How does the future look in 2050?

The Colorado Water Plan uses a scenario planning approach to evaluate a range of possible futures. Water supply and demand are impacted by variables including the severity of climate change, societal values, the pace of economic development, and population growth, among others. The latest statewide projections, from 2019, which will be incorporated into the 2022 water plan update, look at five probable scenarios to estimate the gaps between future water supplies and demands. Under the most stressed future scenario, “Hot Growth,” population has rapidly grown, regulations are lax, and the climate is increasingly hot and dry. Under the least stressed scenario, “Weak Economy,” population growth is low, as are greenhouse gas emissions, so climate change hasn’t accelerated. Based on those assumptions by scenario, the gap between available water supply and water demand is projected to widen by varying degrees for different sectors. Agriculture, which already experiences gaps in available supply (shown in graph as the baseline ag gap), could see gaps increase (shown in graph as the incremental ag gap) by 18 to 43 percent statewide or between 440,000 and more than 1 million acre-feet per year by 2050. The statewide municipal and industrial (M&I) gap is projected to be between 250,000 to 750,000 acre-feet per year.
What are we aiming for?

The 2015 water plan contains eight measurable objectives that are being used to track progress around the state. These goals have dictated how state grant funding is allocated and have helped individuals, basin roundtables, and local and state agencies prioritize projects. It is yet unknown whether these measurable objectives will be used in the 2022 update or if the water plan will be restructured.

**SUPPLY-DEMAND GAP**

**Zero**

municipal and industrial gap closed by 2030

**CONSERVATION**

400,000 acre-feet of municipal and industrial water conserved by 2050

**LAND USE**

75 percent of Coloradans living in communities that incorporate water-saving actions into land use planning by 2025

**AGRICULTURE**

50,000 acre-feet of agricultural water shared through voluntary alternative transfer methods by 2030

**STORAGE**

400,000 acre-feet of additional water storage by 2050

**WATERSHED HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, AND RECREATION**

80 percent of locally prioritized rivers covered with stream management plans and 80 percent of critical watersheds covered with watershed protection plans by 2030

**FUNDING**

$100 million in additional revenue raised annually, starting in 2020, to sustainably fund the implementation of the Colorado Water Plan

**EDUCATION, OUTREACH, AND INNOVATION**

Engage Coloradans statewide on at least five key water challenges that should be addressed by 2030 and and significantly improve the level of public awareness and engagement regarding water issues statewide

**RESOURCES**

Colorado Water Plan: https://bit.ly/3izPNbr
Analysis and Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan: https://bit.ly/3bWqIGx
Engage with the Colorado Water Conservation Board: https://bit.ly/3qH1Jew

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**Colorado Water Plan Timeline**

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<td>First Statewide Water Supply Initiative (SWSI) report released, evaluating future Colorado water demands and planned projects by basin out to 2025</td>
<td>The Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act passes—creating nine Basin Roundtables and the 27-member Interbasin Compact Committee (IBCC)</td>
<td>SWSI 2 released, including technical work on conservation, agricultural transfers and environmental needs</td>
<td>SWSI 2010 released, relying on regional water needs assessments completed by IBCC and Basin Roundtables and extending forecasts to 2050</td>
<td>Gov. John Hickenlooper calls for a Colorado Water Plan</td>
<td>Colorado Water Plan finalized, taking into consideration 30,000 public comments</td>
<td>Technical Update to the Colorado Water Plan provides data to inform the water plan update</td>
<td>Basin Implementation Plan updates complete</td>
<td>Updated Colorado Water Plan</td>
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Need to know

**Acre-foot**

Volumetric measurement of water. One acre-foot of water covers an acre of land at a depth of one foot, and equals 325,851 gallons.

**Alternative Transfer Method (ATM)**

Various water sharing agreements that meet municipal or environmental needs without permanent reductions in irrigated agriculture.

**Basin Roundtable**

Groups active in water planning in each of the state’s eight major river basins, as well as the metro area, and which include water stakeholders representing diverse interests including agricultural, environmental, municipal and more. Roundtables develop local Basin Implementation Plans, which inform the state water plan.

**River Basin**

Land through which a river and its tributaries flow.

**Stream Management Plan (SMP)**

Data-driven river health assessments that help communities understand and prioritize how to protect or enhance environmental and recreational assets.