



## Water Background

### General Water Background

- Water is of critical importance to the future development of the state of Colorado. According to the Colorado Statewide Water Supply Initiative, we will face a major water shortage by the year 2030 unless we work together to find a solution.
- Developing solutions for water, its use, flow, quality, ownership, storage and accessibility, is absolutely necessary in a climate where the average rainfall is less than 20 inches.
- In Douglas County alone, 325,000 existing residents are now reliant upon non-renewable Denver Basin Groundwater.
- Many water and municipal entities are collaborating to create watershed-based regional solutions. There is a strong spirit of cooperation between water entities to work together, which brings bargaining power and greater resources to our collective challenges.
- Historically, the Federal government has assisted in the planning and costs associated with water projects in the arid West.
- In Colorado, we have identified many projects that could help solve the pending water shortage. These projects center on securing water rights, building infrastructure, and transporting and storing water for the benefit of our customers.
- Building infrastructure to transport and store water is very costly, and can required Federal assistance through grants and loans.
- Front Range water entities that are collaborating on water projects include:
  - *South Metro Water Supply Authority (SMWSA)*. SMWSA is comprised of 14 water providers that work collaboratively to foster long-term reliable water supplies through water acquisition and infrastructure development. Together, the 14 members represent about half of Douglas County and 10 percent of Arapahoe County (based on land area). The 14 water providers are:
    - Arapahoe County Water and Wastewater Authority
    - Castle Pines Metropolitan District
    - Castle Pines Metropolitan District
    - Castle Pines North Metropolitan District
    - Centennial Water & Sanitation District
    - Chatfield Study
    - Cottonwood Water and Sanitation District
    - East Cherry Creek Valley Water & Sanitation District
    - Inverness Water & Sanitation District
    - Pinery Water & Wastewater District
    - Rangeview Metropolitan District

- Roxborough Water and Sanitation District
  - Stonegate Village Metropolitan District
  - Town of Castle Rock
- *Denver Water*. Denver Water proudly serves high-quality water and promotes its efficient use to 1.3 million people in the city of Denver and many surrounding suburbs. Established in 1918, Denver Water is a public-agency funded by water rates and new water tap fees, not taxes. It is Colorado's oldest and largest water utility.
- *Aurora Water*. Aurora Water is an enterprise fund utility serving a population of more than 310,000 in Colorado. This forward-thinking organization procures, transports and treats approximately 50,000 acre-feet of raw water annually, and is currently building the Prairie Waters Project, an innovative means of using existing water rights to supplement our existing system by 20 percent.
- *Rural Water Authority of Douglas County*. The purpose of the Authority is to assist in the development of water resources, systems, in whole or in part, for the benefit of rural water users and owners of land within the service area. The Authority's service area is all the unincorporated portion of Douglas County, excluding the service areas of special districts that provide water services, which have not joined the Authority as a Party or Participant.
- Once infrastructure is built to support future water deliveries to the south metro area, water will be acquired in part through a unique partnership between SMWSA, Denver Water and Aurora Water, the three largest water entities in the Front Range.
  - The three entities have come together under the name WISE Partnership, which stands for Water Infrastructure and Supply Efficiency.
  - The three water entities are working together to determine how to best utilize the water yields projected under various scenarios and what additional infrastructure will be necessary to convey, firm and deliver water supplies for the interim and long-term.
  - The benefits of this agreement include the potential to use existing regional infrastructure, such as East Cherry Creek Valley's Northern and Western Lines, Aurora Water's Prairie Waters Project, a portion of Denver Water's and Aurora Water's unused water and water rights and other infrastructure owned by members of South Metro Water Supply Authority.

### **Rural Water Supply Program Background**

- The *Rural Water Supply Program* was authorized by the Rural Water Supply Act of 2006, which authorized Reclamation to participate in projects to develop and deliver potable water supplies to rural communities in the Western United States.
- The Douglas County Water Resource Authority has received a grant from the Colorado Water Conservation Board to determine how to best pursue support from the *Rural Water Supply Program*.
- Under the *Rural Water Supply Program*, entities created under state law with water management authority can apply to the program and have the Bureau of Reclamation assist with planning, design and prioritization of projects.

- Several water and municipal entities have come together and signed an intergovernmental agreement to pursue assistance from the *Rural Water Supply Program*: Douglas County Board of County Commissioners, the South Metro Water Supply Authority (SMWSA), the Rural Water Authority of Douglas County and the Douglas County Water Resource Authority.
- The Act does not provide authority to undertake the construction of water delivery facilities recommended for development under the Program. Those require a specific Act of Congress.
- It is expected that the Bureau of Reclamation will conduct regional meetings on the roll out of this program soon and that formal applications can be submitted thereafter.
- Assuming Facilities are required to bring water to south metro Denver, the water entities will be seeking support from the Federal government in the form of loan guarantees.