

Blue River Integrated Water Mgt. Plan

Summit County State of the River

May 14, 2020



BRWG

BLUE RIVER WATERSHED GROUP



The mission of the Blue River Watershed Group (BRWG) is to promote, protect and restore a healthy Blue River watershed through cooperative community education, stewardship, and resource management.



Blue River Integrated Water Management Plan



The purpose of the IWMP is to:

- enable consumptive and non-consumptive water users and stakeholders to understand and quantify current and future water uses/needs and,
- integrate those uses/needs for the maximum benefit of all and for the health and sustainability of the watershed,
- while respecting and protecting existing water rights.



Blue River IWMP Funding



COLORADO

Colorado Water
Conservation Board

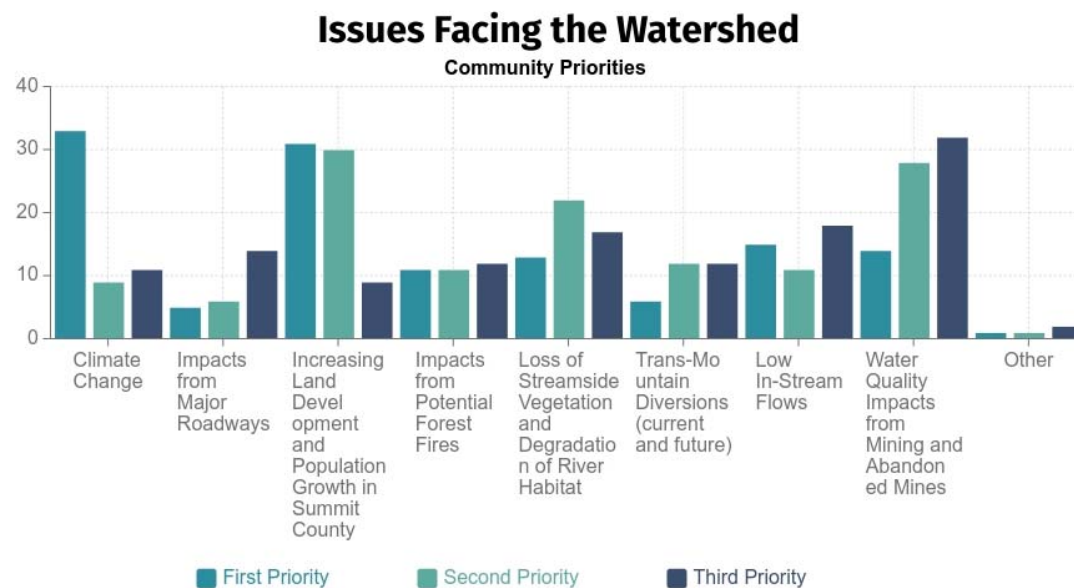
Department of Natural Resources



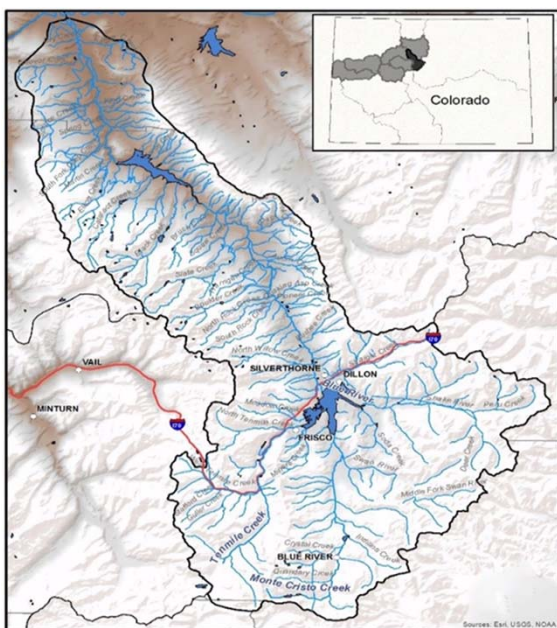
— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION



**BLUE
VALLEY RANCH**
Conservation for Wildlife & Agriculture



Blue River Watershed Overview



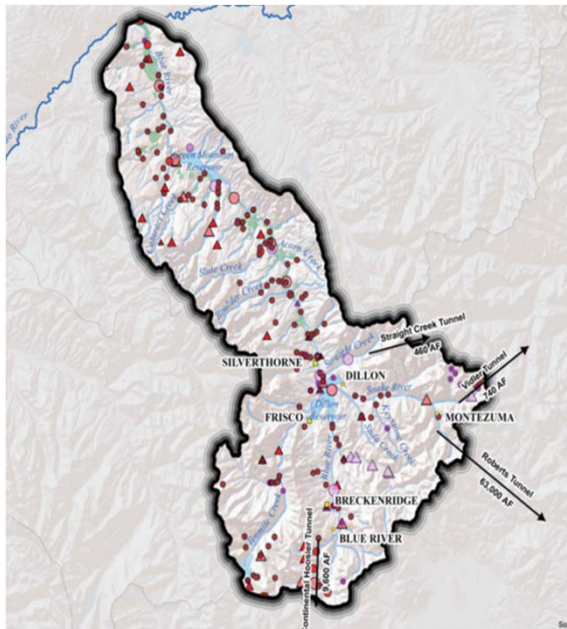
- Watershed closely aligns with County
 - 699 square miles
 - Public land 79 %
 - Elevations 14,270 to 7,400 ft
 - 65 miles long
- 3 major impoundments:
 - Green Mountain Reservoir
 - Dillon Reservoir
 - Goose Pasture Tarn

Blue River Watershed Overview



- 5 communities: Blue River, Breckenridge, Frisco, Dillon, and Keystone
- 4 major ski areas: Arapahoe, Keystone, Breckenridge, and Copper
- 38 farms occupying 25,365 acres
- Population in 2016 estimated to be 30,367
- Population in 2050 projected to about 51,000
- Tourist industry
 - 4 million skier visits in the 2007-2008 ski season
 - Strong summer tourist industry

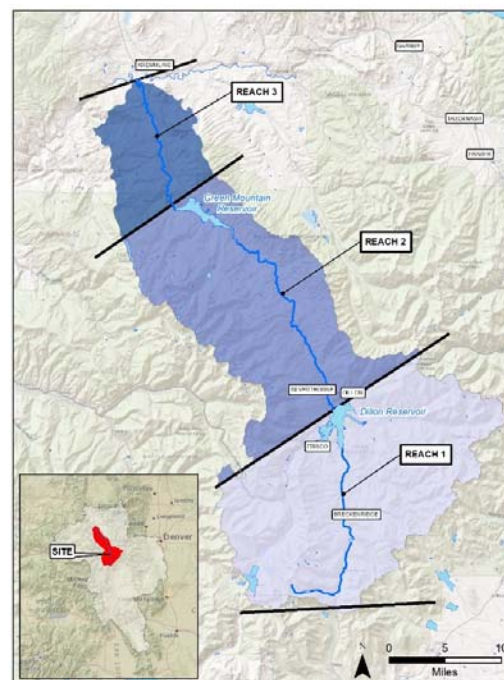
Blue River Watershed Overview



- Blue River watershed generates about 310,000 acre-feet of water per year
 - Five (5) trans-basin diverters removing about 95,000 ac-ft of water per year (10-yr average, 2012) and projected to increase
 - Municipal water use 8,000 ac-ft (2000) projected to be 18,000 ac-ft at full build-out
 - Agriculture flood irrigates 9000 acres
 - Recreational uses

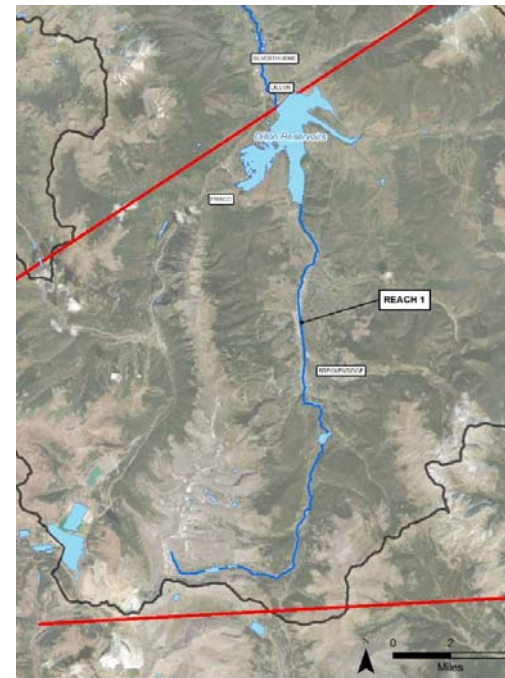
Blue River IWMP Progress Report

- Three Reaches
 - Reach 1 - headwaters region to DR
 - Reach 2 - middle reach to GMR
 - Reach 3 - GMR to Colorado River
- Review of existing available information and data
 - Hydrology and Water Use
 - Water Quality and Temperature
 - Aquatic Life
 - Stream Assessments (aquatic habitat)



Blue River IWMP- Reach I

- Hydrology
 - Periods of low flow naturally occur in the late fall, snowmaking, diversions at the headwaters
 - Future flow conditions could potentially be lower
- Water quality is poor from mining impacts



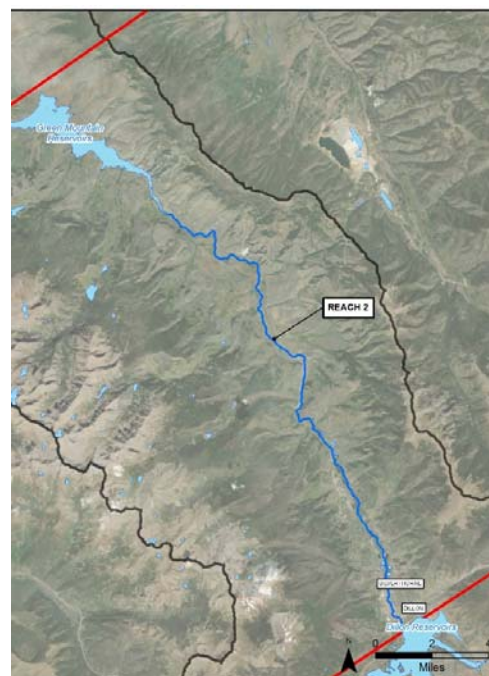
Blue River IWMP- Reach I

- Aquatic life
 - Lower portion is an excellent fishery, but appears to be in decline
 - Closer to Breckenridge, the fishery is not as robust
- Stream Assessments
 - Limited habitat assessments
 - Highly impacted by dredge boat mining
 - Ongoing restoration

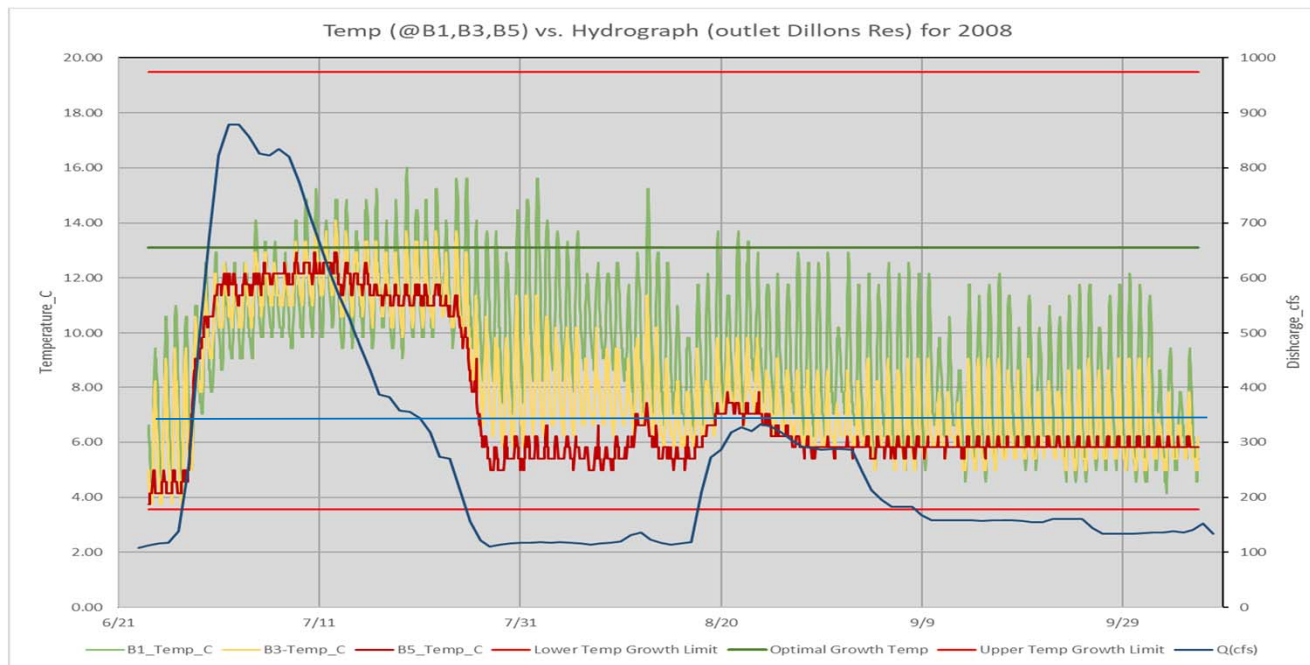


Blue River IWMP- Reach 2

- Hydrology:
 - Flows effected by trans-basin diversions and municipal water uses
 - Highly regulated releases, very cold and transition abruptly



Blue River IWMP- Reach 2



Blue River IWMP- Reach 2



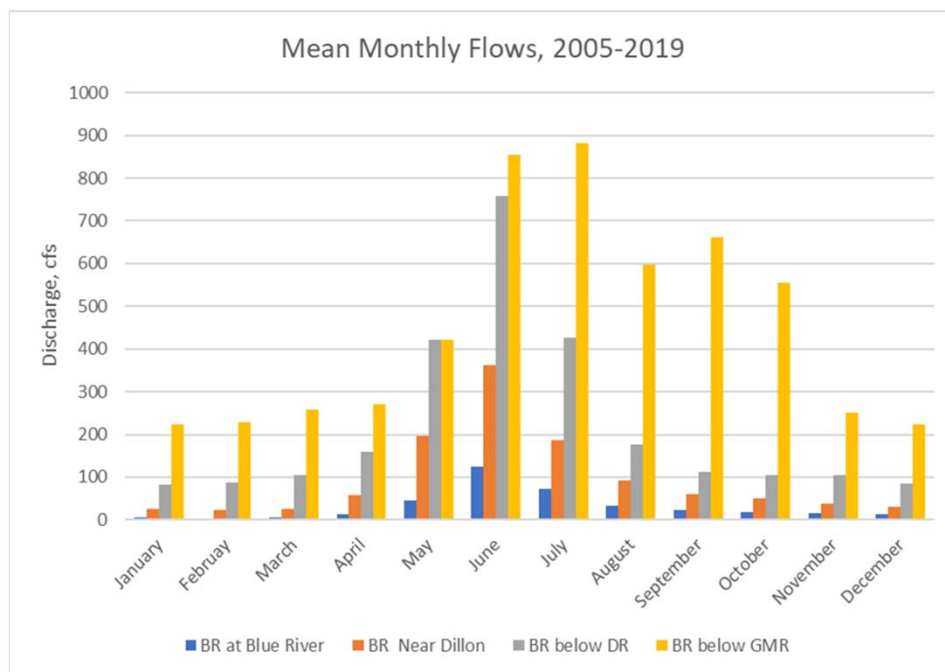
- Future flows could potentially be lower due to increased demands
- Water quality appears to be relatively good
- Aquatic life
 - Does not meet Gold Medal status in some sections and appears to be in decline
 - Focus of the task 2 objective
- Stream Assessments
 - No detailed assessments of habitat
 - Healthy robust riparian corridor

Blue River IWMP- Reach 3

- 2010 GCSMP
- Hydrology
 - Recommended flow ranges from GCSMP are commonly present
 - GMR releases can be unnaturally high in fall



Blue River IWMP- Reach 3



Blue River IWMP- Reach 3

- Water quality appears to be relatively good
- Aquatic life
 - Quality brown trout are abundant
- Stream Assessments
 - GCSMP site assessments indicate a healthy robust aquatic and riparian corridor
 - Aquatic habitat is abundant



Blue River IWMP- Task 2 Declining Fishery

- Working with BREW
- Reviewing and assessing
 - Applicable fish surveys
 - Temperature data
 - Hydrology
 - Macroinvertebrate data
 - Water quality data
- IWMP/BREW additional investigations
 - Macroinvertebrate sampling
 - Temperature monitoring



Next Steps for the IWMP

- Advisory Committee
 - Share data and analysis that have been collected so far with the Advisory Committee
 - Receive input from the Advisory Committee to finalize the goals and objectives of the IWMP
 - Hold Advisory Committee meetings virtually if needed
- Community Outreach
 - Community meetings are on hold because of the coronavirus
 - We will either hold these later this year if in person meetings become possible or find an alternative way to get broad community feedback on the IWMP

Get Involved!

Be Part of the IWMP

- Join the IWMP **Advisory Committee** to help guide the direction and focus of the IWMP
- Attend our community meetings about the content of the IMVP later this year
- Sign up for our newsletter to keep up to date with our progress on the plan
- Fill out the survey

Other Ways to Support BRWG

- Become a member of BRWG to support our ability to continue protecting the Blue River Watershed
- Volunteer for our first annual River Cleanup on August 29, 2020
- Join our Board of Directors



Contact Us



Blue River IWMP Website:

www.blueriverwatershed.org/integrated-water-management-plan

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