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Roundtables Seek Public Input about Regional Water Planning

LOVELAND –You are invited to learn more about regional planning efforts ongoing in the South Platte Basin to address projected long-term water supply shortfalls. The South Platte Basin and Metro Roundtables encourage all interested persons to join their regularly scheduled meetings from January through March 2015, for special informational and input sessions on their joint regional water planning effort known as the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan (BIP). Upcoming meetings in January 2015 are scheduled in Loveland and Aurora; for specific dates, times and locations, see below.

The South Platte Basin and Metro Roundtables are composed of diverse volunteers representing agricultural, municipal, industrial, governmental, environmental and recreational interests. They were created by the State Legislature in 2005, along with seven other roundtables representing each of Colorado’s river basins. They are tasked with determining how to meet the State's projected near- and long-term water needs.

At a local level, the Roundtables are developing Basin Implementation Plans outlining how to best address predicted water needs for all uses. Draft BIPs were released in July 2014, and final BIPs are due in April 2015. The BIPs discuss how much water is needed for the region’s future, and how to meet the gap between demand and supply. Members of the South Platte Basin and Metro Roundtables have dedicated countless hours over the last decade to finding solutions that are pragmatic, balanced, and consistent with Colorado law and property rights. However, there is still much work that needs to be done to provide for the water needs of the South Platte Basin, including the Denver Metro area, and the State as a whole.

Colorado’s nine roundtables are currently completing BIPs that will contribute to the formation of Colorado’s Water Plan. A first draft of the Water Plan was released to the public December 10, 2014. This 419-page document has been under development since May 2013, following an executive order by Gov. John Hickenlooper, who described the draft as “a new way to conduct our water business.” Work on Colorado’s Water Plan will continue through 2015, with a final version due in December 2015.

Bob Streeter, Chair of the Environmental and Recreational Committee for the South Platte Basin Roundtable, emphasized the importance of public input. “The draft South Platte Basin Implementation Plan recognizes the importance of environmental and recreational values to our quality of life and economy. Our committee believes existing environmental and recreational resources can be protected, and in many cases even improved, through cooperative water management. We really need continued citizen input as the Plan is finalized to assure their critical concerns are being recognized in this effort.”

Mark Koleber, Chair of the Metro Roundtable, also encouraged public participation, saying “It’s important for the public to understand our water supply situation, and to provide input on how to best address the challenges that we’ll be facing in the very near future.”

The next South Platte Basin Roundtable meeting is Tuesday January 13, 2015, in the Thomas McKee Building Exhibition Hall A, at The Ranch Events Complex, 5280 Arena Circle, in Loveland. From 4:00-5:00pm, the Roundtable will provide a presentation on the BIP, followed by a public question and answer session. Regular Roundtable business will be discussed from 5:00-8:00pm. These meetings are free and the public may attend either or both of these sessions.

The next Metro Roundtable meeting is Wednesday January 14, 2015 at the MAC 3295 West 72nd Avenue, Westminster, CO. From 4:00-6:00pm, the Roundtable will discuss regular business. From 6:30-7:30pm, the Roundtable will provide a presentation on the BIP, followed by a public question and answer session. These meetings are free and the public may attend either or both of these sessions.

Additional Roundtable meetings will be scheduled in Sterling and another Denver metro location in February 2015.

For more information about the South Platte Basin Implementation Plan, go to www.southplattebasin.com.

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