

MESSAGE FROM MARSHA

House District 19, State Representative

COLORADO WATER – 101 ...

Did you know that Colorado's water administration system is based upon the Prior Appropriations Doctrine? Which basically means, those that put the water to use first are entitled to get their water first during periods of water shortage. In Colorado water is a separate property right and can be sold separately from the land. This is opposed to the Riparian Doctrine that recognizes water rights as being attached to the land adjacent to the river or streams.

In 1879 Colorado established Water Commissioners to distribute water rights based upon a priority system of "First in Time...First in Right". We have 7 Water Commission Districts and 78 Water Districts in Colorado. Colorado Springs and Pueblo are in District 2, which is involves managing the Arkansas River.

Colorado Springs and El Paso County citizens rely heavily on mountain reservoirs and ground water wells for most of our water resource. Transmountain Diversions allow for water to be transferred from high mountain storage to the eastern and western slopes of Colorado.

Not only are the citizens of Colorado using this very important resource, but citizens from 18 states and one other country depend upon Colorado's water.

Citizens in California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky and Mexico also depend upon Colorado water as part of their water supply. The Platte, Arkansas and Rio Grande flow east, while the mighty Colorado flows to the western states.

Your Division of Water Resources administers:

173,000+ water rights annually

30,600+ water diversions and storage records annually

250,000 + wells annually

The Division also administers;

9 Compacts between Colorado & Surrounding States

3 U.S. Supreme Court Cases

2 Agreements

1 U.S. Treaty with Republic of Mexico on the Rio Grande, Tijuana
and Colorado Rivers.

Did you know that 18% of the population relies on ground water also known as wells? Our ground water resource represents about 17% of all diverted water. Over 8,000 well permits are issued yearly, 70% of those well permits are for household and domestic use. In the late 70's the state began requiring permits for ground water wells. Since 1978 over 250,000+ well permits have been issued. Many of those wells are on the eastern slope and are within the Denver Basin Aquifers.

Many citizens of El Paso County rely heavily on ground water from the Upper Black Squirrel and Denver Basin Aquifers. The Upper Black Squirrel Aquifer typically supplies water for irrigation and the Denver Basin Aquifers; Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe and Laramie Fox usually supply water for domestic use.

The Denver Basin Aquifers are considered a non-renewable supply and short-term solution. It is important that all of the stakeholders in Colorado find long-term solutions for citizens who are relying on the Denver Basin Aquifers for their water supply. I thank you for the opportunity to introduce legislation in the upcoming session that will assist the Division of Water Resources in managing ground water wells more accurately. I am committed to continue my work cooperatively with all stakeholders in establishing long-term sustainability of our water resources.

If you have any questions or concerns about this issue or any other issue, please call me at 719-238-5600, email me at marshalooper@hughes.net or visit my website at WWW.GOMARSHA.ORG. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you!

Respectfully,

Marsha Looper

Colorado State Representative

House District 19