

One of the key reasons for the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) to perform the Drought & Water Supply Assessment project was to gain direct input into the development of state water policy, policy that relates to the allocation of state technical, administrative and financial resources. Given the historically contentious nature of water and water policy in not only in Colorado, but the Western U.S., and the ever-changing pressures on water conservation, development and use, it is appropriate to provide the reader with an historical, social, legal and technical framework within which to evaluate the results of the assessment. To this point, Section 1 provides a summary of a number of key issues that help to define and illustrate drought and water supply issues relevant to the development and implementation of this project.

In its eight chapters, Section 1 will:

- Define drought and describe historical drought in Colorado.
- Present social perspectives on the current drought including those from irrigators, recreational users and landscaping businesses.
- Identify the State response to the current drought based on the work of the State's Drought and Water Availability Task Forces.
- Describe the State's population and demographic changes over the last 50 years and the predicted changes for the next 30 years.
- Define the legal frameworks at the federal, state and local levels within which drought and water supply management must occur, with a brief synopsis of local drought mitigation actions.
- Present information on past and current water storage characteristics for each major river basin.
- Identify the tools that are available to individual localities for mitigation of and response to drought.
- And finally, identify the types of structural and non-structural projects that entities can evaluate and implement as appropriate for managing periods of water scarcity – to increase water supply, improve water delivery, or reduce water demand.

The chapters that follow present information on these various issues in a condensed format for purposes of providing the reader with a synopsis of the subject matter. Reference lists are presented when available to provide the reader with additional sources of information for those situations when additional detail is desired.