

White River Integrated Water Initiative

A Locally Driven Process

**Callie Hendrickson
Executive Director**

**White River
and
Douglas Creek
Conservation Districts**



Overview

Questions For You

Conservation Districts 101

Why Conservation District Chose to Lead This Effort

Phase I

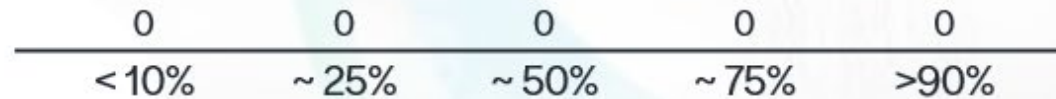
Phase I Results

Phase II (Current)

Takeaways

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 5966 3316

During this conference, how much time have you thought about protecting your drinking water, the environment, and ensuring recreation opportunities?



Together
LIKE NEVER
BEFORE | 2021
SUSTAINING COLORADO
WATERSHEDS CONFERENCE



Go to www.menti.com and use the code 6113 8532

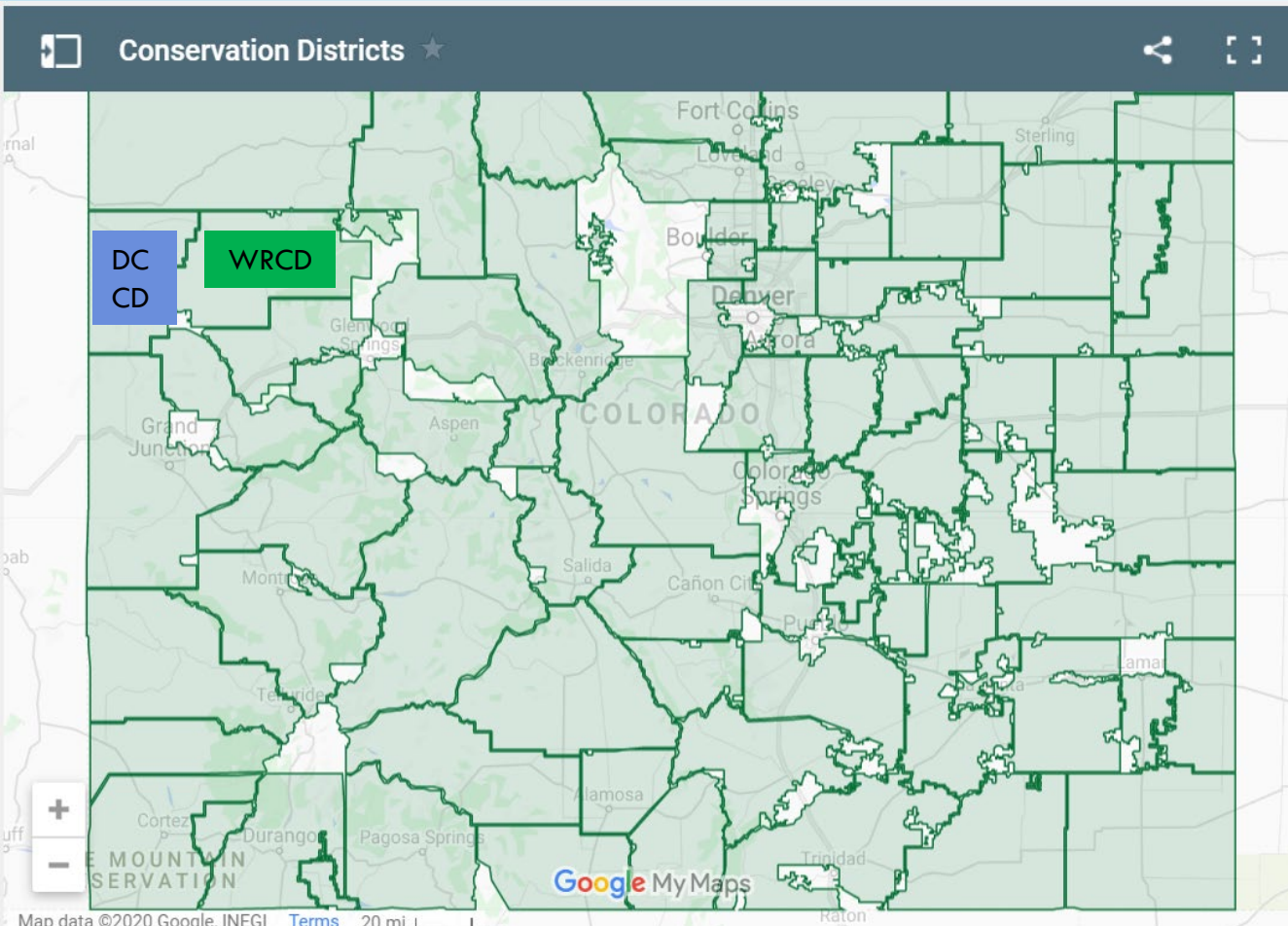
During this conference, how much time have you thought about protecting your food sources and those who produce that food?



- < 10%
- ~ 25%
- ~ 50%
- ~ 75%
- > 90%

Together
LIKE NEVER
BEFORE | 2021
SUSTAINING COLORADO
WATERSHEDS CONFERENCE

Economic Drivers in Rio Blanco County



Food Production (agriculture)

- Primarily livestock and hay production

Energy

- Oil, gas, & coal

Big Game Hunting

- Largest mule deer and elk herds in Colorado

Recreation

- Fishing, UTV, snowmobiling, hiking, sight seeing, etc.

75% public lands

Who Are Those Conservation Districts?

The “Old”
Soil Conservation
Districts

Local Government - (Political Subdivision Of State)

Board Members Are Landowners Elected By Their Peers

Colorado Statute Requires 66% of Board to Be Agriculture Producers

Landowners and Water Right Holders Along With Their Neighbors

Inherently Integrated Into The Local Customs, Cultures, And Economies

Why Conservation Districts (Districts)

State Water Plan Provides Direction

Rumors Of The White River Being A Priority

Desire For Local Control Of Our Own Future

- White River and Douglas Creek Conservation District Boards offer to take the lead
- Community support – Annual Meeting of 120 people strongly support Districts

Agriculture Based and Focused on Natural Resource Conservation

Phase I

Are Local Citizens Interested?

Grant From River Network

District Boards Develop The Planning
Advisory Committee (PAC)

- 1/3 Agriculture
- 1/3 Municipal and Industry (M&I)
- 1/3 Environmental and Recreation

PAC Selects Local Leaders To Interview

Info Used To Begin Public Input Process

Phase I Continues

Public Input:

- 4 public meetings facilitated by a contractor
- Contractor developed a report from public meetings and website comments

PAC Developed the Mission Statement and Primary Goals Based on Report

Divided River Into 3 Segments, Plus Piceance Creek

New Name: White River Integrated Water Initiative (WRIWI)

Data Gap Assessment Was Conducted

Districts Secured a Water Supply Reserve Fund Grant

Mission Statement



Community-based initiative to identify actions promoting a healthy river that ensures a vibrant agricultural community and maintains healthy fisheries while protecting water rights, quantity, and quality with respect for the local customs, cultures, and property rights.

WRIWI Goals

Protect and Preserve Existing Water Rights and Other Beneficial Water Uses

Protect and Enhance Water Quantity and Quality Through Promoting Best Management Practices For:

- **Forest Health**
- **Riparian Health**
- **Rangeland Health**
- **Favorable Conditions Of Streamflow**

Identify Opportunities For Creation or Improvement of Infrastructure to Support Efficient Consumptive and Non-consumptive Uses.

Support The Development and Maintenance of Efficient and Necessary Long-term Storage Solutions That Will Improve, Enhance and Ensure Irrigation, River Health, Water Quantity, Water Quality, and Native and Recreational Fisheries.

Phase II

Tasks

Vet Mission Statement and Goals Through the Community

Develop Objectives by River Segment to Help Reach the Four Goals

Conduct 20 Diversion Structure Assessments

Conduct 20 Riparian Health Assessments

In-depth Data Gap Analysis

Develop Phase III Scope of Work (SOW) Action Items

Staff

Callie Hendrickson

- Program Manager

Liz Chandler

- PAC Coordinator / Facilitator
- Draft Phase III SOW

Kari Brennan

- Assessment Project Coordinator

Dr. Mario Sullivan

- Data Gap Analysis
- Riparian Health Assessment Lead



Progress

To Date

Public Input Sessions – Support for Mission and Goals

Segment Meetings – Developing Objectives

PAC Meetings – Speakers

27 Diversion Assessments Completed

~ 10 Riparian Assessments Completed with Plans to Complete All by Oct. 30th

Next

Continue to Hear From Speakers to Learn About Various Issues Identified Within the Goals

Provide Assessment Reports to Landowners/Water Right Holders

Consider Diversion Structure and Riparian Health Assessment Data to Help Develop SOW

Segment Objectives Finalized and Wrapped Into the SOW

Finalize the SOW to Seek Funding for Phase III

Take-Aways

Locally Led is Critical

Use Local Experts

Trusted Local Entity Must Lead

Ensure Diverse Interests Are at the Table

Evening Meetings