

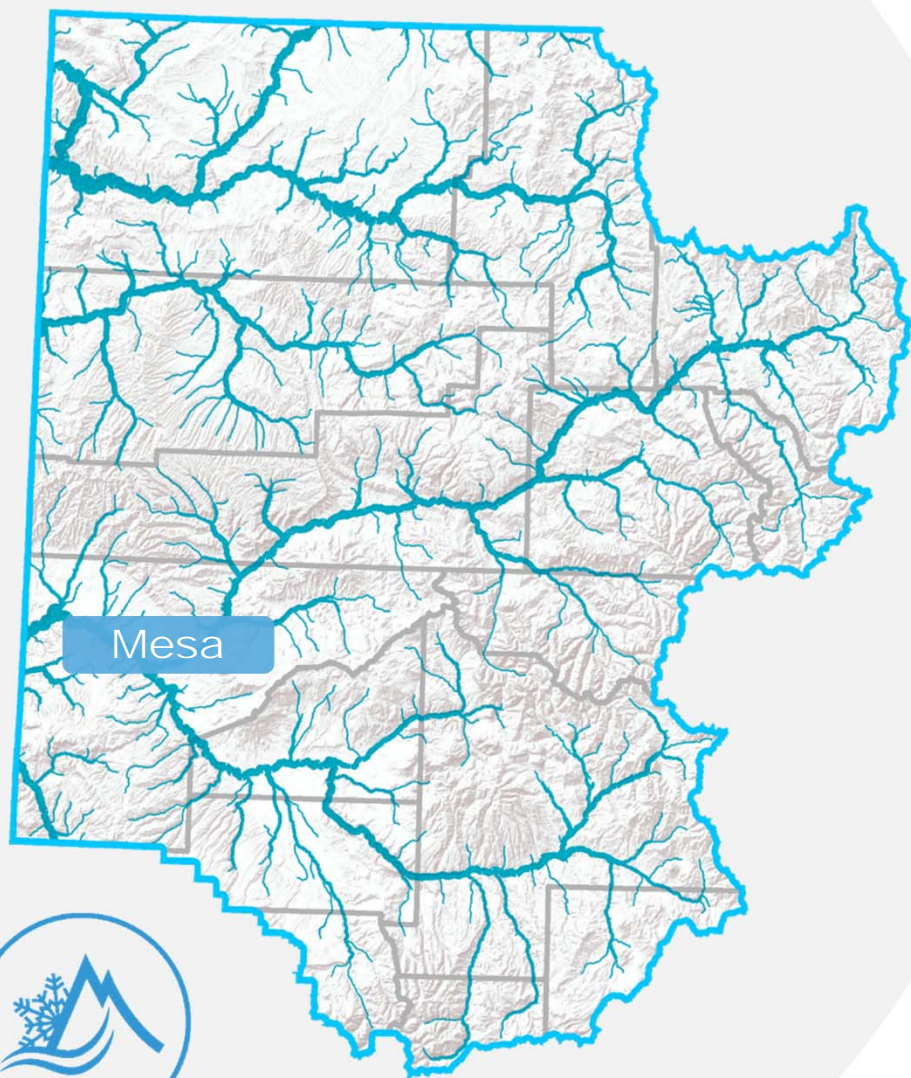
Protecting West Slope water in times of uncertainty

Andy Mueller
General Manager
Colorado River District



COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT
PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937





To lead in the
**protection,
conservation,
use, and
development**
of the water resources of
the Colorado River basin.

Denver Needs Water From Western Slope

(By The Associated Press)

Denver, March 31—The Colorado River commission this afternoon heard its first testimony regarding plans for trans-mountain diversion of the waters of the Colorado river. W. F. R. Mills, a member of the Denver board of water commissioners, told the commissioners diversions must be undertaken if the city of Denver is to obtain a supply of water for domestic consumption for its growing population.

Mr. Mills and other witnesses declared 250,000 acre feet of water should be diverted from the western slope of Colorado to Denver thru irrigation tunnels built at altitudes of approximately 10,000 feet in the Rocky mountains.

Diversion of this amount of water, Mr. Mills declared, would not injure the river in its descent into the lower basin states.

Answering a query from Frank C. Emerson, commissioner of Wyoming, Mr. Mills declared any pact between the states should provide for trans-mountain diversion to guarantee Denver water for all time for domestic consumption. Other city engineering officials agreed with Mr. Mills.

It. H. Meyer, deputy state engineer of Colorado, who opened the technical case of the State of Colorado with a statement, today declared the state is entitled to unrestricted use of the

Take Western Slope Water Under Range

Plans for a \$2,250,000 transmountain water diversion project, to provide water for Golden, Arvada, Edgewater, the state rifle range and irrigation districts west of Denver, has been announced by a committee headed by A. D. Quintana.

The plan was originally made an expenditure of \$1,000,000 after investigation, the sponsor decided to more than double the capacity and the investment. A organization to be known as the Denver-Golden Metropolitan Water association is to be formed and it will seek funds from the construction Finance corporation.

The plans call for a three tunnel under Jones peak, eight miles west of Empire, to divert water from the Williams fork into either creek or Ralston creek. A two tunnel between South fork and Middle fork also is included in the program.

WATER DIVERSION MIGHT INJURE WESTERN SLOPE

Two large projects are being promoted to take water from the Western Slope through tunnels to irrigate lands on the eastern slope of Colorado.

Representatives were in Glen-

EAST SLOPE WANTS COLO. RIVER WATER

Initial steps toward an agreement between Eastern and Western slope interests for transmountain diversion of water into northern Colorado from the Colorado river watershed were taken at a conference in Grand Junction last Friday.

Representatives were present from Weld, Larimer, Logan, Morgan and Sedgwick counties. The Western slope was represented by the protective association directors from the counties on the Colorado river watershed. Those directors are: Simon Smith, Mesa; B. F. Long, Eagle; Frank Delaney, Garfield; Milton R. Welch, Delta; C. J. Moynihan, Montrose; E. M. Nourse, Gunnison; W. B. Burkett, Ouray; C. G. Wag-

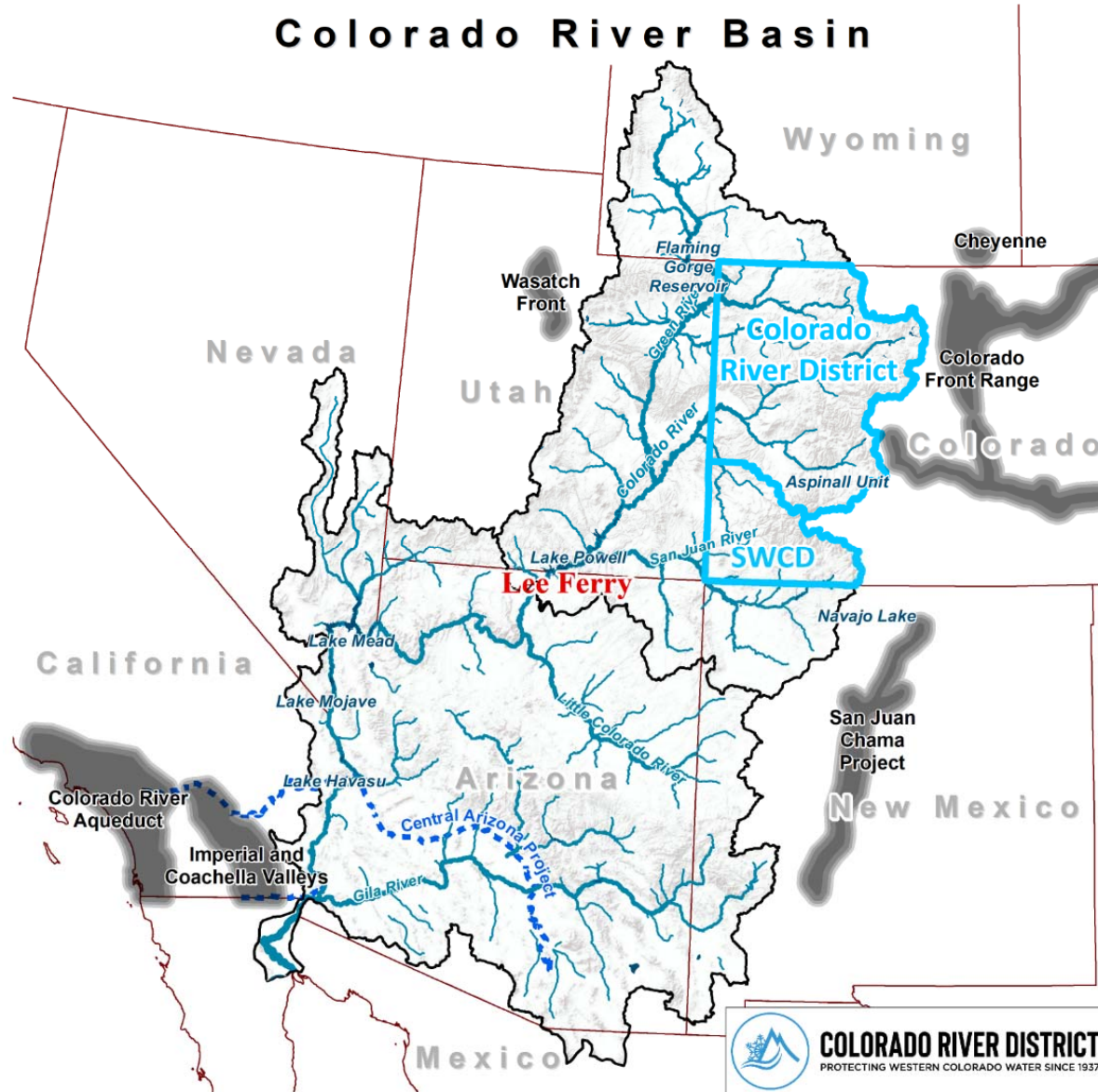
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Archival news stories courtesy Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection

The conference was an outgrowth

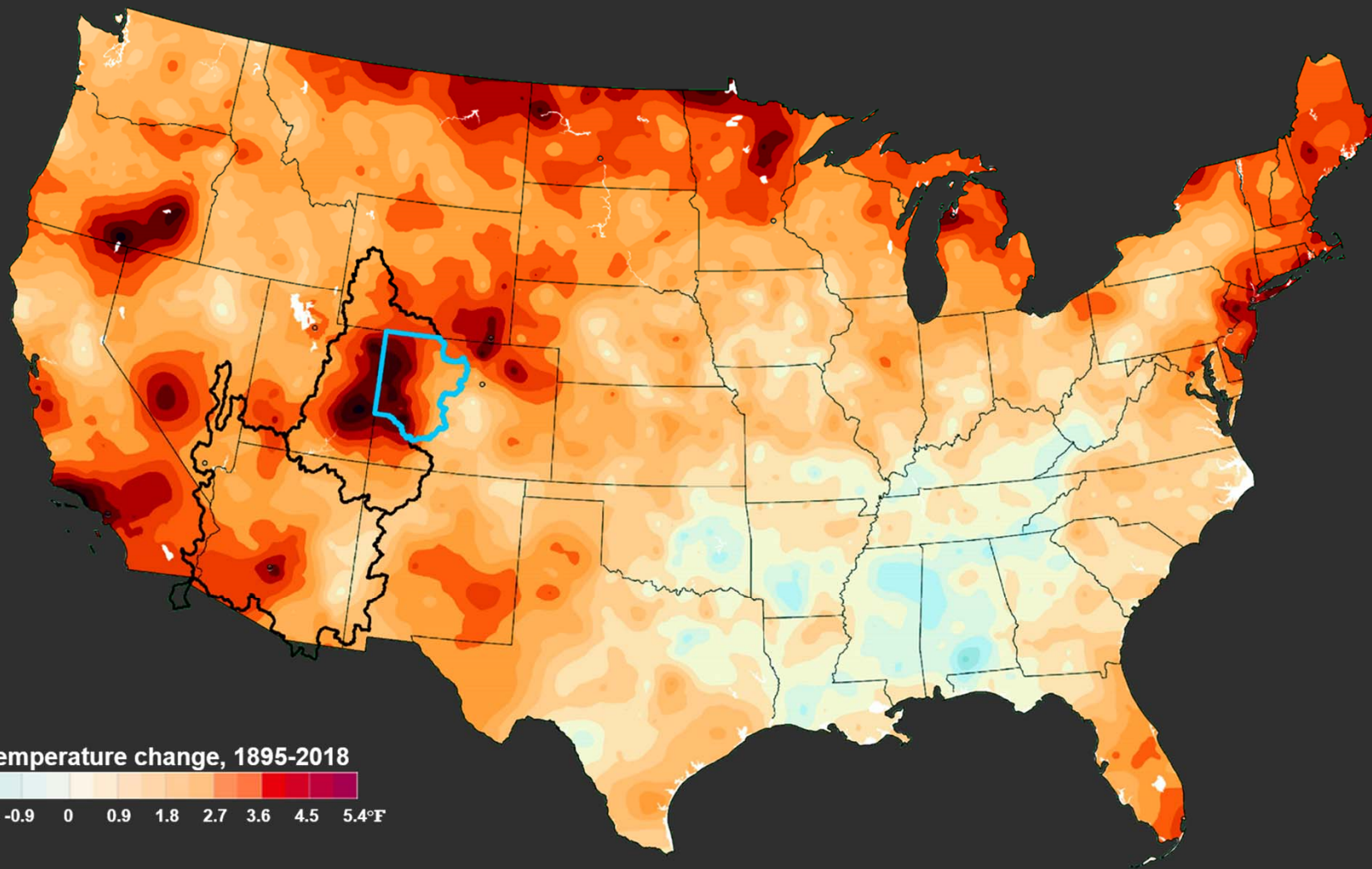
Colorado River Basin



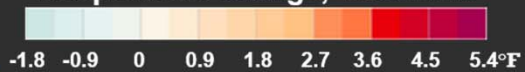
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Annual lower basin overuse:
1.1 to 1.3 million acre feet

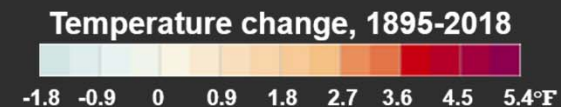
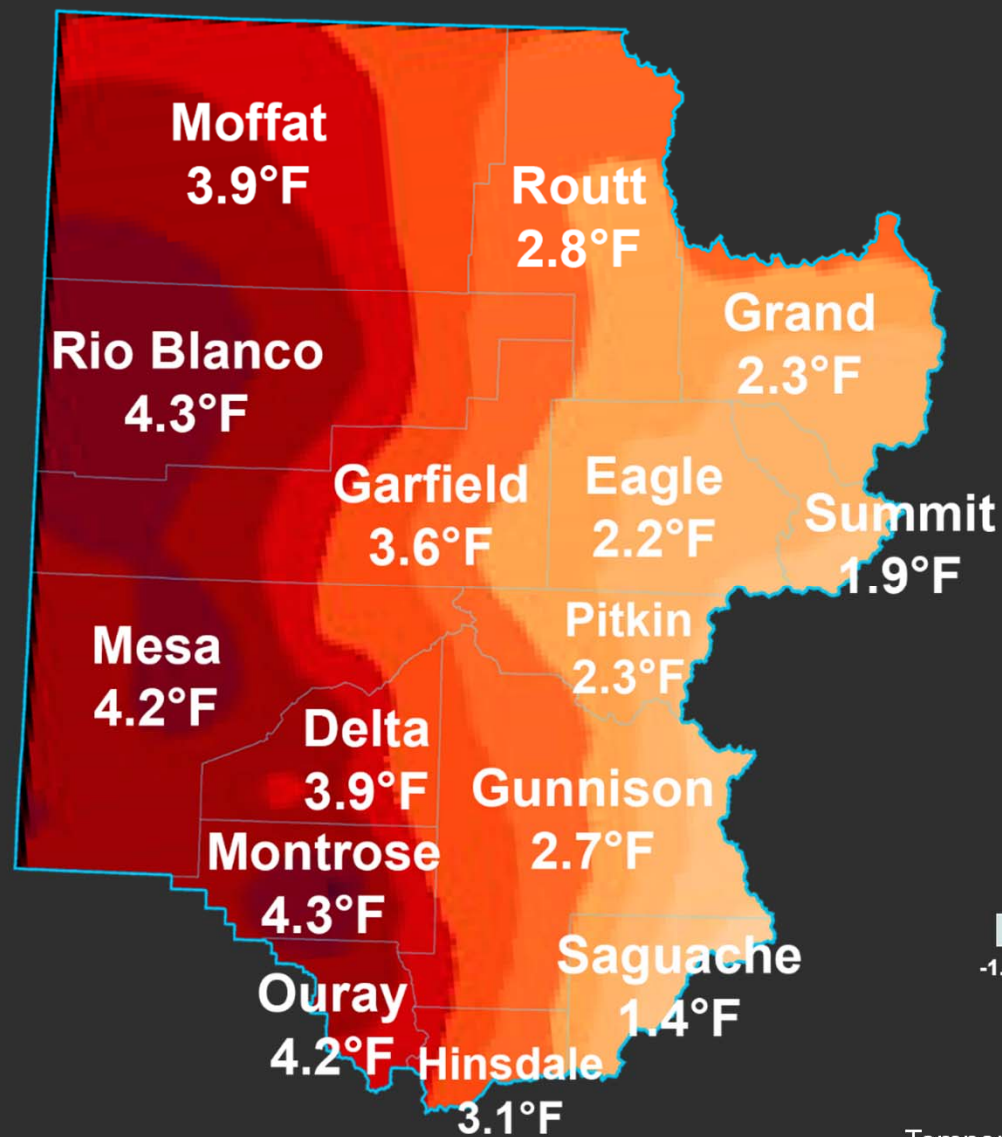




Temperature change, 1895-2018



Temperature data generated by NOAA
Temperature graphic courtesy the Washington Post



Temperature data generated by NOAA
Temperature graphic courtesy the Washington Post



For every 1 degree Fahrenheit rise in temperature, streamflow is reduced between 3% to 5.2%.



Data:

How Warming Drives Reductions in Streamflow Berghuijs et al. (2014), Barnhart et al. (2016), Deems et al. (2013)
Colorado River flow dwindles as warming-driven loss of reflective snow energizes evaporation (P. C. D. Milly, K. A. Dunne, Science 2020)



- **More fall and spring precipitation falling as rain instead of snow**
- **More snowpack lost to sublimation**
- **Earlier snowmelt**
- **A longer growing season**

We work to protect
West Slope water
and keep your water
on the West Slope.





Keeping water
flowing to farms
and ranches



Securing legal
protections to
keep water on
the West Slope



Maintaining
healthy rivers



Ensuring
adequate
drinking water
supplies



Financial challenges



Three key issues:

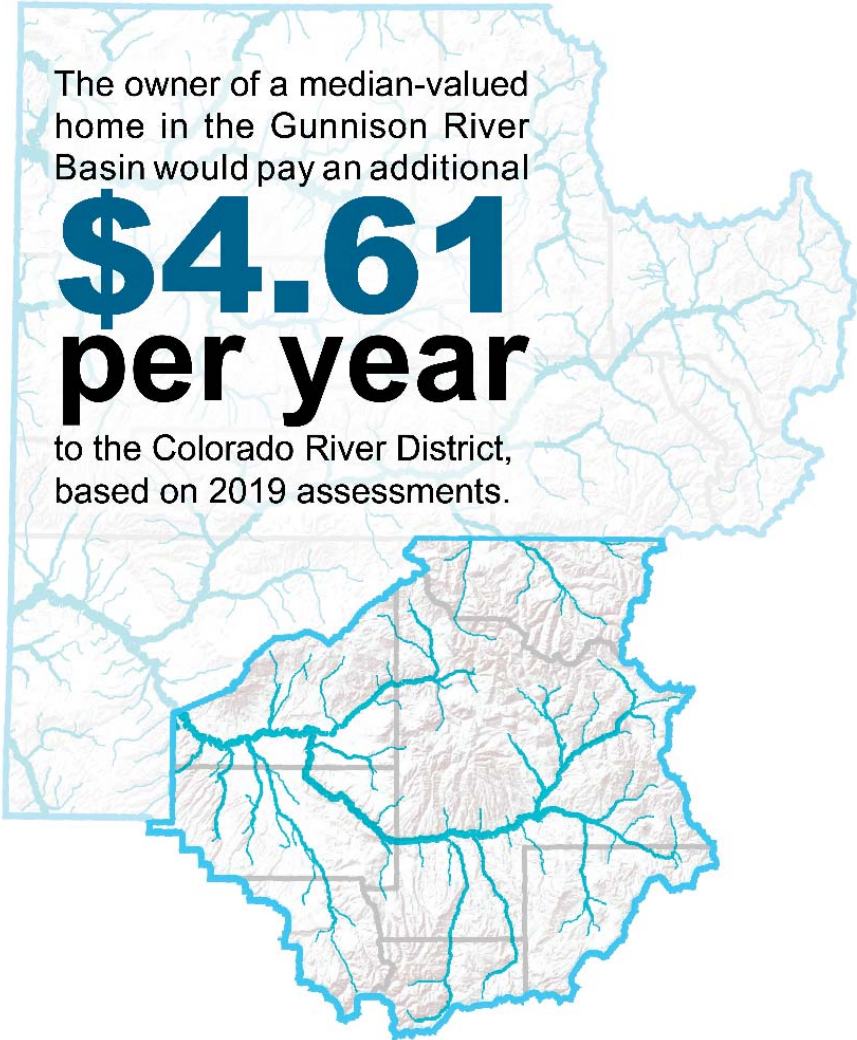
- **Declining tax revenue from the energy industry**
- **Revenue ratcheting down due to the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights**
- **The Gallagher Amendment's reduction in assessment rates**



Proposal under consideration:

Increase of up to half a mill





The owner of a median-valued
home in the Gunnison River
Basin would pay an additional

\$4.61
per year

to the Colorado River District,
based on 2019 assessments.





Productive agriculture



Conservation and efficiency



Healthy rivers



Watershed health and water quality



Infrastructure



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