

~~~ **GUNNISON BASIN ROUNDTABLE** ~~~

QUICK GUIDE to the COLORADO WATER PLAN and the GUNNISON BASIN WATER PLAN

This is a quick guide to getting into the 350-page draft **Colorado Water Plan (CWP)** and the **Gunnison Basin Water Plan (GBWP)**. The Colorado Water Conservation Board and Basin planning groups want public input, but realize that few citizens will have the time to read each plan thoroughly. **So this guide goes back to the basic questions the water planning process is addressing, referencing the questions to sections in the Plans.**

FINDING THE PLANS: Go to website Coloradowaterplan.com. Click on **Resources** on the top menu bar. For the Colorado Water Plan, click on **'Draft Colorado's Water Plan'**. For the Gunnison Basin Plan, click on **'IBCC and Roundtable Documents'**; scroll down to **'Basin Roundtable Implementation Plans'** & click on Gunnison's..

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE CWP: The Gunnison Basin Roundtable has prepared a more thorough guide to the CWP, keyed to the pdf chapters that can be downloaded from the website above. You can find this guide on the **Colorado Mesa University website:** www.coloradomesa.edu/water_center/documents/COWaterPlanGuide-GSibley.pdf.

What goals & values underlie the Colorado Water Planning process?

The ultimate goal of the CWP is to make sure Colorado has enough water at mid-century to meet a **probable expanded water demand** (population increase) with a **probably shrinking water supply** (climate changes). A decade-long State Water Supply Initiative determined that by mid-century a statewide **Municipal & Industrial 'Gap'** of 200,000-500,000 acre-feet annually is anticipated between known supplies and anticipated demand. Most of that Gap will be in the Front Range metropolitan region, which draws on other Basins for its water supply. so its Gap becomes a statewide problem, necessitating the CWP. (Gunnison Basin's gap is <1% of the total Gap.)

But Governor Hickenlooper decided to give all the river basins first shot at describing their own need-and-supply problems; the Draft Colorado's Water Plan has been compiled out of all of those basin specific plans. So there is a 'dialogue' between the state (as represented by the CWCB) and the basins over intra-basin needs and supplies, versus the interbasin need to increase the metro region water supply.

Governor Hickenlooper stated some **values** he believes the Colorado Water Plan should incorporate in planning:

- A productive economy that supports vibrant and sustainable cities, viable and productive agriculture, and a robust skiing, recreation and tourism industry;
- Efficient and effective water infrastructure promoting smart land use; and
- A strong environment that includes healthy watersheds, rivers and streams, and wildlife.

Do you perceive any tensions among these values (especially the three parts of the first value)? If it were not possible to 'have it all,' which values should we sacrifice for others?

How do we know what is actually going to be happening in 2050?

We *don't*, so the CWP is an **'adaptive management' plan**, which will be constantly reviewed and refined as future conditions emerge, according to **five scenarios** factoring climate and population variables. **See CWP Chapter 6.1** for descriptions of the scenarios.

What are the possible sources of water for meeting The Gap?

- **Municipal & Industrial Conservation – including Demand Reduction, Land Use Reform, & Reuse:** CWP Chapters 5 & 6.3 cover efforts to make M&I water go farther. The GBWP has 'High' conservation goals.
- **New Supply:** This generally refers to new or expanded transmountain diversions (TMDs), but also includes existing storage expansion, weather modification, etc. CWP Chapters 4 & 8 analyze these options; Ch 8 has an analysis of strict conditions the Front Range would need to meet for future TMDs to occur. Similar conditions were laid out in the GBWP Section 1 **'Statewide Principles.'** (over for 3rd option)
- **Transfers from Agriculture:** 89% of the water consumed in Colorado is used in food production; some of the 'Gap' water will have to come from agricultural transfers to Municipal and Industrial uses. The challenge is to do it without serious impacts on food production, and on the communities supporting agricultural producers. CWP Chapters 6.3, 6.4, 6.5 address this. The GBWP Goals (Sec. 1) emphasize minimizing ag transfers.

How should we draw on these three sources proportionally in meeting The Gap? Which should be carried out first? What conditions should be placed on any future transmountain diversions?

Can we meet The Gap and still maintain our generally high quality environment?

'Nonconsumptive' environmental, recreational and power uses of Colorado water receive considerable attention in the CWP, as does water quality. All chapters include E&R considerations, usually toward the end; **CWP Chapters 6.6 and 7** are most important here. A 'Watershed Health' section is still being developed for the **GBWP Section 4** involving the Basin's environmental and recreational groups; studies to identify specific nonconsumptive-use projects are included in Tier 1 of the **Section 4** Project Listing.

What suggestions do you have for better integrating nonconsumptive uses with consumptive uses? Should NC uses be quantified? How can relations between recreational and ag users be improved?

How will we pay for all of the work laid out in these Plans?

CWP Chapter 9 explores this; the final **CWP** draft in December 2015 will include a **Chapter 10** with recommendations for the State Legislature. **Chapter 9** describes important state considerations for future funding.

Are all water users really paying a fair share for their use? Would you support a new 'water tax' (whatever form that might take)? Could other economic sectors help with funding (severance-type fees, bottle tax)?

Will this planning process have an impact on Colorado Water Law?

While the basic Appropriations Doctrine is considered inviolable, there is a growing sense in the state that some of the body of law and practice that has grown up around that doctrine results in a rigidity and expenses that prevents the creative and flexible adaptations we will need in addressing future challenges. We may be facing another episode of administrative changes like the State went through in 1969 – something for which the plans should lay the groundwork.

What concerns or caveats do you have on behalf of the users you represent?

How can you join the conversation?

Watch your newspaper and email for announcements of public meetings on the CWP and Basin Water Plans. The Roundtable is making serious efforts to get input on the plans.

Go to to your Basin Roundtable meeting. Each Basin has a website on the Colorado Water Conservation Board website, with meeting information. Go to cwcb.state.co.us/water-management/basin-roundtables/Pages/main.aspx, find your Roundtable in the left margin.

Talk with a Basin Roundtable member. A list of Roundtable members is on each Roundtable website (see URL info above). Find your rep.

Submit 'General Input Form'. Go to coloradowaterplan.com website, and click on 'Get Involved' on top menu; click on 'General Input Form', and then on the category that relates to your own concerns/interests.

Gunnison Basin inhabitants can find a **two-page summary** of the Gunnison Basin Water Plan and an **Input Survey** on the Colorado-Mesa website: <http://www.coloradomesa.edu/watercenter/GunniBasinPlan.html>.

OUTLINE OF THE COLORADO WATER PLAN:

Chapter 1 - Introduction (Plan Goals & primary challenges)

CHAPTERS 2 & 3 are background & context:

Chapter 2 - Our Legal & Institutional Setting

Chapter 3 - Overview of Each Basin (very brief overviews)

CHAPTERS 4 & 5 discuss basin supplies and demands

Chapter 4 - Water Supply (compiled from SWSI 2010)

Chapter 5 - Water Demand by Sector (also from SWSI 2010)

CHAPTERS 6-9 are the plan:

Chapter 6 - Water Supply Management for the Future

Chapter 7 - Water Resource Management & Protection

Chapter 8 - Interbasin Projects & Agreements

Chapter 9 - Alignment of State Resources & Policies

Chapter 10 – Legislative Recommendations (none yet)

Chapter 11 - Updating Colorado's Water Plan

Appendices

OUTLINE OF GUNNISON BASIN WATER PLAN:

Introduction: Overview of Basin and the Basin Plan

Section1: Basin Goals

Section 2: Basin Needs

Section 3: Basin Water Resource Evaluations

Section 4: Basin Plan and Projects for Plan

Appendices