

Shepherding of Water in the Upper Colorado River Basin

What is the view of the Upper Colorado River
Commission?

DISCLAIMER

- The Upper Colorado River Commission has no official position on shepherding
- The views presented are the opinions of staff and do not reflect an official position of the Commission

BACKGROUND ON THE UCRC

- Created by the 1948 Upper Colorado River Basin Compact
- Interstate water administrative agency
- Commissioners appointed by the governors of CO, NM, UT and WY plus one Commissioner appointed by the President

SELECT DUTIES OF THE UCRC

- Adopt rules and regulations
- Operate gaging stations
- Forecast runoff
- Collect and preserve information on streamflow, storage, diversions, etc.
- Make findings as to the quantity of water used in each Upper Basin state
- Make findings as to the quantity of water deliveries at Lee Ferry during each water year

DUTIES (continued)

- Make findings as to the necessity for and the extent of curtailment of use required by Art. IV of the Compact
- Make findings as to the quantity of reservoir losses and the share chargeable to each state
- Make findings of fact in the event of extraordinary drought or irrigation infrastructure emergency
- Acquire and hold personal and real property needed

What is the UCRC interest in shepherding of water?

- UCRC Resolution of December 10, 2014 Regarding Development of an Emergency Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan
 - a. Expand and improve weather modification activity
 - b. Emergency drought operations of initial CRSP Units
 - c. Explore the feasibility of temporary, voluntary and compensated demand management
 - 1. System Conservation Pilot Program (SCPP)

There Are Many Demand Management Issues

- Are there willing participants?
- How much will we have to pay for conservation
- Can we voluntarily conserve enough water to make a difference?
- What does voluntary demand management administration look like and what is the cost?
- Can we get the conserved water to Lake Powell?
- How long will it take to accumulate the desired conservation? When do we start?

Demand Management (cont.)

- How does demand management work with Interim Guidelines releases?
- Will water banking be required to make it work over time?
- Is conserved water entirely voluntary or will there be state quotas?
- Is there a benefit that enures to the conserving state or party?
- How do we account for banked water?
 - Shepherding efficiency
 - What are the transit losses
 - What are the evaporation losses
 - Who will account for the conserved water?

Demand Management (cont.)

- Proactive demand management requires more water and money to protect compact compliance
- Is there a future role for a bank and if so, how would a bank be structured (dry option leases, wet water, etc ?)

Where does shepherding sit within the list of demand management issues?

- There are many issues and shepherding is just one of them
- If there is a demand management program or curtailment, shepherding will be very important
- We still don't know if demand management will be a viable tool in our DCP toolbox.
- A water bank mechanism may be necessary to make demand management viable in the UB
- The questions about shepherding will vary by state and will take a lot of resources when they are currently stretched

Shepherding Issues cont.

- A water bank mechanism may be necessary to make demand management viable in the UB. Is it feasible?
- The questions about shepherding will vary by state and will take a lot of resources when they are currently stretched
- Shepherding concepts will require buy in from the states (especially regulators) and Commissioners