

WINTER WATER STORAGE PROGRAM
Board of Trustees Special Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2025

Acting Chair Leann Noga began the Winter Water Trustees virtual meeting at 10:00 a.m. with a roll call for each canal company.

Representatives for the Board of Trustees

Brett Sabbath, Bessemer Ditch; Greg Williams, Catlin Canal; Stacey Sober, Colorado Canal; Curtis Sniff, Fort Lyon Canal; Darren Grap, High Line Canal; Donny Hansen, Holbrook Mutual Irrigation Ditch; Jeff Baylor, Las Animas Canal; Curtis Sniff, Fort Lyon Canal; and Josh Reiner, Amity Canal joined the meeting at 10:11 a.m.

West Pueblo Ditch, Oxford Ditch, and Riverside Dairy Ditch had no representatives present.

Others present: Jeremy Dutton, Holbrook Ditch; Frank Valencia, Colorado Canal; Casey Williams, Catlin Canal, Wesley Eck, Kim Siefkas, Burt Heckman, Rex Davis and Eddie Hall with Fort Lyon Canal Company; Rachell Zancanella, Jason Ullman, Bethany Arnold, Lonnie Spady, Brian Lenherr, Jessie Harris (joined at 10:47), Brady Cole – Division of Water Resources; Leann Noga, Chris Woodka, Michelle Tocydlowski, Gordon Dillon, and Margie Medina SECWCD staff; Lee Miller and Peter Levish SECWCD attorneys.

Leann Noga turned the meeting over to Division Engineer Rachel Zancanella referencing a March 26, 2025, *2024-2025 PWWSP Memorandum*, attached.

At the end of the Winter Water year, the Division of Water Resources (DWR) does a final balance in a spreadsheet that incorporates the facts of the decree, the water is split up by percentages amongst the different entities. The DWR was unable to make it balance, because of where the water had been physically diverted.

Winter Water Split

DWR Pueblo office works with Kansas to calibrate a split based on the Glasgow gauge, and the Arkansas at Mahana. The ratio that is calibrated in the weeks preceding November 15th to decide how much water that passes through that gauge is allocated towards Winter Water Storage program versus how much is allocated towards the winter conservation storage in John Martin Reservoir. In many typical years, that split is 25% of the water is winter conservation storage and 75% Winter Water Storage.

This year there was a basin wide snowstorm on November 7th that occurred during the calibration week, and the split ended up almost completely reversed. It was about 77% of the flow going through that gauge being directed towards winter conservation storage and about 23% to the Winter Water Storage. This happens every 10 or so years. This is not the first time that it has occurred, but the first time that current staff have been through that process. There was

nothing anybody did that could have impacted it in another way, with snow like that, the ditches shut off and the shift occurred.

In a normal year to move Amity's water to Amity or sometimes Fort Lyon and Las Animas Consolidated, water is delivered to John Martin taken into consideration what that split is. And if, for example, in an ideal year, if we knew at the beginning of the year we were going to get 100,000-acre feet in the program, you would owe around 8,000 for Amity's portion in John Martin. But you'd have to over deliver accounting for that part that gets parsed off for winter storage.

This year more water was stored high up in the upper basin reservoirs than we should have because we were at the end of the day, unable to balance the spreadsheet because Amity was owed more water than they could physically take delivery of. The DWR was unable to balance it because enough water was physically not delivered downstream to John Martin to be able to pro rata by the percentage splits. The winter water program ended on November 15th, and this didn't really become obvious until after that date or right up before that date.

If the water was to be released today straight down to John Martin on a one for one, it would not consider conservation storage in doing so because that split should have been applied. The water actually came out of the program as a whole. In order to be able to balance this year, water needs to be released from the upper basin and deliver to John Martin. Then redistribute and balance the program based on the amount of water that the program will net after you reduce for what is owed to conservation storage.

To solve the problem a release from the upper basin to John Martin will need to be made to get the percentage that Amity is owed in a place that they can take delivery. In doing so, it reduces the overall amount we thought we were going to store in the program to compensate for what gets redistributed to winter conservation storage. On paper, it might not be noticed because the February 28th report said the system had stored a total of about 114,000-acre feet.

And the final report, if we move forward with my proposal for how to remedy the balancing issue, will show that the program stored a total of about 118,000 AF in between the two reports.

Rachel Zancanella reported that to be able to balance the sheet, we need to make a release, of approximately, 2,700 AF from Pueblo, 2,900 AF from Lake Meredith, and 3,300 AF from Adobe through an inter ditch exchange. Those releases would be reduced from the total storage under the program, and that amount of water would then be split retroactively with the winter water split that would have been applied had we done it before the program ended. That'll reduce the overall storage that may have been inappropriately allocated towards this program by about 6,200-acre feet, and it'll add about 5,200-acre feet to the winter conservation storage pool in John Martin. That will get the pro rata amount of water owed to Amity down to John Martin and

ultimately balance the program. A link in the memo of the draft final distribution lists what water would be after this shift and how much.

Rachell Zancanella gathered information from Colorado, Fort Lyon, Holbrook and Las Animas Canal's regarding the transit loss and storage options. DWR will take requests into consideration. Due to this situation the program may benefit from some improvements in the future.

The inquiry as to if Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (SECWCD) would waive Winter Water fees, Leann Noga reported the SECWCD Board has had a request in the past and it was denied. Our contract with the Bureau of Reclamation is that any water that's stored in Pueblo Reservoir with the winter water has a storage fee.

The Trustees agreed that the DWR inquire on the input from the canals and run the numbers as they are not prepared to vote at this time. The Trustees will reconvene Monday, March 31, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. all agreed.

DWR will rebalance the numbers considering a potential transit loss from Adobe down through gauge be Creek and try to move some of Las Animas Consolidated waters into Meredith.

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 p.m.

Margie Medina, Administrative Support Specialist
SECWCD