



MEMORANDUM
JANUARY 4, 2018

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: ANDY MUELLER, INCOMING GENERAL MANAGER

SUBJECT: WATER BANK WORK GROUP UPDATE

ACTION: *Update only*

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE(S): *3.C. Climate and Hydrologic Uncertainty*
4.C. Colorado River Supplies
6.A. Agricultural Water Use

The Water Bank Workgroup met on December 18, 2017 at Colorado Mesa University with representatives from the Colorado River District (Sonja Chavez, Chris Treese and Andy Mueller), Southwest Water Conservation District, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, the Colorado Attorney General's office, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and Colorado State University present in person or by phone. As you will recall, the River District is one of four funding partners in this group. The other funding partners are the SWCD, Tri-State, and the TNC. The meeting was productive and resulted in a consensus to move forward with funding (from existing authorized funds) a contractor to collect and assess prior studies performed to assess the secondary (community) impacts of voluntary fallowing programs. Several studies have been performed in the past and the group decided it wanted to understand and synthesize the work which had been previously completed on this issue before authorizing any new analysis.

It was stressed by both the River District staff and the SWCD representatives at the meeting that demand management, such as water banking, was the third and last tier of an Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) and that both reservoir reoperation and supply augmentation were more likely to produce significant protection for the Upper Basin and more cost effective. It was further discussed that a water bank concept would only be supported by Water Bank Work Group members if it included both west and east slope agriculture, and meaningful municipal and industrial system conservation elements. There is no consensus on how a water bank would work at this time and the group is very aware of the concern that it not perform work which merely makes it easier for a buy and dry situation.

The group is working on producing a report on the lessons learned by this group and consolidating them with lessons learned in other System Conservation studies. The group is also working on developing an outreach program to be able to provide information and understand concerns from agricultural communities on the western slope.

The next meeting is set for March 6, 2018.

201 Centennial Street / PO Box 1120 • Glenwood Springs, CO 81602

(970) 945-8522 • (970) 945-8799 Fax

www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org