

Board approves 2009 budgets

The Colorado River District Board approved a 2009 General Operating Budget of \$3.5 million during its regular quarterly meeting held Oct. 21-22, 2008.

The budget is funded by a 0.198 mill levy in the 15 counties that comprise the Colorado River District. Under the mill levy, most residential property owners in the district will pay between \$2 and \$10 a year to protect Western Colorado water, depending on the size and value of their home.

Since 1998, the mill levy has been cut from 0.307 mills to its present level.

The Colorado River District also operates an Enterprise Fund under which it owns or controls stored water for lease to water users. A \$9.3 million Enterprise Budget was approved. The Enterprise Budget is funded solely by water supply operations.

The board also learned that its investments were not jeopardized by the nation's current financial crisis.

Board adopts policies On Colorado River

The Colorado River District Board adopted two new policies at its October 21-22, 2008, regular meeting concerning Colorado's share of the Colorado River under



The Colorado River District held its Annual Water Seminar, "What Would an Intra-State Colorado River Compact Look Like and How Would It Work," on Sept. 19 in Grand Junction. More than 200 people attended the event and learned that if there were to be an intra-state compact to divide up the remaining state entitlement to the Colorado River, it would take the legislature to make it happen.

the interstate compacts.

The first addresses Colorado's remaining Colorado River water allocations under the 1922 and 1948 compacts. The other concerns Colorado's water rights that pre-date the 1922 Compact.

Colorado's Remaining Colorado River Water: Regarding the state's quantity of Colorado River water that remains for Colorado water users to develop, the Colorado River District supports on-going studies to quantify Colorado's current use and remaining develop-

ment potential of its Colorado River allocation.

Further, the policy calls on the District to "advocate for legislation, policies and programs that protect Colorado's existing uses of Colorado River basin waters and permit responsible development of Colorado's remaining water entitlement without increasing the risk of compact curtailment to existing water uses."

Pre-Compact Colorado River Water Rights: Water put to beneficial use prior to the effective date of the

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Colorado River District

Protecting Western Colorado Water Since 1937

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

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Oct. 21-22, 2008

Update given On Wild & Scenic

The Bureau of Land Management has identified segments of the Colorado River as eligible for Wild and Scenic designation. A Wild and Scenic Stakeholder Group, with Colorado River District staff participation, continues to work on a management plan that would provide an alternative to designation while preserving the river's "Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORVs)."

At its quarterly meeting, the Colorado River District Board was updated on the plan.

The goal of the plan is to protect the ORVs identified by the Bureau of Land Management from the mouth of Gore Canyon downstream through Glenwood Canyon while retaining flexibility for future water development.

The final proposed management alternative will include flow ranges, protective of the ORVs, that will be maintained through a combination

of strategies, including a potential base-flow, in-stream flow, exercise of the current stream flow regimen (*i.e.*, delivery to downstream demands, existing senior water rights) and deliveries required for protection of upper Colorado River endangered species.

The flow ranges will vary, depending on wet, dry and normal year conditions. As a complement to these "permanent" measures to protect the ORVs, the stakeholders are exploring cooperative measures that would be available to enhance the ORVs and to mitigate any threats to the ORVs.

Board hears discussion on South Platte wells

The Colorado River District Board took a wait-and-see stance toward anticipated state legislation that would address a water supply issue regarding a number of South Platte Basin agricultural wells that owe water to the South Platte River for past pumping.

Specifically, the expected legislation would allow temporary substitute supply plans to be used in augmentation plans that replace delayed river impacts resulting from well pumping that occurred prior to 2003.

The issue is being watched by the Colorado River District because the legislation would allow the use of transmountain water imported by the Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) Project in these plans. The subject water would be C-BT water that project shareholders place annually on the "rental" market. Non C-BT water would also be eligible for use.

In the last legislative session, Senate Bill 247 attempted to achieve the same goals but it was opposed by the CRD Board because of its last-minute filing and the unknown details about how West Slope water would be used.

Representatives from the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District and the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District appeared before the CRD Board to explain how a new legislative attempt might deal with the issue. Board members withheld judgment until a bill is actually filed.

Policies adopted on Colorado River Compact

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1922 Colorado River Compact is exempt from the compact's provisions for curtailment of use. Article VIII of the 1922 Colorado River Compact states, in pertinent part, "Present perfected rights to the beneficial use of waters of the Colorado River System are unimpaired by this compact."

The newest policy commits the District to pursuing an inventory of pre-compact water uses and advocating for "legislation, policies and programs to maximize and maintain these valuable water rights that are exempt from curtailment under the 1922 and 1948 Colorado River Compacts." To read all policies, visit www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org.

How to contact us

For more information about the Colorado River District or board actions, call Jim Pokrandt at (970) 945-8522 x 236 or e-mail edinfo@crwcd.org. Visit www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org.



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District to open grant program for large projects

Applications for the Colorado River District Large Grant Program will be accepted from Dec. 1, 2008 to Jan. 31, 2009.

The grants are intended to provide financial assistance for projects that will develop new water supplies within the Colorado River District boundaries.

Recipients can be awarded up to 50 percent of the first \$100,000 toward the project cost and 20 percent of the subsequent \$500,000, up to a maximum of \$150,000.

The applications, guidelines and supporting documents will be **posted on Dec. 1, 2008**, at www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org with applications **due by Jan. 31, 2009**.

Grants will be awarded by the Board of Directors at its April 2009 quarterly board meeting.

Inquiries may be made by calling 970-945-8522 or emailing: grantinfo@crwcd.org.

Board adopts positions on ballot issues:

We're number 1! As a result of the 18 initiatives appearing on the November ballot, Colorado had the longest state ballot in the country.

The Colorado River District Board unanimously adopted posi-

tions on two ballot issues: Amendment 52 and Referendum O.

The Colorado River District Board opposed Amendment 52 and supported Referendum O.

Amendment 52 - Use of Severance Taxes for Highways:

Amendment 52 proposed a change to Colorado's Constitution that:

- Caps severance tax revenues and interest earnings going to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at the 2007-08 levels, plus an annual inflation factor; and
- Reallocates revenues above the DNR cap to highways.

The Board opposed Amendment 52 because it would have a significant annual reduction in revenues allocated to various DNR water-related programs including the Colorado Water Conservation Board's construction fund and the funds supporting the Roundtables process.

DNR estimates a reduction in excess of \$200 million in revenues over the next four years from what it would receive under current law if Amendment 52 were to pass.

Additionally, the Board is concerned that Amendment 52 would place these new revenue allocations in the state constitution removing the ability and responsibility of the Legislature to set annual budget priorities according to current needs.

Referendum O - Reform of the Initiative Process:

Referendum O proposed amending the state constitution to:

- Decrease the number of signatures required for statutory initiatives to be placed on the ballot;
- Increase the number of signatures required for constitutional initiatives to be placed on the ballot;
- Require that at least 8 percent of signatures for constitutional initiatives be gathered from each congressional district; and
- Increase the number of votes required for legislative changes to statutory initiatives for five years after the statute takes effect.

The Colorado River District Board has long been concerned with the public penchant for amending the state's constitution and the ease with which such amendments are initiated.

The Board supported the dual reform of easing the initiative process for statutory changes while raising the bar for constitutional initiatives.

Future meetings

- **Nov. 14: Four West Slope Roundtables Meeting**, 10 am-3:30 pm, Montrose Pavilion
- **Jan. 20-21: Colorado River District Board of Directors Quarterly Meeting**, Glenwood Springs
- **Jan. 28-30: Colorado Water Congress Winter Convention**, Denver.