



ADVANCING THE LEGACY

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Ag Water NetWORK

WEBINAR #3 Highlights – Grand Valley Water Users Association’s (GVWUA) ATM Pilot Project Results and System Conservation Pilot Program Update

Recorded November 10, 2017. (coloradocattle.org/agwaternetwork.aspx)

Grand Valley Water Users Association’s (GVWUA) ATM Pilot Project Results

Presenters: Mark Harris, GVWUA Manager and Luke Gingerich, J-U-B Engineering

- The pilot project was designed to conserve consumptive water use on cropland and re-direct the saved water to supplement flows into Lake Powell.
- Agricultural water demand management has been identified as critical to Upper Colorado River Basin drought contingency planning.
- Project Objectives:
 - Explore ways to address water supply shortages in the Colorado River Basin while benefiting ag producers and not separating the water from ag land.
 - Proactively prepare for drought and population pressures that will create greater demand for water in the upper and lower Colorado River Basins.
 - Identify the financial and agronomic pros and cons of water leasing, including how ATMs can be beneficially incorporated into crop rotations.

- Irrigation water was conserved through partial and full season fallowing.
- Ten (10) farms participated in the project representing 43 fields and 1,252 acres.
- Four (4) fallowing options were allowed:
Full season fallowing, fallowing until August 1st, September 1st, or October 1st.

Program Activity	Timeframe	Conserved Consumptive Use (AF/acre)
Full Season fallowing	7 months	2.8
Fallowing until October 1	6 months	2.6
Fallowing until September 1	5 months	2.3
Fallowing until August 1	4 months	1.6

- Payments to farmer cooperators were based on how long fields were fallowed.
- 3,178 acre-feet of consumptive use water were conserved (i.e. left in the river).
- The \$1,039,615 project budget was allocated as follows:
 - \$725,473 paid directly to farmer cooperators for participation in the project.
 - \$145,095 set aside for infrastructure improvements on the ditch system.
 - \$169,047 for project administration and to offset forgone water sale revenue.

System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP) Update

Presenter: Michelle Garrison, Water Resource Specialist, Colorado Water Conservation Board)

- SCPP Project Goal: To determine whether temporary, voluntary and compensated reductions in consumptive use can be a useful tool to put water into Lake Powell and minimize lake-level declines during drought periods.

Background:

- The SCPP is funded by the Southern California's Metropolitan Water District, Central Arizona Project, Southern Nevada Water Authority, Denver Water, US Bureau of Reclamation, and NGOs.
- Water levels in Lake Mead continue to decline.
- The upper Colorado basin states are required by the 1922 Compact to deliver 75 million acre-feet of water to the lower Colorado basin (ie. Lake Mead) over a 10-year period, which equals an average of 7.5M acre-feet of water annually.
- Lake Powell stores the water that flows from the upper basin and serves as a buffer in years when the upper basin states cannot deliver the required amount.
- The hydroelectric power plant at Lake Powell benefits western Colorado rural residents by providing affordable electricity, funding for salinity control programs that pay for irrigation infrastructure upgrades, and funding for the Colorado River and San Juan River endangered species recovery programs.
- In recent years, about 8.8 M acre-feet has been delivered annually by the upper basin states to Lake Mead, however, releases from Lake Mead have averaged about 9 M acre-feet to meet lower basin water demands. The difference between Lake Mead's inflows and outflows plus its evaporative losses (1.2M acre-feet per yr.) is called the "structural deficit."
- Mexico has recently agreed to share in voluntary water use reductions to help raise Lake Mead water levels provided the lower basin states (CA, NV, AZ) develop drought contingency plans.

SCPP Project Highlights:

- The SCPP began in 2015 and will be continued through 2018.
- About \$4.5M has been spent on the program since 2015.
- Projects have been conducted in all upper basin states (CO, WY, UT, NM).
- Fifteen (15) of the 45 total projects executed so far have occurred in Colorado.
- Types of projects have included fallow and deficit irrigation, alternative cropping and a municipal water savings program.
- About 22,000 acre-feet of consumptive use water has been conserved so far.
 - A Request for Proposals (RFP) has been released for 2018 funding (http://www.ucrcommission.com/RepDoc/SCPPDocuments/2018_SCPP_RFP.pdf)

