

Division 2
Arkansas River Basin

Pond Management Information
January 2021

What is Pond Management?

Division of Water Resources (DWR), Division 2, is beginning a process to review ponds within the Arkansas River Basin to more-accurately manage our water supply and to meet our legal water obligations to Colorado water rights and a downstream state.

Who we are and what we do:

Division of Water Resources, Division 2 Office, Arkansas River Basin. Our job is to administer water rights in Colorado. The use of water is governed by what is known as the “Prior Appropriation System”, meaning that those with the most senior water rights have first use of the river. This system of water allocation works well in a dry, western state like Colorado where water supply is limited. This system of water laws manages who uses how much water, the types of uses allowed, and when those waters can be used.

Why are we doing this?

- Ponds, like any water source in Colorado, must be in compliance with Colorado water law. DWR has identified a number of ponds in our Basin that divert and store water without a water right. Collectively, these ponds can significantly impact water rights and Colorado’s obligations to a downstream state.
- For every acre of pond surface area up to 1 MILLION gallons of water is lost to evaporation each year.
- The Arkansas River Basin is one of the most over-appropriated water basins (we use more water than is naturally supplied) in the state and has experienced more frequent and severe drought conditions. To help meet both our current and future water needs, we need to look at all water uses, like ponds.

What to expect?

Please contact your Water Commissioner to schedule a pond inspection. There are a number of options available including obtaining replacement water for your pond. Our Water Commissioner can go over these options and connect you with organizations, like your local water conservancy district, that work with landowners on pond and water supply issues, if these options are available in your area.

Please contact your Water Commissioner to schedule an appointment.

[Water Commissioner Contacts](#)

For additional information go to:
dwr.colorado.gov/pond-management

