

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD

Department of Natural Resources

Bill Owens, Governor

Greg Walcher, DNR Executive Director

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CWCB DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS

Background

The CWCB is responsible for conserving, developing, protecting and managing Colorado's water for present and future generations.

The CWCB supports local and regional drought and water supply planning by providing:

- Technical assistance to communities and organizations requesting support.
- Fiscal and technical resources for developing studies and drought planning efforts.
- Low-interest loans for construction of drought mitigation and water supply projects.
- Facilitation of collaborative planning efforts.
- Coordination of basin wide planning and multi-objective water projects.

The CWCB provides resources to various state and federal agencies related to drought including leadership and technical resources to various drought management programs, and support to various monitoring, assessment, mitigation and response actions as specified in the Colorado Drought Mitigation and Response Plan.

Responsibilities

The various programs and drought related actions that CWCB maintains as defined in the Colorado Drought Mitigation and Response Plan are identified below:

- ❑ **Provide leadership to the various Drought Task Forces** (including Water Availability Task Force, Impact Task Forces, Review and Reporting Task Force, and Interagency Coordinating Group)

- ❑ **Support and improve water availability monitoring, including securing funding for stream gage improvements**
- ❑ **Increase public awareness and education regarding drought and water conservation through development of fact sheets, press releases, and maintenance of an Internet site**
- ❑ **Develop means to augment water supply:**
 - Facilitate private/public partnerships (with Department of Local Affairs) to augment local water supplies
 - Further research of weather modification programs
 - Explore (with State Engineers Office) feasibility of water supply banking technologies and methodologies
 - Provide funding for water system improvements
- ❑ **Facilitate watershed and local planning**
 - Develop risk-based assessments of water systems by basin
 - Conduct workshops on developing local drought plans
- ❑ **Support efforts to reduce water demand and encourage conservation**
 - Support local development of conservation programs
 - Develop additional computer aided decision support systems with State Engineers Office
- ❑ **Help support methods to reduce drought impacts**
 - Support Department of Agriculture in conducting local workshops
 - Aid State Engineers Office in resolving emerging water use conflicts

For more information about this or other water resources topics you can contact the CWCB at:

1313 Sherman Street, Room 721, Denver, CO 80203

Phone: (303) 866-3441. Fax: (303) 866-4474

Internet : www.cwcb.state.co.us

Other Programs CWCB Offers to Aid Local Entities in Planning for and Managing Drought

Providing Information and Data – The CWCB and DWR are working with state, federal, and local governments to monitor reservoir levels, snowpack, precipitation, and other indicators of drought. This information is used to make decisions about when and where water suppliers should respond to drought conditions. The CWCB has developed a “[Drought Watch](#)” newsletter to make this information available to the public and media.

Conservation Plans - In order to receive state financing, entities that supply more than 2,000 acre-feet of water must have a CWCB approved Conservation Plan. The CWCB helps “covered entities” complete and update their plans. Model conservation plans are available to the public on the CWCB web site.

Drought Plans – As a by-product of the CWCB Drought Assessment, the state will have a much clearer indication which communities are prepared to survive a drought. This type of planning entails both structural and non-structural planning and recognizes that in a semi-arid state like Colorado, water must be stored and transported for use. The CWCB previously initiated an assessment of 67 Colorado communities to determine how many had drought plans. The CWCB is available to work with local communities to develop drought plans upon request.

Dam Safety Inventory and Infrastructure Repair – The CWCB and the DWR estimate that more than 100,000 acre-feet of water could be stored in existing reservoirs if those reservoirs were repaired in order to meet state dam safety regulations. The CWCB offers grants, loans and technical assistance to those with infrastructure repair needs so as much water will be available as possible when it’s needed.

Federal Reservoir Operating Criteria – CWCB and DWR coordinate with federal dam managers like the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers for the development and implementation of federal reservoir operations. When data indicate drought, the state and federal government determine how to conserve water held in reservoirs for as long as possible.

Education and Outreach – The CWCB is funding the establishment of a Water Education Foundation and provides information via the Internet to promote a better understanding of water issues so Colorado citizens will understand water as a limited resource and will make informed decisions.

Water Saving Landscape Practices – The CWCB has financed the creation of a “Best Management Practices” manual for water use by the nursery and landscaping industries. This manual will increase the awareness within the industry of how wise water practices can positively impact their businesses.

Drought Assessment – The CWCB is conducting a statewide drought planning assessment of its water supplies. The information gathered from this Assessment will be used to determine the status of the state’s water suppliers’ storage capabilities and identify how the CWCB can support Colorado’s water suppliers in planning for and mitigating the impacts of drought.

The CWCB’s role is one of finance and advocacy in water issues. It has helped citizens to understand how the state’s water is used and managed by preparing fact sheets for the state’s eight river basins. These fact sheets are available via the Internet at www.cwcb.state.co.us. The fact sheets contain basic information concerning water supply, water rights, compacts, flood events, instream flows, and demographic and water use trends.