

# Conservation Essentials for Colorado's Water Plan



By 2050, Front Range cities' water demands may exceed existing supplies by 20% or more.



Rivers in western Colorado provide over \$9 billion in economic revenue each year and support nearly 80,000 jobs.

**Water is the lifeblood of Colorado** but it is under pressure like never before. Demands for water to support population growth, agriculture, and businesses are increasing while available supplies are not. Conflicts among competing uses are rising and the health of our rivers is declining.

Governor Hickenlooper has directed the Colorado Water Conservation Board to develop the first-ever statewide water plan. This is an important chance to set a positive course for water use for our children.

Here are some common-sense conservation action items that need to be included in the plan:

## **1 Keep Colorado's rivers healthy & flowing**

Colorado's rivers are an integral part of our heritage and way of life. Rivers support wildlife, aquatic life, our agricultural industry and a multi-billion dollar tourism industry. Restoring and protecting rivers needs to be a top priority. New projects should have minimal negative impact on river health and multiple benefits and local input should be required. We cannot run our rivers dry.

## **2 Increase efficiency & conservation in our cities and towns**

Colorado's population is projected to double in the next 35 years to up to 10 million. Providing water for growing communities while protecting our rivers and way of life requires improved efficiency and conservation. State studies have shown that water providers could reduce today's water use levels 35% by 2050. We can achieve this by expanding conservation incentives, increasing indoor and outdoor efficiency, and by developing and financially supporting water recycling programs.

## **3 Modernize agricultural & water sharing practices**

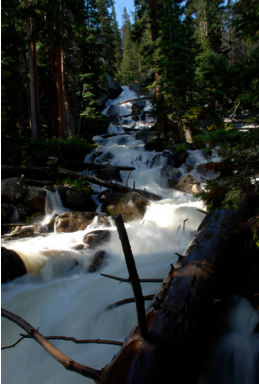
A healthy agricultural industry is vital for our communities, our state and overall economic health. The state should both support voluntary, compensated, flexible water-sharing agreements between agricultural producers and growing communities while respecting existing water rights, as well as incentives to improve agricultural infrastructure that benefit operations and healthy river flows.

## **4 Avoid new trans-mountain diversion projects**

We need to change the status quo. Looking to the West Slope to secure our water needs is no longer the answer. Trans-mountain projects that drain water from West Slope rivers to supply growing Front Range demands are controversial and don't solve the problem affecting the health of all our rivers. Conservation and efficiency are less expensive, less contentious and more effective.

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Colorado College's 2014 State of the Rockies poll shows that 78% of Colorado residents prefer using our current water supply more wisely, by encouraging water conservation, reducing use, and increasing recycling of water.

## The Path Forward

From urban residents to business owners to farmers, we all have a role to play in using our water resources more efficiently. When it comes to water, we all need to live within our means. Greater cooperation, innovative technologies and best practices will enable Colorado to build prosperous communities, support thriving agricultural and tourism industries, and keep our rivers healthy and flowing.

## Take Action

Colorado's Water Plan is an important step laying out how Colorado will preserve what makes our state great to both live and play here: flowing rivers, abundant fish and wildlife, strong tourism and recreation. Please tell Gov. Hickenlooper that Colorado's Water Plan needs to: keep Colorado's rivers healthy and flowing, increase water efficiency and conservation, ensure efficient and modernized agricultural water use—and acknowledge that large new diversions are NOT the answer.

Make a difference and submit your comments at [www.coloradowaterplan.com](http://www.coloradowaterplan.com)

