

Colorado's Contribution Program

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Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

- Published on July 31, 2026
- Details Powell operations, Lower Basin reductions, storage and delivery of conserved water, and Upstream Initial Unit releases within Records of Decision to protect critical elevations at Powell
- Colorado is analyzing the FEIS and looks forward to continued discussions about future operations of Lake Powell and Lake Mead



Upper Basin Parallel Activities

- Upstream Initial Unit Agreement
- Voluntary Contribution Program



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Upper Basin Near-Term Contribution Program

- Bureau of Reclamation announced availability of \$100M in federal funding available for a near-term Upper Basin contribution program
- UCRC will contract with Reclamation for these funds
- Upper Division States will coordinate, with each State working within its unique structure

Building a Post-2026 Contribution Program

Stepping Stones

**Water Bank
Work Group**

SCPP
2015-2018

SCPP
2023-2024

**Drought
Taskforce**

**Provisional
Accounting
MOU**

**Potential
Contribution
Program**

**Demand
Management
Feasibility
Investigation**

**2027-28
Framework**
\$100M
Available



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Water Bank Work Group

Input received:

- No injury
- Benefit both individuals and company/district
- Development of open and transparent criteria
- Consideration of potential impacts to community, economy, and quality of life



SCPP 2015-2018

Lessons learned include:

- Revisions to application process
- Improve data for consumptive use estimates
- Tailor program for different types of projects and allow for more flexible project approaches
- Consider cost-per-acre-foot within the context of the market to avoid setting a new market price

Work To Date on Colorado's Feasibility Investigation



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- **2019 Work Plan:** broad, big-picture questions explored through work groups
- **July 2020 Update:** comprehensive report of work to date
- **Step II Work Plan:** guidance to develop Framework
- **Demand Management Framework:** range of implementation options
- **2021 Decision-Making Roadmap:** Achievable? Worthwhile? Advisable?





Feasibility Investigation

Achievability

Can we?

- **Possible to** verify and track water conservation?
- **Are there mechanisms available** to track environmental benefits and impacts?
- **Possible to** develop appropriately robust plan for education and outreach?

Worthwhile

Should we?

- Can be designed to avoid or mitigate potential adverse impacts?
- Sufficiently robust tool?

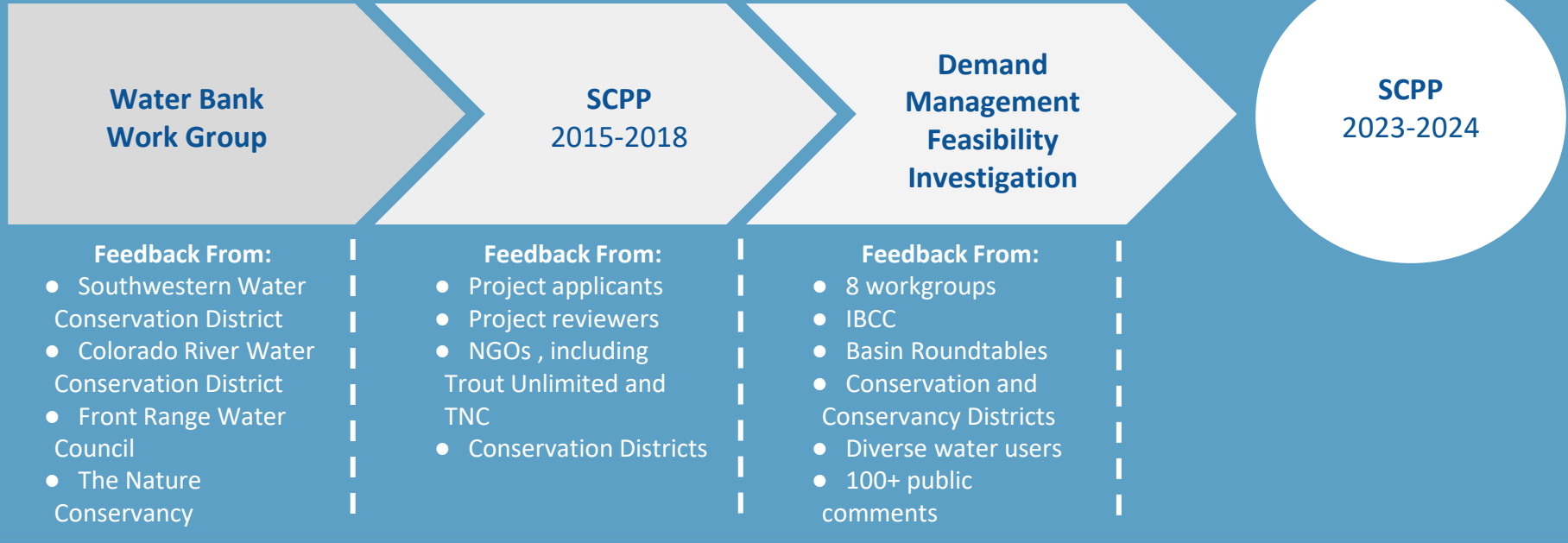
Advisable

Best strategy at this time?

- Aligns with broader Colorado River strategy?
- Appropriate tool at the appropriate time?

How Feedback Shaped the System Conservation Pilot Program, 2023-2025

Stepping Stones



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SCPP 2023-2024

Lessons learned include:

- Initiate the application process earlier in the fall
- Clarity on pricing
- Robust review process
- Focus on projects that can build local drought resiliency and support agricultural innovation



Colorado River Drought Taskforce & Sub-Taskforce

Recommendations include:

- Increase state funding for Taskforce priority areas, including aging water infrastructure and turf removal
- Ensure robust tribal participation

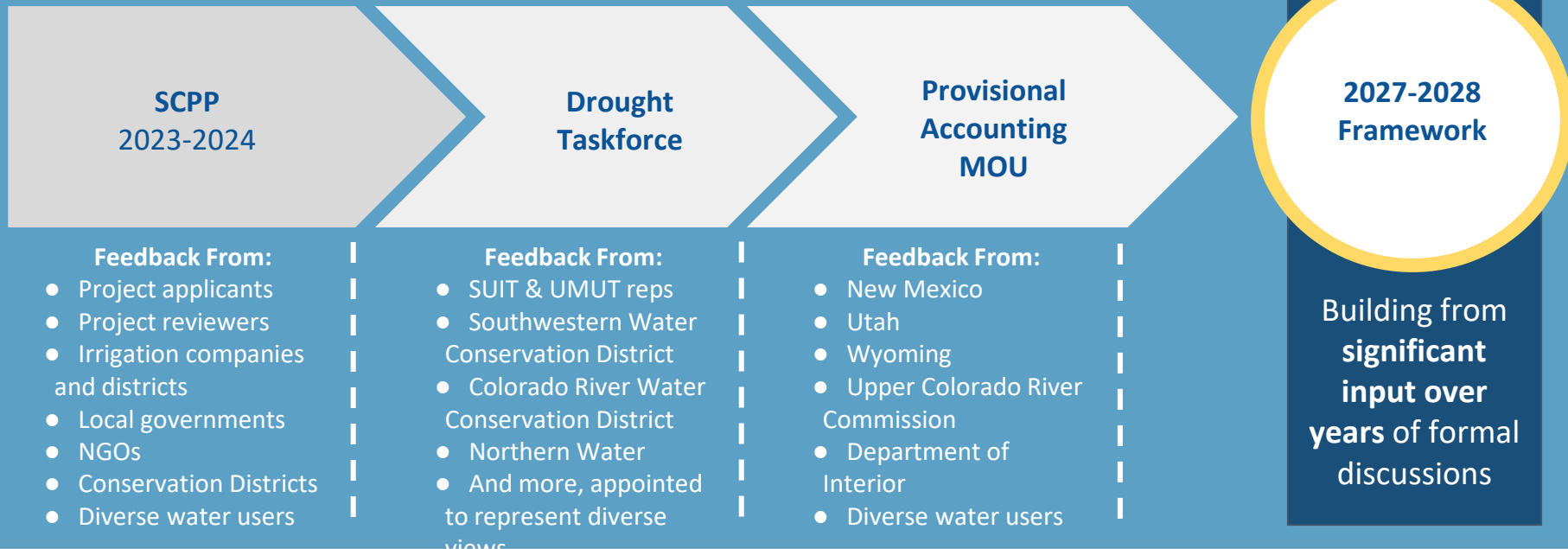


Provisional Accounting MOU

- Defined ways to verify and account for volumes of water that were provisionally accounted for
- Improved coordination between the Upper Division States, the UCRC, and the federal government
- Proof of concept for verifying water conserved for future credit

How Feedback Shapes the 2027-2028 Framework

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Colorado Water Users, including:

- 100+ individual water users
- American Rivers
- Aurora Water
- Club20
- Colorado Cattlemen's
- Colorado River Conservation District
- Colorado Springs Utilities
- Denver Water
- Grand Valley Irrigation Company
- Grand Valley Water Users
- Northern Water
- Pueblo Water
- Southeastern Conservancy District
- Southwestern Conservation District
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- Western Resource Advocates
- Uncompahgre Water Users

Approaching 2027-2028 with Input From...

Government Entities, including:

- New Mexico
- Wyoming
- Utah
- Upper Colorado River Commission
- Federal Government
- Colorado Division of Water Resources
- Colorado Department of Agriculture
- Colorado General Assembly
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe



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2027-2028 Framework

Proposed Criteria

- Result in Credit
- Operate within Existing Authorities
- Provide for Tribal Participation
- Protect Water Rights
- Minimum Acreage
- Drought Resilience
- Innovation
- Administrative Ease
- Comply with Ditch Company or Other Requirements
- Community Impacts
- Participation & Proportionality
- Environment
- Federally Funded



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We Want to Hear from You

Water User Input on Program Criteria

Email DNR_ContributionProgram@state.co.us

- What (if anything) is missing?
Do you disagree with any on the list?
- Which should rank most heavily in the evaluation of project applications?



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CWCB's Contribution Program Webpage



Stay Informed

- Water Congress workshop
Aug. 19, 2:00-4:00, Steamboat
- Upcoming CWCB webinars
See CWCB's *Calendar* webpage
- CWCB Board meeting,
Sept. 16-17, Frisco



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Next Steps

- Staff plan to conduct outreach throughout August and September
- Finalize criteria with CWCB Board
- Ongoing coordination with UDS



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Thank You



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