

From your perspective as a community leader in Northern Colorado, what is your key takeaway from today's session?

- CO water availability based/ on storage, storage is not that much
Climate change is not problematic for base supply, it affects consumption & natural disasters
Water management in CO is all about diversions
Water is so complicated in CO, and its even harder to communicate to the public.
- Today was AMAZING in that it is SOOO interesting to hear from so many different municipalities around us and their successes/challenges. Realizing that all of them know how important water is to our region, they need to work together and being so educated and informed about the resource. It's good to know that so many wise people are leading in their communities and governments. But also very eye opening to see how behind some folks are while others aren't and how they are handling it. Also, how differently each community "handles" water. I felt that I could have sat and listened to each speaker for hours to hear so much more about their specifics and just came away with a better understanding that we truly do all see/handle water differently. Can't tell you how much I "learned" today!
- I have a better appreciation for the actual potential impact of water conservation on our overall water picture in Northern Colorado. I have to say that after the first few sessions hearing about the enormous percentage of our water that is used by agriculture, I wasn't feeling so motivated about the role of water conservation within municipal uses of water. But after today, particularly after hearing from Mariel Miller, I am on board! What I took away specifically is that we need to change public expectations about outdoor water use and about what our managed outdoor spaces (public and private) should look like. Some of this is changing standards of what is beautiful/aesthetically pleasing - what if rather than looking beautiful, a lush green lawn of Kentucky bluegrass is perceived as ostentatious and wasteful? It's just a matter of setting expectations and shifting standards - this can be done through incentives and public education or through regulations. Of course I would love to see our communities voluntarily make these changes but I am not sure that is realistic. It would be great if there was a regional approach with the understanding that different communities in our region have different resources and different realities. It was great to hear from so many towns/cities back to back. It made it easy to recognize common themes/challenges and also what unique challenges they are each addressing. It was also interesting to see what they each highlighted and solutions they are pursuing. The discussion about inequities and challenges that are unique to small, under resourced communities was important. Collaboration was definitely the theme today! It's amazing how much comes down to relationships, connections and collaboration. Pooling resources, strengths and influence makes such a difference. I also took away that sometimes task forces, round tables and collaborative groups have value simply because they provide opportunities for relationship building.
- My key takeaways were how fascinating the other districts work together to create large closed loop systems (or proposals) to help secure water sources long-term.
- The December session was very informative and of-interest to me, specifically because I work for a municipality. Learning about the different challenges, struggles, successes, etc. from the varying municipalities who presented during the December session was interesting to see. As an employee of the City of Greeley, I am used to constantly hearing

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about Greeley's history of water resources and their vast portfolio of water, which some would say is quite excessive (including me), especially compared to smaller and less established municipalities, like Wellington. It's easy to see how Greeley was able to establish their diverse water portfolio over the last century and a half, due to the fact that they were "first in time, first in right" as the first municipality to have water rights. Of course, back when Greeley/Union Colony was establishing as a city, there were less environmental regulations, less population, smaller neighboring jurisdictions, less development, all of which allowed for easy access to the high mountain reservoirs and pipelines to get this water to Greeley. Compared to Wellington who is much younger in age with their water portfolio, it is not hard to see the challenges they are facing as they are trying to sustain growth but also ensure they can supply water to their residents as they grow. The equity of water resources in Northern Colorado is seemingly not fair, but by the definition of "first in time, first in right" that's the only way to go it seems. The infrastructure needed to store and transport these water resources is extremely expensive, so municipalities have to be resourceful and get water where they can to ensure their populations have water in the future. Clearly, as this has been a resounding theme with all of the sessions thus far, municipalities within Northern Colorado will have to collaborate and work together to ensure our populations are supported, make sure water resources are properly planned for, to allow for continued growth within this region.

- The December session once again did not disappoint. I particularly found the session, Leadership Challenge Lisa Darling, Executive Director, South Metro Water Supply Authority, to be most thought provoking to me as I think about how utilize the water resources that we to full benefit, multiple times.
- I am pretty amazed at the way the municipalities have been forced to develop their own water strategies and how the timing of growth has made this much more challenging for some of the emerging markets. You have a City like Windsor, who barely has any water capacity of it's own, and then you have a city like Greeley, who has what seems to some of these communities as endless amount of resources. I was also interested to see some of the "anger" regarding Greeley's conservation efforts and continued water purchases.
- Both the WISE Compact and the concept of the SPROWG collaboration are awesome examples of collaboration in the water space as it applies to municipalities. Wellington is going to (and already does, to a point) have major water issues - how can we as a region work together to avoid these types of negative impacts on our communities?
Collaboration is crucial!
NISP is a bigger undertaking than I realized - I hope we get to dive a bit deeper on NISP in a future session.
- As a community leader in Northern Colorado, what resonated with me most from December's session was Lisa Darling's presentation. Her love for her work and excitement for water really stuck with me. She shares her knowledge in a way that makes it, not only exciting, but easy to understand.
- Lisa's history lesson of Aurora's water planning and project were interesting – a very innovative way to get water to the larger urban populations. I REALLY don't like the concept of buy-and-dry though. I think Lisa made a comment about how Aurora simply purchased water rights from eastern plains lands that were otherwise fallow and unproductive. I TOTALLY disagree with this and I think she painted a picture that is full of

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misinformation. Just like the Greeley area (which I read about in Confluence) and many other places in Colorado, the eastern plains counties of the Arkansas River were formed around the agricultural industry. Of course, it was hard going to be a farmer in SE CO. But without any water rights to those farms or lands there, they have no chance to make any type of industry work. Therefore, their populations will always remain small, which is part of the reason why more people move to the Front Range. Those water rights purchases didn't just take away any potential productivity of the land, it took away a way of life in those rural areas. To me, that is not sustainable.

- Having watched the Great Divide and hearing Debbie's side of the Two Forks Dam I found it very interesting to wonder about the implications of removing that project and how Denver had to start looking outside of their normal box of water. Does changing that one event prevent those communities from starting to look at Northern Colorado's water supply?

Seeing the size of the neighboring communities water portfolio based on population and wanting to compare this to my community to ensure we are sustainable in our growth.

- Really appreciated Lisa's presentation, the history and concepts of reusable water. Really like the collaboration and creativity apparent in the loop systems such as WISE and SPROWG.

Agriculture is the largest water user AND the largest contributor to our cycle.

Interesting how each municipality approaches water use/management differently and that they're in competition but also work together in an emergency.

- My key takeaway from this class is that water is an issue for most municipalities and districts, minus Greeley, who started this process long before anyone. Every speaker touched on the subject of either partnerships or regionalism, but at the same time, stated this was hard as the topic is unique to each organization. Nonetheless, partnerships and regionalism need to be explored even deeper as this resource is finite, and without there will be wars, only in the form of paperwork.
- The amount of time, planning and energy that goes into each of the communities plans for water acquisition / storage / usage continues to be something that resonates with me.
- I thought Lisa Darling's presentation was most informative. With 20 years at Aurora Water, her historical perspective and presentation of how Colorado's 3rd largest city developed its water was really interesting. After having read Confluence, it was fascinating to hear Lisa describe Aurora's water development and how two communities 50-60 miles apart had such different paths to water development. Aquifers vs. river water; reliance on Denver Water vs. Greeley's development of its own supply; urban development vs. agriculture. Aurora's development of the Prairie treatment plant to reuse water was most interesting and led me wonder how other communities in Colorado could do the same thing. I appreciated learning about SPROWG (South Platte Regional Opportunities Water Group - they need a new brand!). Todd Hanlin talked about Loveland's reservoirs - Great Western, Green Ridge and Glade (is there another Glade Reservoir - I had a question about that). He talked about the importance of Firm Yields. Shane Hale gave us a good perspective from a City Manager versus a Water Resource manager. His description of Windsor's non potable system was as interesting as it is innovative. He also told us that C-BT water is not an option for Windsor to support its growth. I was interested to learn about Windsor's water leases with Loveland and Greeley. Ty Bereskie from Greeley gave us an interesting

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presentation about Greeley Water, especially some of Greeley's conservation efforts. I liked Megan Smith of Wellington and her approach to educating us about how different it is for a small community to develop water resources. Chris Pletcher of FC/Loveland Water gave us a different view of a district vs. a municipality. He spoke about the challenges that a district has with conservation and reduced water use, primarily reduced revenue. All the presenters did a good job and made their topics interesting.

- From your perspective as a community leader in Northern Colorado, what resonated with you from today's session? (What are your key takeaways?) I've been following the Colorado River saga for a few years now and learned from Lisa Darling that CA has the senior water rights. I didn't know that. I thought CA had more senior rights than AZ, but CO also! Wow, how is Becky Mitchell going to navigate around that issue? Also, a key takeaway are the limited resources of water supply that our neighbors (Loveland and Windsor, in particular) have secured. They keep developing but availability of a water is becoming scare and expensive.

What questions do you have after today's session? Any areas you want to explore further?

- How does the commoditization of water play into equity? Is Colorado creating a bunch of Jackson Hole's where yes we'll be great at conservation?
- My HUGE "huh?" moment was hearing that FoCo has NO restrictions on watering of landscape for residential homes??? Like you have got to be kidding me! So that means a homeowner could water their lawn for 10 hours on a 100 degree day and their only "penalty" is a higher water bill? Greeley has been on 3 day water restrictions for YEARS and we found a way to make it work so there was a part of me that felt like ok then this is with the "collaboration piece" needs to come in that we all have to do our part. Also, hearing about Wellington and their troubles with the quick growth/not being able to handle it all and having to "slow" the building, that is basically a "moratorium" , just watered down a bit so then I reference back to FoCo and their "no restrictions" but poor Wellington is in constant state of "panic".....but I think this is where reading our book brings me back to "we must have compassion and collaboration" and not point fingers or point out the "what we think is wrong" but more have some really meaningful discussions on other ways we might be able to help them or overall our region. Seems so simple but we all KNOW it is far from that. So I came away with questions on how do we "help" each other without "hurting" each other in that space. And I would love to hear from all of the entities around us but know time is our biggest restriction so I am grateful for those we heard from today.
- I am curious about something Lisa Darling said during her presentation about the WISE project. I think I heard her say that water can be reused until it gets to a certain point when it becomes unusable. What makes water unusable at some point? And then what happens to it?
- What is the likelihood of NISP getting successful litigation? Are there ways to help reduce the liability and therefore speed up the process/reduce the cost?
- I don't have a ton of questions following the December session, but I am interested to see project updates with NISP, SPROWG, and others and how project partners/jurisdictions will work together to ensure water rights are secured for their respective communities. I think I gained a new perspective on how challenging these sorts of projects really are and how important they are to ensure they happen in the most environmentally-friendly and equitable way.
- No questions
- At what point are the municipalities "speculating" on their water purchases and inflating the value of the water rights? Are what point would a Water Court tell Greeley they have enough water? At what point do the Water Courts stop issuing change in use decrees based on projected need and instead force the municipalities to adopt more stringent conservation programs.
- The reality is that water is politicized - how can we exist within this reality and still make change occur?
I'm wondering whether there is additional information about Greeley's plan to "support emerging tech" (in water) - how does that work for them?
Is there any kind of monopoly rule/law about water rights? Could an Amazon-type organization come in and just throw money at current water rights owners until they had all access?

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- After the session, many of my thoughts surrounded the idea of municipalities “sharing” water should that need arise. Many say they would in theory, but in my experience working the water space, that has not seemed the general consensus on that subject – so I’d be interested to hear from others their thoughts.
- Why is it so hard to limit growth along the Front Range? Sometimes in our conversations I have a hard time following the perspectives people are coming from. I am pretty sure we ALL want to make sure we have clean, reliable sources of water for us and future generations. But during our conversations at the beginning of the class, I was doubting this – several people seemed so focused on making sure we had water supplies that would support MORE development, citing that water should not be political. This really stressed me out! As the conversation went on, I think I came to the conclusion that everyone in the room still doesn’t want to see more development. Maybe it’s just that everyone has accepted that development will inevitably happen? Why do we have to accept this though? Who decides and what goes into those decisions. The more people that move here, the more municipalities need to potentially purchase water from more ag land (see #1 above).
- I would like to understand what water can be reused and how exchanges work as they seem to be the backbone to making your water portfolio successful. – Ellen Hilbig
- I’d like to further understand the inequities between communities, large and small, and how that relates to access to water. This is something that seems will grow over time into a larger and larger issue, and the state might need to provide greater oversight and/or guidance.

I would like to better understand the three states agreement.

Interested in the Special District philosophy on conservation when their stated purpose is to sell water. They have a very different approach/goal than a municipal water system like Fort Collins which is trying to decrease use overall. You can see this in their conservation utilization rate of 1-2 percent. How many water districts are there in CO (I think 100?) and what is the overall impact on water used?

- Can municipalities and districts set aside their differences and work together as a region to secure water for all?
- I asked a question at the end of class (about people on septic systems)...so I’ll count that as my “after class” question.
- One question I had is a statement Lisa Darling made about the Colorado River - that using prior appropriation doctrines, California actually has the senior rights on the Colorado River. How does that work in the long term and how does that affect the compact? Are the other states that are part of the compact at a disadvantage in negotiations with California?
- Will those municipalities (Denver, Ft. Collins, Boulder, Greeley) with plenty of water be compelled to provide water for smaller, growing communities who don’t plan well? NISP is essential for these communities. Super proud of and grateful for Greeley’s Water and Sewer board.

Are there any components of what you learned today that are applicable for your current position or profession?

- Water isn't as scarce as we think, we need to use it more efficiently..
- Oh my, I said that I couldn't WAIT to go back to my Realtors and let them know how LUCKY we are to live in Greeley and not have to face some of these issues these others face. I can remember that a number of local builders were very upset with the City of Greeley about 10 years ago about what they felt like were SUPER high development/impact fees and water taps.....Mayor Norton kept going back to the fact that we do this to NOT try to drive builders out but to balance it out so that once joe citizen buys that new house, they will be able to afford their water bill for years to come unlike other cities that maybe keep those fees low on the development end but then their citizens bear the brunt of that in their cost of living.....a way to keep Greeley affordable for its average citizen so I now fully understand the WHY of what they were doing and today just helped me to further understand that piece of it. (and definitely not trying to bad mouth our region, we are lucky to be surrounded by so many tremendous regional partners and think this program with foster that growth and ability to work together) I feel so fortunate to be in this program and cannot tell you how much I appreciate the time it takes to plan it and all of the speakers time that they give to us, it is invaluable!!!!
- Yes - I appreciated hearing from both Loveland and Greeley about their commitment to source water protection and planning preemptively for wildfire. I know FC Utilities is doing quite a bit in this space as well. It was very helpful to me to hear about how each of the cities/towns in Northern Colorado have unique solutions and approaches for sourcing and managing their water supplies. It was great to hear from so many of them at one sitting. I am not sure it has an immediate direct impact on my work but it certainly helps me understand the bigger picture and helps me think about how we might be better allies to communities outside of Greeley, Loveland and Fort Collins which we are already working with.
- Curious why more loop systems aren't in the works – fascinated by the long term thinking of what's next after NISP.
- Definitely. It was great again to be able to gain a better understanding and perspective of how complex and expensive these water resources are to attain, specifically for the smaller and younger municipalities. The content from this session definitely helped me put the reality of the situation in perspective and will help as I talk about these issues both in my job at Greeley but also with my board position with Big Thompson Watershed Coalition as we assess future projects within the watershed and how we can collaborate with other municipalities/jurisdictions/water districts to get these projects completed.
- No response
- We do a lot of work in housing development, and it is important for us to understand the trends that will be coming regarding conservation programs and water costs. The water costs are now north of 10% of a home in some areas, and affordability is continuing to be something that is talked about but not addressed in many communities. I believe that some municipalities have the ability to be creative with their water costs and could use these holdings to encourage certain types of building.

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- Aurora's goal of "not all eggs in one basket" is a great reminder that I can use in my day-to-day at work (for them they're referring to water, but for me this applies to basically everything small business!)

The South Metro goal of managing non-renewable supply can apply to many industries - it is an important thing to remember for all of us that some resources, once depleted, can never be used again.

- From December's session, hearing Ty Bereskie speak was certainly applicable (and important) to my work in Greeley. It always helpful to hear such an involved and intelligent person speak on water issues that directly affect your own work.
- All of this just further supports the fact that MORE people need to be knowledgeable about where their water comes from and that it should not be taken for granted.
- I plan to take a closer look at the presentations provided by other Municipalities and analyze which benchmarks and measures I should be tracking as a municipality in a similar situation

Learning that water storage has a cost benefit analysis and that a newly built reservoir could remain empty for a very long time and how do you equitably transfer that burden to the rate payers when they may not see a benefit for 20 years.

- No response
- Everything spoken about today is a portion of my profession. I work alongside many of those who spoke during this class and, in fact are trying to create a regional approach with some of those entities. I will admit it has not been easy, and much more work still needs to occur.
- Nothing too applicable directly to my current job, but again great speakers. This class continues to expose me to new people, and understand new water concepts and challenges that we must address in Colorado.
- I learned most about the importance of cooperation and collaboration. There truly is only so much water and all entities must try their best to work together to maximize the use of water in our arid climate. It amazes me the innovation and creative thinking and development that happens with water.
- Yes, watching emerging issues of water scarcity/expense among communities in northern CO is worrisome. Also, learning about Ft. Collins' water conservation programs and gray water initiative was interesting, too.