

Long Term Water Policy Positions for Colorado

- It's imperative to re-educate the public on how to reduce outdoor use. Also of great importance is how to keep trees, plants and valuable landscapes alive during dry conditions. Thanks to solid science and best management (or xeric) practices, it's possible to do both.
- Water providers need thoughtful long-term policy that incentivizes conservation and uses a more balanced consumption/billing approach known as water budgeting. With water budgeting, a homeowner is allowed so much water and it's up to them to decide how to use it
- The use of gray water should be strongly considered for irrigation in more applications and areas in the state. The most current research on what types of gray water (recycled, reclaimed, gray) should be used when deciding how and what to irrigate.
- River compacts are extremely complicated and in many cases were based on apportioning water at levels that are no longer flowing in our rivers. This requires thoughtful discussion and collaboration among western states. Arizona has no water restrictions this year, despite a severe drought in the headwaters state where its water comes from.
- Water storage in Colorado is critical to make sure water to which we own the rights is not leaving the state. Several projects in planning stages would help us capture water in wet years to use in dry ones (e.g. NISP, Windy Gap, etc.) Additional storage could help mitigate long term problems caused by drought and should be investigated.
- Water conservation is important everywhere -- indoors and out. Some water providers say that it's pointless to talk about indoor conservation during a summer drought, but we need citizens to shift their thinking. Focusing only on outdoor watering is not a balanced approach – indoor water consumption happens every day for 12 months versus 6/7 months for outdoor water use. Indoor water saving messaging is also crucial to conservation and should be part of an ongoing, consistent focus on water conservation.
- Water restrictions need to be based on science and horticultural practices. You can attain required savings by using these guidelines. Arbitrary limits on how many minutes or prescribed watering days don't necessarily save water and it certainly doesn't educate consumers about how to water when the landscape needs it. We understand why water providers have to set the limits they do, but we don't agree with many of their policies because they don't follow horticultural practice nor do they teach sustainable practices and thinking.
- The economic impacts of drought are felt by everyone: water providers, property owners and the green industry. Keeping landscapes alive and maintaining property values should be a priority for policy makers.