

Revised and Readopted April 16, 2019

Recreational Water Use

Colorado River Water Conservation District Policy Statements:

The Colorado River District supports recreational water uses - and the water rights confirming those recreational water uses - that balance recreational needs with historical and future consumptive water uses, including water uses by exchange. A recreational in-channel water right (RICD) should not be granted if it would materially impair the ability to fully develop for beneficial use Colorado's entitlements under the Compacts of 1922 and 1948.

The River District recognizes that a variety of recreational water uses occur throughout Colorado, including on-lakes and reservoirs, in-stream, and those enabled or enhanced by storage releases and diversions from streams. Like all water rights, water rights for recreational uses must be reasonably efficient and promote maximum utilization of Colorado's waters.

Recreational water uses and any water rights confirming those uses should be included in regional stream management plans.

Background & Discussion:

Recreational water use and aesthetic enjoyment of the state's waters are integral to Western Colorado's lifestyle and economy.

Recreation is a recognized beneficial use of the state's waters. Colorado's courts and Colorado's General Assembly recognize certain recreational in-channel uses of water as beneficial water use and eligible for adjudication.

In 2001, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 01-216 providing legislative certainty and conditions on recreational in-channel diversions (RICD). In 2006, the legislature passed Senate Bill 06-037 providing clearer definitions regarding RICD water rights and their associated structures. The final version of Senate Bill 06-037 represented considerable compromise by both sides of the debate and resulted in an Act that both deserved and enjoyed broad support. The River District supported both bills.