

WATER ISSUES IN COLORADO

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ABSTRACT

I would like to cover two separate areas within Colorado that I thought would be of interest to the Central Plains region.

First, Colorado has been working on the development and implementation of an augmentation plan that was submitted to the Republican River Compact Administration in March 2008. The augmentation plan is required to maintain compliance with the Republican River Compact and the Final Settlement Stipulation reached between Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado in 2002. The presentation will include a discussion of the legal, physical and financial challenges that Colorado has faced in the development of this augmentation plan and the current status of negotiations between the three states regarding the request for approval by Kansas and Nebraska. Additional information regarding our compact compliance efforts can be found at:

<http://water.state.co.us/SurfaceWater/Compacts/RepublicanRiver/Pages/RepublicanRiverHome.aspx>

Second, I promulgated new rules in the Arkansas River basin titled Irrigation Improvement Rules. The Irrigation Improvement Rules are designed to allow improvements to the efficiency of irrigation systems in the Arkansas River Basin while ensuring compliance with the Arkansas River Compact. I have determined that certain improvements to surface water irrigation systems, such as sprinklers and drip systems that replace flood and furrow irrigation, or canal-lining that reduces seepage, have the potential to materially deplete the usable waters of the Arkansas River in violation of the Compact. The Irrigation Improvement Rules optimize use of the waters of the Arkansas River by allowing such improvements in a manner consistent with the terms of the Compact. I submitted the Rules to the Water Court on September 30, 2009. The Water Court approved the rules on October 25, 2010. The effective date of the rules was January 1, 2011. Additional information regarding the rules can be found at:

<http://water.state.co.us/SurfaceWater/RulemakingAndAdvising/ArkRiverAC/Pages/ArkSWIrrigImpRules.aspx>