

1-1-2012

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Joseph Norris, Conference Report, Water and Its Relationship to the Economies of the Headwater Counties: Presented by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments, 15 U. Denv. Water L. Rev. 504 (2012).

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ter-energy nexus topic. Attendees suggested fostering opportunities for water and energy utilities to collaborate as well as developing a common vocabulary and shared modeling methods.

For more information about the Charting New Waters project from the Johnson Foundation, along with a copy of the Colorado Regional Freshwater Forum Report, go to <http://www.johnsonfdn.org/aboutus/chartingnewwaters>.

Joseph Norris

WATER AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE ECONOMIES OF THE
HEADWATER COUNTIES: PRESENTED BY THE NORTHWEST COLORADO
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Jean Townsend, President of Coley/Forrest, Inc., presented the recently completed Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Report ("Council" and "Report"). Coley/Forrest, Inc. prepared the Report to evaluate the unique economic characteristics of the six headwater counties of Council, Routt, Grand, Eagle, Summit, Pitkin, and Gunnison Counties ("Counties"). Townsend explained that the Counties have a unique relationship with the Front Range and Eastern Plains of Colorado when dealing with water. The report addressed the economic consequences of increased demand for water and transmountain diversions on the Counties. Townsend stressed that there is a strong history of cooperative planning and collaboration between West Slope and Front Range interests; however, some of the historic planning strategies may not be as effective in the future. Townsend also emphasized that the report does not take issue with Front Range water users, but highlights the concerns and point of view of the West Slope Counties.

First, Townsend described the effect of tourism on the Counties and Colorado as a whole. She argued that the vast recreational areas are just as valuable a commodity to the Counties as they are to the Front Range. Recreational opportunities attract national and international tourists to all of Colorado. Townsend pointed out that many Front Range economic development initiatives actually use iconic images provided by the recreational areas in the Counties. Industries in the Counties also rely more on having consistent water in the natural stream course than Front Range counties. Internationally known kayaking venues and "Gold Medal" fishing are examples of the key recreational industries that rely on flowing water in the natural stream course. Townsend explained that the Counties rely on water clarity and water volume in their water bodies. Recreation in the Counties comprises forty-eight percent of jobs while statewide the number is only eight percent. Because tourism is a key industry for Colorado, Townsend suggested that preserving a viable recreation industry in the Counties is in the best interest of the entire state.

Next, Townsend discussed the agricultural sector and mineral leasing in the Counties. The Report found that farmed acres in the Counties decreased nine percent from 1929 to 2007 while there was a six percent

increase statewide in the same time period. However, agriculture is part of the historic culture of the Counties. The report referenced a survey conducted by CSU in Gunnison County that found only fifty-four percent of the winter visitors would return if one-quarter of the ranch land was converted to a different use. Townsend argued that much of the economic value of agriculture to the Counties is intrinsic rather than qualitative. Additionally, the future development of energy resources in the Counties will likely depend on water supply. Energy extraction from sources like oil shale, natural gas, coal, and uranium in the Counties will place an additional demand on water, which has the potential to trigger adverse economic effects.

Townsend concluded that the West Slope is already fully compromised from past transmountain diversions. Plans for future diversions without mitigation measures to address the environmental impacts of lower stream flows, degradation of water quality, degradation of water clarity, and compromised aquatic environment will have adverse economic impacts on the entire State, not just the Counties. A full copy of the report prepared by Coley/Forrest, Inc. is located at www.nwccog.org.

Joseph Norris

OPENING SESSION: IN THE BEGINNING

This year's conference theme was to learn from the past. The opening session speakers discussed how weather, population trends, and politics have influenced Colorado's water history. The Year of Water is designed to be a year of action, and how Coloradans plan for the future should be informed by what has been learned from the past.

Transforming Hindsight into Foresight

Patty Limerick of the Center for the American West wrote, *A Ditch in Time: Denver, the West, and Water*, a book on the history of Denver and its relationship with water, which is to be released by Fulcrum Publishing in 2012. In her presentation, Ms. Limerick identified the characteristics of the 1930s-era West that encouraged a spirit of action in water development. She then addressed how Coloradans can learn from the spirit of the 1930s in addressing today's water problems.

Strong political leadership was a defining characteristic of the 1930s. New Deal legislation enabled dynamic water development programs at all levels of government. Despite the financial pressures of Great Depression, citizens expressed widespread enthusiasm for public works projects. During droughts, political leaders were willing to ask citizens to cut back on consumption partially because it was expected that the end of the drought would allow citizens to return to higher consumption. Accordingly, in the 1930s, a reduction in the quantity of water available for consumptive use was not viewed as a reduction in the quality of life, the way it would be viewed today. When looking to the future, Ms. Limerick encouraged Coloradans to learn from the lessons of the 1930s when con-