

---

---

**SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO  
WATER CONSERVANCY  
DISTRICT MINUTES  
July 17, 2025**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (District) was held on Thursday, July 17, 2025, at 9:37 a.m., at the District office, 31717 United Avenue, Pueblo, Colorado. The ZOOM platform was also made available for Board Members and visitors.

**Attendance:**

Board Members Present:

Abby Ortega	Curtis Mitchell	Pat Edelmann
Alan Hamel	Justin DiSanti	Seth Clayton
Andy Colosimo	Kevin Karney	Tom Goodwin
Ann Nichols	Matt Heimerich	
Bill Long	Mike Bartolo	

**DIRECTOR(S) ABSENT AND EXCUSED:**

Dallas May, and Greg Felt

**DISTRICT OFFICIALS:**

Executive Director Leann Noga; Legal Counsel, Lee Miller; Staff Attorney, Peter Levish; Senior Policy and Issues Manager, Chris Woodka; Engineering Manager, Gordon Dillon; Administrative Support Specialist Margie Medina and Patty Rivas; Finance Manager Stephanie Shipley; Water Resource Engineer, Robert Banham; Project Engineer, Trevor Singleton; Jewell, Jimmerson Natural Resources Law, April Hendricks and Pete Jaacks(remote); H2O Consultants, Roy Vaughan; Kogovsek & Associates, Christine Arbogast; and Wilson Water Group, Mitch Frischmeyer.

**PRESENT VISITORS:**

Aurora Water, Abba Ahmed; USBR, Mike Holmberg; USGS, Andrew Klakulak and Krystal Brown; Arkansas River Watershed Coordinator (ARWC) Yates McConnell, Pueblo West Metro District, Elissa Velasquez and Jeffery DeHerrera; Private Citizen, Kim Dillon.

**VISITORS CONNECTED VIA ZOOM:**

Security Water & Sanitation, Roy Heald.

**Mrs. Noga introduced new staff members to the Board:**

Trevor Singleton – Project Engineer

Robert Banham – Water Resources Engineer

**CONSENT ITEMS:**

Mr. Goodwin moved, seconded by Mr. Edelman, to approve:

1. Minutes from June 19, 2025, District Board Meeting
2. The June 2025 Treasurer Reports
3. Inclusion Item.

Motion unanimously carried.

**PRESENTATION ITEMS:**

**LOWER ARKANSAS WATERSHED PLANNING INITIATIVE**

Mr. Yates McConnel presented to the Board:

*Water Plan Grant: Lower Arkansas Watershed Planning Initiative- Phase 1:*

- Core Partners:
  1. Colorado Springs Utilities
  2. Arkansas Groundwater & Reservoir Association
  3. Ducks Unlimited
- In Feb. 2025 ARWC began developing a CWCB grant application to hire an employee and expand work to the reaches of the Arkansas Watershed between Pueblo & John Martin with the above-mentioned partners.
- Tasks:
  1. Lower Arkansas Coordinator
    - A. Interface with Community Member & Interested Parties
    - B. Develop self-sustaining fund-raising plans
    - C. Serve as go-between for community
  2. Baseline Inventory
    - A. Hydrology & Flow
    - B. Water Quality
    - C. River Dynamics
    - D. Riparian Vegetation & Floodplain Habitat
    - E. Aquatic Life & Wildlife
    - F. Flooding and Human Impacts of sedimentation
  3. Partnership Development
    - A. One-on-one outreach meetings with stakeholders
    - B. Planning & Facilitating Public-Targeted input sessions
    - C. Attend/Present at local government meetings
    - D. Develop outreach materials
    - E. Fundraising outreach
  4. Project Management
- Budget
- Partners; AGRA, Amity Canal, Colorado Canal, Colo. Springs Utilities, Ducks Unlimited, Institute for resilient infrastructure systems, Pueblo Water, and Pueblo West

- Future Phases:
  - A. Phase 2 – Comprehensive Assessment, Develop Water Shed Assessment, Identify key, high impact projects
  - B. Phase 3 – Fundraising, Implementation based on recommendations

Mr. McConnell was asked questions.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**LOWER ARKANSAS WATERSHED PLANNING SPONSOR REQUEST**

Mr. Woodka presented an action item to the Board the recommendation of a \$5,000 contribution toward the Lower Arkansas Watershed Planning grant request to the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative (ARWC) toward its Lower Arkansas Watershed Planning Initiative grant request from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). The REPC also recommends a letter of support and staff availability for the watershed planning effort.

Lower Arkansas Watershed Planning Initiative Project Objectives include:

- Develop a diverse coalition of stakeholders who regularly meet to discuss ongoing issues.
- Complete high-level current-conditions assessment of the Arkansas River between Pueblo Reservoir and John Martin Reservoir
- Hire Coordinator dedicated to the Lower Arkansas River Valley
- Build momentum for a Phase 2 project that incorporates shared community priorities and identifies shovel-ready projects.

Mr. Heimerich told the REPC that in some places the bed of the Arkansas River has risen 4-5 feet and that sedimentation has created problems for ditch companies in the Lower Arkansas River Basin. Additionally, there are problems with invasive species and increased flood risks. Several agencies in the Arkansas River Basin, including CS-U, Pueblo Water, Colorado Canal and Amity Canal have contributed toward the grant request.

The grant request includes a three-year budget of \$486,977, which includes \$362,801 in CWCB grants and matching funding or in-kind contributions of \$124,176.

Mr. Clayton moved, seconded by Mr. Hamel, the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District to contribute \$5,000 toward the Lower Arkansas Watershed Planning Initiative grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, being sought by the Arkansas River Collaborative, along with a letter of support for the project and staff availability in support of the project. Motion carried unanimously.

**MONTHLY/QUARTERLY REPORTS:**

**UNITED STATES BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

Mr. Mike Holmberg presented a PowerPoint to the Board that reviewed the following topics.

As of July 14, 2025 :

- 220,401 acre-feet stored in Pueblo Reservoir
- 146,606 acre-feet of Project Water
- 51,771 acre-feet of Excess Capacity Water
- 26,048 acre-feet of Winter Water/Carryover
- 98,767 acre-feet of Project Water Space Available in Pueblo
- 14,950 acre-feet of Project Space in Twin & Turquoise Lake

Graphs 2023-2025:

- Turquoise Lake
- Twin Lakes
- Pueblo Reservoir

June 30, 2025:

Total M&I PW in system = 137,530 AF

1. EAST = 27,279
  2. WEST = 12,194
  3. PUEBLO = 18,547
  4. OTHER = 4,677
  5. FVA = 74,833
    - A. CSU – 54,129
    - B. FOUNTAIN = 6,758
    - C. SECURITY = 6,134
    - D. STRATMOOR = 2,145
    - E. WIDFIELD = 5,688
- Boustead Stored Cumulative Imports 2025: total as of 7/14/2025, 38,472 AF
  - Voluntary Flow Management Program
  - Arkansas River at Wellsville charts

Questions were asked of Mr. Holmberg.

**COLORADO RIVER ISSUES**

Mr. Lee Miller updated the Board; Acting Assistant Secretary Scott Cameron presented comments on the post-2026 Colorado River Operations process during the recent Upper Colorado River Commission meeting. Mr. Cameron said the Draft Environmental Impact Statement would be released during December 2025, followed by a Record of Decision in May or June 2026. He set a November 11, 2025, deadline for the seven Basin states to propose an agreement in principle to the Interior Department, with details to be completed no later than February 14, 2026, for consideration by the Department in the Record of Decision.

As reported at the last Board meeting, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) began the process of considering the River District's request to accept a donation of the Shoshone Power Plant water rights for instream flow purposes. On July 1, 2025, the CWCB held a special Board meeting to consider the formal hearing requests of Colorado Springs Utilities, Denver Water, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and Aurora.

The hearing request was granted and a hearing officer appointed. The District will not make a hearing request or join another entity's hearing request. Requests for party status were due on July 9, 2025; after hearing discussion during the CWCB's special Board meeting, the decision was made to not file for party status. The District will continue to stay in contact with participating Front Range Water Council, to stay informed on the proceedings. The District decision to not participate in the CWCB hearing will not preclude the District from filing a statement of opposition to the resulting water court application to protect the District's water rights.

Mr. Miller reviewed a portion of a CWCB memo: Agenda Item 12: Colorado River Updates:

**The Natural Flow Based Operations Concept**

A significant development in recent negotiations is the emergence of the "Natural Flow Based Operations" concept, which may provide an opportunity for a supply-driven management framework. This concept proposes that Lake Powell would release a certain percentage of the average of the last few years of natural flow as determined at Lees Ferry.

**Key Elements Under Discussion:**

- **Averaging Period:** There is general agreement among the Basin States that a three-year period for averaging natural flow at Lees Ferry is appropriate.
- **Release Percentage:** Negotiations are ongoing regarding the percentage or volume of the natural flow average that Lake Powell will release. Discussions also include whether this percentage could vary depending on specific hydrologic conditions.
- **Upper and Lower Release Bounds:** Defining clear upper and lower bounds for Powell's releases is also a critical element under negotiation.

This framework is designed to allow the Upper and Lower Basins to manage themselves, with the primary point of agreement being the Powell release volume. For this concept to be successful, the Basin States must agree to set aside existing legal arguments, and any negotiated framework must not bias either Basin's legal position. This includes an understanding that it would not impose a delivery obligation on the Upper Basin. The Basin States would also agree that no Compact claims may be asserted pursuant to the agreement.

The Basin States discussions are ongoing, and Colorado will continue to pursue a supply-driven approach that appropriately mitigates risks to Lake Powell and Lake Mead and protects the interests of the Upper Division States.

Questions were asked of Mr. Miller. The complete memo will be provided to the Board.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

The Board was provided written material on the following topics, which were posted to OnBoard and the Board website:

- Water Court Resume
- Other Business Matters:
  1. NWRA Western Water Seminar – July 29-31, Park City, UT
  2. CWC Summer Conference – August 19-21, Steamboat

Mr. Lee Miller announced that the scheduled Executive Session will not be held.

President asked if there were any other matter to come before the District Board, hearing none, President Long adjourned the District Board Meeting at 10:34 a.m.

---

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patty Rivas**  
**Administrative Support Specialist**

---

**Seth Clayton – Secretary**

---

**Bill Long – President**

---

**Greg Felt**

---

**Curtis Mitchell – Vice President**

---

**Justin DiSanti**

---

**Ann Nichols- Treasurer**

---

**Kevin Karney**

---

**Abby Ortega**

---

**Matt Heimerich**

---

**Alan Hamel**

---

**Mike Bartolo**

---

**Andy Colosimo**

---

**Pat Edelmann**

---

**Dallas May**

---

**Tom Goodwin**