



ADVANCING THE LEGACY

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## Ag Water NetWORK | [www.agwaternetwork.org](http://www.agwaternetwork.org)

### WEBINAR Highlights – Colorado River Basin Issues and Colorado Water Plan 2023 Update. Recorded January 19, 2023

**Presenters:** Amy Ostdiek, Interstate, Federal and Water Information Section Chief, CWCB, and Nora Flynn, Senior Agricultural Water Specialist, Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB)

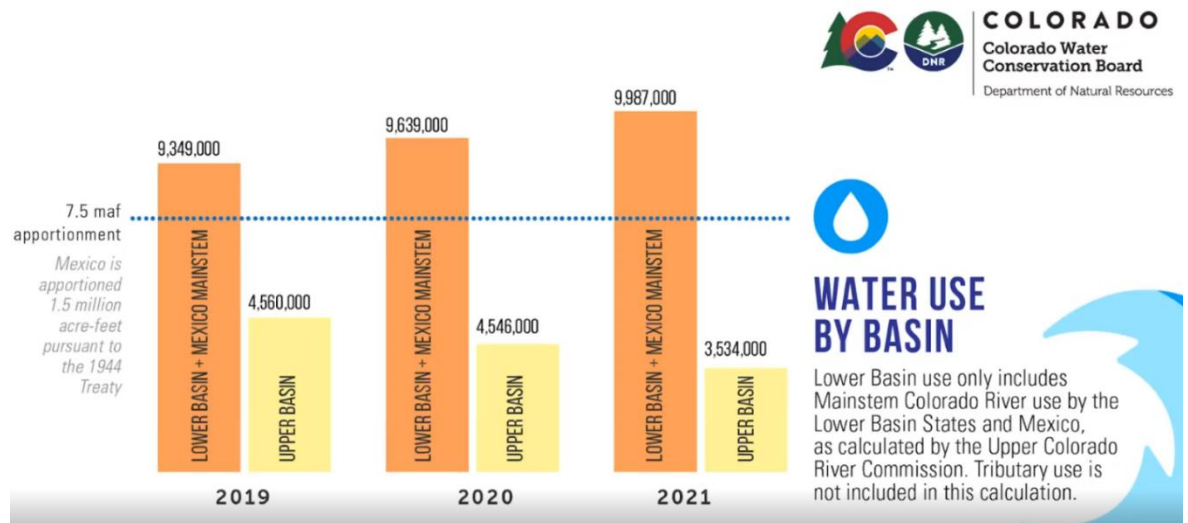
#### Colorado River Basin Background and Current Situation (Amy); [amy.ostdiek@state.co.us](mailto:amy.ostdiek@state.co.us)

- The 1922 Compact Agreement apportions equal shares of the river to the Upper and Lower Basins.
- Article III(a) apportions to each basin 7.5 million acre-feet (MAF) of the annual flow in perpetuity.
- The Upper Basin does **not** have a delivery obligation to the Lower Basin states. The Upper Basin has an obligation to “not deplete” the river by more than 75 MAF over a 10-year period.

- The annual combined consumptive use of the Upper Basin has not exceeded approximately 5 MAF.

- Upper Basin states adjust their annual water usage based on available runoff.

- Lower Basin states have utilized storage water in Lake Powell and Lake Mead to use more than their allocated share of water annually. As a result, the levels of both reservoirs have fallen to crisis levels.
- Lake Powell releases to the Lower Basin have exceeded annual inflows the last two years.
- The Upper Basin has developed a [5-point plan](#) to help mitigate impacts to the river.
- The US Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) controls Blue Mesa Reservoir and released water in 2021 to help prop up Lake Powell. The releases harmed irrigation and recreational interests and aquatic life. CWCB has advised the US BoR that future releases should first consider local and regional impacts.
- Both Basins need to live within the means of what the river provides annually. Long-term, this is the only sustainable solution.
- Info on [Colorado's Demand Management Feasibility Investigation](#).



## 2023 Water Plan Update (Nora); [nora.flynn@state.co.us](mailto:nora.flynn@state.co.us)

- Updated Water Plan focuses on supporting four broad goals: 1) Vibrant Communities, 2) Robust Agriculture, 3) Thriving Watersheds and 4) Resilient Planning.
- Supporting Robust Agriculture can include:
  - studying the impacts of soil management on water conservation .
  - encouraging collaborative water sharing that is temporary, voluntary and compensated.
  - Supporting peer-to-peer learning between agricultural producers.

### CWCB Funding:

Water Plan grant funding for agriculture can support research, education, irrigation infrastructure improvement, on-farm efficiency and water conservation.

- The applicant match requirement for construction projects is 50% and for studies is 25 percent.
- Application Deadlines: December 1 and July 1 annually.
- Funding available: Variable. There was about \$1.5M for the agriculture category in 2022. This is expected to increase in 2023.

Water Supply Reserve Funds (WSRF) are available both through basin roundtables and the statewide WSRF.

- Types of projects: Studies or analysis of structural, nonstructural, consumptive and nonconsumptive water needs, projects or activities. Current focus on drought resilience and aging infrastructure.
- Securing local Basin Roundtable WSRF support and funding is necessary to seek additional funding from the statewide WSRF account. The Basin WSRF must provide at least 10 percent of the project cost.
- A 25% match is required from the applicant. Up to half of the match can come from in-kind contributions.
- Application Deadlines: December 1, February 1, April 1, June 1, August 1 and October 1 of each year.
- Funding available: Variable. Recently brought up to \$1M per basin with another \$11M in a statewide account.

Federal Technical Assistance Grant (FTAG) is available for a limited time to pay for doing the up-front work needed to **apply** for federal funding. The objective is help bring more federal funding home to Colorado.

- Types of projects: project development, (site assessments, information collections, coordination with stakeholders, design assistance and other work required for a federal grant application).
- The FTAG enables two types of grants: 1) Local capacity grants in which grantees hire their own contractors to help with the above project types, 2) CWCB technical assistance grants where a CWCB-selected contractor assists a local project coordinator with the above project types.
- Application Deadline: Rolling
- Funding available: \$5M

Water Project Loan Program provides loans for agricultural water projects.

- Types of projects: Reservoirs, ditches and canals, pipelines, diversion structures, groundwater wells, water rights purchases, flood control projects, hydropower.
- Interest rate currently available for agriculture projects: 1.8%
- Deadline: Depends on the size of the loan, see the above website.
- Contact [matthew.stearns@state.co.us](mailto:matthew.stearns@state.co.us)