

September 13, 2023 YWG Basin Roundtable Meeting Briefing

From: [Ken Brenner](#)
To: [dougmonger](#); [webster_jones](#); [Lyn Halliday](#); [Nicole Seltzer-UYWCD \(nicaseltz+UY@gmail.com\)](#); [haskywild](#); [rmurphy100bc](#); [redmondjv](#); [tom](#)
Cc: [Andy Rossi](#); [Deb Bastian](#); [Emily Lowell](#); [Holly Kirkpatrick](#); [Karina Craig](#); [Bob Weiss](#)
Subject: Fwd: 9/13 BRT
Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 8:04:00 PM

Dear Directors and staff

YampaWhiteGreen Basin Roundtable (BRT) Wednesday, September 13, 2023

The agenda included updates from Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB), Division of Water Resources (DWR), Colorado River District (CDR), BRT committees and updates and presentations by the UYWCD and finally Colorado DNR Interstate and Federal Section update.

Jeff Rodriguez and Jackie Brown, CWCB

Jeff and Jackie updated the BRT on the C9 Summit on November 14 for the nine BRT members, IBCC and CWCB board members. The event will take place at the Broomfield Westin in north Denver. There was strong encouragement for anyone interested to attend the C9 event. The CWCB is working on a draft Handbook for the BRT's to provide a uniform foundation for structure and process, but maintain flexibility for individual basin needs.

Jeff also said the CWCB 9/20 board meeting would approve BRT funds for 2024.

Jackie said the CWCB board members were going through a facilitated process to review their rules and responsibilities, take individual surveys and propose any new changes. Personnel wise, DNR has promoted Becky Mitchell to full-time Colorado Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC). Also, in a corresponding move, Lauren Ris has been named to replace Becky as Executive Director of the CWCB.

Jackie is also a member of the Drought Task Force (DTF) and said they have met three times. They are beginning to have more substantive discussions and agenda planning. Topics include intrastate tools, interstate System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) reauthorization, Demand Management, Water Banking, turf removal, municipal efficiency and shepherding. Jeff Meyers and Ken Brenner have been asked to attend the next DTF meeting in Granby on 9/28 to comment on behalf of the YWG BRT.

Erin Light, DWR

Erin let us know that the call on the White River has been lifted for maintenance work on the hydroelectric plant at Kenney Reservoir. The Elk River is on call because the flows have dropped below the 65 CFS in-stream flow designation. Elkhead Reservoir releases have been decreased from 70 to 50 CFS in support of the Endangered Species Fish Program. There are still several objectors to the new measurement rules, but she did not believe that any of those objectors would end up in court, that they should be able to resolve the remaining differences in negotiation.

Rebecca Briesmoore, CRD

The River District is poised to respond once the supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for operation of the Colorado river system by Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) for the next three years. We will be copied their comments.

Rebecca also let us know that the CRD has approved over 100 grants from the 7A funds approved by the voters.

BRT Committee Reports

The Big River committee did not meet this month. During the update from IBCC, Jeff and Ken encouraged attendance at the 11/14 C9 conference and noted that more substantive IBCC discussions were taking place. PEPO spent their hour and a half meeting refining the script for a YampaWhiteGreen Basin three minute video for the website.

Grant Committee update was brief because we still don't know the amount of WSRF funds that may be available for 2024. Steve Hinkemeyer, committee chair, did say that the committee was working to update the scoring matrix guidelines used to evaluate grant proposals. Next Grants Committee meeting October 11.

Andy Rossi, UYWCD

Update on technical projects

Andy used a PowerPoint to explain about our soil moisture and meteorological sensor network that's being installed within the district. He also explained the USGS snow model he has contracted for. He also described the WRF-Hydro (Weather Research Forecasting) model extension and StateMod application for water modeling in the basin. Finally, Andy talked about the Wildfire Ready Watersheds initiative and the Bear River plan.

Becky Mitchell, Colorado River Commissioner

Alyson Gould, Assistant Attorney General, Federal and Interstate Water/Colorado Section, Amy Ostdiek and Emily Zmac, Chief and Deputy Chief, Interstate, Federal and Water Information Section.

Alyson Gould lead off with a nice summary of Colorado River law, as applicable to the current negotiations between the Upper Basin states, the Lower Basin states and the BoR. Commissioner Mitchell's presentation emphasized that the crux of the Colorado River water supply issue is that the Lower Basin is significantly over using their compact allotment and that the Upper Basin states are using closer to half of what they are entitled to. Eight of the last 10 years, more water left Lake Powell than the volume of water that went into storage. Everyone is anxiously awaiting both the SEIS for the Interim Operational Guidelines for Lake Mead and Lake Powell 2024 thru 2026 and the EIS for the post 2026 Operating Guidelines. I would suggest that we actively participate in comments to the BoR when that opportunity arises, certainly the BRC will develop comments for submittal as well as the CRD. I will provide a copy of Commissioner Mitchell's "Colorado's Post 2026 Principles", also known as the "Irrefutable Truths", at the UYWCD meeting. Her presentation ended by requesting that we share with her examples of our ways of adopting to water shortage, efforts regarding water education for the public and encouraging our Basin to provide input during the SEIS/EIS public process.

Finally, we were reminded that the 11/8 BRT meeting would be election of officers and membership terms. I do need the UYWCD Board to send a confirmation to the BRT that I remain the representative for the Upper Yampa. The meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Thank you for your support and the honor of representing you at the YWG BRT!



Colorado's Post-2026 Principles

Commissioner Mitchell is committed to negotiating sustainable operations at Lake Powell and Lake Mead with the Basin States, federal government, and the Tribal Nations. Her principles are rooted in irrefutable truths that we can all agree to:

1

Acknowledging that climate change is real. We must anticipate a drier, but also a more variable, hydrologic future. Upper Basin water users live on the front lines of climate change and for the last twenty plus years regularly have experienced significant cuts to their water supplies.

2

Recognizing that water users in the Lower Basin are not more important than water users in the Upper Basin. The Upper and Lower Basins have equal apportionments to the River in perpetuity, established by the 1922 Colorado River Compact. The 1922 Compact promises certainty and security of water supplies for both the Upper and Lower Basins.

3

Preventing overuse in the Lower Basin. Water use in the Lower Basin cannot continue to exceed available supplies and operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead must better respond to actual hydrology. The Lower Basin must account for all depletions, including evaporation and transit losses. The Lower Basin's overuse poses risks to the entire Basin.

4

Defending against attempts at Compact curtailment in the Upper Basin States. The Upper Division States are in full compliance with the 1922 Colorado River Compact; therefore, Upper Basin water uses must not be curtailed.

5

Operating Lake Powell and Lake Mead to respond to actual hydrology and protect storage. Balancing releases from Lake Powell and the tier structure in the 2007 Guidelines depend on conditions at Lake Mead. This has led to depleted storage, and has driven both reservoirs and System into crisis. Lake Powell releases must be determined by actual hydrology and protecting storage rather than by Lake Mead conditions.

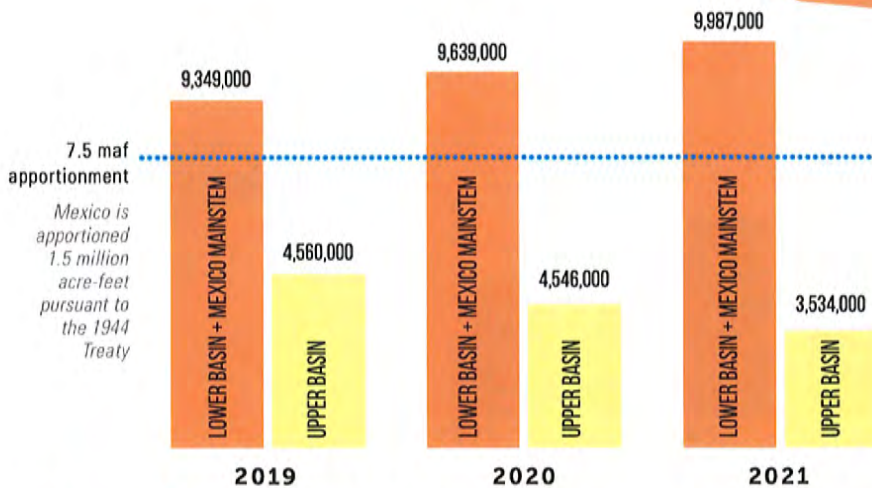
6

Preserving federal reserved water rights for Tribal Nations. The Tribal Nations have water rights that they are entitled to use. Solutions for overuse in the Lower Basin cannot continue to depend on Tribes' undeveloped federal reserved water rights.

In addition, any interstate agreement must **comply with with federal environmental law** and **advance coordination between the United States and Mexico.**

WHERE THE WATER IS USED

COLORADO RIVER BASIN



WATER USE BY BASIN

Lower Basin use only includes Mainstem Colorado River use by the Lower Basin States and Mexico, as calculated by the Upper Colorado River Commission. Tributary use is not included in this calculation.



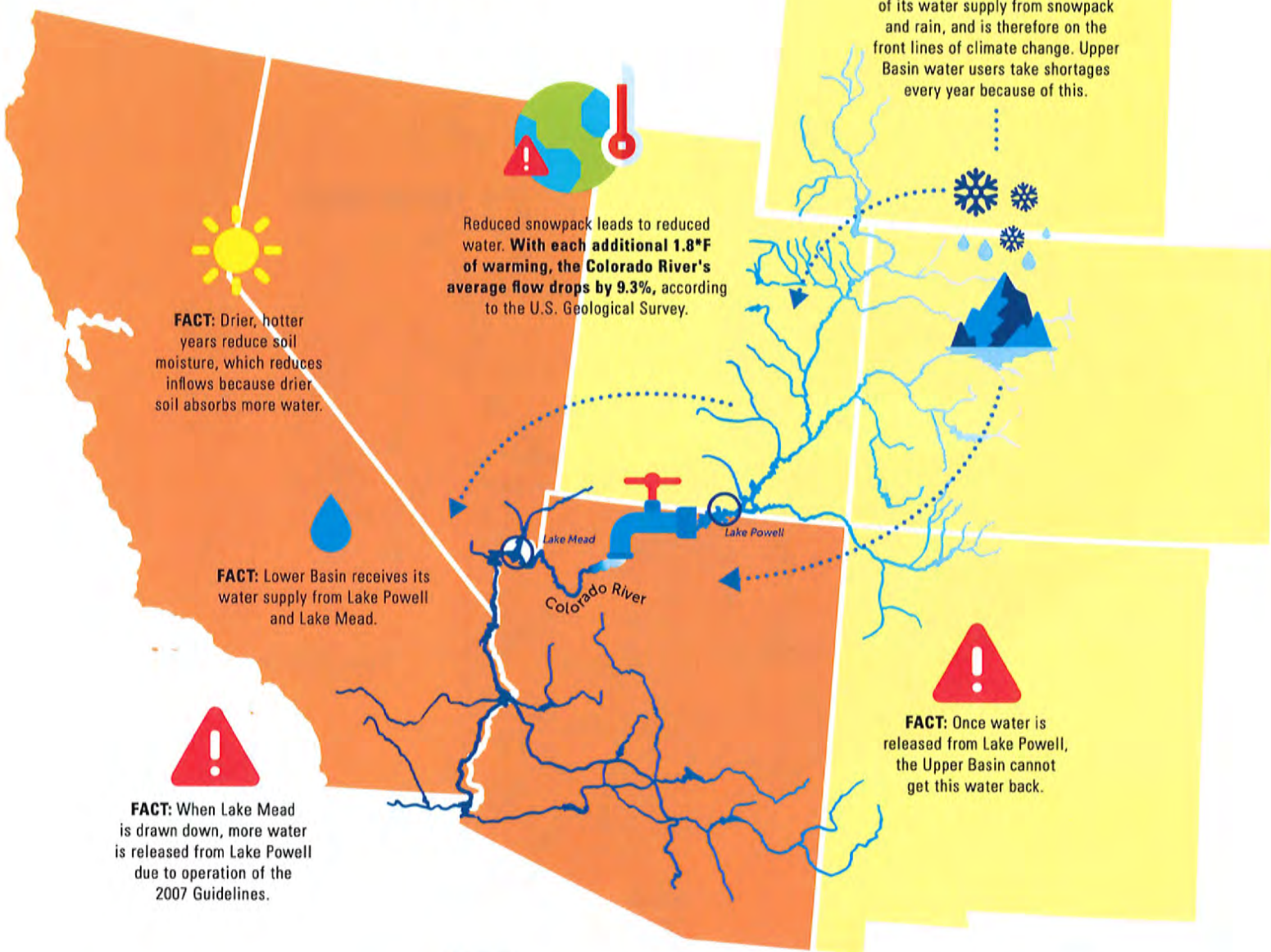
COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Department of Natural Resources

WHERE THE WATER FLOWS

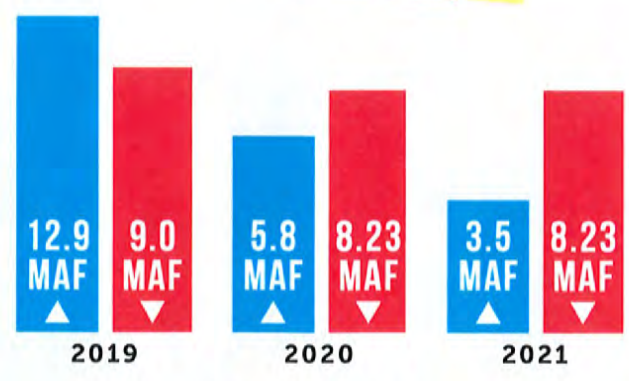
COLORADO RIVER BASIN



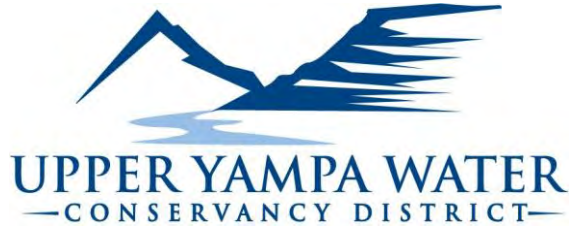
WATER THAT FLOWED INTO LAKE POWELL



WATER RELEASED FROM LAKE POWELL INTO LAKE MEAD



Revised Community Grant Documents



BOARD COMMUNICATION FORM

From: Holly Kirkpatrick

Date: 8/31/2023

Item: UYWCD Grant Disbursements

DIRECTION
 INFORMATION
 MOTION
 RESOLUTION

I. Request/Issue and Background Information:

The attached Diversion Infrastructure Improvement Project Grant Report and Community Grant Funding Report will be included in each board packet to provide a full background of all grant disbursements. The Diversion Infrastructure Improvement Project Report tracks all disbursements throughout the life of the project. The Community Grant Funding Report tracks disbursements on an annual basis.

II. Summary and Alternatives:

To date, there is \$89,553.10 remaining of the allocated \$200,000 for the Diversion Infrastructure Improvement Project.

The Community Grant Funding Program has allocated \$100,000 for the 2023 budget, of which, \$35,000 has been awarded and \$65,000 remain available.

III. Staff Recommendation: n/a

Please see the attached reports for disbursement details.

IV. Legal Issues: n/a

V. Consistency with Board Goals and Policies:

Goal 4, 7, and 8.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Diversion Infrastructure Improvement Project Grant Report

Attachment 2: Community Grant Funding Report

2023 Community Grant Funding

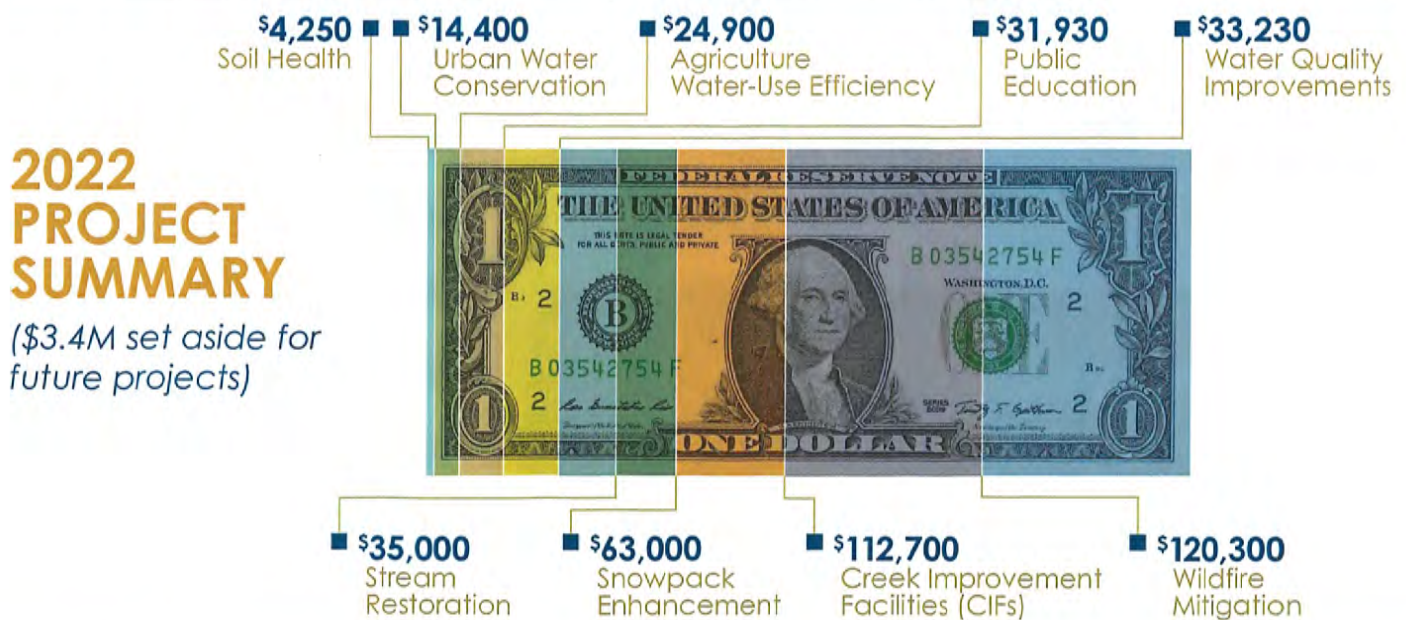
Project	Applicant	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Yampatika Water Education Program	Yampatika	11/16/2022	\$20,000
CAA Ag Water Coordinator	Community Agriculture Alliance	7/12/2023	\$ 15,000.00
TOTAL APPROVED:			\$35,000
TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:			\$65,000.00

Left Hand District Water Plan

District Water Plan: 2022 PROGRESS UPDATE

The St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District is making significant progress implementing the five pillars of the District's Water Plan. The Water Plan continues to focus District efforts and resources on key water issues, now and in the future.

How were your 2022 dollars spent?



St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy District
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303.772.4060 | svlhxcd.org | Created in 1971

