

San Juan Basin Hydrologic Unit Regional Water Planning

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Perceptions, Challenges, and Solutions to Meet Regional Water Needs

The goal of the Planning Committee for Regional Water Planning is to engage diverse groups of people to identify and address critical water issues and develop a collaborative plan for alternative solutions to optimize the current and future availability and quality of water, for all water users in the San Juan Basin.

The purpose of the first meeting of the Planning Committee, held July 18, 2002, was to discover the initial perceptions of the critical issues concerning water in the San Juan Basin. The Planning Committee members were divided into panel groups to encourage an open exchange of views about water issues. The task of each panel, was to discover the initial broad-based perceptions of their respective members regarding water issues, to reach consensus on the water issues having the highest priority, and to share their findings with the full Planning Committee.

The full Planning Committee heard an array of perceptions about water issues as each panel shared their findings. Every water issue was not identified by every panel but, when combined, provide a preliminary list of the water issues that challenge the effective use and management of water in the San Juan Basin.

FINAL CONSENSUS REPORT ♦ WATER SUPPLY PERCEPTIONS

► Adjudication of Water Rights

- Knowing who has the right to use what water is essential for any planning
- Adjudication of all water rights, including Native American rights, must be accelerated and completed in an accurate manner
 - To date, only a small portion of water rights have been adjudicated
 - State needs to provide funding to accelerate the adjudication process
- The 1948 Echo Ditch Decree is legal and binding among those parties involved

► Water Supply

- We believe the water supply in the San Juan Basin is over allocated
 - The Basin does not have enough “wet” water to meet future expectations
 - Unpredictable surface water supply
 - Legal constraints restrict our use of the water (ESA, showing beneficial use)
 - Restricted by demands from downstream users
- Need for comprehensive determination of ground and surface water supply
 - Wells – assessment of the impact of wells on water supply
- Implementation of accurate stream flow measurement (gauging) and monitoring system
- Accurate monitoring system for water consumption

- Ditch control – implement an accurate measurement and monitoring system
 - Preserve existing uses, show beneficial use, and protect our water rights
 - Protect agricultural water rights and irrigation systems
 - Protect our water rights from going out of our Region, out of State
 - Prevent the State from claiming our water rights
 - Need for additional water storage
 - Need for regional planning for water emergencies (drought) and water conservation
- Regional Water Management Effort
- Integrate the San Juan Basin’s regional water plan into statewide plan
 - Establish an (inclusive) decision making group/organization, representing the Regions different water users, to coordinate regional water management efforts with the State
 - Coordinate regional effort with local efforts (cities, water user associations, ditch companies, tribes, commercial, and industrial users) to implement regional water plan recommendations
 - Provide on-going public awareness
 - Be aware of other State’s actions that might affect our Region
 - Need for more cooperation among regional water users
 - Need for cooperation among the Cities
 - Consideration of centralized water storage facilities, water plants, and waste water treatment facilities
 - Equitable allocation of stream flow
 - Preservation of agricultural water rights
 - Preservation of agricultural, domestic, and livestock water uses
- Funding for Regional Water Management Effort
- Need for funding to implement the regional water plan
 - Need for funding to sustain regional water planning efforts