

Southwestern Water Conservation District

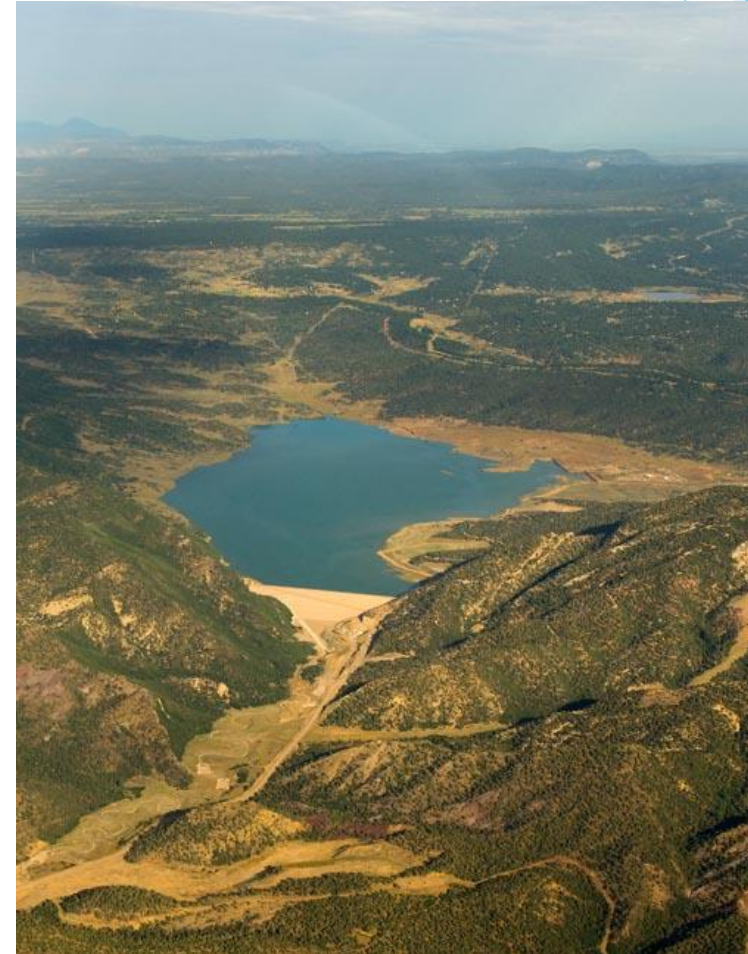
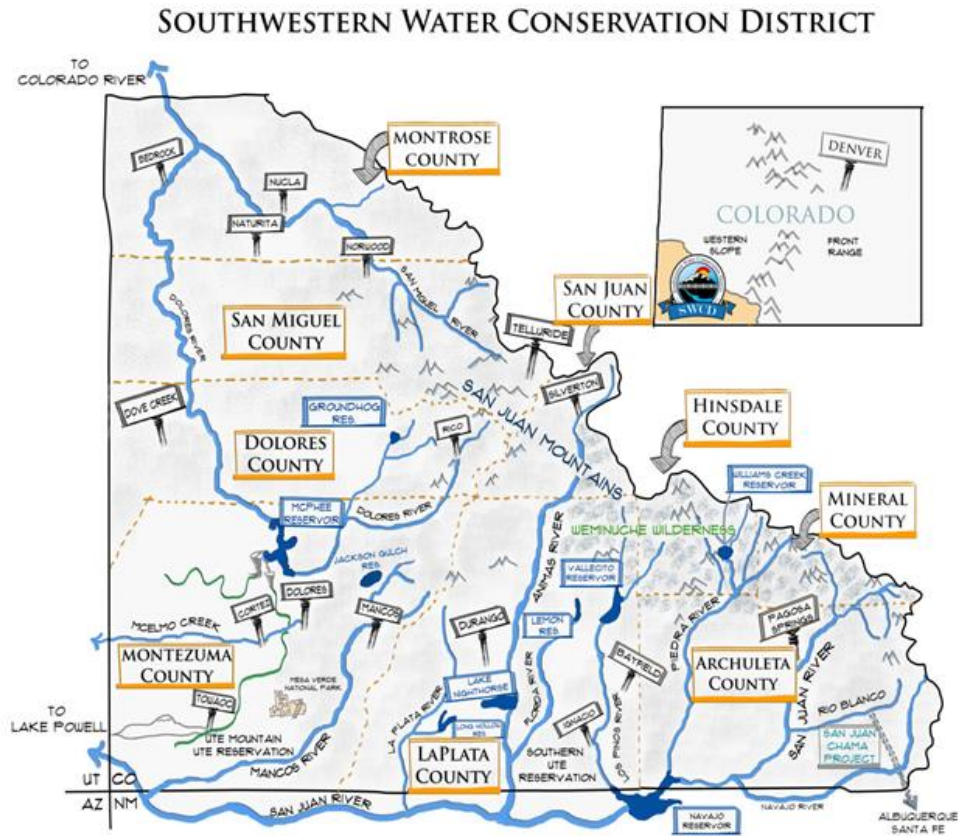
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General Manager

Fort Lewis College
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- ▶ **The Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD) was created on April 16, 1941 by the Colorado General Assembly through House Bill #795 ([Statute 37-47-101](#)).**
- ▶ The District is comprised of all or part of nine counties: Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan, San Miguel, Hinsdale, Mineral, and Montrose.
- ▶ Each Board of County Commissioners appoints a representative to the District Board of Directors, which meets bi-monthly.
- ▶ SWCD's statutory authority is to protect, conserve, use and develop the water resources of the Southwestern basin for the welfare of the District, and safeguard for Colorado all waters of the basin to which the state is entitled.
- ▶ Funded primarily by property taxes.

Includes the San Juan and Dolores River Basins ...



Our history

- ▶ Water Supply Projects (Dolores, ALP)
- ▶ Outreach & Education
 - ▶ Water Information Program (with 30 partners)
 - ▶ Annual water seminar
 - ▶ Children's Water Festival
- ▶ Tribal Engagement
- ▶ Grant Program
- ▶ Interstate matters (Colorado River compacts)
- ▶ Data collection efforts (water quantity and quality)

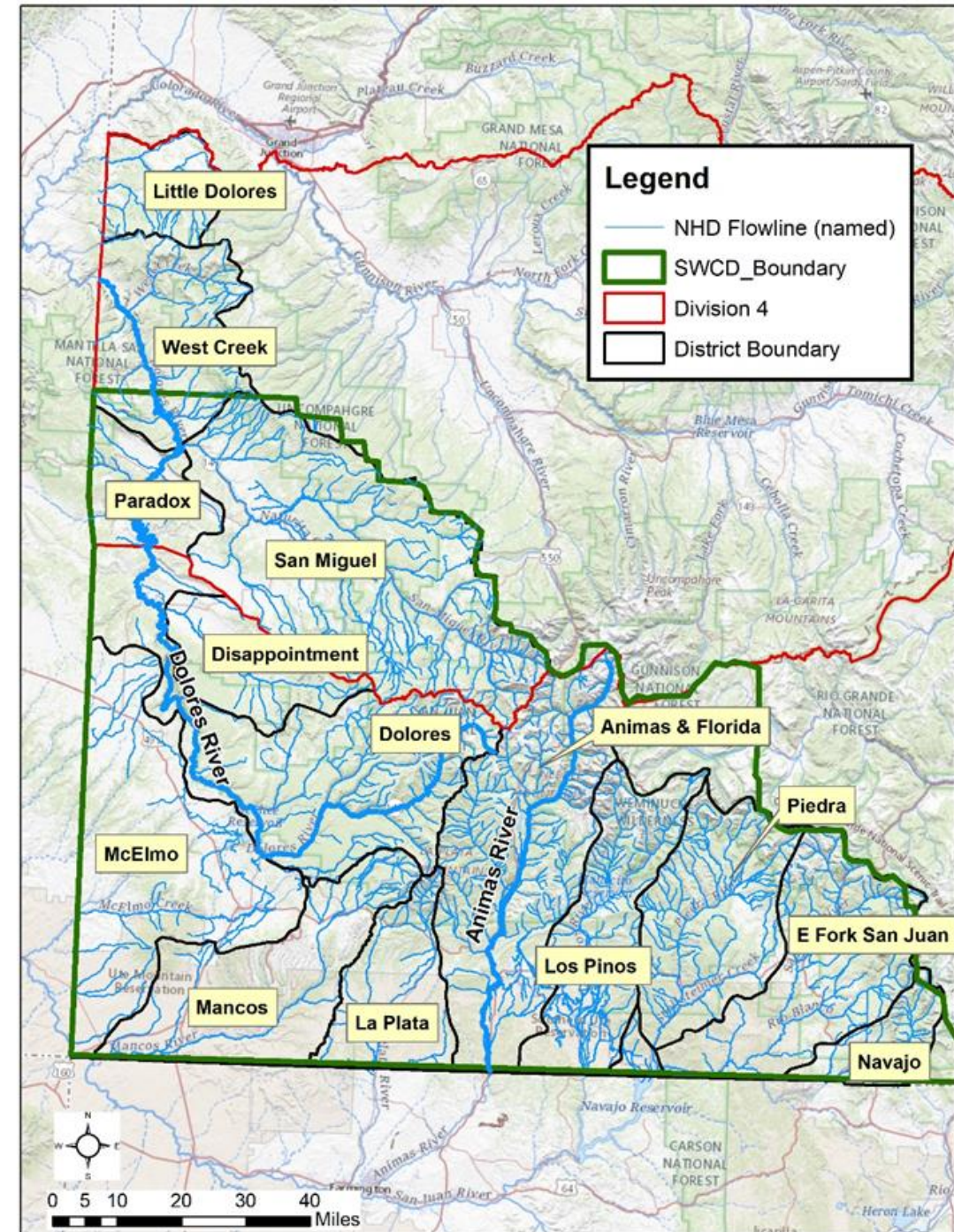
Current issues

- ▶ Declining water supply versus increasing demand.
 - ▶ Need for increased/better data collection (OpenET)
 - ▶ State Engineer measurement rules
- ▶ Basin-wide water resources planning
- ▶ Tribal engagement
- ▶ Aging infrastructure
- ▶ Use & protection of SWCD's existing water rights
- ▶ Protection of all water users in our basin

All of these have implications to the Colorado River compacts and the ongoing issues in the basin

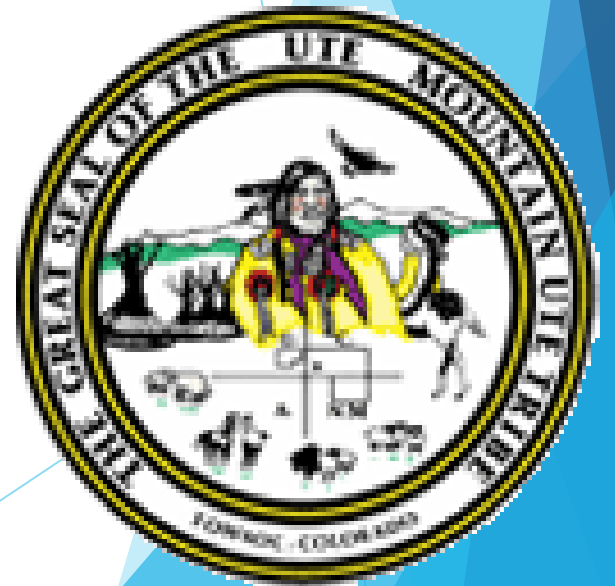
Assessing Risk

- ▶ Value of older (senior) water rights
 - ▶ Priority administration within Colorado
 - ▶ Pre- versus post-compact rights (1922)
- ▶ 2019 Risk Study
 - ▶ Jointly with Colorado River District
 - ▶ Evaluation of priority dates of all water rights on the west slope of Colorado (Colorado River Basin)
- ▶ SWCD may have a higher percentage of junior water rights than other places on the westslope
- ▶ Higher risk to intra-state administration and/or interstate curtailment
- ▶ Need to assess risks within all SWCD sub-basins
- ▶ Develop strategies to protect water users



Tribal Engagement

- ▶ Both the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes have quantified water rights
 - ▶ The quantities and sources of those rights have been identified
 - ▶ Some, but not all, of those rights have been put to beneficial use
 - ▶ The priority date for those rights is “variable”
- ▶ How and when the tribes may decide to utilize the unused portion of those water rights is an important consideration in the intra- and interstate water administration in SW Colorado
- ▶ SWCD believes there are some positive outcomes for all water users in SW Colorado in working together in the San Juan and Dolores River Basins



Interstate Discussions

- ▶ We are working with the State of Colorado, Upper Basin States and all parties in looking for solutions to address the sustainability of the system
- ▶ Voluntary water conservation programs should be implemented in the Upper Basin but should be flexible to allow for the unique qualities and conditions that may exist in any given local area
- ▶ Participation by individuals in such programs must follow the following:
 - ▶ Do no harm to other water users
 - ▶ Ensure that the desired benefits (increased inflows to Lake Powell) must be documented, appropriately accounted for and realized
- ▶ Continue to seek new technologies to reduce water use in a practical manner
- ▶ Recognize the need for regular federal funding to support long-term efforts. Such funding needs to be distributed across the basin and reach local entities that work directly with water users to seek appropriate uses



Thank You !