



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 19, 2015

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Northern Water Supports State's Water Planning Effort

BERTHOUD – Northern Water officials today expressed appreciation to both the Colorado Water Conservation Board and Colorado's water community for an outstanding collaborative effort on the Colorado Water Plan.

The CWP provides Colorado with a solid foundation to build a better future for the state and its most precious resource – water.

The CWP takes an “all of the above” water strategy approach that includes greater water conservation efforts, protecting and enhancing environmental and recreational values, developing and constructing infrastructure, building additional water storage, and more collaborative water planning efforts.

“It's ambitious, and provides a road map for a better water future for Colorado,” said General Manager Eric Wilkinson. “The plan makes it very clear our future has to include careful and thoughtful planning and management, including construction of additional infrastructure and more reservoir storage. It's a wise investment in our future.”

On behalf of 23 individual water providers, Northern Water has been deeply involved in the federal permitting process for two proposed projects: the Windy Gap Firming Project and Northern Integrated Supply Project. These two projects jointly include three new storage reservoirs in Northern Colorado. Participants for both projects feel the CWP helps demonstrate the valuable contribution the WGFP and NISP will make to Colorado's future.

The CWCB states, “As the state conserves, Colorado must also develop additional storage to meet growing needs and face the changing climate.” The CWP also sets a measurable storage objective of attaining 400,000 acre-feet of water storage in order to manage and share conserved water.

A major concern is the ability of the state to keep water on farms and avoid wholesale “buy and dry” of irrigated farms on Colorado's Eastern Plains. The CWP recognizes the importance of irrigated agriculture to the state's economy and emphasizes action to preserve this industry.

To accomplish this will require alternate supplies for fast-growing cities and towns that often have no other choice but buy and dry. The CWCB explains, "...without a water plan, Colorado stands to lose up to 700,000 more acres of irrigated agriculture lands – that's 20 percent statewide and nearly 35 percent in Colorado's most productive basin, the South Platte."

"The CWCB staff received and incorporated extensive public input from all sectors in what was a grass roots approach to developing the CWP," Wilkinson said. "We now have a framework that will guide the planning and actions needed to provide for Colorado's future."

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About Northern Water

Northern Water is a public agency created in 1937 to contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to build the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, which collects water on the West Slope and delivers it to the East Slope through a 13-mile tunnel that runs underneath Rocky Mountain National Park. Northern Water's boundaries encompass portions of eight counties, 640,000 irrigated acres and a population of about 880,000 people. For more information, visit www.northernwater.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).