



Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
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WATER NEWS

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BERTHOUD – Those who own units of Colorado-Big Thompson Project water will have the ability to receive additional water in coming months, based on a decision made today by the Board of Directors of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District.

At its meeting today, the Northern Water Board set the C-BT Project quota at 80 percent, a 20 percent increase from the initial quota the Board set in October 2008. The initial quota became effective at the beginning of the water year, Nov. 1. A quota of 80 percent means that each unit of C-BT water will yield eight-tenths of an acre-foot. An acre-foot is equal to nearly 326,000 gallons, which is about how much water two urban families use in a year.

The 80-percent quota will make available a total of 248,000 acre-feet of C-BT Project water. C-BT allottees, those water users within Northern Water boundaries who own units of C-BT water, include municipalities, domestic water districts, industries and farmers. The 80-percent quota affects the current water year, which ends Oct. 31.

Farmers are facing low soil moisture conditions, and the Board hoped that the 80-percent quota would help.

“It’s critical to set quotas as high as we can for the benefit of the basin, and supplies are adequate for an 80-percent quota this year,” said Don Magnuson, Board member representing Weld County.

The Board reassesses the initial quota each April, based on updated data and information, including snowpack, water available in local storage, soil moisture conditions, runoff and estimated diversions. In determining the quota, the Board also considers the need to maintain C-BT Project storage reserves. The Board strives to utilize the supplemental water supply provided by the C-BT Project to complement the supplies available from native sources to ensure adequate regional water supplies through the current water year.

The project’s reserves, as measured on April 1 of each year, have been below average every year since 2000. Although the reserves are recovering, they are again below average this year.

Although the Board has an option to raise the quota later, members emphasized that they likely will not change the 80-percent quota unless conditions change dramatically.

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. The Northern Water boundaries encompass portions of eight counties and a population of approximately 800,000 people.

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