

SOUTHERN DELIVERY SYSTEM | eNews
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Leading State Policy Report States SDS “Key to Meeting Future Water Needs”:

The state’s leading water policy board charged with ensuring sustainable water supplies is projecting a coming water shortfall in the state and has outlined the steps Colorado must take to address it.

The [Colorado Water Conservation Board](#) (CWCB) is recommending that Colorado continue its aggressive conservation programs, optimize the use of existing water rights and develop new supply projects that meet multiple stakeholder needs. The [Southern Delivery System](#) (SDS) and Colorado Springs Utilities’ [1996 Water Resource Plan](#) align perfectly with the board’s recommended actions.

By 2050, Colorado is expected to have between 8.6 million and 10 million residents – nearly twice the number that live here today. Population in the Arkansas River basin, which includes El Paso County, is expected to increase about 78 percent by 2050. El Paso County will account for much of the growth and will remain the largest population center in that basin. As a result, statewide water consumption is expected to double during the next 40 years and require between 600,000 and one million additional acre-feet of water supplies – resulting in a formidable water supply gap. One acre-foot of water supplies about two families of four in Colorado Springs for one year.

The CWCB approved and adopted the [2010 Statewide Water Supply Initiative](#), or SWSI 2010 report findings and recommendations, at its recent board meeting and was distributed widely at the annual Colorado Water Congress meeting in late January. While no single approach will satisfy the growing demand for water, the SDS project and Colorado Springs Utilities’ plans mirror many of SWSI 2010’s recommended actions.

The report points out that SDS is among the “identified projects and processes” that will reduce a projected disparity between supply and demand and that SDS is “key to meeting future water needs.” Colorado Springs Utilities’ projections indicate the City of Colorado Springs would face its own water supply gap, beginning in the 2020 decade.

To meet growing demand, the report tasks policymakers to “actively encourage new projects to address multiple purposes, including municipal, industrial, environmental, recreational, agricultural, risk management, and compact compliance needs.”

SDS will not only satisfy the growing municipal and industrial demand for water, but will also help Colorado Springs manage risks associated with our current aging water supply system – introducing more reliability as our primary water delivery system is approaching 50 years old. Added reliability will become increasingly important as climate variability and other uncertainties limit our water supply. [A severe, prolonged drought is impacting water supplies from the Colorado River basin](#) – the source of 70 percent of Colorado Springs’ drinking water. The river supplies municipal water to 30

million people and irrigates four million acres in seven states. SDS allows us to deliver our existing water rights and provides the opportunity for potential new water supplies from the Arkansas River basin, thereby diversifying both our sources of water supply and delivery systems.

Additionally, SDS provides funds for environmental mitigation on Fountain Creek, supports fisheries through wildlife mitigation, and will provide new recreation opportunities at the new Upper Williams Creek Reservoir, which will be developed as part of the second phase of the project.

The report also recommends dialogue and cooperation among water interests in each basin. By providing water for Colorado Springs, Security, Fountain and Pueblo West, SDS exemplifies intra-basin cooperation. In tandem, the report recommends that water utilities maximize the use of existing water rights. SDS does exactly that, by storing and delivering water we already own and transporting it to where it will be needed most. SDS also provides a mechanism for us to maximize the reuse of the water we transport from the other side of the Continental Divide. This “transmountain” water can be used to extinction.

Finally, the SWSI 2010 report encourages conservation, reuse, and other strategies to reduce water demand. Conservation has been an integral part of Colorado Springs' water management for more than 60 years. We began using meters to conserve water in the 1940s, long before it was standard practice and have a State-approved water conservation plan that includes education, pricing structures, and incentives to promote water conservation. Our 1996 Water Resource Plan identified conservation as one of four essential components for providing safe, reliable water and our award-winning Xeriscape™ Demonstration Garden has served as an educational tool for customers on water-wise landscaping since it was opened in the 1990s. Colorado Springs pioneered the reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation in the 1960s and today utilizes non-potable water for irrigation and power plant cooling. As a result of these efforts, today our community has one of the lowest per capita residential water consumption rates along the Front Range.

Two decades of planning, public process and exhaustive review has allowed our community to develop a new water delivery system – SDS – that aligns with the state's plans for responsible water planning and management now and into the future.

For more information on the Southern Delivery System, visit www.sdswater.org.

Southern Delivery System | eNews is an electronic newsletter designed to keep interested public officials and members of the public up to date on developments associated with the Southern Delivery System. Please forward it to anyone you think would be interested. Contact us at sdsinfo@csu.org to subscribe or unsubscribe.

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For more information, please contact us:

Southern Delivery System
P.O. Box 1103, MC 930
Colorado Springs, CO 80947
719-668-7582
866-719-4SDS (4737) toll free
sdsinfo@csu.org

Media contact: 719-668-3848