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## At the Confluence

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## At the Confluence

## AT THE CONFLUENCE

At the confluence of the Poudre and the Platte  
the Union Colony grew into Greeley,  
1870 a sagebrush plain,  
2005 a broad and shaded canopy for citizens  
to grow into being Coloradans.

Some of those who first arrived turned away  
almost immediately. The work unsettling-  
hard, hope it seemed so far away  
and back home where they started out  
many, understandably, returned.

But those who remained dug in.  
They built a failed ditch then trenched-out  
two that were long and sturdy enough to bring home  
the life-sustaining water for the harvest  
and the table, and others came.

They grew laws, too, for settling disputes  
between neighbors,  
1874 when the Poudre dried up  
they walked up-river searching for the cause,  
more settlers at Camp Collins had intercepted all the flow.

Who would prevail? Those who might leapfrog  
go to a higher station on the stream  
although but later arrived,  
or those who planned and built  
in reliance on the earlier furnishing work?

Prior appropriation Colorado's 1876 Constitution,  
"The Colorado Doctrine" its Westwide moniker,  
first in time/first in right became the measure of effort  
and vision startled to reality by recurring scarcity,  
and so surviving in the arid lands

Puts men and women to the test of securing community.  
Smart conservation an enduring precept,  
also engendered by experience,  
took to the hills for building reservoirs to store the  
renewable treasure in time of plenty for the time of want,

Use only what you need, beneficial use, no waste.  
How like Joseph and the Pharaoh prayers and action  
must, in solution and allegiance, meet to muster the waters,  
faith and charity, for the good of all the people  
government in service to what needs to be done!

The people's representatives assigned to courts the task of decreeing water rights, to State and Division Engineers, Water Commissioners duty to enforce them. Son of Union Colony settlers, Delph Carpenter, pioneered the 1922 Colorado River Compact, eight more, to share high mountain vitality with downstream states.

1954 brought the headwaters of two great oceans together through the Great Divide, C-BT they called it  
C for the source the Colorado River, BT for the Big  
Thompson eastern slope receiving stream,  
Green Mountain Reservoir on the Blue

For the Western Slope. Congressman Ed Taylor saw to that in the 1937 pact making resolution possible once again! Accord is a process for giving your word and preserving what is best in the land and the people. The 1986 Poudre Wild and Scenic River Act guarantees

No more dams in a 75 mile stretch of free-flowing heritage, and now a river greenway/walkway/heron rookery from Greeley to source in Rocky Mountain National is a near and growing possibility, the joy of open space always a requisite for becoming a Coloradan.

The customs and values of the people change, adapt, accommodate, shape the water law. Today, Colorado's law of beneficial use includes water for fish, for wildlife, rafting, kayaking, making snow for skiing, celebrating the Heart of the Continent joining the Great Divide Community.