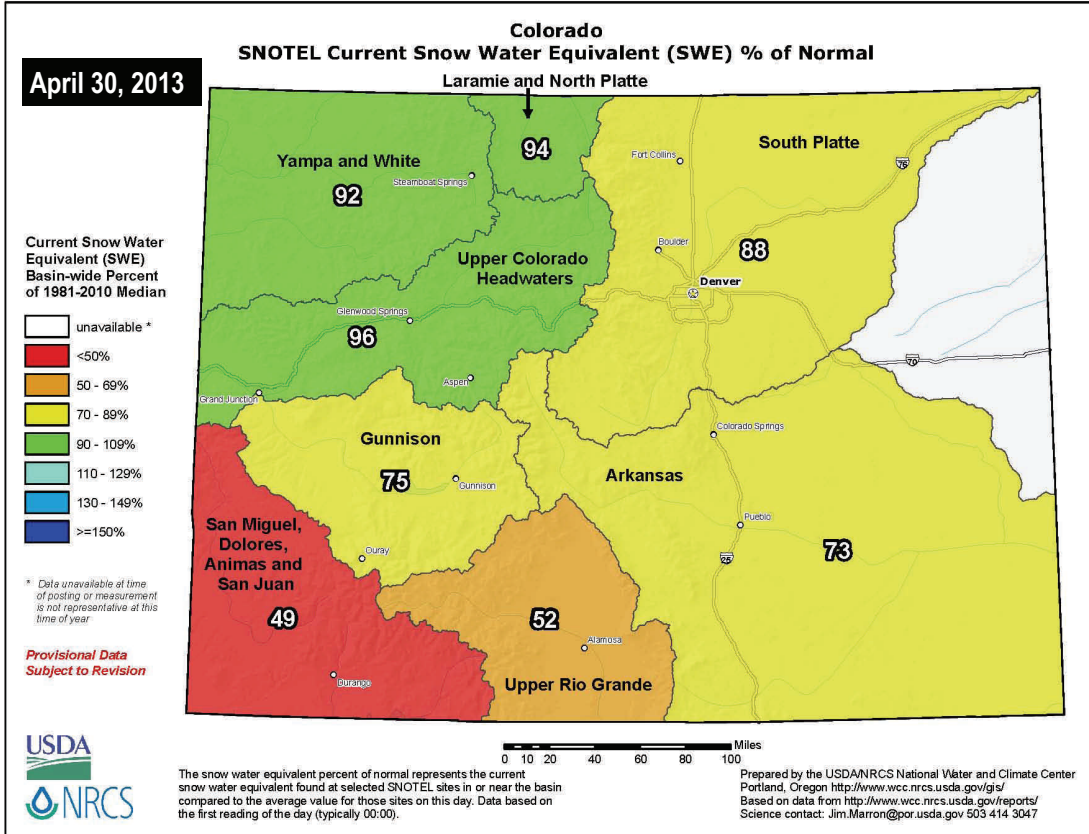




# Colorado River District

Protecting Western Colorado Water Since 1937



## April storms boost snow, but not for all

April's snowstorms improved the water supply prospects in the Colorado River Basin, but the effects were uneven across the 15 counties of the Colorado River District.

Receiving the biggest boosts were the Colorado, White and Yampa Basins. The Gunnison Basin was not as fortunate and will likely experience water supply problems this summer, according to General Manager Eric Kuhn, reporting to the Colorado River District Board at its April 16 meeting.

For most of the winter, Western Colorado was tracking even with the abysmal snow year of 2012, the fourth worst on record. But where it had stopped snowing in March of 2012, this past March experienced a wave of storms, a pattern that accelerated in April.

In fact, the April 14-15 storm forced the Colorado River District to abbreviate its agenda and defer a number of discussions until its July meeting.

"This time last year, 90 percent had run off and we about 10 to 20 percent of normal snowpack," Kuhn said. "This April, the curve was still going up. Still, districtwide it is not an above-average year. We will have some problems down the road but they will not be as severe as it seemed earlier in the year."

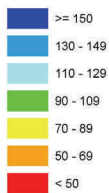
The difference a year makes. Above is the current snowpack for April 30, 2013. Below shows the anemic conditions of a year ago.

## Colorado Snowpack Map

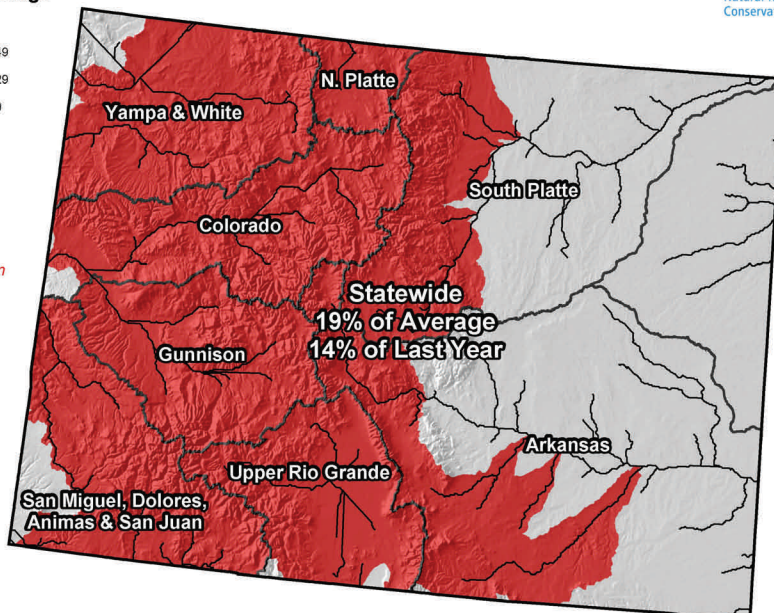
May 2012



Percent of Average



Provisional Data Subject to Revision





# Colorado River District

*Protecting Western Colorado Water Since 1937*

**Board of Directors Meeting Summary**

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**April 2013**

## **Board awards almost \$250,000 in grants**

The 2013 annual Colorado River District Water Supply Grant Program garnered 33 qualifying requests for more than \$1.6 million for a wide range of projects with total costs between \$3,400 and \$5.02 million. The Board of Directors awarded nearly \$250,000 in financial assistance at its April board meeting.

Awards are made on a cost-sharing basis. The projects must meet one or more of these objectives: develop new water supplies; improve existing water supply projects; improve water use efficiency; improve sediment control; improve water quality; undertake a watershed action or implement tamarisk control measures.

This year's recipients, representing a wide variety of water supply projects that met the multiple objectives of the grant program are:

**Grand Mesa Reservoir Company** in Mesa County, \$5,000 to repair an outlet pipe and install a cure-in-place pipe

lining;

**Elmwood Lateral Ditch Company** in Mesa County, \$5,800 to upgrade Wallace Ditch;

**No Name Water Creek Association** in Garfield County, \$11,600 for the No Name Creek water line replacement along Hideaway Lane;

**Van Hoose & Son Inc.** in Delta County, \$6,200 for the installation of 15-inch plastic pipe to adequately carry water, building a 75-foot trellis to carry 80 feet of pipe;

**Routt County Conservation District** in Routt County, \$5,000 for the Armstrong Creek Reservoir Project;

**Montrose Botanical Society** in Montrose County, \$1,700 for an upgrade of the Montrose Botanic Gardens irrigation evapotranspiration rate experiments;

**CJC Properties** in Eagle County, \$30,526 for the Cache Creek Reservoir Project;

**Timbers Water & Sanitation Dis-**

**trict** in Routt County, \$16,545 for the Timbers Well;

**Overland Ditch and Reservoir Company** in Delta County, \$10,000 for SCADA design and implementation for remote reservoir operation and real time flow management;

**LK Ranch Livestock, LLC** in Rio Blanco Eagle County, \$62,500 for East Flag Creek pipeline, pivot and reservoir rehabilitation;

**Robinson Ditch Company** in Eagle County, \$82,394 for piping improvements; and

**Ware & Hinds Ditch Association** in Garfield County, \$4,500 for seepage and erosion mitigation.

Please visit [www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org](http://www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org) after Dec. 1, 2013, to obtain information on the 2014 Grant Program.

## ***Boards makes minor adjustments to three policies***

Each year the Colorado River District Board considers at least one-third of its policies.

The Board took final action at this meeting after considering and making minor, editorial changes to its policies on the Endangered Species Act, the Upper Colorado River Basin Endangered Fish Recovery Program and Recreational Water Uses.

The Board chose in January to delay review of its Water Quality policy in favor of discussing it in depth in the context of a Strategic Plan for the Colorado River District.

The readopted Endangered Species Act policy calls on Congress to reauthorize the Act with amendments focused on

species recovery, encouraging and rewarding partnerships with non-federal parties, and respecting private property, including water rights.

Recognizing that comprehensive Congressional action, including reauthorization, is unlikely, the Board's policy calls on federal agencies to administer the Act in a manner respectful of property rights and through cooperative partnerships with affected parties.

The Board reaffirmed its support for the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program (Recovery Program) and the Recovery Program's twin purposes of recovering fish species listed as endangered while allowing historical water use and future water devel-

opment to continue unimpeded.

The Board's Recovery Program policy lists seven program principles ranging from support for non-native fish removal to supporting adding water quality protections to the Recovery Program's goals and objectives.

Finally, the Board readopted its policy supporting recreational water uses and Colorado's inclusion of recreational rights within Colorado water law.

The River District's policy calls for recreational water uses that balance recreational needs with historical and future consumptive water needs.



## Legislative and federal affairs reports

With the Colorado legislative session in its final weeks, the Colorado River District Board of Directors heard updates from External Affairs Manager Chris Treese on the progress of bills prioritized by the River District and on a new one: Senate Bill 258.

Senate Bill 258 was introduced at Douglas County's request to address an adverse court ruling that had reversed a county approval of a large development. This case was the first legal test of House Bill 1141 from 2008 that addressed the linking water supply with development approvals. The River District was centrally involved in that legislation. House Bill 1141 requires an up-front finding of an adequate water supply for the full development before any construction can begin.

In discussing Senate Bill 258 Directors expressed their support for the principles of the existing statute (1141) and the benefits of a one-time determination of a proposed development's planned water supply.

Based on Treese's characterization of the bill, the Board unanimously adopted a position of opposition to Senate Bill 258.

Following the meeting, additional legislative analysis revealed that the bill would not compromise the District's priority of maintaining the integrity of House Bill 1141 from 2008. With confirming legislative history officially recorded at the committee hearing and repeated on the House floor, the Board accepted Treese's subsequent recommendation to move to neutral on the bill.

The River District's No. 1 priority going into the 2013 legislative session was passage of Senate Bill 041 ensuring flexibility in management of stored water and affirming that carryover storage – water stored one year but not released for beneficial use until drought conditions dictate. Treese reported the

good news that Governor Hickenlooper signed Senate Bill 041, and it is now law.

Treese also highlighted Representative Coram's (R-Montrose) successful effort to return up to \$30 million of previously diverted funds to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) construction fund if 2013 revenues exceed forecasts. Recent bi-monthly revenue forecasts have consistently enjoyed upward revisions.

Both House Bill 1130 and House Bill 1248 would allow for streamlined review of temporary lease-following arrangements. Treese reported that each bill has, or will soon have, identical language ensuring that such programs cannot be used to increase transmountain diversion of Colorado River water across the Continental Divide.

Treese also reported on the reversal of an amendment the River District supported that would have continued the current limitation on the use of CWCB construction fund monies used to purchase water rights for conversion to in-stream flow rights.

The House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources Committee agreed with the River District's position, but the full House on a largely party line vote during an evening of partisan votes, rejected the Ag Committee's protective amendment.

Treese reported to the Board that the bill, without the River District-supported amendment, moved quickly to the Governor's desk, and he is expected to sign it.

### Federal Affairs:

Treese also reported on a recent trip to Washington, D.C., with the National Water Resources Association Board. While there, he met with new staffers with Congressman Tipton (R-Cortez) and both Colorado Senators'

offices. Treese also had opportunities to meet with senior staff at the U.S Bureau of Reclamation to seek final approvals on agreements related to the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement and with the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the scope of the Clean Water Act.

In Congress several bills providing incentives for hydroelectric installations, including Congressman Tipton's and Congresswoman DeGette's (D-Denver) bills, are moving through this session of Congress with uncharacteristic speed. DeGette's bill passed the House unanimously and Tipton's bill garnered only seven "no" votes.

Treese also relayed that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee scheduled a meeting for the week following the Board meeting to hear these two House bills and/or their companion Senate bills.

### Colorado River District Mission Statement:

To lead in the protection, conservation, use and development of the water resources of the Colorado River Basin for the welfare of the District, and to safeguard for Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which it is entitled.

### How to contact us

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