However, the forecast for cash fund revenue that would be subject to TABOR has been revised up and is expected to grow in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, which also decreases General Fund availability.



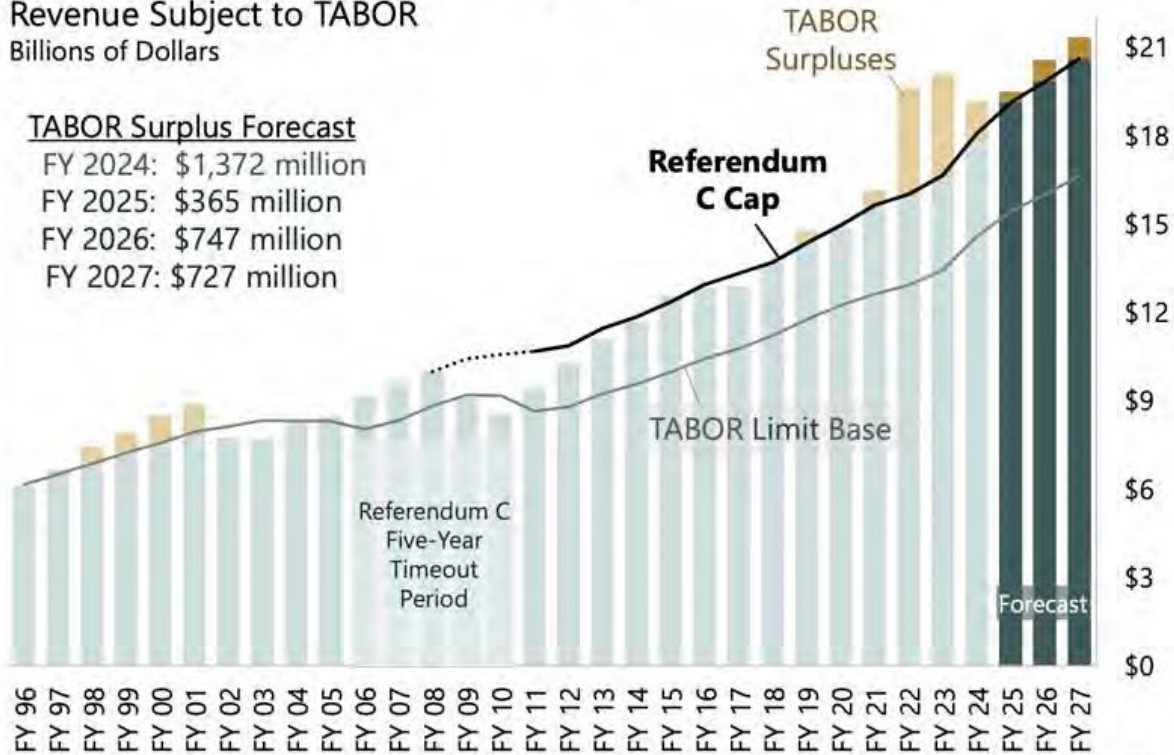
In contrast to the June forecast, TABOR surpluses are expected to decline from a total of \$1.66 billion in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, to \$365 million in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. This eliminates the income tax rate reduction refund mechanism in 2025.

# TABOR Surpluses Are Expected to Decline

Revenue Subject to TABOR  
Billions of Dollars

## TABOR Surplus Forecast

FY 2024: \$1,372 million  
 FY 2025: \$365 million  
 FY 2026: \$747 million  
 FY 2027: \$727 million



Source: Colorado Office of the State Controller and Legislative Council Staff September 2024 forecast.

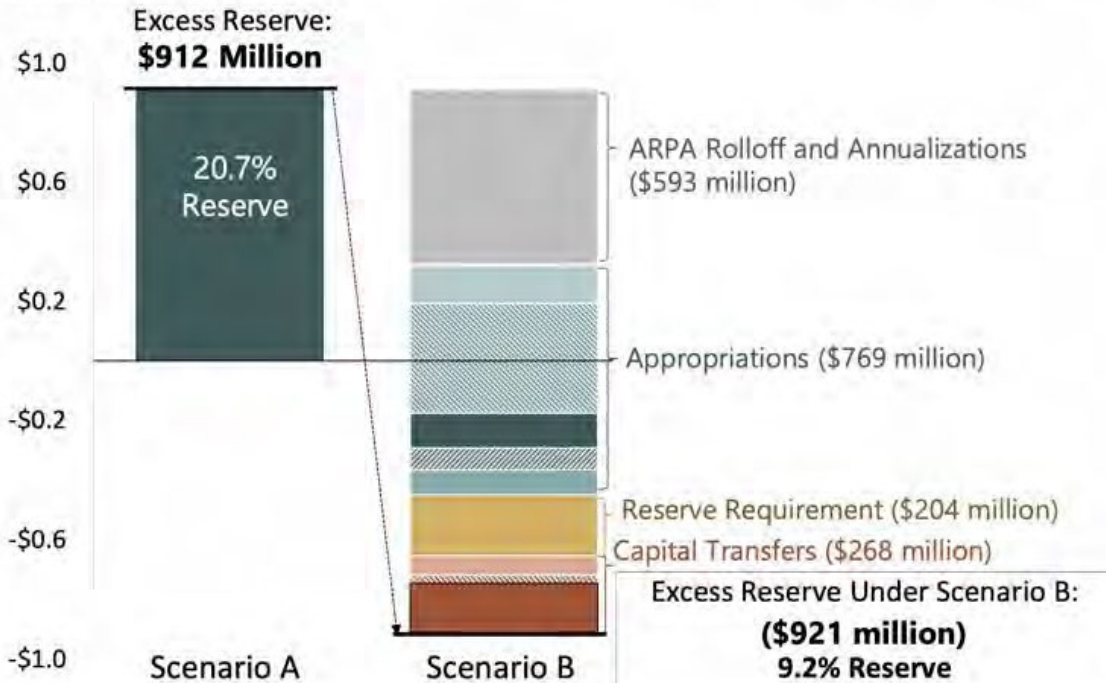
22

Legislative Council Staff economists always present two different scenarios for next year’s budget. Scenario A holds 2025 appropriations constant, and it’s projected that fiscal year 2025-2026 would end with a 20.7 percent general fund reserve and \$912 million excess to either spend or save. Scenario B accounts for previous budget decisions made by the General Assembly, and predicts the general fund reserve will end at 9.2 percent of appropriations, which is \$921 million below the reserve requirement.

Scenario B illustrates that when all of the increased appropriations recently are coupled with the loss of federal assistance (ARPA funds rolling off), plus the decrease in General Fund revenue coming in and the TABOR refund obligation, we get to that scary expectation that next year’s budget it starting off \$921 million in the red.

## Budget Year | FY 2025-26 **Scenarios A and B**

General Fund Reserve Above/Below the 15% Reserve Requirement  
Dollars in Billions



Source: Legislative Council Staff forecasts based on current law.

29

### **Conclusion**

Apologies for all this depressing news on your Friday. While it looks bad now, keep in mind it's a long road to the final passage of next year's budget. Next up in the budget cycle will be the Governor's budget request on November 1. That document will lay out the Governor's spending priorities, how he would tackle the starting deficit, and set the stage for much of the Joint Budget Committee's decision items for the budget. After that we will have another forecast in December and March before the budget is finalized. Buckle up, it's going to be a wild ride.

### **Links to all September forecast documents:**

- [Legislative Council Staff](#)
  - [Presentation](#)
  - [Full Report](#)
  - [Consumer Price Index](#)
- [Office of State Planning and Budgeting](#)

- [Presentation](#)
- [Full Report](#)
- [Supplemental Materials](#)

**Links to some media coverage of the September Forecast:**

- [Colorado Politics – Colorado's Medicaid overspending contributes to \\$1 billion hole in state reserve](#)
- [Colorado Sun – Colorado state budget woes grow as property tax cuts, Medicaid costs and economic slowdown take a toll](#)
- [Denver Post – Colorado's next TABOR refund will be the last big one for a while, state forecasters predict](#)



## **COLORADO LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES NEWSLETTER**

### **2024 Ballot Initiatives**

**September 27, 2024**

#### **Intro**

This week marked the first week of fall – the leaves have started to change, the mornings have gotten a little more chilly, and football season is in full swing. In Colorado, the fall season wouldn't be complete without a slew of ballot measures for voters to decide in November.

This year's ballot includes 14 total statewide measures, which ties with 2006 and 2008 for the most measures on a Colorado ballot in the last 50 years. This year, seven of the 14 proposals were referred to the ballot through legislation passed by the General Assembly during the legislative session. The other seven are from citizen-led efforts to get measures on the ballot.

For context, constitutional amendments from the legislature are identified with single letters, statutory proposals from the legislature are identified with double letters, and citizen-led statutory proposals are identified with numbers. Constitutional amendments need 55 percent of the vote to pass, and statutory proposals just need a majority to pass.

From education, to hunting, to sports betting, this year's ballot has something for everyone. For more information on each measure, please see the state's [blue book](#) for this year. All that being said, we're here to break down this year's ballot, so let's get started.

#### **Amendment G – Modify Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with Disabilities**

This would expand eligibility for reduced property taxes under the homestead exemption for veterans with a disability who are homeowners. This is to fix an oversight that would've excluded certain disabled veterans from claiming the exemption otherwise.

Coloradans for Local Communities is the registered issue committee against the measure, but has raised less than \$500. There are no support issue committees registered in support of the measure.

#### **Amendment H – Judicial Discipline Procedures and Confidentiality**

This one would reform current judicial discipline procedures by creating an independent board to handle disciplinary processes. This comes from calls for changes to disciplinary procedures in

recent years over complaints about judges and lack of transparency in the judicial discipline process.

There are currently no issue committees registered for or against this measure.

**Amendment I – Constitutional Bail Exception for First Degree Murder**

Amendment I would make an exception to the right to bail for defendants accused of first degree murder. Before the death penalty was repealed in 2020, courts were only allowed to deny bail for “capital offenses”. After the death penalty was repealed, “capital offenses” were no longer recognized under Colorado law, so defendants accused of first degree murder were technically entitled to bail. This was more or less an oversight when the death penalty was repealed, so this amendment would allow a judge to still deny bail for first degree murder defendants.

There are currently no issue committees registered for or against this measure.

**Amendment J – Repealing the Definition of Marriage in the Constitution**

Passing the General Assembly with bipartisan support, Amendment J repeals a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage. The ban came from an initiative that passed in 2006, but was nullified after the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Obergefell v. Hodges. Amendment J is more of a formality to officially remove the ban from the constitution.

Freedom to Marry Colorado is the registered support committee on the measure, and has raised a little over \$340,000. There are currently no issue committees registered against the measure.

**Amendment K – Modify Constitutional Election Deadlines**

Amendment K would shorten the collection period for initiative petitions by moving the filing deadline with the Secretary of State up by one week. This would give the Secretary of State’s office one more week to certify ballot initiatives.

There are currently no issue committees registered for or against this measure.

**Proposition JJ – Retain Additional Sports Betting Tax Revenue**

This would allow the state to keep excess revenue from its sports betting tax, which passed in 2019. This additional revenue would go toward the state’s water plan implementation cash fund and water conservation projects. The excess revenue is projected to be between \$2.8 to \$7.2 million over the next three years.

The support committee on JJ, Conserve and Protect Our Water, has raised almost \$500,000 in support of the measure. This includes the Colorado Cattlemen’s Association, the Environmental Defense Action Fund, and Conscience Bay Research. There are currently no issue committees registered against this measure.

**Proposition KK – Firearms and Ammunition Excise Tax**

This is where it starts to get controversial. This one would impose an excise tax of 6.5 percent on guns and ammunition sales, going into effect on April 1, 2025. The revenue from the tax would go



toward funding mental health services, gun safety programs, and services for victims of domestic violence.

Stop Tax Increases has registered as the issue committee against KK, but has yet to report any contributions. There are currently no issue committees formally registered in support of KK, but supporters of the measure held a press conference earlier this month.

### **Amendment 79 – Constitutional Right to Abortion**

This measure enshrines the right to abortion in the Colorado Constitution. This one also allows for public funds to go toward abortion services, which is a reversal of Amendment 3 from 1984.

On the support side, Coloradans for Reproductive Freedom has raised \$6 million over the last year, and a good chunk of that has gone toward TV advertisements over the summer and last month. No on 79, the committee registered against this measure, has raised a little over \$61,000 from several pro-life groups.

### **Amendment 80 – Constitutional Right to School Choice**

Amendment 80 enshrines the right to school choice in Colorado's Constitution. The measure defines school choice to include "neighborhood, charter, private and homeschools, open enrollment options, and any future innovations in education".

The support issue committee, School Choice for Every Child, has received support from several groups, including Advance Colorado. Proponents of the measure argue that the bill further protects school choice in the constitution. Colorado Dawn, a group that tends to support more establishment Republicans, spent nearly \$1 million on petition circulators to get this on the ballot.

The measure is opposed by the No on 80 issue campaign, which is backed by the Colorado Education Association among several other groups who argue that the measure lays the groundwork for private schools to be funded with public money. Currently, the opposition campaign to Amendment 80 has received more funding than the support campaign for Amendment 80.

### **Proposition 127 – Prohibit Bobcat, Lynx, and Mountain Lion Hunting**

Another controversial proposal we'll see on the ballot in November is Proposition 127, which would ban the hunting of bobcats, lynx, and mountain lions. Currently, bobcat and mountain lion hunting is legal in Colorado with certain licenses and permits. Lynx hunting is already illegal in Colorado because they're a federally protected species.

The proposition would also remove mountain lions from what is considered "big game" species. Currently, landowners who have property or livestock damaged or killed by big game are eligible to claim government reimbursement for their loss. So, this proposition would exclude landowners who incur damages due to mountain lions from claiming reimbursement.

Cats Aren't Trophies is the main supporter of the measure, which has raised roughly \$865,000 from several animal advocacy organizations across the country. The group even partnered with Carole Baskin from *Tiger King* to [promote the proposition](#) earlier this year.



Colorado's Wildlife Deserves Better is the issue campaign registered against the measure and has received \$625,000 from several recreational hunting groups.

**Proposition 128 – Parole Eligibility for Crimes of Violence**

This one would require individuals convicted of certain violent crimes to serve 85 percent of their sentence before being up for parole. Currently, individuals convicted of these crimes only have to serve 75 percent of their sentence before applying for discretionary parole.

There are currently no issue committees registered for or against this measure.

**Proposition 129 – Establishing Veterinary Professional Associates**

This measure would create a mid-level role in the veterinary field called a veterinary professional associate, which is basically the equivalent to a physician assistant. The proposal comes from an idea that was brought up during last year's Water Resources and Agricultural Review Committee, but legislation didn't advance on the issue.

Supporters of the measure argue that the measure would address workforce shortages in the veterinary space and increase access to care for animals in underserved communities. Opponents of the measure claim the proposed training to obtain the new credentials is inadequate, which will cause increased costs for pet owners and inaccurate diagnoses for animals.

So far, the Denver Dumb Friends League has contributed \$1 million to the YES issue committee on the proposal, All Pets Deserve Vet Care. The NO issue committee, Keep Our Pets Safe, has raised \$964,000 and almost all of its funding is from the American Veterinary Medical Association.

**Proposition 130 – Funding for Law Enforcement**

This measure would direct the state to spend \$350 million toward better recruitment and retaining of police officers and offer families of officers killed in the line of duty a one-time \$1 million benefit. The \$350 million would come from the state's general budget. Advance Colorado and other organizations were supportive in the \$1.45 million effort to get the proposal on the ballot.

There are currently no issue committees registered for or against this measure.

**Proposition 131 – Establishing All-Candidate Primary and Ranked Choice Voting General Elections**

Currently, Colorado's primary election system is set up for both Democrats and Republicans to conduct their own, separate primaries. This measure would change the current primary system by placing all primary candidates on the same, single ballot. The top four candidates who receive the most votes would advance to the general election.

The measure also makes changes to the general election. In the general election, voters would rank the four candidates from the primary, and the winner would be decided by an instant runoff. An instant runoff would happen in a scenario where one of those four candidates doesn't receive the majority of votes. Then, the candidate who received the least of the four would be eliminated, and the ballots that ranked the last place candidate as first would be distributed among the remaining three, and so on, until one candidate has received over 50 percent of the vote.



If the measure passes, it would be implemented in 2028. However, in the final days of legislative session this year, a last minute amendment was added to [Senate Bill 210](#) to ensure ranked choice voting couldn't be implemented until certain criteria was met, essentially ensuring that it would never happen. When Governor Polis signed Senate Bill 210, he expressed support for ranked choice voting and would be supportive of legislation next year to remove the language added in the last minute amendment.

The support issue committee, Colorado Voters First, has raised \$5.45 million in funding so far from Unite America, which is a group associated with Kent Thiry, the former CEO of DaVita. The issue committee against 131, Voter Rights Colorado, has raised \$46,000 so far. Notably, the Colorado State Democrat party has formally taken an oppose position on the measure.

### **Conclusion**

With 39 days until November 5, Colorado's in the home stretch of another exciting election season. Be on the lookout for a newsletter next week to preview the big races to watch this year. Have a good weekend.

# Hydrology Update



# Upper Colorado Region Weekly Hydrology Summary

This hydrologic information is provided weekly to summarize the hydrologic conditions in the Upper Colorado Region. If additional information is required, please contact Heather Patno (hpatno@usbr.gov).

## Selected Reservoir Status - Report Date: September 26, 2024

Reservoir	Elevation (ft)	Live Storage (1000 AF)	% of Live Capacity	Avg Daily Unreg Inflow (cfs)	Daily Release (cfs)
Lake Powell	3,578.34	9,162	39%	4,339	9,900
Blue Mesa	7,487.80	561	68%	257	1,277
Flaming Gorge	6,027.19	3,161	86%	732	1,652
Fontenelle	6,493.37	241	72%	444	835
Navajo*	6,043.06	1,093	66%	338	700
Elephant Butte**	4,299.53	113	6%	219	674

Current as of: 9/26/2024

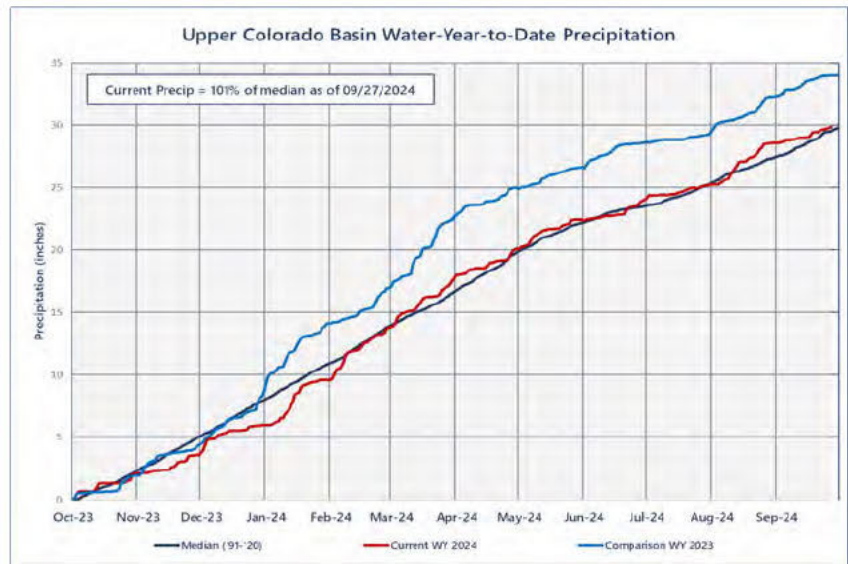
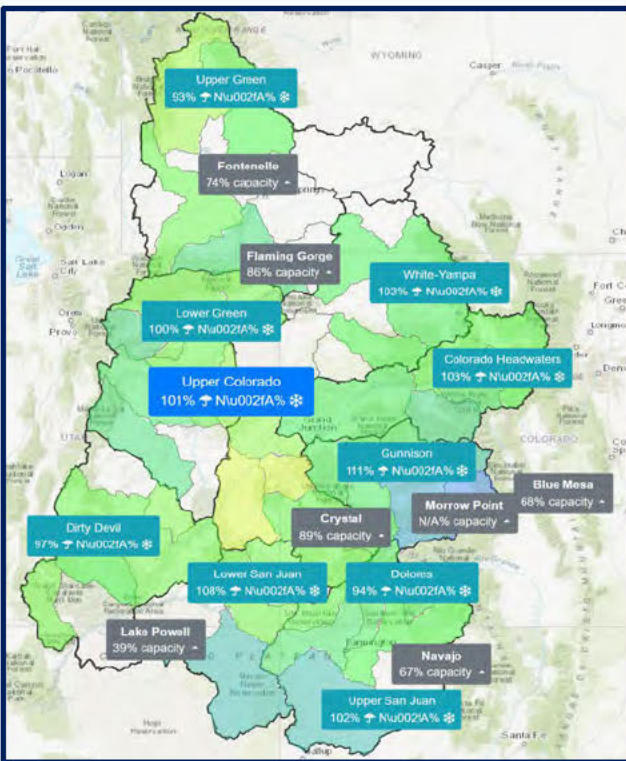
\* Uses Modified Unregulated Inflow

\*\* Unreg Inflow Current as of: 9/22/2024

## Selected Reservoir Inflows - Unregulated Forecast and Observed Inflow

Reservoir	2024 WY Volume (kaf) (September Midmonth Forecast)	2024 WY % of Avg (September Midmonth Forecast)	2024 April-July Volume (kaf) (Observed)	2024 April-July Volume (kaf) (Observed)	Aug Unreg Inflow Observed (Acre-Feet)	August Unreg Inflow Observed (% Avg)
Lake Powell	8,008	83%	5,327	83%	334,614	89%
Blue Mesa	914	101%	653	103%	63,455	111%
Fontenelle	835	78%	516	70%	44,021	68%
Flaming Gorge	1,175	83%	713	74%	56,806	79%
Navajo*	583	64%	447	71%	25,358	77%

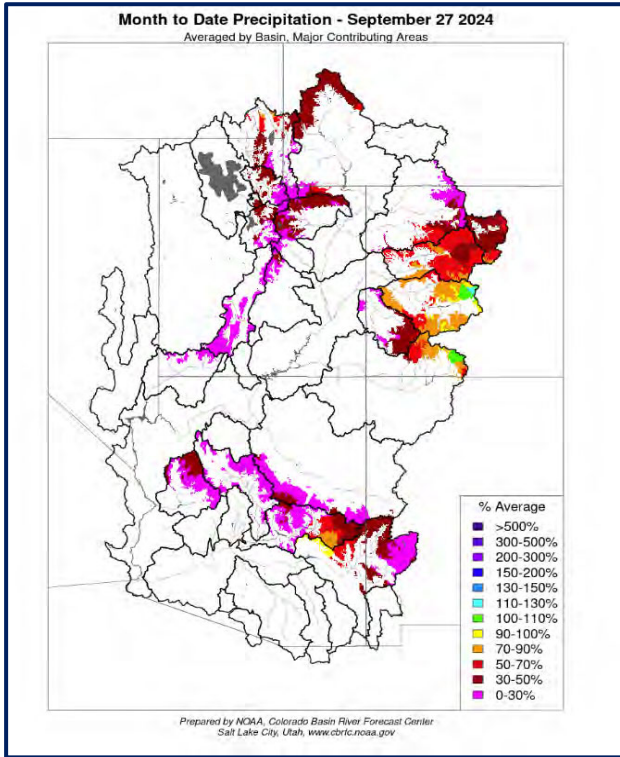
\*When the MUI is negative, it indicates the upstream storage and transbasin diversion losses are greater than the total inflow.



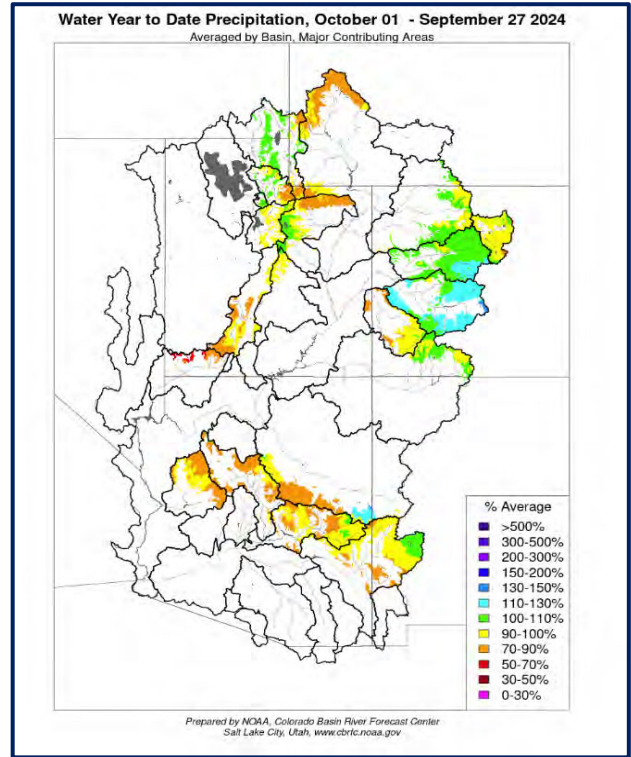
## SWE (% median peak)

Note: The NRCS site list generating the aggregate SWE values in this graphic is limited to only those sites that have been in operation for the entire WY 1991 - 2020 comparison period. For this reason, the percent median may vary slightly from that reported directly from NRCS.

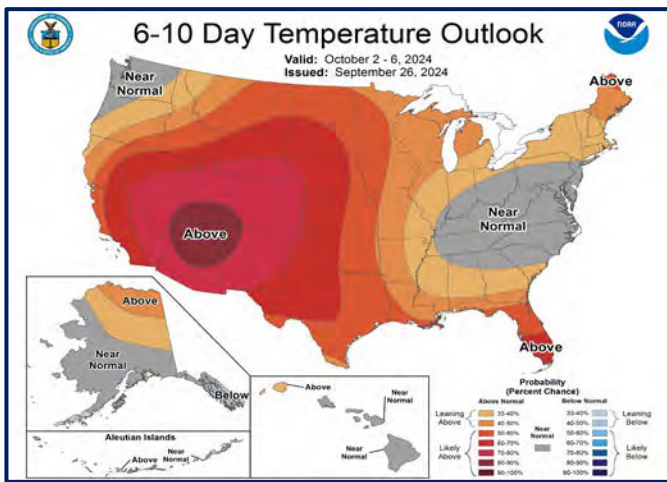
# Upper Colorado Region Weekly Hydrology Summary



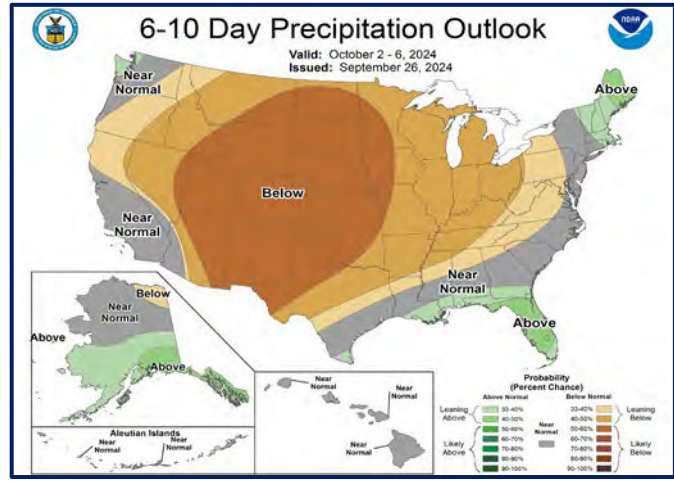
[Month to Date Precipitation](#)



[Water Year to Date Precipitation](#)



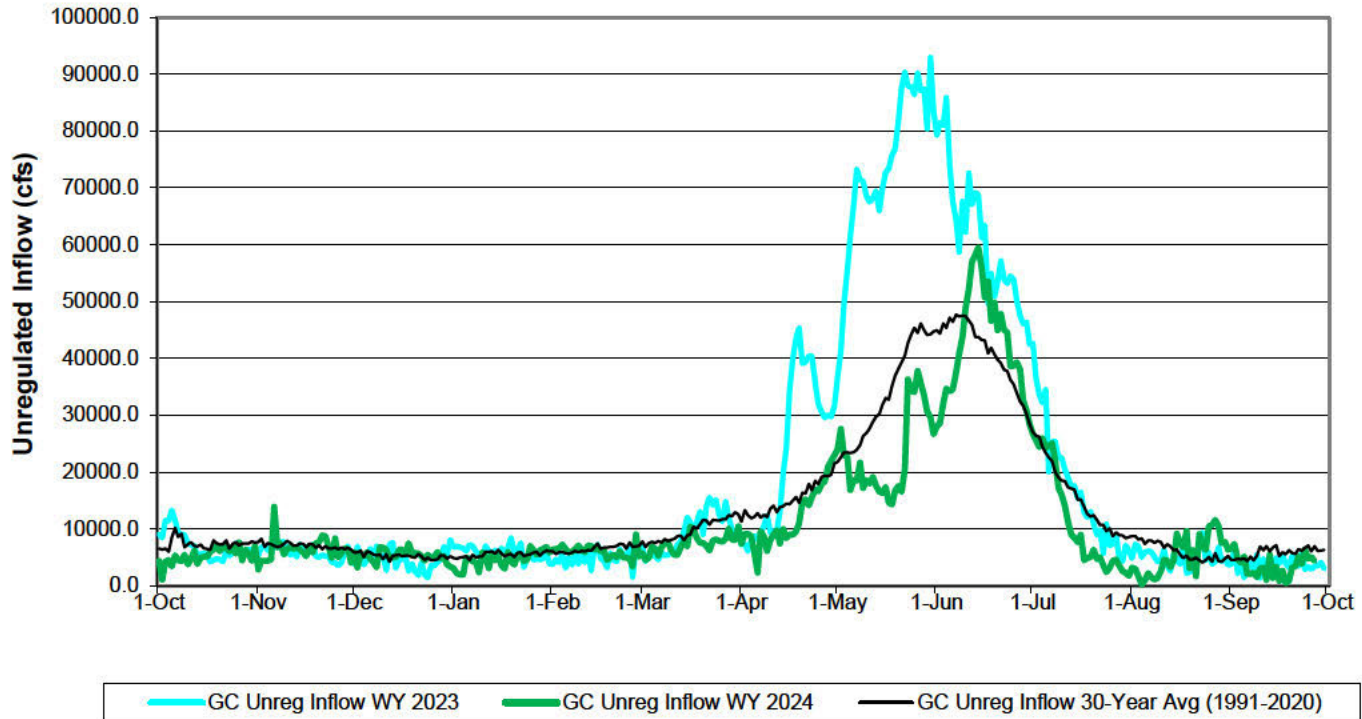
[6-10 Day Temperature](#)



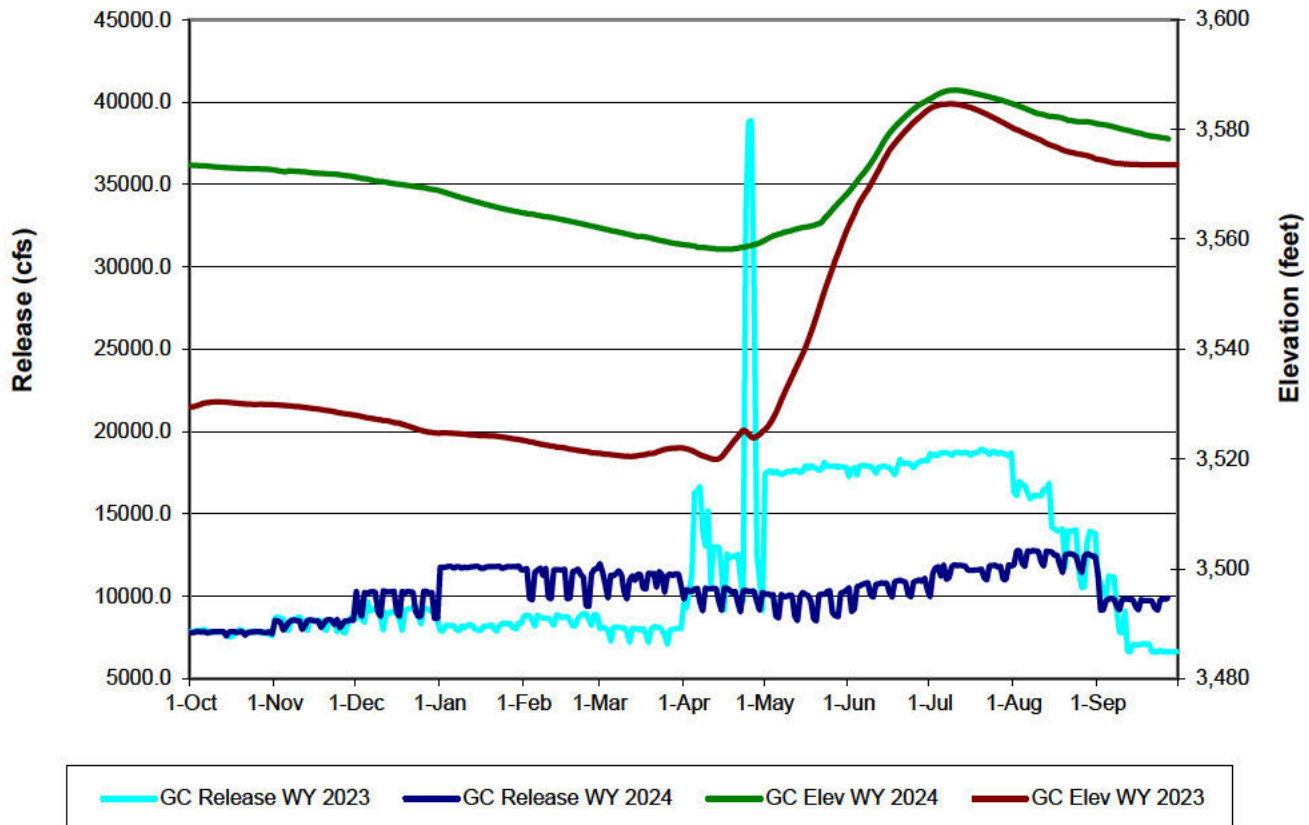
[6-10 Day Precipitation](#)

# Upper Colorado Region Weekly Hydrology Summary

## Lake Powell Reservoir and Glen Canyon Dam Daily Unregulated Inflow Water Year 2024

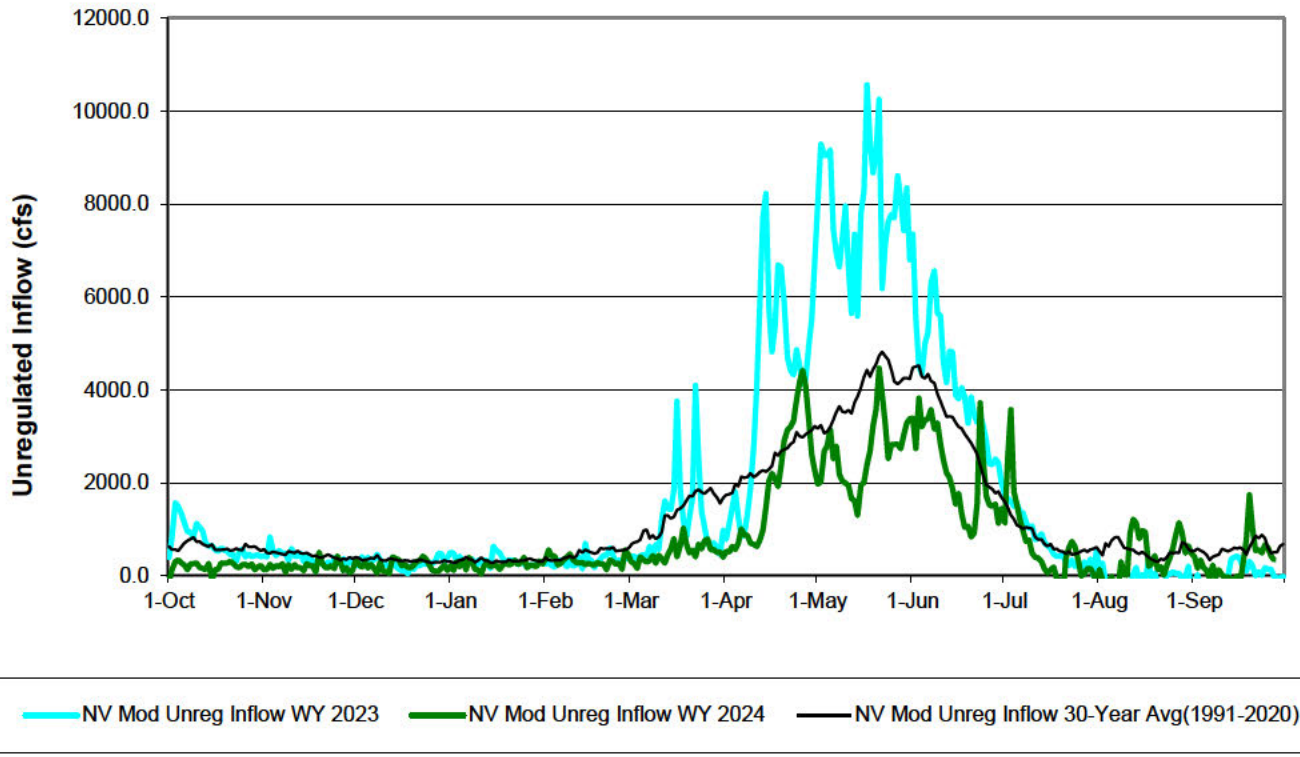


## Lake Powell Reservoir and Glen Canyon Dam Daily Total Release and Elevation Water Year 2024

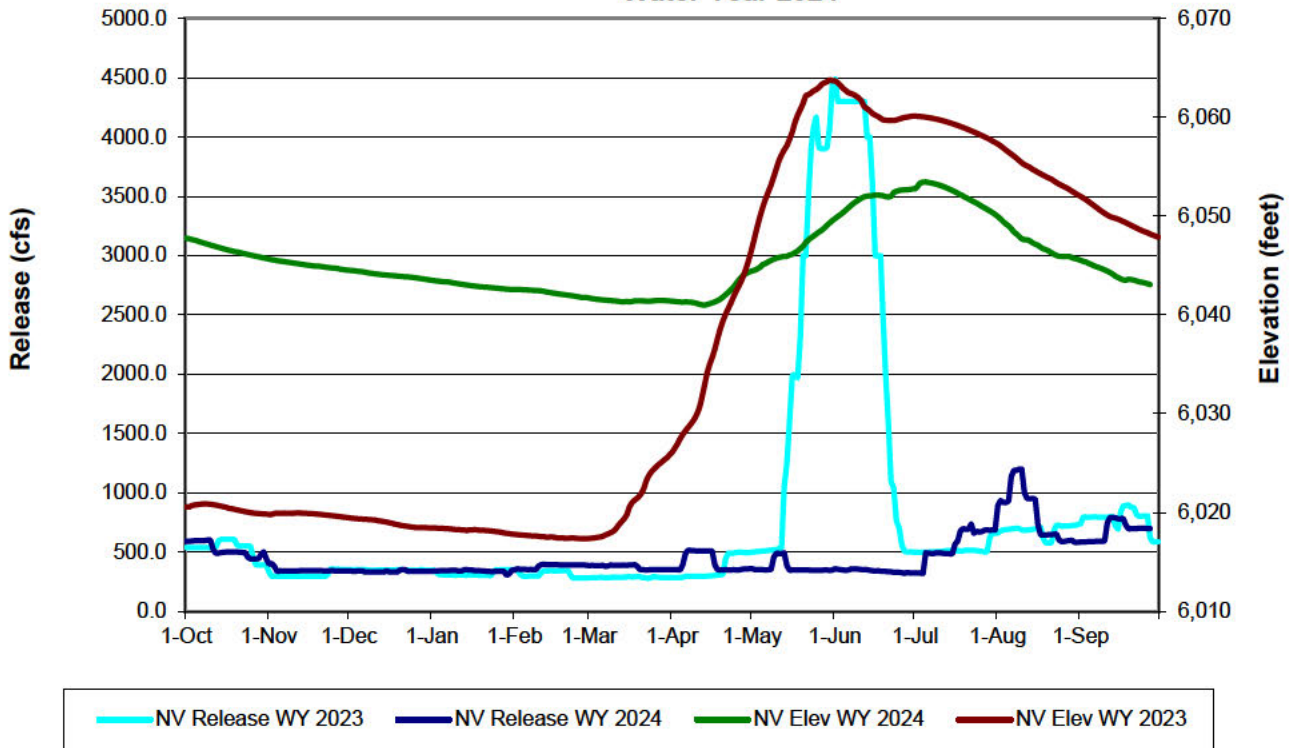


# Upper Colorado Region Weekly Hydrology Summary

## Navajo Dam and Reservoir Unregulated Inflow Daily Average Water Year 2024

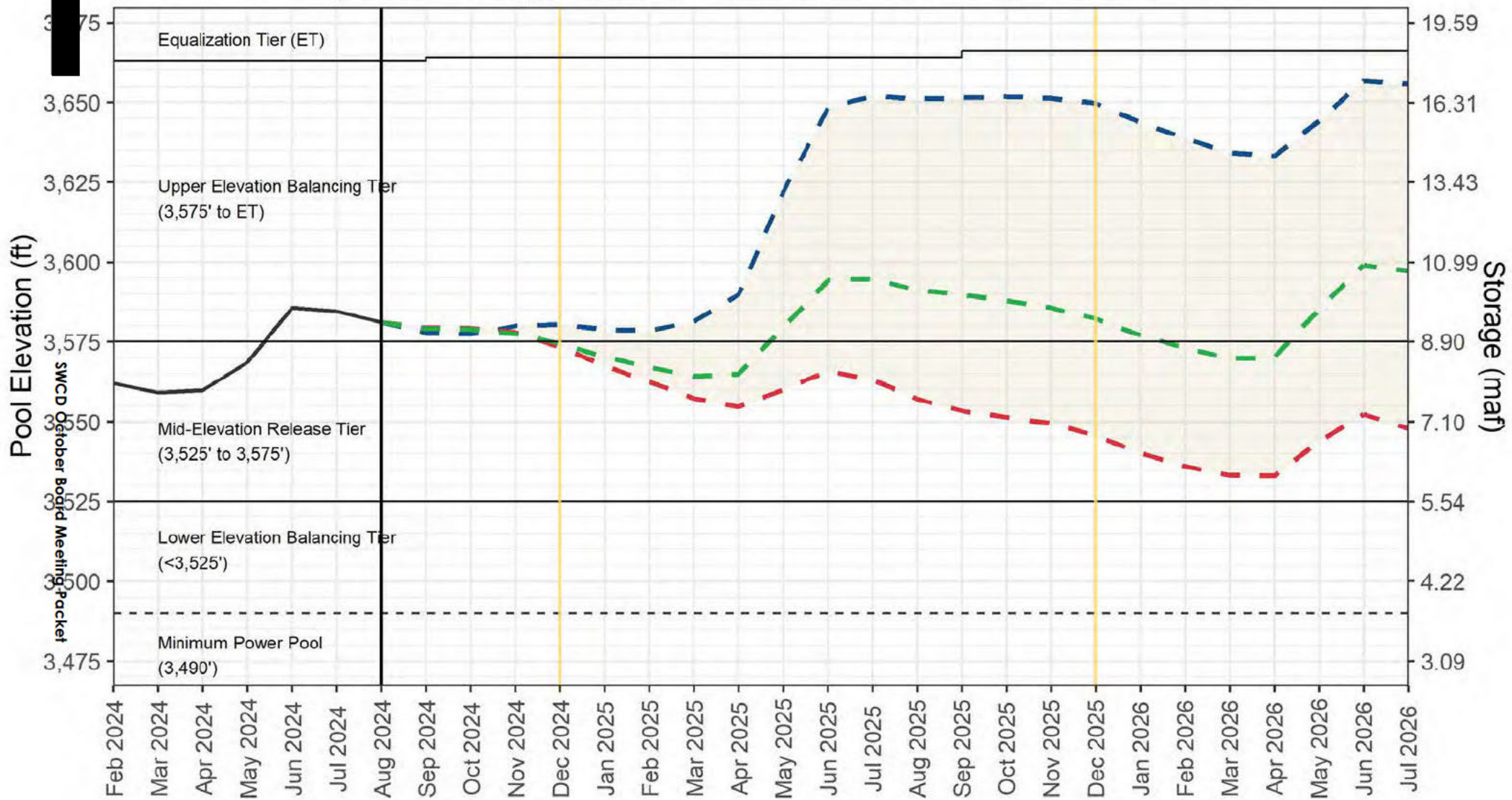


## Navajo Dam Daily Total Release and Elevation Water Year 2024



# Lake Powell End-of-Month Elevations

## Projections from August and September 2024 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios



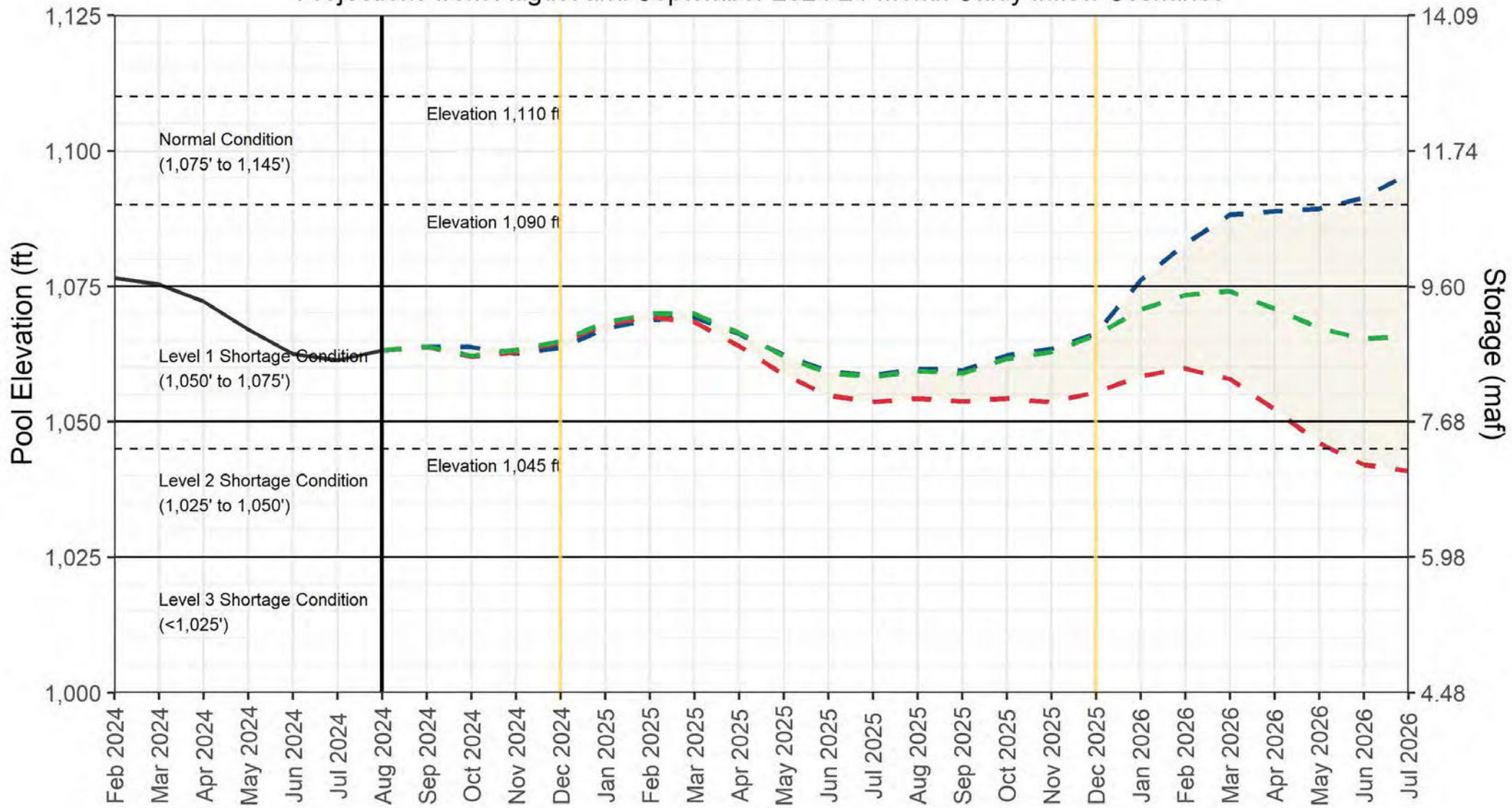
- Historical Elevations
- August 2024 Probable Maximum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025
- September 2024 Most Probable Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025
- September 2024 DROA Probable Minimum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025





# Lake Mead End-of-Month Elevations

## Projections from August and September 2024 24-Month Study Inflow Scenarios



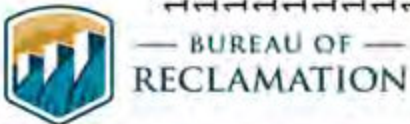
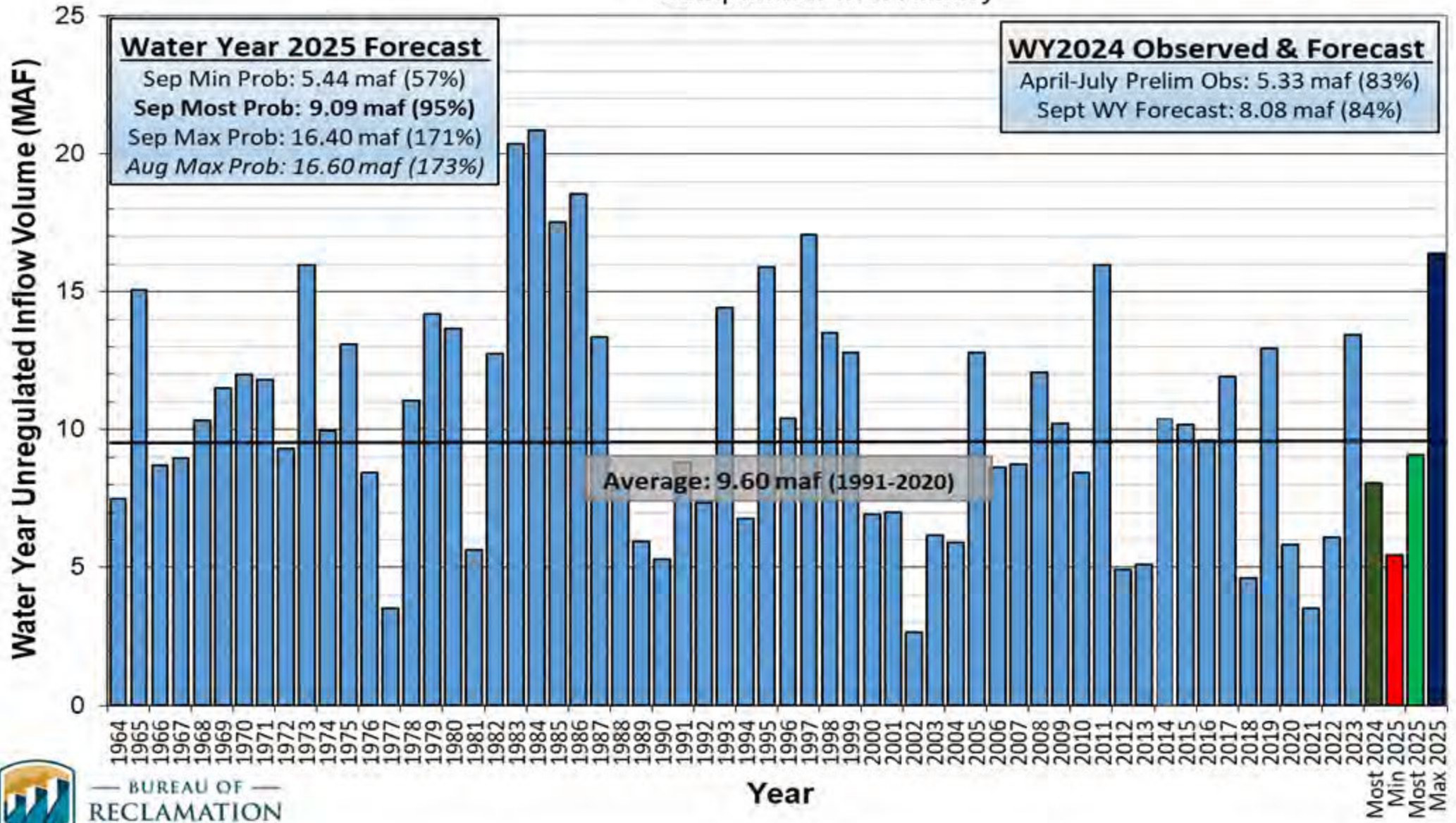
- Historical Elevations
- August 2024 Probable Maximum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025
- September 2024 Most Probable Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025
- September 2024 DROA Probable Minimum Inflow with a Lake Powell release of 7.48 maf in WY 2024 and WY 2025



# Lake Powell Unregulated Inflow

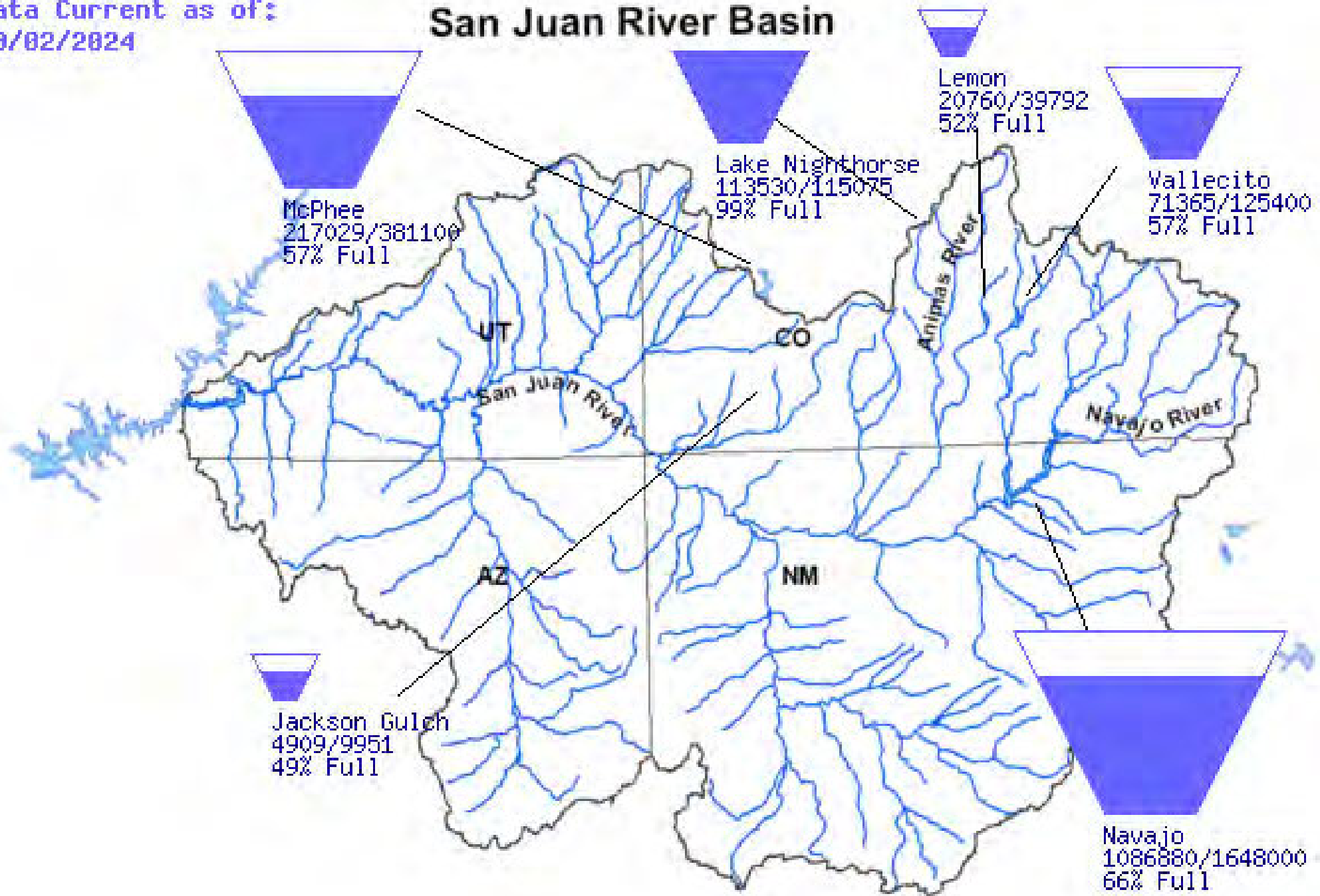
## Water Year 2024 and 2025 Forecast *(issued September 2)*

### Comparison with History



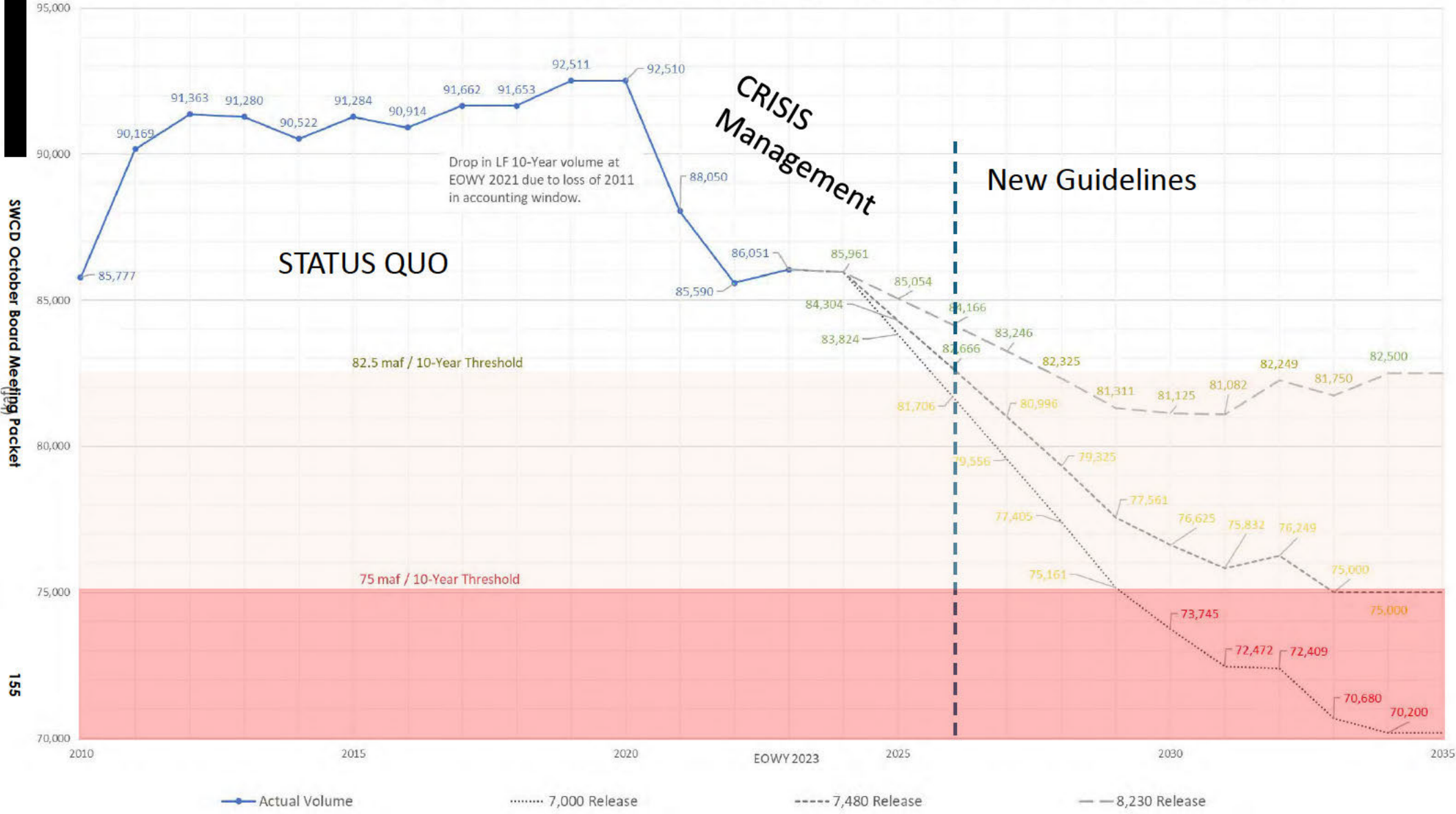
Data Current as of:  
10/02/2024

# San Juan River Basin



# Lee Ferry Flow Estimates – 10 YR

DRAFT - Actual and Potential 10-Year Lee Ferry Flow Volume (GCD Release + Paria Streamgages)



# 2025 Budget Discussion



## SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT **DRAFT** 2025 BUDGET MESSAGE

### **ABOUT SWCD**

The Southwestern Water Conservation District (“SWCD”) consists of all or part of nine counties in southwestern Colorado: Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan, San Miguel, and parts of Hinsdale, Mineral, and Montrose counties. Each Board of County Commissioners appoints a representative to the SWCD Board of Directors. The board meets regularly, and the schedule (while subject to change) is available at [swwcd.org](http://swwcd.org).

SWCD was formed by the Colorado General Assembly on April 16, 1941 and charged with the conservation, use, and development of the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores rivers basins. SWCD is charged by statute ([C.R.S. §37-47-101](http://C.R.S. §37-47-101)) to safeguard for Colorado all waters to which the state of Colorado is equitably entitled and has such powers as are necessary to carry out this mandate. Within [SWCD’s boundaries](#) are the San Juan and Dolores River Basins, in which there are nine distinct watersheds.

Following this mandate, SWCD maintains a broad strategic role on behalf of its diverse constituents. SWCD advocates for southwestern Colorado’s water interests at the local, state, regional, and federal level.

For more information about SWCD, please visit [swwcd.org](http://swwcd.org), call 970-247-1302, or email [admin@swwcd.org](mailto:admin@swwcd.org). The SWCD office is located at 841 East Second Avenue in Durango, Colorado.

### **BRIEF BUDGET OVERVIEW**

SWCD will provide the following services during the 2025 budget year: support the conservation, development and management of water use in southwestern Colorado; safeguard all waters to which the State is equitably entitled; participate in and provide funding for data collection; support, participate in, and lead local policy efforts; represent southwestern Colorado on federal and state policy concerns; and provide a variety of public education on water-related issues. Finally, SWCD will seek to serve constituents by providing general water information as requested. SWCD’s strategic plan, adopted February 2022, is available at <https://swwcd.org/our-strategic-plan/>.

SWCD’s accounting is performed on a modified accrual basis, consistent with generally accepted accounting practices. SWCD’s financial statements are [audited annually](#).

This budget reflects estimated revenues and proposed expenditures for 2025. For your reference and information, please find below a detailed description of the budget by line item.

### **BUDGET DETAIL: REVENUE**

SWCD's total budgeted revenues for 2025 are projected to be \$2,234,303.

**Property Tax.** SWCD is supported through a mill levy, which is assessed on property located within the District boundaries. Property tax revenues are expected to be approximately \$1,830,369, based on a mill levy of .380. This revenue is based on a combined assessed net valuation across nine counties of \$4,805,983,451.

**Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Reimbursement.** This line item tracks annual reimbursements of SWCD's portion of tax increments collected by urban rural authorities (URA) within the SWCD's boundaries. Currently, SWCD has agreements with the City of Durango to reimburse SWCD for SWCD's portion of the tax increment collected by the North Main Gateway URA and the Durango Midtown URA.

**Specific Ownership Tax.** This is a property or ad valorem tax levied in addition to sales (or use) taxes on a motor vehicle and is paid annually when the vehicle is registered within a county. SWCD receives a portion of these taxes collected by the nine counties.

**Interest, PILT, and Other Tax Revenue.** SWCD receives revenue from delinquent tax from prior years that has been recently collected, payment in lieu of tax (PILT), and other miscellaneous taxes.

**Other Income.** SWCD receives interest income and registration fees for SWCD's educational events. SWCD also receives income on behalf of the Water Information Program from its 28 partner entities and educational event registration fees. SWCD also receives partner contributions to help support our stream gaging joint funding agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey. The District has also applied for several federal grants to support carrying out our mission, but we will not know if we have been awarded them until mid-2025.

**TABOR Emergency Contingency Reserve.** This line item is required by the TABOR amendment to the state constitution, which mandates that at least three percent of SWCD's fiscal year spending (excluding bonded debt service) be set aside as a contingency reserve for declared emergencies.

## **BUDGET DETAIL: EXPENDITURES**

SWCD's total appropriation of money to the general fund is \$2,019,298.

## **WATER SUPPLY – QUANTITY AND QUALITY**

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**San Juan Recovery Program Water User Committee.** This line item covers SWCD's 50% cost share for the cost of the two consultants, who participate in the broader San Juan River Basin Recovery Implementation Program (SJRBRIP) on behalf of water users in New Mexico and Colorado. This program works to recover the endangered Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker populations in the San Juan River and its ongoing success protects water uses

across the basin. Included in this line item is also the small contribution SWCD provides to the Colorado Water Congress in support of the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program.

**Weather Modification in SW Colorado.** SWCD matches local partner commitments to winter cloud seeding, also known as weather modification.

**Public Forums, Data Collection and Related Efforts.**

- **Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group.** This line item supports operational costs for the Bonita Peak Mining District Community Advisory Group.
- **Center for Snow & Avalanche Studies.** This line item supports the Center for Snow & Avalanche Studies, which conducts valuable research on the impacts of dust on snow to runoff.
- **Stream Gaging/Federal.** This line item covers SWCD's cost share with the US Geological Survey for operation and maintenance of several regional stream gages. SWCD receives partial reimbursement from local partners for some of the stream gages.
- **Stream Gaging/Colorado.** This line item covers the cost for Colorado Division of Water Resources to operate their Cherry Creek and Long Hollow stream gages.
- **San Miguel Watershed Coalition.** This line item covers support for water quality studies and monitoring provided by the San Miguel Watershed Coalition.

**Local Financial Support (Grants).** This line item covers grants that may be awarded through SWCD's Grant Program to qualified entities that are carrying out projects consistent with SWCD's statutory purposes.

**Previously Committed Local Financial Support (Grants).** This line item covers any previously committed aid, approved in a prior year, for which the SWCD staff or board approves an extension through 2025.

## WATER POLICY AND LEGISLATION

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**Federal.**

- **Federal Lobbying Fees.** This line item covers fees related to federal lobbying efforts on behalf of SWCD.
- **Federal Lobbying Expenses.** This line item covers principally travel expenses related to federal lobbying efforts on behalf of SWCD.

**State.**

- **State Lobbying Fees.** This line item covers fees related to contracted state lobbying efforts on behalf of SWCD.
- **State Lobbying Expenses.** This line item covers principally travel expenses related to contracted state lobbying efforts on behalf of SWCD.



**Dues & Memberships.** This line item covers membership dues for organizations that provide benefits to SWCD and its constituents.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

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### Legal.

- **Attorney Fees/General Counsel.** This line item covers attorney fees and legal costs for representation on general matters.
- **Attorney Travel Expenses/General Counsel.** This line item covers travel time and expenses for representation on general legal and litigation matters.
- **Litigation/General Counsel.** This line item covers attorney fees and legal costs for representation.
- **Attorney Fees/Special Counsel.** This line item covers fees for special legal counsel in matters related to SWCD's water rights and on certain employment matters.
- **Attorney Expenses/Special Counsel.** This line item covers expenses for special legal counsel.

### Engineering and Other Technical Services.

- **Engineering Fees/General.** This line item covers fees and expenses related to engineering activities.
- **Engineering Fees/Modeling.** This line item covers modeling efforts necessary to support and assess inter- and intrastate water administration scenarios.

**Other Technical Services.** This line item covers other contracted technical services (non-engineering) that may arise during the year, such as water quality support, other technical needs, as well as funding to be used as match requirement for grant applications to enhance District capacity.

## WATER EDUCATION & OUTREACH

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**Other Event Sponsorships.** This line item covers SWCD support for water-related events regionally and locally.

**SWCD Children's Water Festival.** This line item covers all costs related to SWCD's Annual Children's Water Festival, at which more than 700 fifth graders from across southwestern Colorado engage in educational programs for a full day at Fort Lewis College each May.

**SWCD Southwest Water Seminar.** This line item covers all costs related to SWCD's Annual Water Seminar, which nearly 300 people attend each year to hear from state and local water experts.

**SWCD Water Leaders Program Scholarship.** This line item allows SWCD to potentially support all or a portion of tuition for any professionals from southwestern Colorado accepted to the statewide Water Leaders Program.

**Water Connections Event.** This line item covers all costs related to SWCD’s fall educational event, “Water Connections,” which has been held with other sponsoring partners.

**Water Education Colorado.** This line item covers SWCD’s support for the programming and content produced by Water Education Colorado, a statewide educational organization.

**Watershed Education Program.** This line item covers support for the Watershed Education Program, which provides water-related field trips throughout the year to elementary students in the Upper and Lower San Miguel basin.

## **WATER INFORMATION PROGRAM**

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This line item covers all program expenses related to operation of the Water Information Program (WIP), which is presently financially supported by 30 partners in southwestern Colorado, with a dollar-for-dollar match from SWCD for partner contributions. Also included are any revenue generated from sponsored events (e.g. “Water Law in a Nutshell”). WIP provides balanced water-related educational content and programming to our nine-county region. This line item includes the cost of the independent contractor who manages the Water Information Program. As noted under budgeted revenue, among the Water Information Program’s revenue is an estimated \$40,000 from local partners for 2025.

## **DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION**

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### **Board of Directors.**

- **Director Fees.** The board members are eligible to receive \$100 per day while engaged in SWCD business.
- **Director Travel.** This line item includes mileage, lodging, flights, meals, and any other travel costs incurred by board members while conducting SWCD business.

### **Staffing.**

- **Wages – General Manager.** This line item covers wages for SWCD’s general manager.
- **Wages – Programs Coordinator.** This line item covers wages for SWCD’s programs coordinator.
- **Wages – Fiscal and Grants Accountant.** This line item is a place holder in case the District receives funds from federal water conservation grants that have been applied for. If grants are awarded, additional fiscal staff support may be necessary. Some of these costs can be recovered by the grants and are reflected in the revenue section.
- **Wages – Payroll Taxes.** This line item includes SWCD’s payroll taxes for two employees.
- **Wages – Retirement Benefit.** This line item includes SWCD’s retirement plan contributions for two employees. SWCD equally matches each employee’s personal contributions to their retirement plan, up to 5% of their annual salary.
- **Wages – Health & Life Insurance.** This line item includes the maximum amount that SWCD will contribute towards the payment of certain health and life insurance premiums for SWCD’s two employees and, in the case of health insurance, any qualified dependents.

## **Administrative Expenses.**

- **Accounting.** This line item covers any costs related to SWCD accounting, such as accounting software or consultation with professional accountants.
- **The Payroll Department.** This line item covers SWCD's fees for using The Payroll Department to process payroll, payroll taxes, and process and distribute tax documents.
- **Audit.** This line item covers the cost of the annual audit of SWCD's financial statements, which is provided to the state by July 31 each year.
- **Capital Outlay.** This line item covers any purchases of items such as computers, other office equipment, or furniture.
- **Casual Labor.** This line item covers any one-time labor needs, such as movers or event support.
- **SDA Membership.** This line item covers SWCD's Special District Association (SDA) membership.
- **Insurance – General Liability.** This line item covers general liability insurance for SWCD, public officials' liability, excess liability, and SWCD's worker's compensation policy.
- **Legal Notice.** This line item includes SWCD's noticing of the budget hearing annually in local papers in each of the nine counties.
- **Meeting Expenses.** This line item covers all meals, venue costs, facilitation, and other meeting-related expenses. This line item also includes all costs related to coordination of the board's remote meeting and basin tour.
- **Miscellaneous Expenses.** This line items covers any expenses that do not clearly fall into another category, such as flowers for a hospitalized colleague or director.
- **Office Expenses.** This line item includes office supplies, consumable supplies, copy costs, software purchases, subscriptions, and other office-related needs.
- **Postage.** This line item covers postage costs for office mailings, principally board packets.
- **Registration Fees.** This line item covers conference, seminar or other event registration fees for board or staff.
- **Staff Training & Professional Development.** This line item covers the cost of courses or training for staff.
- **Telecommunications & IT Support.** This line item includes SWCD's phone, internet, teleconferencing, and website services.

**Staff Travel.** This line item reimburses staff for mileage, lodging, flights, meals, and any other travel costs incurred while conducting SWCD business.

**Rent.** This line item includes monthly rent for SWCD's current office space, related utilities, parking spaces, and storage.

**County Treasurer Fees.** This line item covers fees charged by the nine counties to collect and disburse property tax revenue on behalf of SWCD. Country Treasurer Fees are estimated at three percent of total tax revenue budgeted.

<b>SWCD - Budget History</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2023</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2024</b>	<b>Draft Budget 2025</b>	<b>NOTES FOR BOARD &amp; STAFF</b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance</b>	4,493,502	4,986,893	<b>5,041,375</b>	
<b>REVENUES</b>				
<b>Property Tax</b>	1,646,892	1,755,449	<b>1,830,369</b>	Net AV = \$4,805,983,451; Mil=0.380
<b>TIF Reimbursement</b>	1,104	1,148	<b>1,200</b>	Durango North Main and Midtown URAs
<b>Specific Ownership Tax</b>	120,000	130,000	<b>120,000</b>	
<b>PILT &amp; Other Tax Revenue</b>	35,500	30,000	<b>30,000</b>	
<b>Other Income</b>	102,550	203,015	<b>252,734</b>	
Interest Earned	55,000	100,000	<b>150,000</b>	Investment interest
Miscellaneous	0	0	<b>0</b>	
SWCD Event Registration	10,000	12,500	<b>12,500</b>	Water Seminar
USGS Partner Contributions	-	45,080	<b>44,734</b>	
Water Information Program - Partner Contributions	37,550	37,985	<b>40,000</b>	
Water Information Program - Registration Income		7,000	<b>5,000</b>	
Water Information Program - Income Interest		450	<b>500</b>	
Grant Income for Administration Support				
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>1,906,046</b>	<b>2,119,612</b>	<b>2,234,303</b>	
<b>TABOR Emergency Contingency Reserve</b>	(56,980)	(61,954)	<b>(60,579)</b>	3% of total budgeted expenses
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>6,342,568</b>	<b>7,044,551</b>	<b>7,215,099</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
<b>Water Supply - Quantity &amp; Quality</b>	496,981	555,894	<b>525,493</b>	
San Juan Recovery Program Water User Cmt	55,260	55,260	<b>56,560</b>	Includes \$1,300 for UCRIP via Water Congress
Weather Modification in SW Colorado	81,000	80,000	<b>80,000</b>	
Public Forums, Data Collection and Related Efforts	80,721	123,634	<b>123,933</b>	
Bonita Peak Community Advisory Group	5,000	5,000	<b>5,000</b>	
Center for Snow & Avalanche Studies	7,000	7,000	<b>7,000</b>	
Stream Gaging/Federal	53,081	101,994	<b>102,293</b>	SWCD Contributions = \$57,739
Stream Gaging/Colorado	2,640	2,640	<b>2,640</b>	
San Miguel Watershed Coalition	13,000	7,000	<b>7,000</b>	
Local Financial Support (Grants)	250,000	250,000	<b>250,000</b>	
Previously Committed Local Financial Support (Grants)	30,000	47,000	<b>15,000</b>	

<b>SWCD - Budget History</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2023</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2024</b>	<b>Draft Budget 2025</b>	<b>NOTES FOR BOARD &amp; STAFF</b>
<b>Water Policy &amp; Legislation</b>	101,600	100,318	97,878	
Federal	55,500	55,500	55,500	
Lobbying Fees	50,000	50,000	50,000	
Lobbying Expenses	5,500	5,500	5,500	
State	23,600	24,218	25,278	
Lobbying Fees	20,600	21,218	22,278	
Lobbying Expenses	3,000	3,000	3,000	
Dues & Memberships	22,500	20,600	17,100	
Club 20	300	300	300	
Colorado River Water Users Association	200	-	-	
Colorado Water Congress	11,000	10,000	6,500	
Ditch & Reservoir Company Alliance	500	500	500	
Family Farm Alliance	10,000	9,300	9,300	
Four Corners Farmers & Ranchers Coalition	500	500	500	
<b>Professional Support</b>	700,000	775,000	750,000	
Legal	400,000	400,000	350,000	
Attorney Fees/General Counsel	300,000	300,000	225,000	
Attorney Travel Exps/General Counsel	20,000	20,000	20,000	
Litigation/General Counsel	50,000	50,000	50,000	
Attorney Fees/Special Counsel	25,000	25,000	50,000	
Attorney Exps/Special Counsel	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Engineering	225,000	225,000	250,000	
Engineering Fees/General	150,000	175,000	200,000	
Engineering Fees/Modeling	75,000	50,000	50,000	
Other Technical Services	75,000	150,000	150,000	
Technical Support	75,000	50,000	50,000	e.g. water quality and other technical support
CWCB Local Capacity Grant (Community Navigator) Match		50,000	50,000	Match Funds #2 for CWCB Community Navigator Grant
Other Grant Matching Funds		50,000	50,000	ASO - Upper San Juan?

<b>SWCD - Budget History</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2023</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2024</b>	<b>Draft Budget 2025</b>	<b>NOTES FOR BOARD &amp; STAFF</b>
<b>Water Education &amp; Outreach</b>	67,000	74,750	<b>74,250</b>	
Event Sponsorships (≤ \$1,000 GM discretion; > \$1,000 needs Board approval)	6,000	6,000	<b>5,000</b>	
SWCD Children's Water Festival	10,500	10,500	<b>10,000</b>	
SWCD Southwest Water Seminar	28,000	35,000	<b>36,000</b>	Estimated revenues of \$12,500 (see line 15)
SWCD Water Leaders Program Scholarship	4,500	4,750	<b>4,750</b>	
Water Connections Event	2,000	2,500	<b>2,500</b>	
Water Education Colorado	10,000	10,000	<b>10,000</b>	
Watershed Education Program (Telluride Institute)	6,000	6,000	<b>6,000</b>	??
<b>Water Information Program</b>	80,110	82,150	<b>85,460</b>	WIP Proposed; SWCD Contribution ~ \$40,000
<b>District Administration</b>	399,530	419,520	<b>426,770</b>	
Board of Directors	35,000	30,000	<b>30,000</b>	
Director Fees	20,000	15,000	<b>15,000</b>	
Director Travel	15,000	15,000	<b>15,000</b>	
<b>Staffing</b>	245,950	263,050	<b>263,050</b>	
Wages - General Manager	130,000	145,000	<b>145,000</b>	
Wages - Programs Coordinator	60,000	60,000	<b>60,000</b>	
Wages - Fiscal & Grants Accountant	-	-		
Wages - Payroll Taxes	17,100	18,450	<b>18,450</b>	
Wages - Retirement Benefit	9,500	10,250	<b>10,250</b>	5% employer match
Wages - Health & Life Insurance	29,350	29,350	<b>29,350</b>	Up to \$1200/mo/empl + life insurance
Recruitment				

<b>SWCD - Budget History</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2023</b>	<b>ADOPTED BUDGET 2024</b>	<b>Draft Budget 2025</b>	<b>NOTES FOR BOARD &amp; STAFF</b>
Administrative Expenses	65,900	67,970	74,220	
Accounting	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Payroll Department Fees		3,000	3,000	
Audit	10,000	10,500	10,500	
Capital Outlay	5,000	5,000	5,000	
Casual Labor	200	200	200	
SDA Membership	1,500	1,500	1,500	
Equipment Leasing	-	-	-	
Insurance - General Liability	8,500	8,750	9,000	
Legal Notice	200	520	520	
Meeting Expenses	7,500	7,500	7,500	
Miscellaneous Expenses	500	500	500	
Office Expenses	7,000	7,000	7,000	
Postage	2,500	2,500	2,000	
Registration Fees	8,000	10,000	10,000	
Staff Training & Professional Development	2,500	2,500	2,500	
Telecommunications/IT Support	7,500	3,500	10,000	Includes new laptop for Programs Coordinator
Staff Travel	20,000	25,000	25,000	
Rent	32,680	33,500	34,500	
<b>County Treasurer Fees</b>	54,105	57,498	59,447	
<b>SWCD Contingency Reserve</b>	0	0		
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (TOTAL APPROPRIATED FUNDS)</b>	<b>\$1,899,326</b>	<b>\$2,065,130</b>	<b>\$2,019,298</b>	
<b>Excess Revenue Over (Under) Expenditures</b>	<b>\$6,720</b>	<b>\$54,482</b>	<b>\$215,005</b>	
<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$4,500,222</b>	<b>\$5,041,375</b>	<b>\$5,256,380</b>	