

## Memorandum

**To:** Mayor and Council  
**From:** Tom Baker, Town Administrator  
**Date:** April 16, 2013  
**Re:** Water Discussion

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this item is to follow on two Town Council requests:

1. In a past water workshop Council inquired about the possibility of securing a long-term lease on the Coryell water rights the town secured during the 2012 irrigation season. John W, Tim C, Bob Gordon and I met several times to review our options and discussed a strategy with Mike Sawyer. Mike has prepared a lease document that reflects this thinking for Council review and direction.
2. At last months regular Council meeting, Council requested a discussion of the town's drought policy and possible actions that may be needed if the drought condition continues from last year. To inform this discussion, staff has attached two documents: 2013 Water Supply letter from Mike Sawyer dated March 29<sup>th</sup>; and the Town of New Castle Drought Plan Regulatory Policy 2012.

In preparation for the drought discussion Mike Sawyer identified the following areas for discussion:

- In terms of water restrictions for lawns and gardens – review triggers and reauthorize drought measures;
- Raw water and potable water use the same water rights and conservation measures should apply to both types of water;
- Ensure Lakota understands the Lakota Agreement – Colorado River water is available for their use but must pay pump costs – est. \$13k-\$15k/month;
- Customer education: when implementing drought policy provide a utility bill insert explaining what, why, how and when. This will be good information and it will provide Mindy, Wendy and Melody with an approach to customer complaints when concerns are raised “Thank you for calling, was the billing insert about the drought and the town's drought measures helpful to you?”

Thank you



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March 29, 2013

Tom Baker  
Town Administrator  
Town of New Castle  
P.O. Box 90  
New Castle, CO 81647

Re: **2013 Water Supply**

Dear Tom:

Tom Zancanella provided some information regarding snowpack and current drought conditions. I thought that Town Council would be interested in this information.

As you may know, 2012 was the worst drought in recorded history in western Colorado. By contrast, 2011 was the wettest year in recorded history in western Colorado. Exhibit A to this letter is a graph showing snow water equivalent for the years 2011 – 2013. 2011 is the dark blue line that is at the top of the graph. 2012 is the light blue line which becomes the same as the orange line (minimum snow water equivalent). The green line is 2013. As you will note, the green line is slightly higher than the 2012 light blue line. Additional Spring snowfall will hopefully push the green line closer to the red line (average snow water equivalent). Exhibit B is a series of projections for 2013 water availability in the Colorado River basin based upon various Springtime precipitation and temperature conditions.

Even though we are having a slightly better precipitation year in 2013 than in 2012, current streamflows are substantially below 2012 levels (Exhibit C). The reason is that in 2012 shallow groundwater (which feeds stream flow and springs) was still very robust coming off the 2011 water year. This is compared to 2013 when shallow groundwater levels are suffering from the 2012 drought. Thus, even if western Colorado ends up with close to average snowpack in 2013, water users such as the Town should expect lower than average streamflows throughout the summer.

Data for the Flattops (where New Castle takes its primary water supply) is not robust. Exhibit D shows percentages of average at various SNOTEL measurement sites. The two sites on the Flattops are yellow (70-89 percent of average). As summertime water supply data becomes clearer over the next two months, Tom Zancanella and I will provide updates to the Town. It may be that the Town will need to enact water conservation measures in 2013. I believe that the Town has drafted water conservation measures as a result of last year's water situation. Tim Cain was the staff person in charge of water conservation last year.

KARP NEU HANLON, P.C.

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If you have any questions, please feel free to give me or Tom a call.

Very truly yours,

KARP NEU HANLON, P.C.



Michael J. Sawyer

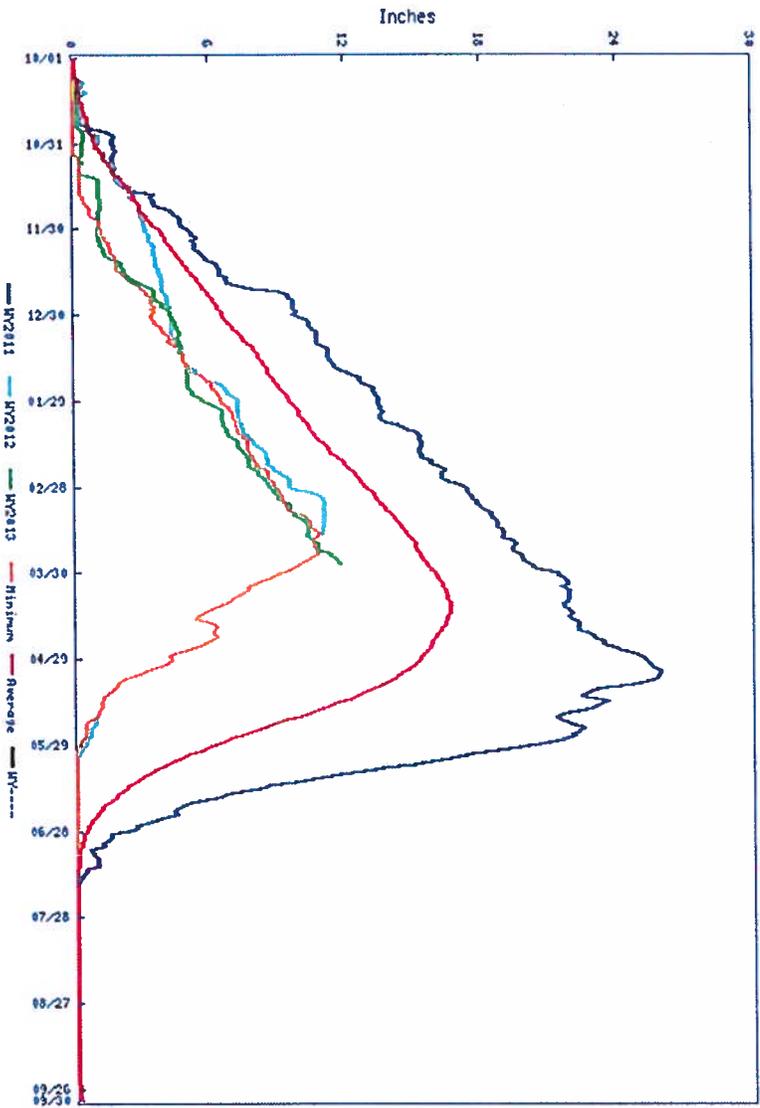
MJS:

Enclosures

cc: Tom Zancanella (w/o enclosures)

# Colorado River Basin Snow Water Equivalent Graph

Colorado River Basin Snow Water Equivalent



EXHIBIT

tabbles

A

Colorado River Basin with Non-Exceedence Projections  
Based on Provisional SNOTEL Data as of Mar 27, 2013

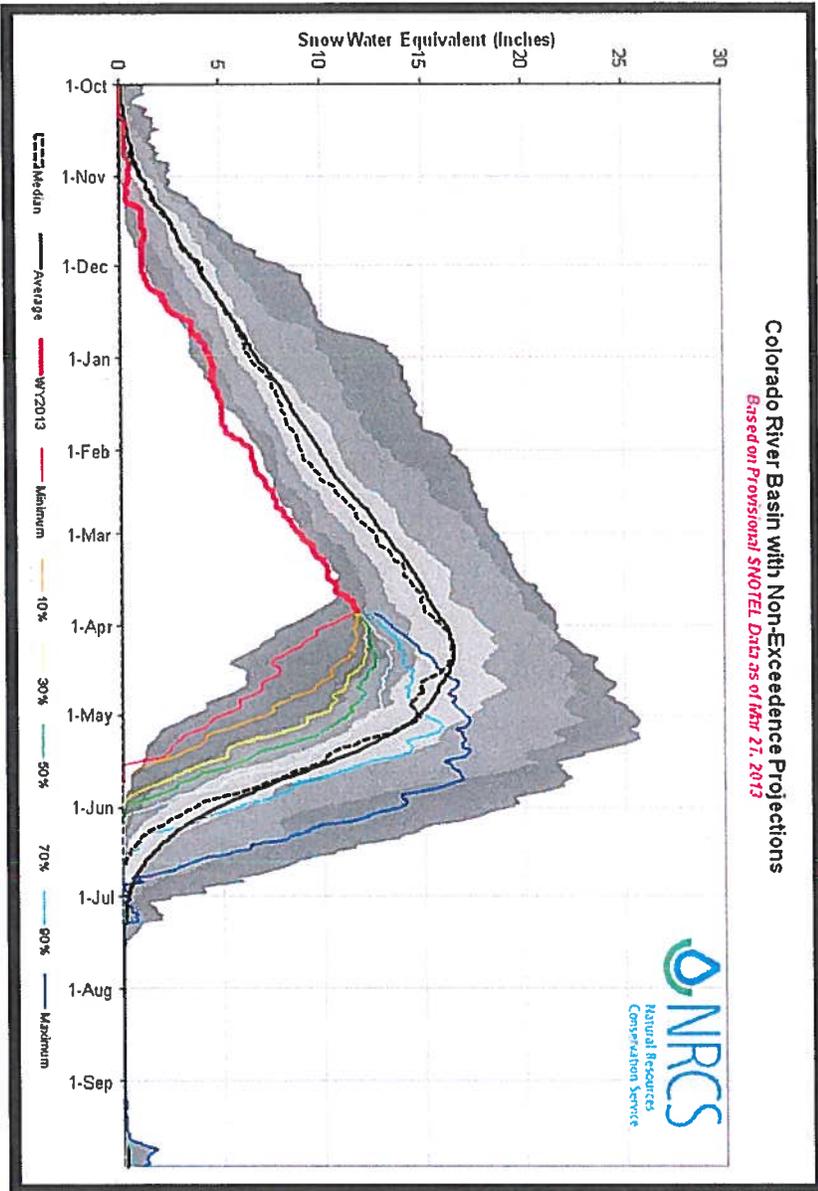
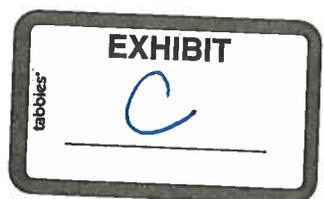
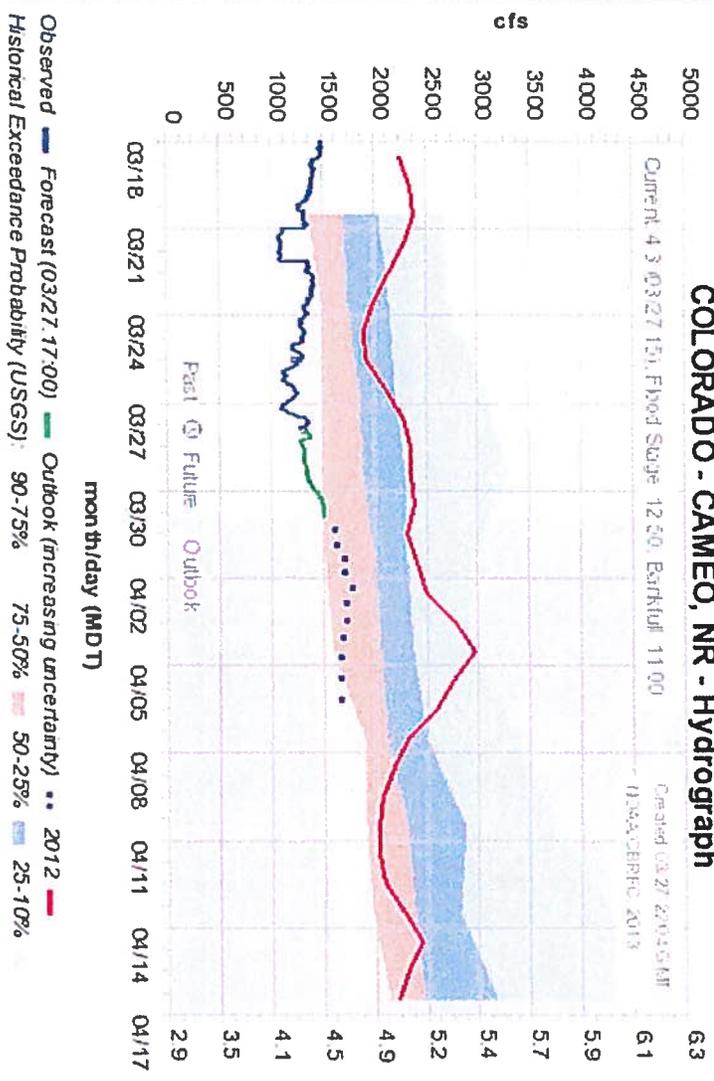


EXHIBIT  
B

# COLORADO - CAMEO, NR (CAMC2)

Forecasts are guidance only. Click here for official warnings and forecasts.  
View station on Conditions Map or Download KML

## Colorado Basin River Forecast Center COLORADO - CAMEO, NR - Hydrograph

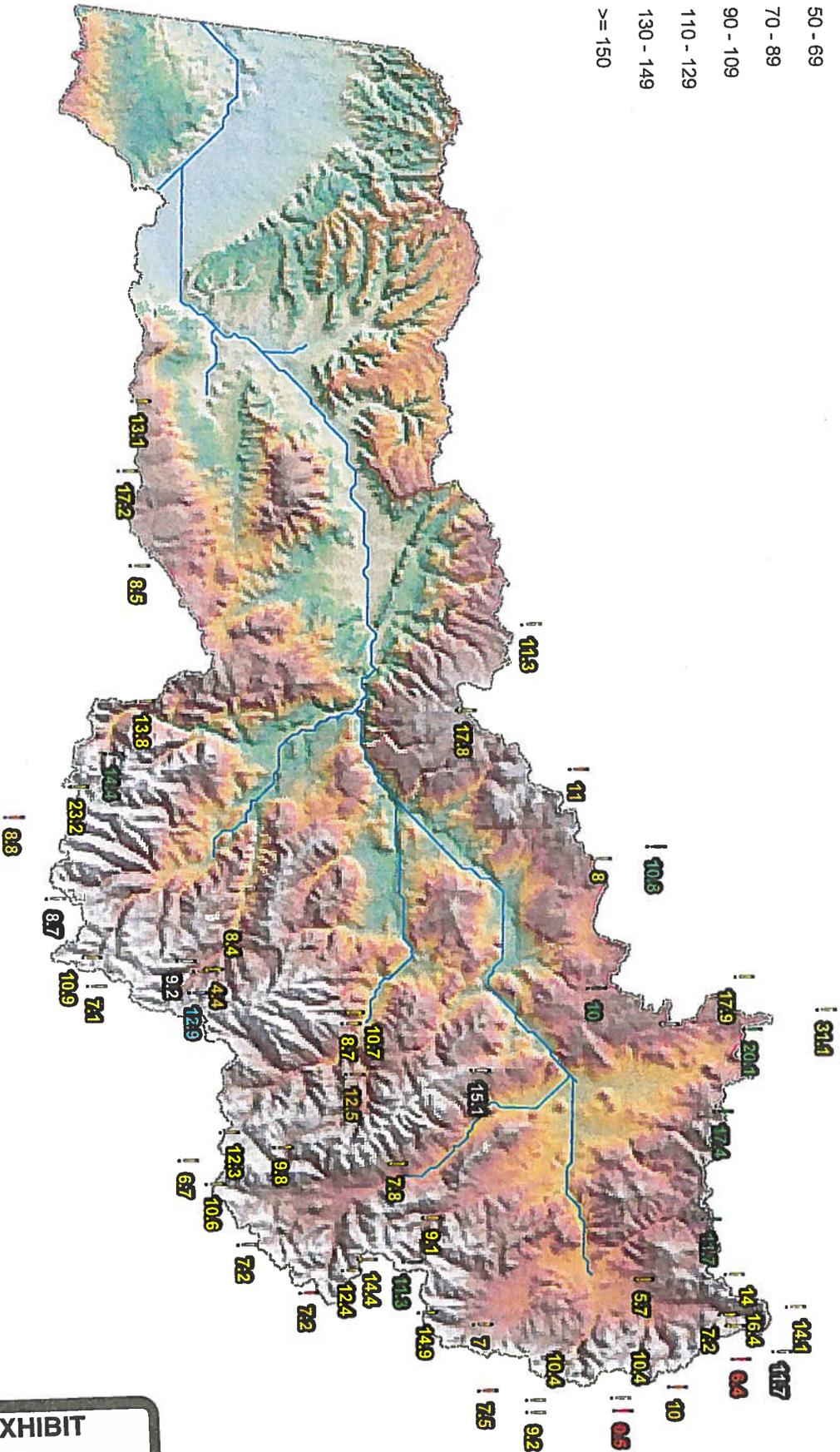


# Colorado River Basin SNOTEL Snow Water Equivalent (inches)

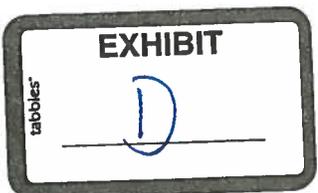
*Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision*

## Percent of Average

- Missing or Invalid Data
- < 50
- 50 - 69
- 70 - 89
- 90 - 109
- 110 - 129
- 130 - 149
- >= 150



Current as of Mar 26, 2013





This email is sent to you to let you know you are not alone in the concern regarding water resource issues in the Colorado River Basin - watch for our periodic updates addressing these challenges.

## Let's face it, delivering bad news isn't easy!

Avoid the 'shoot the messenger' metaphor when it comes to talking to your water customers about drought. The worst time to introduce yourself to your customer is when enacting drought restrictions or during an emergency or when it is time to raise rates. On the other hand, your customers deserve to be informed. For instance, they want to know how to prepare for this summer's pending drought. The best time to develop customer relations is now. Tell them what you're up to, what they can expect. By starting now you can show customers they can be confident in their water provider. But how do you ask?

Diane Johnson, Communications and Public Affairs Manager for Eagle River Water and Sanitation District in the Vail Valley, has managed the message for ERWSD's customers through many water supply challenges. She says the key to delivering tough messages is first developing trust by regularly talking to customers using a variety of communication tools. Be sure you have clear internal leadership and knowledgeable operations staff to ensure customer communications are accurate, strategic and positive. Here's what she had to say.

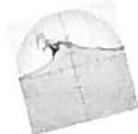
### Start with the basics



Billing stuffers and websites are your first line of defense: your back-up. Use these to give the facts, but don't be fooled, many customers don't read them. They are best used as reference when customers call. "Was the billing insert helpful to you?"

The local newspaper is your community partner. They care and want to share the facts of drought as much as you do. Be a resource, give them useful information and don't be afraid to ask for a full spread or weekly spot to deliver the water supply story as it unfolds.

### Zero-in on what's most effective



Community meetings, for Diane, are the most effective means of delivering messages to customers. HOA/community managers, town councils, special district boards, garden clubs, civic groups, watershed organizations, chamber of commerce and recreation & tourism boards meet regularly and will be impacted when water supplies are low.

Radio ads and interviews are a good time to give tips. Tell people what to do, "Cycle & soak when watering your lawn" or "Water in the evenings."

### Go cyber



Twitter is not just for your teenager anymore. Many local governments and utilities now use this as a tool to give concise, up-to-the-minute information to customers. Managing it is easy and efficient and linking to other community groups adds to your delivery audience.

Email Blasts once established will be sent to people who "opted-in." You know your message is being delivered to people who care.



For further information on Water Conservation, Drought Mitigation Planning and other water resource related issues, contact Angie Fowler at 970.384.9027 / [angief@sgm-inc.com](mailto:angief@sgm-inc.com) or Shannon Ullmann at 970.384.9060 / [shannonu@sgm-inc.com](mailto:shannonu@sgm-inc.com)

## **Town of New Castle Drought Plan Regulatory Policy 2012**

The Town of New Castle and surrounding areas outside the town limits including most of the State of Colorado is experiencing drought conditions of significant concern. The state has experienced the worst snowpack conditions in the last decade, and the forecast is for continuing below-average precipitation in northwest Colorado through July. Snowpacks in many river basins reached their peak 6 weeks ahead of normal, in some cases by March 2<sup>nd</sup>. In addition, everything is lining up for a fire season that could be very volatile this summer. Soil moisture content, which is normally 60% - 70% in mid-May, is currently between 5% and 10%. The Bureau of Land Management has issued a fire ban and it includes land directly and adjacent to New Castle town limits.

For these reasons the Town of New Castle formally adopts a Town Policy which adheres to the following section of the Municipal Code:

*At any time the water available to the town is insufficient to provide unlimited usage to all customers, the town administrator or town council shall be authorized and empowered to ration and limit the usage of water for other than in-house uses for such periods of time and under such rules and regulations as the town administrator or town council shall from time to time adopt. Rationing and limitation of usage shall become effective on the day following the publication in a legal newspaper of general circulation in the town of the regulations governing the rationing and limitation upon such water usage. (Ord. 2002-5 § 4 (part); prior code § 11-16-010*

Notice:

Notice of water use restrictions shall be given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation. In the event of a water supply emergency declared by the Town Administrator, notice of water use restrictions may be given by delivery of a flyer delivered to property served with Town water.

### **Phase 1**

- Triggers:
  - 1) Spion-Kopp call
    - \* Town diverts some of Red Rock ditch water rights to Lakota Canyon Ranch Golf Course at the KSE pump station
    - \* No Colorado River pumping required
  - 2) Reduction in flow to Red Rock ditch
    - \* Colorado River pump station will be turned on

- A. Property owners who use Town water for irrigation (either from the Town's potable system or a raw water irrigation system) are restricted in their use effective on the following day after public notice to irrigating lawns, trees, shrubs and other vegetation planted in the ground to two hours, between the hours of twelve a.m. to ten a.m. and six p.m. to midnight. Irrigation is limited to every other day based on odd and even address numbers. Addresses ending in odd numbers may irrigate on odd days, and addresses ending in even numbers may irrigate on even days.
- B. Exemption Permits. An exemption permit can be issued for the purpose of watering newly installed landscaping, lawns and trees. Water exemption permits are limited to irrigating four hours per day for a period of thirty days in one calendar year. Water usage is subject to water rates then in effect.
- C. Restrictions on Town. The town government shall abide by the watering restrictions and exemptions set forth in this section. The town is restricted in its use of water for street cleaning or emergency purposes except for life-safety situations. The Town may reduce watering parks and open spaces or share Colorado River pump costs with Lakota Canyon Ranch.
- D. Construction Water. Town water is limited in use for construction purposes from a hydrant or otherwise, including but not limited to tire washing, dust suppression, and to clean construction debris from streets. At the discretion of the Public Works Director, a valid permit from the town may be issued for the sale of bulk water.
- E. Recreational Water Use. Water use restrictions shall not apply to children's games or activities that utilize water so long as at least one child is actively participating in the game or activity while the water is being used. Unattended running sprinklers or water toys shall be subject to fines applicable to unauthorized irrigation.

## **Phase II**

- Triggers:
  - 1) Red Rock ditch call
  - 2) Ware and Hinds calls out Town's Coryell ditch rights
    - \* Colorado Pump station costs proportionally shared with Lakota Canyon Ranch
- A. Property owners who use Town water for irrigation (either from the Town's potable system or a raw water irrigation system) are restricted in their use

effective on the following day after public notice to irrigating lawns, trees, shrubs to two times a week for two hours between the hours of twelve a.m. to ten a.m. and six p.m. to midnight.

- B. Exemption Permits.** An exemption permit will not be issued for the purpose of watering newly installed landscaping, lawns and trees unless the applicant can demonstrate to the Town Administrator a need that outweighs the benefit of not allowing for an exemption permit e.g. new commercial business or subdivision that grades raw land that will be subject to noxious weed growth unless mitigated by seeding the property and including landscape such as trees, shrubs, drought tolerant plants, etc.
- C. Restrictions on Town.** The town government shall abide by the watering restrictions and exemptions set forth in this section. The town shall restrict its use of water for street cleaning or emergency purposes except for life-safety situations. The Town shall reduce watering parks and open spaces and share Colorado River pump costs with Lakota Canyon Ranch.
- D. Construction Water.** Town water shall be limited in use for construction purposes from a hydrant or otherwise, including but not limited to tire washing, dust suppression, and to clean construction debris from streets. At the discretion of the Town Administrator, a valid permit from the town may be issued for the sale of bulk water
- E. Recreational Water Use.** Water use restrictions shall not apply to children's games or activities that utilize water so long as at least one child is actively participating in the game or activity while the water is being used. Unattended running sprinklers or water toys shall be subject to fines applicable to unauthorized irrigation.
- F. Washing vehicles, sidewalks and driveways.** It is strongly recommended that residents utilize the commercial businesses in town that provide car washing services and to limit the amount of time it takes to wash your sidewalk and driveway. Car washing facilities utilize conservation measures that will reduce water consumption. Washing of sidewalks and driveways is strongly discouraged.

### **Phase III**

- Triggers:
  - 1) Elk Creek is so low it cannot physically divert water
    - \* Colorado River pump station supports potable water to the Town

- A.** Property owners who use Town water for irrigation (either from the Town's potable system or a raw water irrigation system) are restricted in their use effective on the following day after public notice to irrigating lawns, trees, shrubs and other vegetation planted in the ground to once per week for two hours between the hours of twelve a.m. to ten a.m. and six p.m. to midnight.
- B.** Exemption Permits. An exemption permit will not be issued for the purpose of watering newly installed landscaping, lawns and trees. New commercial and subdivision developments can be issued an exemption permit for the purpose of dust suppression and noxious weed control. The number of hours and days one can use water is determined by the Town Administrator on a case-by-case basis.
- C.** Restrictions on Town. The town government shall abide by the watering restrictions and exemptions set forth in this section. The town shall not use water for street cleaning. Water may be used for emergency purposes such as those situations surrounding life-safety. The Town shall eliminate watering parks and open spaces.
- D.** Construction Water. Town water shall not be used for construction purposes from a hydrant or otherwise, including but not limited to tire washing, dust suppression, and to clean construction debris from streets.
- E.** Recreational Water Use. Voluntary water use restrictions shall apply to children's games or activities that utilize water so long as at least one child is actively participating in the game or activity while the water is being used. Children's games or activities that utilize water shall be restricted to one hour each day. Unattended running sprinklers or water toys shall be subject to fines applicable to unauthorized irrigation.
- F.** Washing vehicles, sidewalks & driveways. Use of personal (VS Commercial car washes) potable and raw water is not allowed to wash vehicles, sidewalks and driveways.