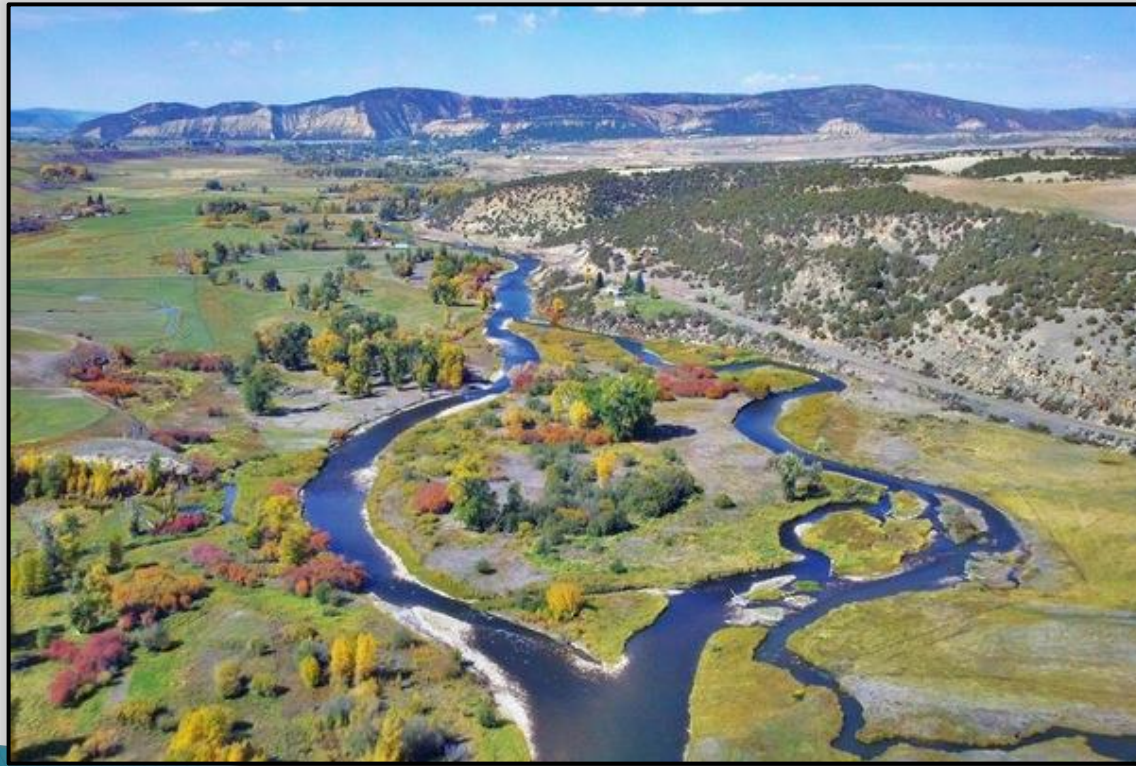


# Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District

State of the White River

**June 15, 2021**



*Our mission:*

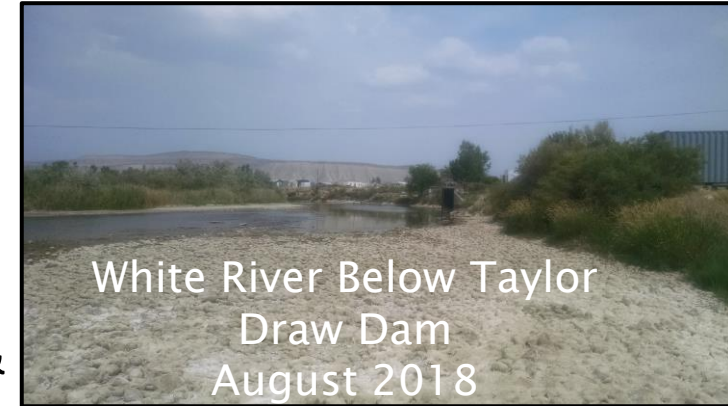
*To conserve and develop land and water resources for the best use of water within the RBWCD boundaries.*





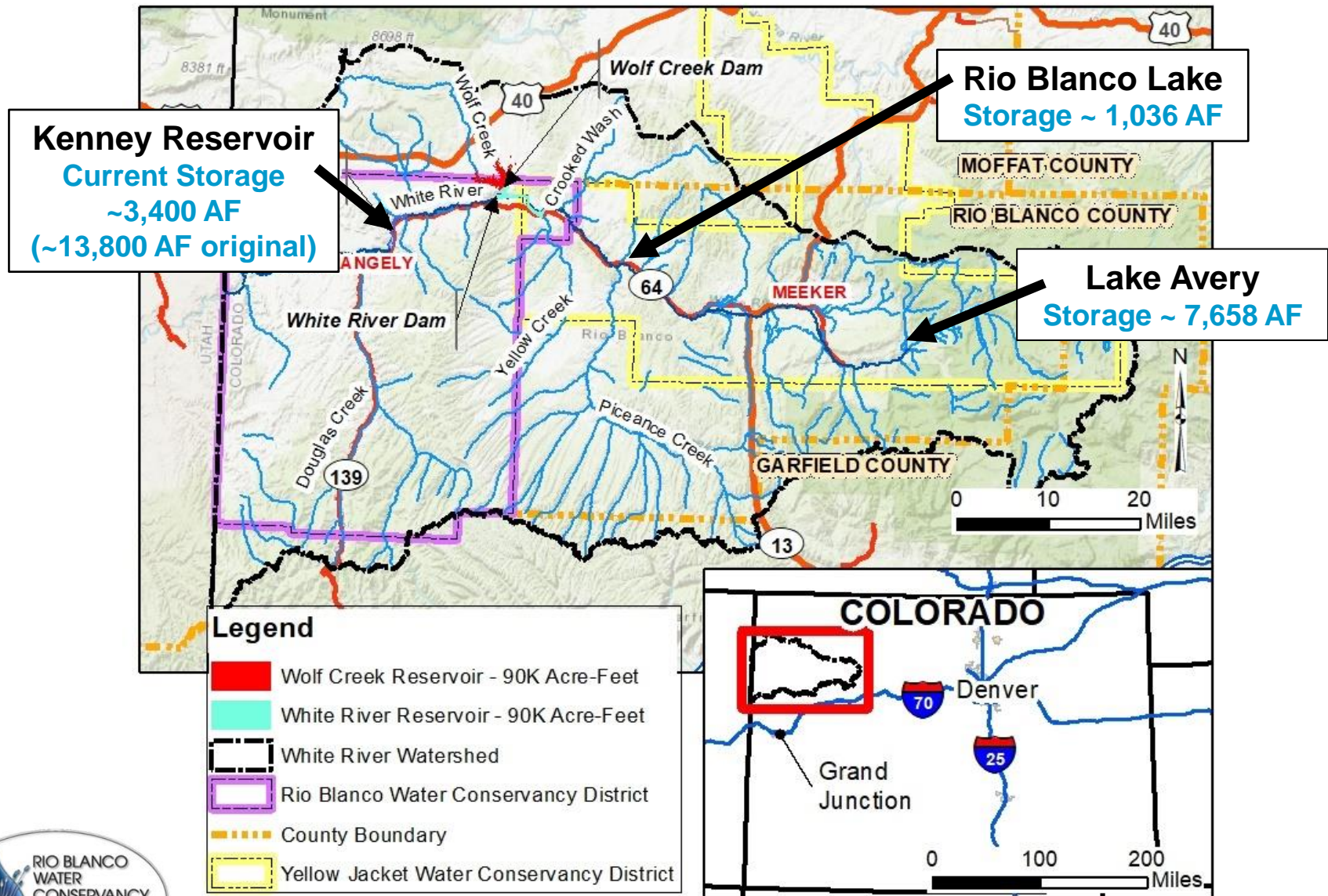
# The White River Water Crisis

- 75% of Kenney Reservoir's original storage has been lost to siltation.
- The Town of Rangely has no water storage for drought protection.
- Any future water development is a considerable challenge due to adverse effects on threatened & endangered fishes & lack of water supply.
- Loss of open water recreation at Kenney Reservoir is estimated to be gone in less than 10 years.
- Agricultural water users unable to divert their full decreed water right or ability to sustain/develop agricultural lands
- Drought conditions persist and conditions worsen
- High potential for Colorado River compact curtailment with 20% of water rights in White River Basin impacted & w/45% impact to RBWCD

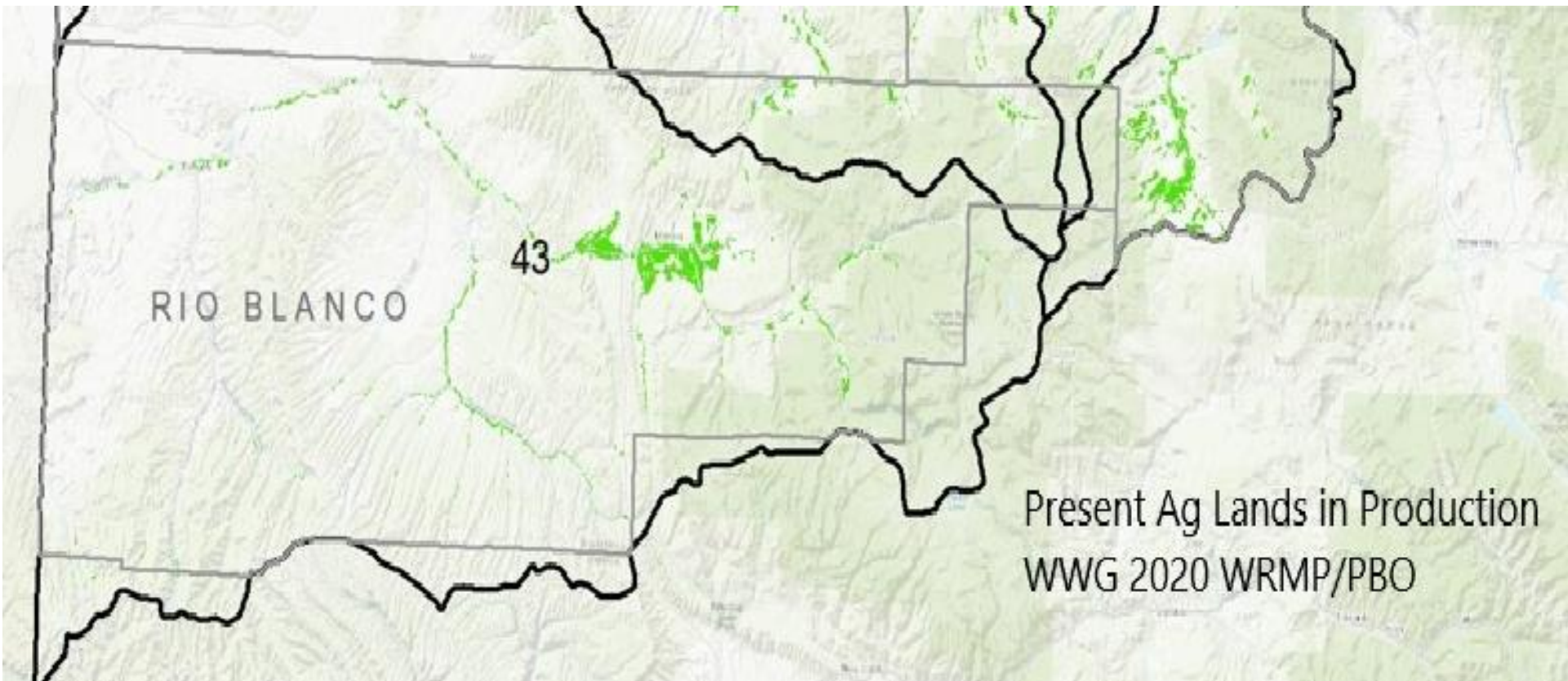




# Current White River Water Storage



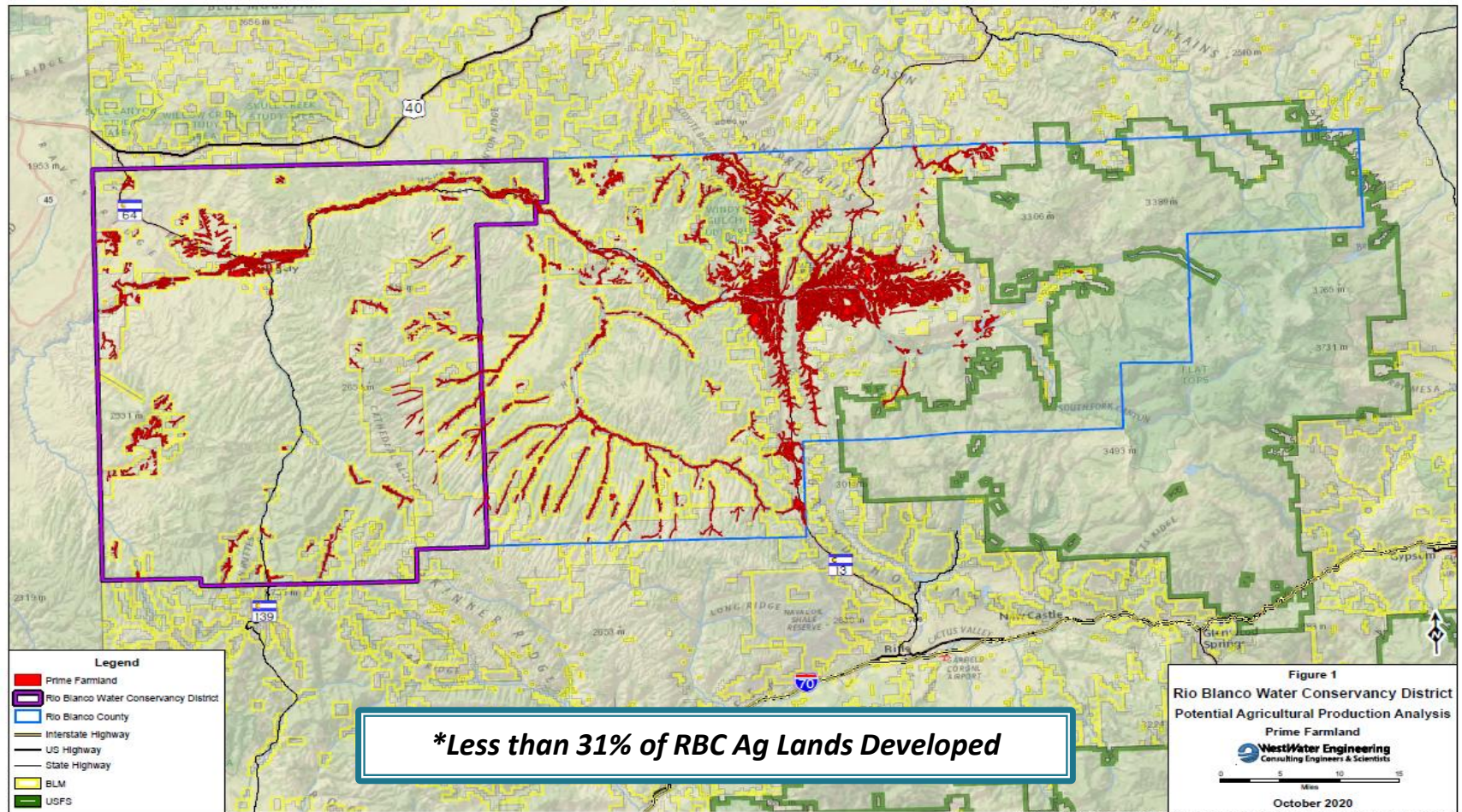
# Present RBC-WR Basin Ag Lands in Production



2017 USDA Farmland Census = 28,624 acres in production in RBC



# Potential Ag Production Lands



Non-Federal Lands classified and USDA high value soils:

Total Potential Farmland within RBWCD Boundary = 21,898 acres

Total Rio Blanco County Potential Farmland Outside RBWCD = 68,909 acres

Total Rio Blanco County Potential Farmland = 90,807 acres

Total Non-Federal CO684 Soils in Rio Blanco County excluded = 10,971 acres



# What has the RBWCD done to address the Water Crisis ?

**Since 2013, the RBWCD has completed planning studies and stakeholder outreach that:**

- Has developed a solution to the pending water crisis on the White River.
- Has identified two very economical water storage locations.
- Identified a means to avoid and minimize adverse environmental consequences.
- Has minimal impacts on private landowners.
- Has obtained a water storage decrees
- Creates environmental enhancements.
- Identified a mechanism to provide recreation and economic benefits to northwestern Colorado.
- Supports and promotes RBC & WR Basin Agriculture.
- Has entered Intergovernmental Agreements with Rio Blanco County, Town of Rangely, & Yellow Jacket Water Conservancy District.





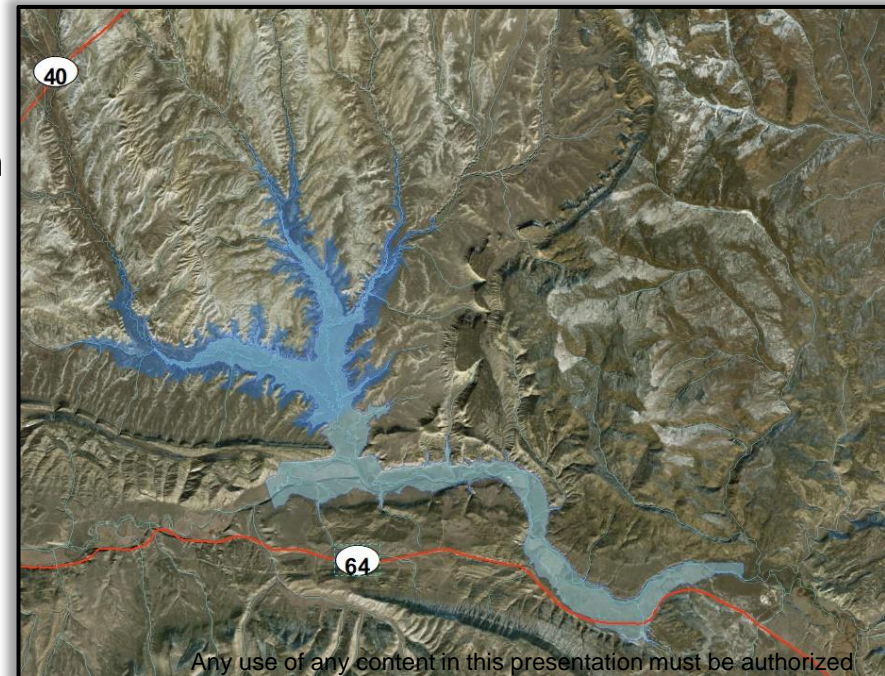
# The Solution: A new northwest Colorado Water Storage Reservoir

**On August 29, 2018, the RBWCD Board of Directors unanimously approved their preferred alternative as the Wolf Creek Dam with a pump station.**

**On January 7, 2021, the RBWCD was awarded a conditional water right  
Amount decreed = 66,720 acre-feet**

Decreed uses:

- Municipal (critical for the Town of Rangely)
- Augmentation (flexibility for other water users in the basin including agriculture)
- Mitigation of environmental impacts (including endangered fish recovery)
- Hydroelectric power generation
- Recreation, Piscatorial, Wildlife habitat



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# NO ACTION IS NOT AN OPTION

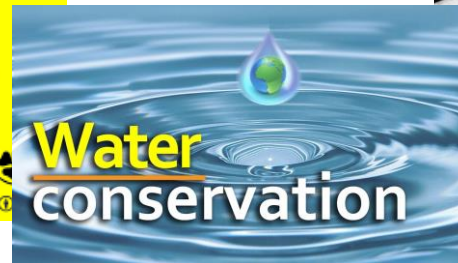
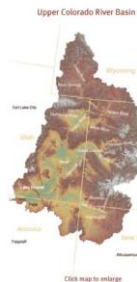
The White River basin does not have storage to meet:

1. The current water needs during drought conditions; or
  2. Reliably provide water for future needs.
- Kenney Reservoir is a run of the river project with primary purposes being flood control, hydropower generation, and recreation.
  - Lake Avery and Rio Blanco Lake are recreation with limited water uses and not available for water supply.
  - White River constituents are currently facing an imminent municipal, agricultural, environmental, and economic catastrophe due to the lack of storage for a resilient water supply.
  - Recreational benefits at Kenney Reservoir will continue to diminish.
  - Tax revenue from the Project will not be available to benefit the local economy.
  - WR Basin agricultural development, present and future, will continue to be repressed without basin storage.



# Wolf Creek Benefits

- Drought storage & water certainty for WR users including Rangely.
- Will mitigate impacts & help recover T&E fish in the lower White River & Green River (Colorado Pikeminnow and Razorback Sucker).
- Will protect & stimulate rural development, including agriculture, for present & future water uses.
- Create economic development opportunities for an economically fraught region of the State
- Provide an augmentation supply for White River Basin users
- Create new recreational opportunities.
- Water storage to develop & support future demands, hydropower, energy development, & alternative energy development research.
- Usher in the development and implementation of new water conservation



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# **PROJECT SUPPORT**

## ***RBWCD has substantial community support***

Letters of Support, Financial Support, or other types of support i.e.,  
Staff/legal:

- ▶ Town of Meeker
- ▶ AGNC
- ▶ Yampa-White-Green BRT
- ▶ City of Craig
- ▶ Moffat County
- ▶ Rio Blanco County
- ▶ Rangely Chamber
- ▶ Meeker Chamber
- ▶ Town of Rangely
- ▶ Colorado First Conservation District
- ▶ White River Conservation District
- ▶ Douglas Creek Conservation District
- ▶ Colorado River District
- ▶ Club 20
- ▶ CWCB - Financial and project support
- ▶ State Water Plan
- ▶ Lower White River Weed and Pest District
- ▶ White River Integrated Water Initiative

*“The White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts are grateful for the work being done by the Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District and offer our continued support for the development of storage in the White River Basin.”*



# 2021 - 2022 Work (2018 CWCB Water Plan Grant)

1. Continued Project Management and Facilitation;
2. Continued coordination with the Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) and White River Management Plan (*water right includes Mitigation, scheduled for completion 2021/early 2022*);
3. Development of a one record of decision permitting work plan (*initiated in 2019*);
4. Preliminary Recreation Plan (*Generally complete*);
5. Purpose and Need refinement and strengthening (*water right has been attained & developing*);
6. Financing Plan; and
7. Final Report.





# This is Our Community

**RBWCD will continue to:**

- **Progress solutions for our WR community water needs including agriculture, environmental, & drinking water supplies collaboratively working with our constituents & partners.**

Thank you

Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District  
Alden Vanden Brink  
(970) 675-5055



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