



Stop RWR-Keep Fishing

Presentation to: Douglas County Commissioners 2/23/2022

Water Based Recreation is Critical to the SLV's Economy

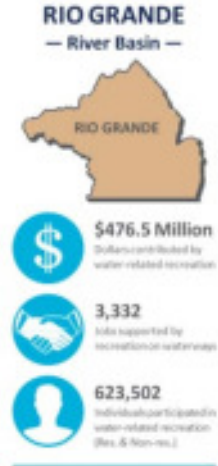


- In 2019 water-based recreation contributed nearly \$500 million in economic output in the Rio Grande
- RWR is offering a one-time payment that amounts to ~ 10% of what recreation provides the economy every year

Business for Water Stewardship Report



ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF Water-related Outdoor Recreation in Colorado



Well Pumping Dries up Streams and Rivers- Period



RWR plans to double confined aquifer pumping in sub-district 4, and it is already unsustainable. This would occur directly adjacent to critical wildlife habitat, threatening Colorado's most robust population of Rio Grande Chub and one of only two remaining aboriginal populations of the state's endangered Rio Grande Sucker

Baca National Wildlife Refuge



- USFWS has expended over \$2 million for riparian protection (elk exclosures)
- \$1.2 million for improved culverts to reduce habitat fragmentation and help upstream fish passage
- \$500k for monitoring unique fish populations on Baca National Wildlife Refuge



Rio Grande cutthroat trout



The RWR scheme threatens Rio Grande cutthroat trout, including a project CPW is implementing to reestablish this rare native trout to Sand Creek, in close proximity to RWRs planned well field

Through Our Eyes- A TU Perspective



RWR wants to pump 31 cfs year-round out of the San Luis Valley

31 cfs amounts to a sizable stream and would provide stream flow equivalent to 6 healthy Rio Grande cutthroat streams (≥ 5 cfs = resilient cutthroat stream)

There are only 36 populations of Rio Grande cutthroat remaining in Colorado and ~75% of them have a baseflow discharge of less than 1 cfs

Solutions- Winter Flow Program



- Water users are teaming up with TU for reservoir releases of water that have multiple benefits including fish habitat.
- This program is designed to work every drop of water as hard as possible to make progress towards sustainable water use and to restore stream flows, aquifers and habitat.
- RWR's proposal offers NO benefit to the streams and rivers and threatens this successful Winter Flow program.

Nowhere like it on Earth



The Baca Wildlife Refuge, Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, and the Rio Grande National forest including the Sangre de Cristo wilderness area all provide incomparable natural habitat and environmental refuges that are responsible for next to none recreational opportunities for all Coloradans and tourists from around the world. These natural treasures are irreplaceable, and any threat is unacceptable. Pulling water from the confined aquifer puts these places at risk

Discussing water rights in Colorado – a popular pastime



There are better ways



- ☞ Don't trade reliance on overtapped Denver Basin groundwater for reliance on overtapped San Luis Valley groundwater
- ☞ RWR faces major legal, political & practical challenges - and alternatives exist
 - South Platte BIP identifies project totaling more than 17,500 AF for Douglas County (Walker Reservoir, rainwater, East Cherry Creek Valley Pipeline projects, cooperative ag transfer projects, Chatfield yield, etc)
 - Bear Creek Lake reallocation – 20K AF of potential storage
 - SPROWG – at least 50K AF potential yield
 - Platte Valley Water Partnership – 13-16K AF

Thank You for Protecting the San Luis Valley's Water



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