

**The Colorado Division of Water Resources  
Office of the State Engineer**

**Vision  
Mission  
Strategy**



**November 2006**

## ***Introduction***

**The Colorado Division of Water Resources** has been successfully guided by long-range strategic planning activities for over fifteen years. The plan outlined below will serve as a guide for our work through 2009, however, it is reviewed and updated on a yearly basis. As in most strategic planning processes, this plan sets a framework for the organization to accomplish its mission and serve the citizens of the state in an effective and efficient manner.

This strategic plan is designed in a manner that allows flexibility for the organization to adapt and change as new situations and technologies emerge. In this light, the Division operates under broad categories of focus that allow for the development and change of objectives as the need arises. Day-to-day activities are assumed and the focus of this plan is to address emerging challenges of the future based on a expansive focus over the coming five years.

## ***Purpose of Plan***

- Directional guide in decision making processes
  - Define priorities
  - Develop performance goals
  - Identify future needs
  - Act as a model of how we do business

## ***Vision***

***The Colorado Division of Water Resources*** is a leader in the water community of Colorado and the western United States. This is accomplished by focusing on the following areas: *people, water and stewardship*. ***People***, because we recognize that the business of water involves our employees and the public. ***Water***, because the administration, safety and use of the State of Colorado's water resources is something we are committed to and care deeply about. ***Stewardship***, because we understand and accept our obligation to the taxpayers and ourselves, in using and protecting the resources in the most effective manner possible.

### ***The Mission of the Colorado Division of Water Resources is:***

- to provide competent and dependable distribution of water in accordance with statutes, decrees and interstate compacts;
- to ensure public safety through safe dams and properly permitted and constructed water wells;
- to maintain and provide accurate and timely information concerning water;
- to promote stewardship of all human, fiscal and natural resources;
- to serve the public through the generation of creative solutions to problems;
- to help the public understand complex water issues;
- to promote stability in the use of the state's limited water resources; and,
- to apply modern technology to its greatest advantage.

## ***Fundamental Goals***

### **The goals of the Division of Water Resources are:**

1. To distribute and allocate the surface and ground water of the state in accordance with Colorado statutes, judicial decrees and interstate compacts.
2. To protect Colorado's entitlements and ensure compliance with interstate stream compacts.
3. To promote stewardship of our human and fiscal resources.
4. To promote a safe environment for the public and our employees through awareness, technology and education.
5. To enhance the customer service capabilities of the agency.
6. To maintain and provide accurate, timely data and information related to water resources and our agency.

## Principles

***The Division values these principle statements and will use them to guide our actions internally and externally:***

- Treating each other and the public with dignity, respect, honesty and fairness.
- Assuming personal responsibility for individual and organizational actions.
- Fostering continuous improvement, innovative thought, learning and shared leadership.
- Promoting an open and honest communication environment that builds trust, respect and loyalty among us and the diverse community in which we live and work.
- Recognizing our employees and the water community for the professional, competent services they provide.

## Structure, Authority, and Roles of the State Engineer

The Office of the State Engineer (a/k/a Division of Water Resources) was created in 1881 to oversee recently appointed Water Commissioners in the State (1879) and ensure administration of water rights based on the prior appropriation doctrine set forth in the State's constitution. In the 125 years since its creation, a host of responsibilities have been added to assist the people of the state in managing its water resources. Major programs include:

- Public Safety
  - Dam Construction and Maintenance
  - Well Construction, Board of Examiners of Water Well Construction and Pump Installation Contractor's Staff
- Hydrography
- Water Administration, Surface and Ground Water Rights
- Public Information Services
  - Record Collection and Maintenance
  - Information Technology and Internet Services
- Interstate Compacts
- Ground Water Well Permitting
  - Outside Designated Basins
  - Inside Designated Basins (Colorado Ground Water Commission)

## Objectives

The objectives listed under each goal below identify key areas that will be addressed to accomplish and achieve the goals of the agency.

### **GOAL 1 To distribute and allocate the surface and ground water of the state in accordance with Colorado statutes, judicial decrees and interstate compacts.**

- Objective 1: Effectively use technology to improve data quality, data accessibility through implementation and use of GPS, GIS and DSS systems.
- Objective 2: Eliminate the backlog of final permits in Designated Basins by December 31, 2007 in accordance with the fiscal year 2000 decision item.
- Objective 3: Accurately locate and identify every major diversion structure, including all large capacity wells, using GPS technology.
- Objective 4: The Division will proactively provide public educational opportunities through the State Fair, SEO forum, workshops and various other media to communicate with the public concerning water issues and water administration in the state.
- Objective 5: The Division will continuously look for any and all opportunities to improve and enhance its capabilities to administer and manage water for optimum use.

### **GOAL 2 To protect Colorado's entitlements and ensure compliance with interstate stream compacts.**

- Objective 1: Implement the final decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the Arkansas River Compact litigation to insure compliance with the compact.
- Objective 2: The State Engineer and designated Division staff will continue to meet with Kansas representatives to resolve outstanding John Martin Reservoir accounting issues that are the subject of disagreement between the States of Colorado and Kansas through the Special Engineering

Committee established by the Arkansas River Compact Administration.

- Objective 3: The State Engineer will develop and promulgate rules to assure water use efficiency improvements are made in compliance with Article IV D of the Arkansas River Compact.
- Objective 4: The State Engineer, as Colorado's Commissioner on the Rio Grande Compact, will protect Colorado's entitlements under the compact, and will meet the State's obligations by promulgating rules to address depletions above the Index gages on the Rio Grande and Conejos River. The State Engineer's staff will provide assistance to the Rio Grande Water Conservation District in establishing ground water management sub-districts and related management plans to address the impacts of well depletions.
- Objective 5: The Division will provide staff and resources to support the implementation of the Platte River Cooperative Agreement within the provisions of the South Platte River Compact.
- Objective 6: The State Engineer, as Colorado's Commissioner on the Republican River Compact, will provide staff and resources to implement the final decision of the U.S. Supreme Court (Settlement Agreement), and will assist the Republican River Water Conservation District in developing proactive programs to reduce consumptive use of water in the basin.
- Objective 7: The State Engineer, as Colorado's Commissioner on the Costilla Creek Compact, will appropriately address the issues concerning the proper administration of the Compact and obtain necessary funding for the operation of the compact.
- Objective 8: The Division will work closely with the CWCB and other agencies to develop and protect Colorado's compact entitlements through acquisition of data, decision support systems, and studies to support the complex and difficult issues related to water resource development and potential future interstate conflicts.
- Objective 9: The State Engineer, as Colorado's Commissioner on the La Plata River Compact, will attempt to resolve New Mexico's concerns about historic administration of the compact during low runoff conditions. Assistance will be provided to the La Plata Water Conservancy District in obtaining necessary

permits and agreements for the construction of Long Hollow Reservoir.

- Objective 10: The State Engineer will develop and identify proactive processes to address potential issues, conflicts and opportunities on interstate streams.
- Objective 11: The State Engineer, as administrator of all water rights in Colorado, will compile, review, and analyze pertinent data and information necessary to promulgate rules and regulations necessary to administer Colorado water rights in response to a Colorado River Compact or Upper Colorado River Compact “river call”.
- Objective 12: The Division will update identification of all irrigated acreage, statewide, in conjunction with the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

**GOAL 3 To promote stewardship of our human, fiscal and natural resources.**

- Objective 1: The Division will develop partnerships with other government agencies and water user organizations to enhance the use of its human and fiscal resources.
- Objective 2: The Division will implement recruitment and retention plans to help ensure a competent and diverse future workforce that strives to match the diversity of Colorado’s citizens.
- Objective 3: The Division will encourage employee development by funding commitments to training, the mentoring program, succession planning and a fair and equitable promotion or salary process for all positions.
- Objective 4: The Division will be an active participant and leader in professional, technical and community organizations that promote Colorado’s water resource management and public safety.
- Objective 5: The Division will proactively seek sufficient funding from all potential sources to provide the highest level of service to the citizens of Colorado.
- Objective 6: The Division will exercise prudent and diligent stewardship of allocated fiscal and human resources to effectuate the



highest level of service and performance of its responsibilities.

**GOAL 4 To promote a safe environment for the public and our employees through awareness, technology and education.**

- Objective 1: The Division will provide a comprehensive and effective Dam Safety Program.
- Objective 2: The Division, in its relationship with the Colorado Board of Examiners of Water Well Construction and Pump Installation Contractors, will protect the ground water resources and public health of the state through a comprehensive water well inspection program as required under Senate Bill 03-45.
- Objective 3: The Division will continue to maintain and develop the State's Flow Alert System to provide the best flow and stage data available to emergency managers; and will continue to provide specific safety training (such as swiftwater first responder training, confined space hazard training, defensive driving, flagger/traffic control training, first aid, winter survival, etc.) to employees (dam safety engineers, hydrographers, water commissioners, and others) who often are first line responders to emergency situations in their area.

**GOAL 5 To enhance the customer service capabilities of the agency.**

- Objective 1: The Division will provide timely response to customer needs, including efficient handling of complaints and public information requests.
- Objective 2: The Division will continue to examine organizational functions, systems, policies, processes, training and procedures to improve internal and external customer service.
- Objective 3: Continue customer survey efforts to measure the level of service being provided to its internal and external customers.

**GOAL 6 To acquire, maintain and provide accurate, timely data and information related to water resources and our agency.**

- Objective 1: The Division will increase data access efficiency and effectiveness for both the public and its employees including internet and intranet capabilities.
- Objective 2: The Division will develop quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) programs for all data related functions.
- Objective 3: The Division will search for ways to improve data transmission and collection capabilities.
- Objective 4: The Division will review its rules and regulations for fee structures and related methodologies concerning data and information provided to the public.
- Objective 5: The Division will participate in the Interbasin Compact Committee roundtable discussions and other public information and policy development forums to further enhance the maximum utilization of water resources in the State of Colorado.
- Objective 6: The Division will seek new or additional sources of revenue to provide sufficient funding for work associated with periodic data compilation, review, and analysis that is associated with quantifying irrigated acreage throughout the State of Colorado. The Division will support and encourage other government agencies to continue operation of the Landsat satellite system that provides essential spectral images used in computing the consumptive use of water resources.
- Objective 7: The Division will continue to apply advanced computer programming, updated data/information, and modeling expertise in the development and utilization of hydrologic computer models and decision support systems. The Division will coordinate with other government agencies and water user organizations to secure adequate financial and human resources necessary to operate, maintain, and update the computer models and decision support systems used by the Division in performance of its statutorily prescribed duties.