



**Colorado WaterWise**  
***Colorado Water – Live Like You Love it***  
**Communications Toolkit Plan**  
**Developed by Sigler Communications, Inc.**  
**Updated September 2015**

**Situation Analysis:**

Colorado water providers and others with a role in managing our state’s most valuable natural resource face a serious challenge. In an analysis of research conducted for Colorado WaterWise (CWW), it appears many of the people who currently pay or will be paying for water do not understand its value, how it gets to their tap, and the finite nature of the resource. (See Appendix A for full research analysis.)

Additionally, people ages 18-34 who have lived in Colorado less than 10 years are the least concerned and informed about water quality, availability and infrastructure. Several barriers also were noted to increasing appreciation of water among Coloradans, including the complexity of the issues; low price of water; and the lack of overarching, consistent and compelling messages about water across the state.

Research identified shortfalls in awareness of the following areas:

- **The Life Cycle of Water:** Most residents lack understanding of the life cycle of water, including the long journey it takes from source to treatment plant to tap, as well as the effort and infrastructure required in this elaborate process.
- **The Finite Nature of Water/Projected Shortfalls:** Many residents do not have the high level of awareness required to instill an appropriate sense of urgency and value for the state’s water resources.
- **The True Cost of Water:** Respondents cited the low price of water as one of the greatest barriers to increasing appreciation for the resource.
- **The Varied Uses of Water:** Lack of understanding of multiple water uses, and specifically how much water is used by various users, was noted.

One thing the research did make clear is that people do have an emotional connection to their water. One survey noted that those interviewed value water more than any other service – electricity, Internet, cellphone and cable television.

Simple information about the value of water exists in general, but little of that is specific to Colorado. Information that addresses issues in Colorado is often technical and/or lengthy, and geared to a more informed audience. A number of utilities in Colorado, particularly the larger water providers, have robust water conservation campaigns and messaging, but very few deliver messages comprehensively in the context of the value of water to Coloradans. Colorado does not have a state-wide, consumer-friendly water conservation information campaign such as those in other states: California's [Save our Water](#), Arizona's [Water Use It Wisely](#), and Texas' [Water Smart](#).

The state of Colorado is embarking on its first statewide water plan. One of the plan's recommendations is more public education on the importance of water and water conservation.

Recognizing that educating consumers about the value of water they use and purchase is a critical foundation to having meaningful conversations about some pressing issues related to water, Colorado WaterWise developed a campaign name, logo and preliminary toolkit in 2014. The purpose of the toolkit is to provide members with professionally produced informational tools and cohesive messaging to help educate the public about the importance of water in our state and why it's worth conserving and caring for.

To access the toolkit, logo and other components, an organization must be a member of CWW, or agree to a financial sponsorship and become a project partner. Members and project partners will have access to a password-protected area of the CWW website to download materials. Eventually, all materials could be housed on a campaign website.

**Toolkit Goals:**

To support Colorado WaterWise members' efforts to raise awareness and appreciation about the value of water among their customers and constituents, and to encourage conservation, protection and needed investment in our water systems for continued water delivery.

**Strategy/Target Market:**

Based on the analysis of existing research and given the limited resources available to develop toolkit materials that speak to multiple audiences, Sigler Communications recommended focusing on a defined target audience for the initial toolkit to maximize the budget and ensure messages resonate. Based on research analyzed, the toolkit targets Millennials, the generation born 1980s-2003, for the following reasons:

- 51% of this group thinks Colorado has enough water to meet current needs.
- 39% feel the state has enough water to meet future needs.
- 27% are more concerned about water quality in the home than older residents.
- They are more concerned about water quality of rivers, lakes and streams than availability, which indicates they may be less likely to support future water infrastructure investments or water storage projects.
- They represent a large segment of the population (86 million nationally, which is about 7% larger than baby boomers).
- They comprise the largest group of incoming customers for water utilities.
- They will be the next generation of residents who will likely experience serious water issues, including drought, funding aging water infrastructure, more stringent water conservation measures, higher water rates and lifestyle decisions.
- They tend to be more civic-minded and environmentally conscious.
- They are better educated, and tend to trust government more than their parents or grandparents.
- They will be entering the parenting stage of life and will be valuable water advocates for the next generation of water customers

This audience will greatly benefit from education on our state's water future, the importance of this resource and what it takes to get water to the tap.

## **Name/Slogan: Colorado Water: Live Like You Love It**

### **Calls to Action:**

#### **If you live like you love water, you:**

- **Conserve** it.
- **Care** for it.
- **Commit** to learning about it and make your voice heard.

### **Key messages:**

- Water is scarce and finite so it's critical that people do their part to conserve.
- The water cycle is a massive recycle, so it's important to care about how our lifestyles may impact water quality.
- Millions of people rely upon Colorado water – in addition to Colorado, 18 other states rely upon Colorado water.

- To ensure Colorado and other states have needed water, we must plan accordingly now and live a lifestyle that shows we love the water that originates here.
- Everyone who benefits from Colorado water needs to be a good steward of this resource.

### **Communications Tools:**

The toolkit materials developed are available to Colorado WaterWise members. They will be accessed in a members' only section of the website. Co-branding is available for the fact sheets and ad. Members can add their logo and website address through an editable PDF.

The components of the toolkit include:

- A general overview fact sheet
- Three Colorado "Fourteener" fact sheets on indoor, outdoor conservation and protecting water quality
- A 1:40 minute animated video
- Facebook post copy and photos
- One print ad
- Web banner ad
- PowerPoint slides
- Water cycle infographic
- Water use infographic

### *Suggested Implementation Strategies and Tactics:*

**Fact sheet:** The general fact sheet developed for CWW serves as the toolkit's message platform. Information can be extracted and shared through social media, website, customer communications, media relations and other methods. It also can be used as a mailer to customers, be posted on the CWW member website, distributed at conferences and events.

**Video:** A 1:40 minute animated video provides a visual overview of the water cycle in Colorado and explains to the target audience why it's imperative to live like you love water. The video could be posted on the CWW members' websites, used in presentations, posted as a link in social media posts and housed on the members' YouTube channels. Additionally CW-LLYLI will post the video on a CWW YouTube channel.

**Fourteener Fact Sheets:** Three CW-LLYLI "Fourteener" fact sheets that each contain 14 tips about indoor and outdoor water conservation and water quality protection. The Fourteener theme ties into Colorado Water, highlighting the snow>tap>snow water cycle. Tips can be used as part of customer education, in social media posts and in website content.

**Sample Ads:** A sample ad was created and can be sized for a newspaper ad. Web banner ads are also included to drive traffic back to a members' website.

**PowerPoint Slides:** Five PowerPoint slides can be incorporated into a larger presentation to educate the public on the value of water. Presentations to internal audiences, local civic groups, environmental groups, clubs and other organizations are a common way many CWW members engage with their customers and the local communities they serve.

**Social Media:** A Colorado Water Live Like You Love It Facebook page and Instagram account was developed. Various members of the CWW communications committee supply content. Some of the highest liked posts and share posts include the infographics developed for the campaign.

**Website:** A CW-LLYLI website was developed in 2015 to provide a consumer friendly "one-stop information hub" for conservation and care tips and water resources for consumers. The website provides the toolkit in a digital format and provides sponsorship information. Future phases for this site could feature a RSS feed for water related news, a blog authored by a rotating group of CWW members and other water experts, and the opportunity to sign up for water alerts and water eNewsletters, etc.

## **SUBSEQUENT PHASES OF COLORADO WATER LIVE LIKE YOU LOVE IT**

### **Future Phases of Colorado Water -- Live Like You Love It:**

Colorado is one of the only Western states that does not have a statewide water campaign underway with unifying and consistent messages. [Arizona's Water Use it Wisely campaign](#) is a good example of a very robust and cohesive statewide campaign that has garnered broad support.

It is not contradictory to deliver statewide messages concurrent with individual utilities delivering their own specific water communications. If you look at the tourism industry as an example, the state of Colorado markets the state as a whole, while individuals towns and cities market their unique attributes. The statewide messages talk in general terms, allowing more targeted messaging to occur at the local level. This same exact approach could be used in water communications and in fact is being used by most other large western states. The Colorado Water – Live Like You Love It campaign would emphasize the importance of Colorado water and support the water conservation messaging delivered by individual water providers and other campaign supporters. Colorado's first water plan, now nearing completion, calls for sustained and proactive communication with the public.

To increase broad-scale awareness, the toolkit must evolve into a more sustained campaign. Again, one only has to look at the successful campaigns in the states of Arizona, California and Texas to see the potential Colorado Water – Live Like You Love It

holds. Behavior change takes sustained, consistent effort. The adoption of recycling, smoking cessation campaigns, etc. have taken years to finally change behavior. Getting consumers to change their behavior about water is also a long-term proposition. The following is an outline of the types of activities that could occur in the next three years to carry LLYLI into a statewide campaign.

### **Looking Ahead: 2016**

As CW-LLYLI evolves from a toolkit to a campaign, it will be critical to add content, expand information channels and reach to ultimately increase the number of touch points with the target audience.

### **Funding**

To further this campaign, it is necessary to obtain sponsors to participate in funding the ongoing efforts. CWW has prepared a sponsorship packet based on campaigns in other states that provide various levels for sponsors to participate and be recognized. Preliminary efforts to secure sponsors started in 2015, but CWW should retain a sponsorship/fundraising expert in 2016 to provide direction and more structure to that effort. The fact that all the CWW committee and board members are volunteers and the group lacks sponsorship experience, outside expertise would be very helping in guiding fund raising efforts. The effort would target public and private sponsorship to continue the campaign. Even if sponsors are unable to fund the campaign, local, state and federal entities can support the campaign by endorsing the message.

A statewide campaign is going to take significant resources to do well and be effective. As the research has revealed, if one really wants to move the “public opinion” needle, you have to do mass media advertising.

In researching costs, the Arizona Water Use It Wisely team revealed that campaign cost in excess of \$500,000 to launch and requires at least \$300,000 annually to maintain. That level include very limited advertising.

For a Colorado campaign, it has been suggested that the following potential partners be approached for sponsorship: Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado-based businesses, products/companies that skew the millennial demographic (beer companies, sports drinks, etc.) U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Reclamation, local foundations, Front Range Water Committee, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, state legislature, State Board of Agriculture, Green Industries of Colorado, etc. Eventually, organizations outside Colorado could be brought into the fold, as the message should resonate downstream of the state as well.

### **Messaging Focus:**

Based on research, CWW continues to support educating key stakeholders on the value of Colorado water and the need to conserve and care for water and commit to becoming engaged in the dialogue. The new tools will give existing CWW

members/sponsors additional resources to use. The focus on stormwater for 2016 will provide an opportunity to engage a new groups of campaign users.

The high level of precipitation in Colorado in 2015 has made the water conservation message less urgent and has removed it from the public’s radar. CWW has agreed to partner with the Colorado Stormwater Council (CSC) on pursuing grants from the state basin roundtable groups and CWCB.

For these reasons, it is recommended the 2016 communications efforts be focused on the enhancing and advancing the “Care” component or water quality message of the campaign. The messaging for these communications tools would encompass “where your water comes from”, “where it goes”, and the importance of watershed protection. Based on the level of funding secured, we would develop a public outreach program to match the funding levels through the stormwater council.

**Tactics:**

Following are recommended tactics for 2016 based on the level of funding secured through the Stormwater Council grant. Because the campaign is funded by CWW members and sponsors, fund raising will play a key role in securing sponsors and raising necessary funds to sustain the campaign. CWW should engage a fundraising/sponsorship expert in 2016 to develop a plan and assist with implementation of that plan.

Low Level Funding (under \$50K)	Medium Level Funding (\$50-75K)	Higher Level Funding (\$75 to \$150K)
<p><b>Fact sheets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New general fact sheet on water life cycle, water quality and watershed protection</li> <li>• New Fourteener fact sheet to included 14 new tips</li> </ul> <p><b>Advertising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 print ad templates on water quality</li> </ul> <p><b>Website Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance SEO</li> <li>• Additional web content on water quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All the low level funding tactics</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Fact sheets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Series of 3 water quality fact sheets</li> </ul> <p><b>Advertising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print ad templates; digital media ad templates</li> </ul> <p><b>Website Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance SEO</li> <li>• Enhanced water quality section on website including calendar of events, Facebook alignment for all events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>All medium level tactics</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Advertising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop advertising media buy                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Online advertising</li> <li>○ Cable TV advertising</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Water quality short videos/PSAs</li> </ul> <p><b>Website Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance SEO</li> <li>• Website widget (daily tip on water – Tip Widget for sponsor’s websites)</li> <li>• Add a Blog</li> </ul> <p><b>Stream Team Events:</b></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Add website press room and water quality links</li> </ul> <p><b>Templates/Social Media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14 water quality infographics</li> <li>• 14 social media post templates</li> <li>• Facebook/Twitter content – 3-5 posts per week</li> </ul> <p><b>Media Relations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media relations to support water quality messaging (3 press releases/pitches associated with topical issues)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Templates/Social Media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook/Twitter content – 5-10 posts per week</li> <li>• Facebook advertising</li> <li>• Develop an eNewsletter for monthly distribution (sign up through website/Facebook page)</li> <li>• Digital advertising to drive traffic to website</li> <li>• Animated short video (1-2 minutes) on water quality for the website and eNewsletter</li> </ul> <p><b>Media Relations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit local water quality spokespeople to address various water quality issues in editorials, blogs and news stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate statewide media events in the basins with CSC. Focus would be on river/stream protection and the nexus the public plays in the events.</li> <li>• Events would be staged on rivers/streams</li> <li>• More extensive media relations program to support water quality messaging to include media tour to highlight water quality issues/opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Latino Communications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latino communications campaign to include bi-lingual PSAs, radio advertising and translated fact sheets about water quality</li> </ul>
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**2017 and 2018**

Additional funding will allow the campaign to evolve in 2017 and 2018. If adequate funds are secured, the following recommended tactics would continue to advance the campaign.

2017 Activities	2018 Activities
<p><b>Website Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add calendar of water events of sponsors (existing events that focus on water education)</li> <li>• Facebook page alignment/RSS newsfeed from the Facebook page to the website</li> <li>• Water use calculator form (see <a href="http://wateruseitwisely.com/wp-">http://wateruseitwisely.com/wp-</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Website Updates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire a Pro (information on what types of certification to look for and questions to ask when hiring plumbers, contractors, landscape professionals, etc.)</li> <li>• Page featuring water demonstration gardens links/contacts</li> <li>• Add a shopping cart to website to sell LLYLI logo wear</li> </ul>

<p><a href="content/uploads/2014/12/WUIW-Calculate-Water-Usage.pdf">content/uploads/2014/12/WUIW-Calculate-Water-Usage.pdf</a>)</p>	
<p><b>Additional Infographics/Tools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional information on water rates/cost analysis (Peter Mayer)</li> <li>• Develop generational messaging and infographics to communicate about the cost of water, how water is priced and paid for, and the need to continue investment in water</li> <li>• Create a cost of water fact sheet that discusses how inexpensive water is compared to most other daily consumables (gas, rent, smart phones, etc.). Incorporate new infographics that explain costs comparisons and the factors that go into water costs.</li> <li>• Create 5-10 additional infographics to support the Conserve, Care and Commit messages</li> <li>• Rebrand GreenCo fact sheets on water conservation to expand the campaign’s information on outdoor watering, landscape and conservation tips.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Additional Infographics/Tools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create 5-10 additional infographics to support the Conserve, Care and Commit messages</li> <li>• Create 1 new Fourteener fact sheet for the Conserve category</li> <li>• Create 1 new Fourteener fact sheet for the Commit category (appropriations, need for water projects, infrastructure, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook and Twitter content should continue to be posted 3 to 5 times per week.</li> <li>• The CW-LLYLI Facebook page has about 500 likes.</li> <li>• Facebook advertising should increase with the goal of adding 3,000 like annually.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social Media:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facebook and Twitter content should continue to be posted 3 to 5 times per week.</li> <li>• Continued advertising to build likes and engagement.</li> <li>• Facebook advertising would be increased as well as the use of contents to building page likes to the goal of 10,000 likes by 2018.</li> </ul>
<p><b>eNewsletter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly eNewsletter would continue</li> </ul>	<p><b>eNewsletter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly eNewsletter would continue</li> </ul>
<p><b>Visual Display:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide CWW sponsors who are retailers (Home Depot,</li> </ul>	<p><b>Visual Display:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additionally, tools for creative displays should be</li> </ul>

<p>Lowes, garden centers, etc.) a visual demonstration (gallons of water to support a house daily/annually) and a CW-LLYLI banner that could illustrate the importance of water conservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banners driving traffic to the website in areas where low flow devices are sold, irrigation supplies, Xeric plants, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>created for local festivals and water events.</p>
<p><b>Consumer Events:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore partnering with existing Farm to Table events in the state to encourage the water to food link/message. Farm to table events are growing in popularity and dovetail with LLYLI’s messaging that water is critical for every aspect of our lives.</li> <li>• Explore developing CW-LLYLI events to raise funds for the campaign. Options could include Farm to Table or Water to Mug craft beer concept to reinforce the role water quality plays in the quality of the growing craft brewery business in Colorado.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Publicity Event:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With sponsor support, plan a Colorado Water: Live Like You Love it Cairn Stacking event.</li> <li>• Event would involve stacking rocks inscribed with the “Colorado Water: Live Like You Love It” slogan on top of all 53 Colorado Fourteeners. These Cairns would be an environmentally sound way to symbolize where water starts in Colorado and the importance of caring for and conserving it. It also would give each climbing team a way of promoting their favorite water conservation tips and post photos of their trek on the CW-LLYLI Facebook page.</li> <li>• The climb teams could be comprised of CWW members, customers (Millennial demographic), members of local climbing clubs, local businesses, recreational interests, etc. This would be a highly visible outreach activity for CWW members and their customers/constituents. By placing a focus on the Colorado mountains, it highlights the water cycle in our state.</li> <li>• Schedule a summer weekend where 53 climb teams would summit all 53 Fourteeners the same day and build their Colorado Water: Live Like You Love It Cairns. Videos and photos of the Cairns could be posted on social media channels.</li> <li>• Pitch event to Denver TV and to the local mountain community newspapers like the <i>Telluride Daily Planet</i>, <i>Durango Herald</i>, <i>Vail Daily</i>, <i>Summit Daily News</i>, <i>Steamboat</i></li> </ul>

	<i>Pilot, etc.</i>
<p><b>Speaking Engagements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create targeted programming including hosting water tours with a strong watershed component in conjunction with a local restaurant or brewery as a starting or concluding location could serve as a way to provide these younger customers a firsthand look at a water system or program.</li> <li>• Bringing in speakers that resonate with this audience (high-profile local skiers, hikers, brew masters, urban garden experts, local celebrity chefs, etc.) to keynote on their topic of interest as part of a broader symposium or panel on the value of water would be draw. Timed to be held during World Water Day (March 22), Colorado Day (August 1) or even the start of the spring planting season, when the use of water usually increases.</li> <li>• Distribute the CW-LLYLI fact sheets and give-a-way items as part of these activities.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Media Sponsor/Consumer Advertising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A paid media sponsor(s) should be pursued to help carry the message to a broader audience and provide on-air talent for public service announcements and other educational messaging.</li> <li>• Explore mass media advertising (print, radio, TV, billboards) to heighten awareness and reinforce the messages.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Latino Communications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add conservation messaging to Latino communications campaign to include bi-lingual PSAs, radio advertising and translated fact sheets about water quality.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Latino Communications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional content for Latino communications</li> </ul>

**Measurement:** There are two stages of measurement for the toolkit. CWW will measure success by the number of members/sponsors who utilize/download the campaign. Individual members will need to evaluate effectiveness through their individual communications channels including:

- Web hits for pages listing CW-LLYLI and analytics for the CW-LLYLI website
- Social media engagements (increasing page likes/engagement on CW-LLYLI posts)
- Quality and quantity of news media articles
- Attendance at and audience response to presentations
- Participation in events

- Pre- and post-customer surveys about awareness of the value of water (include value of water questions in consumer surveys)
- eNewsletter subscribers

## Appendix A

### WaterWise Research Summary The Value of Water Campaign Summarized May 7, 2014

#### Information Sources

1. Value of Water Index, Xylem 2012
2. Public Opinions, Attitudes and Awareness Regarding Water in Colorado, Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2013
3. Colorado's Water Future: A Communications Roadmap for Enhancing the Value of Water, GBSM for Colorado Water Conservation Board, 2011
4. Conservation in the West Survey: A Survey of the Attitudes of Voters in Five Western States, 2011
5. Colorado River Water Conservation District Survey, 2009
6. Public Opinions on Water Quality Issues, State of Colorado Water Quality Control Division 2007
7. Value of Water Survey: Americans on the U.S. Water Crisis, ITT 2010
8. Conservation in the West, 2014 Water Report
9. Public Perceptions, Preferences and Values for Water in the West, Colorado State University Colorado State University, 2008
10. A Survey of Denver Latinos and African-Americans, Denver Water, 2010
11. Water Education Survey & Focus Group Report, Colorado Water Education Task Force, 2008
12. GBSM Stakeholder Survey Results

#### Target Audiences

Residents rank water concerns in the following order:

1. **Water quality** – Locally, protecting community drinking water is the issue with the most public support.<sup>10</sup> In Colorado:
  - a. 80% of respondents felt the quality of surface waters where they live were fair, good or excellent. However, 25% indicated that these waters were “good, but deteriorating.”<sup>2</sup>
  - b. One in 5 respondents thought repairs/new infrastructure would improve water quality.<sup>2</sup>

c. 71.5% are moderately to very concerned with water quality in their homes, while 82.7% are concerned about quality of water in rivers/lakes.<sup>2</sup>

2. **Water availability** – Long-term and older Colorado residents are most concerned about water availability in general.<sup>2</sup> Respondents have a moderate to high concern about water supply for:

- a. Farms/ranches – 84.8%<sup>2</sup>
- b. Cities/towns – 83.4%<sup>2</sup>
- c. Fish/wildlife – 5%<sup>2</sup>
- d. 51% say the low level of water in rivers in Colorado is seen as a serious problem.<sup>8</sup>
- e. 46% do not think Colorado has enough water to meet its current needs; 25-30% say more conservation is needed <sup>2</sup>
- f. 68% does not think Colorado has enough water available to meet our needs for the next 40 years<sup>2</sup>
- g. 59% does not think Colorado has enough water to meet future water needs<sup>2</sup>

Most Americans are largely unaware of their water footprint. More than half believe they use 50 gallons or less daily, when it is actually closer to twice that amount.<sup>1</sup>

3. **Aging water infrastructure** – Nearly 75% of Colorado respondents would pay \$10-\$25 more per month for repairs or replacement. Another 19% think repairs/new infrastructure would improve water quality.<sup>2</sup>

### Snapshot of Attitudes

We cannot take a one-size-fits-all approach to communications. Younger people (ages 18-34), who have lived in Colorado less than 10 years, are the least concerned and informed about water quality, availability and infrastructure. Additionally, ethnic minorities are more concerned about water-related issues than Caucasians.

Demographic	Water Quality	Water Availability	Water Infrastructure
Men		Less convinced about water scarcity and value of water in Denver particularly <sup>11</sup>	
10+ yr. residents	76% are more likely to be paying increased attention to water issues <sup>2</sup>	More concerned about water availability for farms and ranches <sup>2</sup>  49% does not think Colorado has enough water to meet its current needs and 67% believe the state does not have enough water to address future needs <sup>2</sup>	Shared the same concern as shorter-term residents about the condition of infrastructure; ranks third behind availability and quality <sup>2</sup>
Hispanics	More concerned than Caucasian respondents on all water-related	There is much more doubt, particularly among Latino men, as to whether there is a	Infrastructure concern ranked third behind quality and

	<p>issues<sup>2</sup></p> <p>24% said quality of water in home is the most important issue to them<sup>2</sup></p> <p>More likely to drink bottled water as their primary source of drinking water<sup>11</sup></p>	<p>“real danger” we will run out of water, with 48% of Latinos, 45% of Blacks and 62% of Spanish-Only saying this is “definitely” or “probably” true.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>Spanish-only respondents – as well as younger Latinos and Blacks - are less likely to say they take steps to conserve water.<sup>11</sup></p>	<p>availability<sup>2</sup></p> <p>34% think water services are too expensive <sup>2</sup></p>
Caucasians	<p>Less concerned about water quality and water-related issues than Hispanics and other minorities<sup>2</sup></p> <p>18% said quality of water in home is more important<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>More are concerned about amount of water available for Colorado’s farms and ranches<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Infrastructure concern ranked third behind quality and availability<sup>2</sup></p> <p>23% think water services are too expensive <sup>2</sup></p>
African American/other minorities	<p>31% said quality of water in home is the most important issue to them<sup>2</sup></p> <p>More concerned about water issues in general than Caucasians <sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Less likely to conserve</p>	<p>Infrastructure concern ranked third behind quality and availability<sup>2</sup></p> <p>27% think water services are too expensive <sup>2</sup></p>
Young (under 34)	<p>27% are more concerned about water quality in the home than older residents<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Water quality in rivers, lakes and streams is more important than availability<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>51% thinks Colorado has enough water to meet current needs and 39% feel state has enough to meet future needs <sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Infrastructure concern ranked third behind quality and availability<sup>2</sup></p>
Older (35+)	<p>More concerned with the amount of water used for energy development than quality of water in homes<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>More concerned with the amount of water available for farms and ranches than quality in homes<sup>2</sup></p> <p>54% does not think Colorado has enough water to meet current needs and 72% does not think the state has enough water to meet future needs <sup>2</sup></p>	<p>Infrastructure concern ranked third behind quality and availability<sup>2</sup></p>

## Awareness

More people in Colorado are paying more attention to water issues today than in the past (72%) and 73% are paying more attention to their own water use than they have in the past.<sup>2</sup> However, respondents said Coloradans continue to be minimally aware of<sup>3</sup>:

- The state's present and future water supply challenges and the reasons behind the projected shortfalls.
- Water runoff and its impact on water quality.
- The many uses of water beyond meeting residential needs.
- The important role of infrastructure improvements in addressing the state's water challenges.

In Colorado, 95 percent of those surveyed thought residents need to know more about the state's water situation and potential future water issues or concerns.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally:

- There is a high level of concern among Coloradans about the fragility of the environment, including having clean water, clean air, natural areas and wildlife.<sup>4</sup>
- The perspectives of Coloradans on various water issues, including future water supply, varies by age, education level, ethnicity, political party affiliation and geographic location.<sup>5</sup>
- There is a low level of awareness among Coloradans about where their water comes from and the varied uses of water within the state.<sup>6</sup>
- Some Coloradans recognize the importance of the state's water resources to our economic prosperity and to them personally.<sup>4</sup>

One survey showed that concern for protecting natural resources was highest among the residents of Colorado's mountain regions and that Front Range residents were less likely to know where their water comes from.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, most organizations believe they would achieve the following as a result of greater water awareness<sup>12</sup>:

- Support for individual organization's projects and goals
  - Investment in infrastructure
  - Conservation
  - Rate increases
- Greater conservation, less water use
- Greater appreciation, more awareness, leading to more informed development of opinions and actions
  - Less extremism
- More balance between water uses
- Statewide cooperation
- More engagement in water issues

The majority of water education efforts in the state have not focused on the appreciation and value of water.<sup>11</sup> With many residents taking water for granted, it would serve us well to demonstrate what life would be like with little to no water (e.g., no water for coffee, shower, meals, laundry, or lawn/garden).

Emotionally connecting residents to that loss would help them realize the value of water firsthand. A campaign about the water cycle or what it takes to get water from snowflake to tap would be informative, but less likely to change the appreciation for water.

## Value of Water

A 2010 national *Value of Water Survey* by ITT Corporation found that voters value water more than any other service. Electricity and heat were second and third, ahead of Internet, cellphone and cable television. Industrial and agricultural businesses rank it second.<sup>7</sup>

In terms of costs, 2% of Colorado respondents indicated that water was “inexpensive” or “priced about right,” compared to 28% who indicated that water was “too expensive.”<sup>2</sup>

Respondents believe that greater understanding of certain facts would have a significant impact on how Coloradans value water, including<sup>3</sup>:

- Its true cost
- Why conservation alone won't secure our water future
- The link between the tap and the source:
  - How variability in snowpack impacts water supplies
  - The full cycle – the connection between water, skiing, agriculture, economy and the individual user
- The significance of the investment in water infrastructure
  - The supply gap and the potential consequences of shortages
  - The many uses of water and the competition and conflict between users

Additionally, nearly 71% said enhancing Coloradans' appreciation of water is either extremely important or very important to their organization.<sup>12</sup>

## Messaging

Messages about the value of water generally fall into one of four categories: the importance of water to public health, the environment, supporting the economy or the overall quality of life.<sup>3</sup>

There are several barriers and obstacles to increasing the appreciation of the value of water among Coloradans, including<sup>3</sup>:

- The complexity of the issues
- The limited interest and attention span for water issues among the public
- The low price of water
- A lack of overarching, consistent and compelling messages about water across the state; instead, communications efforts are “balkanized” among individual providers and regions

By elevating Coloradans' consciousness about the value and importance of water, they will be more receptive to the pleas from providers to conserve, from the environmental community to protect and from the agricultural community to preserve, thus benefiting the entire state.<sup>3</sup>

We can demonstrate the value of water by showcasing the role it plays in people's lives. Reminding residents of how they depend on water for living, drinking, bathing, cleaning, pets, healing, exercising – and their overall quality of life – is critical to driving appreciation.

Understanding what is at stake without water will ultimately boost awareness, investments and other actions needed to preserve water quality and availability.

### Lessons from others:

1. Explain water issues and impacts in lay terms. Avoid jargon.
2. Toolkits must be customizable and go above and beyond what is typically used.
3. Connecting to people's emotions and values is recommended.
4. Use a variety of channels to deliver messages about water.

Other messaging themes identified include:<sup>3</sup>

- **The Life Cycle of Water:** Help Coloradans understand the life cycle of water, including the long journey it takes from source to tap to treatment plant, as well as the effort and infrastructure required in this elaborate process.
- **The Finite Nature of Water/Projected Shortfalls:** Most residents do not have the level of awareness required to instill an appropriate sense of urgency and value for the state's water resources.
- **The True Cost of Water:** Respondents cited the low price of water as one of the greatest barriers to increasing appreciation for the resource. Messages can help communicate the true cost of water in terms of how much is spent annually on infrastructure, water quality and wastewater treatment.
- **The Varied Uses of Water:** Helping people to understand all of the multiple uses of water – and connect the state's water supply to its economic prosperity could prove to be effective.

Additionally, messages Coloradoans are NOT hearing today that may have a significant impact on how they think about water and their appreciation of its value<sup>12</sup>:

- They get it in chunks – need to understand the full cycle and the full picture
- Need a coordinated message that is simple, clever, meaningful and resonates
- Why conservation alone won't secure our water future
- The link between the tap and the source
  - How the variability in snowpack impacts water supplies
  - The full cycle – the connection between skiing, rafting, other recreation and the tap
  - The connection with a healthy economy
  - The connection with agriculture

### Findings from Water Communications Campaigns

- Comprehensive baseline research in the form of statewide surveys and focus groups is critical to developing highly effective messaging and branding that will produce the desired results.<sup>3</sup>
- Efforts with a strong strategic mass media component, including TV, radio and billboards, were found to be the most effective in moving public opinion.<sup>3</sup>
- Connect to core values (such as family, faith and future generations) among ethnic customer groups in a culturally appropriate way.<sup>11</sup>
- Communication toolkits may be helpful but have limited effectiveness. They need to be customizable and complemented with other tactics. Also, most utilities did not need the basic tools, but something above and beyond.<sup>3</sup>
- Create a comprehensive, yet scalable, campaign that can be implemented as funding becomes available.<sup>3</sup>
- Many Coloradans are unfamiliar with basic water terms, indicating a need to communicate water issues using language that is understandable to the average person.<sup>9</sup>
- Nearly 85% believe an advertising campaign would be most effective when it comes to increasing the public's appreciation of water; 80% believe a grassroots public education program; and 50% believe social media.<sup>12</sup>
- Many respondents named social media and events as effective; printed materials and a website were ranked last in terms of effectiveness.<sup>3</sup>

- Of the various mediums used to communicate with stakeholders, the methods found to be most effective include:<sup>12</sup>
  - Printed materials (bill inserts, newsletters)
  - Web-based (website, e-newsletters, emails, social media)
  - Advertising (noted for its high numbers and consistent message)
  - Events
  - Media
  - Grassroots outreach (noted for its low reach but high effectiveness)
  - Meetings and presentations
  - Educational outreach (meetings, seminars, school programs)
  - Partnerships
  - Commitment from customers – pledge
- The likelihood of organizations deploying the following communication tools/programs is as follows:<sup>12</sup>
  - Organizations would be *highly likely* to use web content about the value and appreciation of water and campaign videos, while they would be *highly unlikely* to use campaign bill inserts
  - Organizations would be *highly likely* to use:
    - Web content about the value and appreciation of water
    - Campaign videos
  - Organizations would be *somewhat likely* to use:
    - Campaign fact sheets
    - Campaign brochures
    - Campaign messaging platform
- Organizations would define the success of campaigns by:<sup>12</sup>
  - Specific percent have heard of campaign and have changed behavior
  - Specific decrease in water demand
  - Specific increase in knowledge of where water comes from
  - Citizens taking action
  - Better success passing water-related legislation
  - Reduced demand for ag to muni transfers
  - Support for WaterSense products and programs
  - A roadmap that stakeholders agree on

### Trusted Information Sources

Statewide, the percentage of Colorado residents who believed the following were trusted sources of information includes:

- Colorado regional water conservancy and water conservation districts (29%)
- Environmental and conservation organizations (18%)
- Colorado state government (15%)
- Local water utility (12%)

DRAFT 9/30/15

- City or county government (9%)
- Federal government (2%)