

WINTER WATER STORAGE PROGRAM

Board of Trustees Annual Meeting Minutes

October 17, 2025

Leann Noga called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m. then introduced Water Resources Engineer Robert Banham, staff Chris Woodka and Margie Medina. Robert Banham asked for introductions then took roll of the Board of Trustees of the Winter Water Storage Program (WWSP).

Winter Water Board of Trustees Voting Members Roll Call:

Josh Reinert, Amity Mutual Irrigation Company; Tim Hund, Bessemer Ditch Company; Greg Williams, Catlin Canal Company; Stacey Sober, Colorado Canal & Reservoir Company; Wesley Eck, Fort Lyon Canal Company; Darren Grap, High Line Canal Company; Donny Hansen, Holbrook Mutual Irrigation Company; Jeff Baylor, Las Animas Consolidated; Von Lieber, Oxford Farmers Ditch Company; Tom Pope, Riverside Dairy Ditch; and Alan Ward, West Pueblo Ditch.

Others in Attendance: - Frank Valencia, Colorado Canal; Todd Marriott, Victor Brown, and Jeff Linenberger – Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Garrett Markus, BDE; Casey Williams and George Hanzas - Catlin Canal Company; Jeremy Dutton, Holbrook Mutual Irrigation Company; Neil Thompson, and Glenn Wilson - Amity Mutual Irrigation Company; Lonnie Spady, Rachel Zancanella, Jessi Harris, and Brandy Cole - Colorado Division of Water Resources; Ed Mayhoffer, River Ranch Reservoir Co.; Aidan Burgess, Oxford Ditch; Curtis Sniff, Fort Lyon Canal Company; Ryan Dalton, West Pueblo Ditch; Israel Ortega, City of Aurora; Dan Tucker, Justin Zeisler, and Katie Garrett - Colorado Springs Utilities; Tim Miller and Terry Dawson - U. S. Bureau of Reclamation; Leann Noga, Robert Banham, Margie Medina, and Chris Woodka - Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District.

Minutes

Mr. Banham asked if everyone had received the minutes of October 18, 2024, March 11, 27 & 31, 2025, minutes and asked for a motion to approve those minutes. Tom Pope motioned, seconded by Von Lieber to approve the minutes of the Board of Trustees meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Fry-Ark Operations – U. S. Bureau of Reclamation

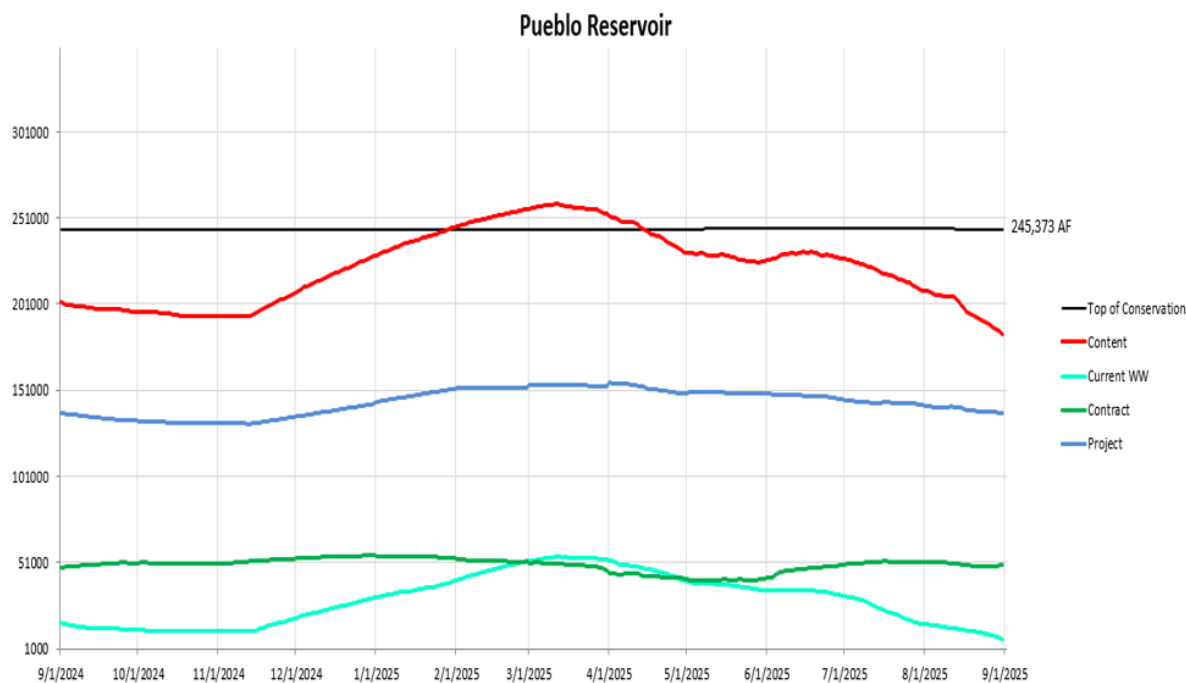
Tim Miller reported in a PowerPoint presentation on the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project (Project) as of October 17, 2025, there was:

- 186,976 / 311,384 AF stored in Pueblo 60% full
- 66,740 / 102,373 AF 65% full in Ruedi
- 87,537 / 129,398 AF 68% full in Turquoise
- 7,788 / 11,143 AF 70% fill in Mt. Elbert Forebay
- 119,064 / 141,000 AF 84% fill in Twin Lakes

East slope reservoirs are at between 40,000 and 39,000 AF currently graph showing 2026 – 2023 for all four reservoirs. Turquoise Lake at 87,500 above average, and Twin Lakes around 120,000 AF below average. Mt. Elbert Powerplant's role in water movement is a conduit from Turquoise Lake to Mt. Elbert forebay, main path of releases from Turquoise to Twin Lakes, allowing a good neighbor agreement with Lake County for 400 cfs from Turquoise. There is an extended outage for maintenance unit 2 as it is still down. Unit 1 is available and not doing annual maintenance until unit 2 is running. A

photograph of the crack in the unit was shown.

Pueblo Reservoir is just below 190,000 AF graph levels shown below



66,011 AF of Joint Use pool above top of conservation 245,373 AF, stored about 13.6 KAF in Joint Use in 2025. Start evacuating April 1st based on Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) drawdown curve out by April 15th. Winter Water 2025 storage 43.6 KAF average is 42.6 KAF, stored between Nov 15 to Mar 15. Project Water cannot be spilled mostly regards M&I accounts carryover. Contract water includes short/long term contracts, and Master Contracts can be spilled based on spill priorities. Winter Water can be spilled in excess of 70 KAF.

Accounting as of October 7, 2025: 187,671 AF stored in Pueblo; 135,020 AF of Project Water; 47,398 AF of excess capacity water; 6,027 AF of Winter Water; 110,353 AF of Project space available in Pueblo Reservoir; and 30,543 AF of Project space in Twin & Turquoise Reservoirs.

Reclamation new allocations versus current allocations were presented and they will go into effect for the 2027 water year. Spaces that will change are Flood Control -264AF, Joint use +287AF and Conservation -2,525AF.

On November 1, 2025, at 00:00 hours John Martin Reservoir gate will be closed. Project Water Winter Storage Program (PWWSP) and conservation storage split is determined in November. Baseline flows (conservation portion) are determined from 11/1 through 11/15, enhanced flows (PWWSP portion) are determined from 11/16 through 11/30, PWWSP/Conservation storage percentage are agreed upon. This marks the end of the irrigation season, all PWWSP participants close their headgates, Winter storage begins. Pueblo Reservoir is reduced to 80 cfs maybe less (100 cfs with fish hatchery). Fort Lyon Storage Canal starts sweeping the river. Please email your storage preferences to Lonnie.spady@state.co.us and brian.lenherr@state.co.us.

Division of Water Resources – Division Engineer’ Office

Lonnie Spady then reviewed available storage in Turquoise 129,440 AF, Twin Lakes 141,000 AF, Clear Creek 9,213 AF, DeWeese 4,338 AF, Pisgah 2,192 AF, Skagway 2,066 AF, Pueblo 311,384 (included the Joint Use Pool), Colorado Canal System 52,517 AF, Holbrook 9,700 AF, Fort Lyon Canal System 106,000 AF, Great Plains 256,000AF, and John Martin 340,703 AF.

Aurora Rocky Ford Ditch Water Estimate of Return Flow Storage Availability

Robert Banham informed the WWSP participants that Aurora reported based on projected storage amounts accredited to Aurora this year, the total delayed return flow obligation is projected to be 1,618 AF to be held in Pueblo Reservoir.

Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District Ag Updates

Winter Water History Presentation

Robert Banham presented on the Winter Water History initiated in 1976 as a voluntary winter storage initiative, water court application filed in 1984, amended in 1986. The purpose is to capture winter flows for use during peak irrigation periods.

Initial 100,000 acre-feet of storage allocated as follows:

28% ditch companies without storage rights, based on historical winter usage.

72% to ditch companies with storage rights, based on combined historical irrigation and storage use.

Additional allocations:

2,750 acre-feet to Amity for storage in Great Plains or John Martin Reservoir.

356 acre-feet to Holbrook for storage.

When storage exceeds 103,106 acre-feet, allocation shifts to:

25% Direct Flow only

75% Direct Flow and Storage

River call during operations set at March 1, 1910, aligning with the most junior storage decree among participants.

In 1985, Kansas filed suit against Colorado, alleging three violations of the Arkansas River Compact, including the operation of the WWSP. In 1997, the Special Master’s second report concluded that there was not enough evidence that the WWSP violated the Compact. A formal decree was issued by Colorado Division 2 Water Court in 1989.

Disbursement for the first 100,000 AF:

Disbursement For First 100,000 AF

Ditch Company	Allocation (AF)
Bessemer	6,190
Highline	8,310
Oxford	2,000
Catlin	9,140
Consolidated	2,760
Riverside–West Pueblo	400

Ditch Company	Allocation (AF)
Colorado, Lake Henry, Lake Meredith	10,690
Holbrook	8,520
Fort Lyon	38,160
Amity	13,830

Amount stored or direct flow irrigated pre-winter water 142,479 AF; winter water 135,220 AF, this includes direct flow and Winter Water. Annual storage and delivery volumes have varied over time, reflecting both climate and operational factors. In 1978 there was no Winter Water program.

Rachell Zancanella spoke about the conservation storage and provided an update on the interesting spring and will send out an updated memo to the group. Meetings will be held with one representative from each trustee to communicate on the operations for the program. Suggested meeting every two 2 weeks or once a month to come to a consensus on managing the program. Southeastern will work with DWR to plan these. Virtual meetings were suggested.

Agricultural Fry-Ark Project Water Carryover Storage

Robert Banham explained the 80/20 percent rule which is 80 percent of any agricultural allocated Project water would be used by November 15 of the current year and remaining 20 percent used by May 1 of the following year.

In 2022, the Southeastern Colorado Water Activity Enterprise approved a Pilot Project. This Pilot Project established parameters for which agricultural entities were permitted to carry water past November 15. During the process, items were identified that required changes to provide additional clarification and set timelines.

The proposed changes to the program are:

- Limited to entities who choose to use the first right of refusal on Return Flows.

- District staff will assess feasibility in August and September in coordination with Bureau of Reclamation & Colorado Division of Water Resources.
- Allocation Committee will make a recommendation to the Board in September to spill risk in Pueblo Reservoir.
- Board will decide at the September Board meeting to spill risk in Pueblo Reservoir.
- Decision is based on current forecasts and hydrologic outlook.
- Participation is subject to change as hydrologic conditions evolve.

Category 1 - Imminent Spill Risk is defined as (Pueblo Reservoir spill likely):

- 80/20 Rule (per policy):
 - I. 80% of Agricultural Project Water must be used by November 15 of the allocation year.
 - II. 20% of Agricultural Project Water must be used by May 1 of the following allocation year.
- The Allocation Committee will recommend one of the three spill categories to the Board of Directors in September.
- The Board of Directors will decide on one of the three spill categories in September.
- Agricultural entities may submit requests for variance by September 15 each year, subject to Board approval in October.

Category 2 - Marginal Spill Risk, (spill possible, but not likely):

- Annual Waiver of the 80/20 Rule.
- Agricultural Project Water may be stored from November 15 to March 15 but must be used by April 15.
- The Allocation Committee will recommend one of the three spill categories to the Board of Directors in September.
- The Board of Directors will decide on one of the three spill categories in September.
- In March the Allocation Committee and the Board of Directors will receive an update on storage conditions in Pueblo Reservoir and take one of two actions:
 1. Change to a different category. (Category 1, Category 3)
 2. Look at and consider and variance letters that were received by the September 15th Deadline of the year prior.

Category 3 -Unlikely Spill Risk, unlikely spill as of May 1 following allocation year:

- Annual Waiver of the 80/20 Rule.
- Agricultural Project Water may be stored from November 15 to March 15
- May be carried past May 1 but must be used by November 15 of the carryover year.
- The Allocation Committee will recommend one of the three spill categories to the Board of Directors in September.
- The Board of Directors will decide on one of the three spill categories in September.
- In March the Allocation Committee and the Board of Directors will receive an update on storage conditions in Pueblo Reservoir and take one of two actions:
 1. Change to a different category. (Category 1, Category 2)
 2. Look at and consider and variance letters that were received by the September 15th Deadline of the year prior.

Factors impacting spill risk are, Winter Water program demand, M&I Project water carryover, excess capacity municipal contracts, estimated release schedules, evaporation losses, Pueblo Reservoir content vs. Historical averages and conservation pool limit of 245,373 AF. For water year 2025 category 2 was selected.

Reclamation Reform Act (RRA) – Water District Review

Robert Banham reported that the Bureau of Reclamation started its audit the week of August 25, 2025. The RRA process is set to end in 2032. The District is looking at alternatives to ensure the equitable distribution of Project Water to its constituents. Maps will again be sent with the RRA forms and are required to be collected. Irrigable land was defined as land under a specific project plan for which irrigation water is, can be, or is planned to be provided, and for which facilities necessary for sustained irrigation are provided or planned to be provided. Irrigation land is any land receiving water from a Reclamation project facility or irrigation purpose in a given year, except for land that has been specifically exempted by statute or administrative action from the acreage limitation provisions of Federal reclamation law.

Landholding changes direct/indirect such as change in owned/leased land, effective date or term of lease, identify change marital or death, change in part owners or beneficiaries, percentage of acreage attribution, IRS classification of an entity, transfer of directly owned land from a landholder to a family-owned entity change in excess or full cost acres. If landholders have changes, they are to verbally or in writing within 30 days inform the District or canal and new forms are to be on file within 60 calendar days of the change. Except if a landholder has finished receiving Project water in that water year.

RRA audit update is expected to be completed by the second week of November 2025; fines may be assessed to canal companies and paid in full upon notification. Unpaid fines will result in ineligibility of Project Water in 2026. Timely resolution is required to maintain allocation eligibility. Staff will provide an update once audit findings are finalized.

Next Scheduled Meeting

Next meeting would be Friday, October 16, 2026 (third Friday in October). The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Margie Medina, Water Resources Administrative Analyst
Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District

Date Approved