

Colorado Water Bank Work Group



2016 Upper Colorado River Basin Water Forum

Water Bank Work Group:

- Colorado River District
- Southwest River District
- Front Range Water Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Tri-State Generation & Transmission
- Colorado Water Conservation Board

Advisors:

- Bureau of Reclamation
- Agricultural water users and managers
- Southern and Mountain Ute Tribes



How might a “water bank” work?

Water right holders curtail use.



Municipal and other water right holders that need certainty

Upper Basin



Reservoir storage or held in “account” elsewhere



Maintain reservoir levels and releases to meet Compact obligations.

Lower Basin



Curtailment and crisis are averted.

Depletions from the Colorado River Basin

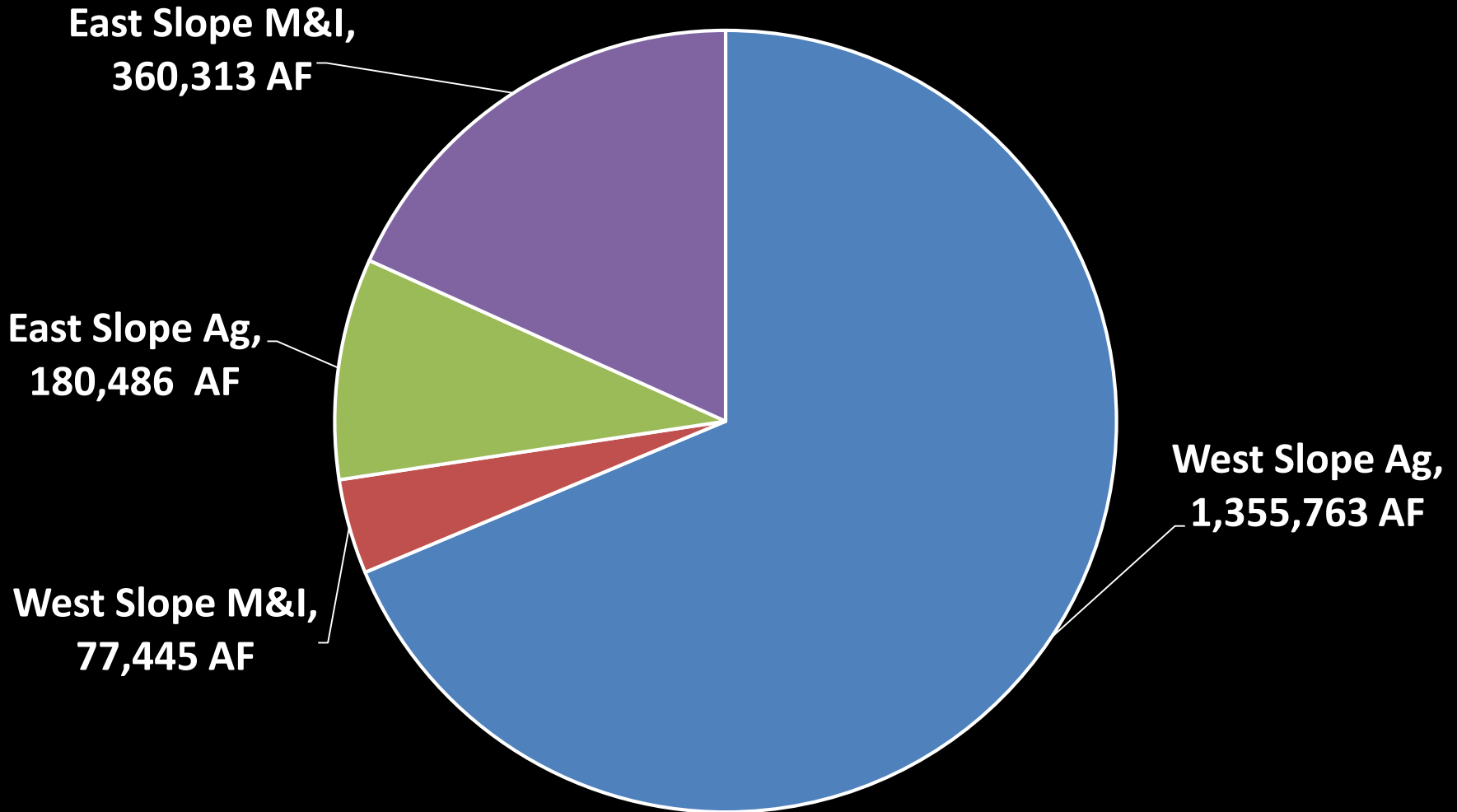
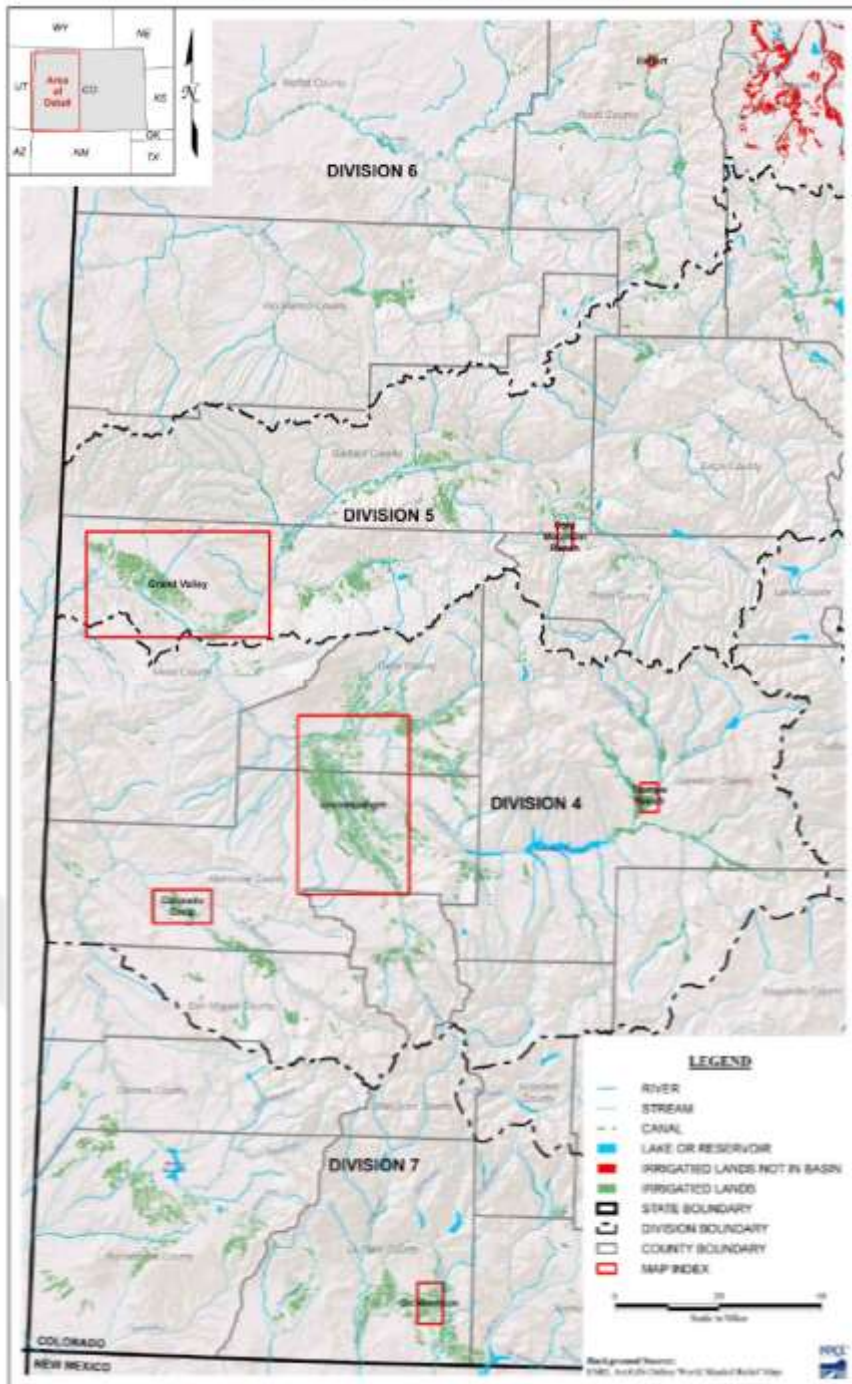


Figure 1 – Location of Best Case Systems



- Ekhart Ditch
- Cold Mountain Ranch
- Grand Valley Water Users Association
- Grand Valley Irrigation Co.
- Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association
- Colorado Cooperative Ditch
- Trampe Ranch
- Doc Morrison Ditch

Water Bank Field Study Sites

Phase IIC Site Locations



Pilot Projects:

How do we make demand management work for us?



- Temporary rotational fallowing with “fallow management”
- Split-season irrigation for grass and alfalfa
- Shorter season and cover crops
- Transition to certified organic
- Improvements to farm/ranch operations or irrigation delivery infrastructure
- Environmental benefits



On Farm



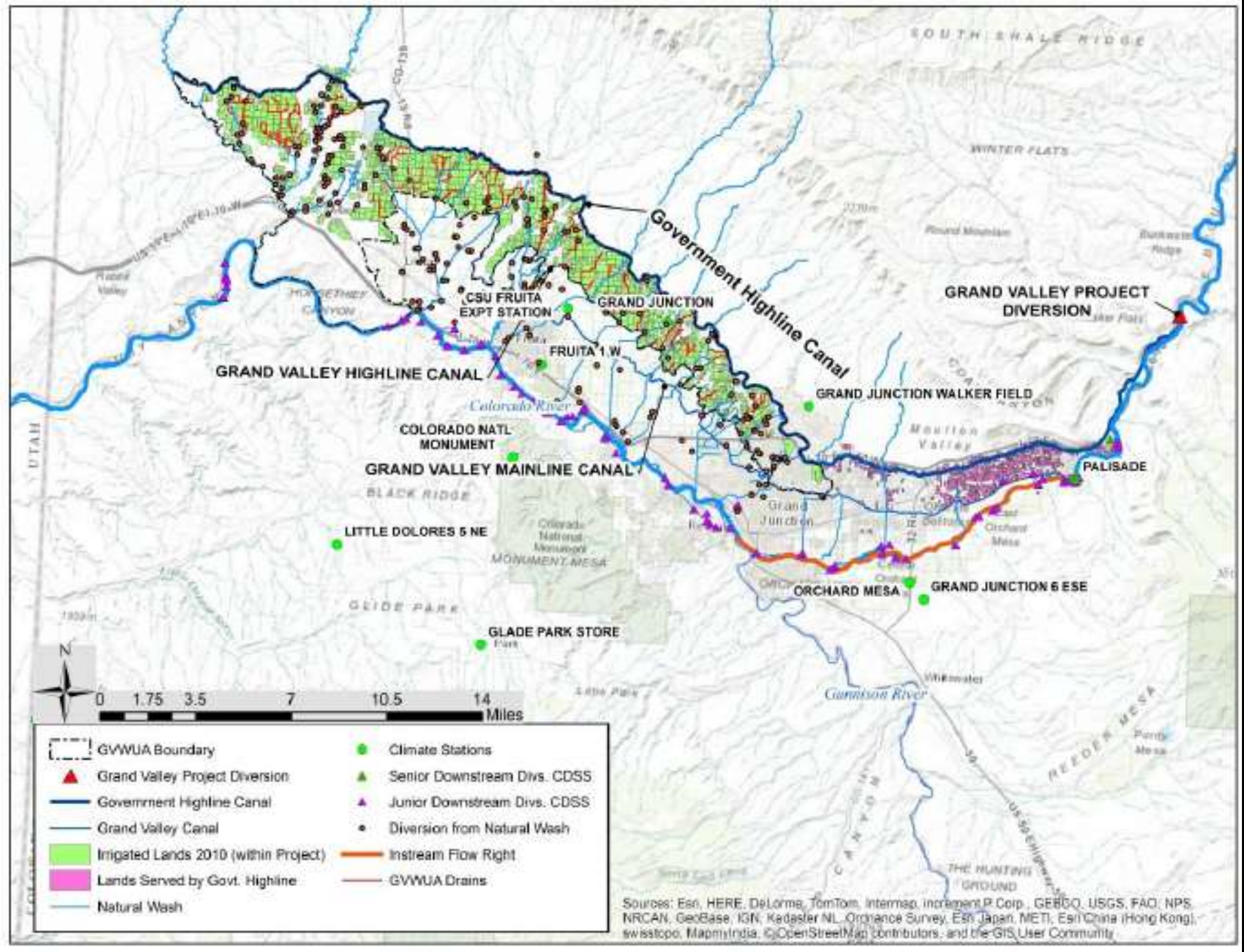
Irrigation District



Community



Basin



Grand Valley Pilot Project: Goals



- Reduce water use
- Involve a range of partners
- Scale-up
- Test the nuts and bolts
- Help finance infrastructure improvements for ongoing benefits
- Address community concerns

Grand Valley Pilot Project: The Numbers

- 2017 Irrigation Season
- 1,250 acres participating
- 10 farmers
- 4 distinct program activities for reducing water use
- 3,200 AF of water savings
- \$1,000,000 for farmer payments, program administration, and infrastructure improvements



Next Steps

- Continue field studies and tests at scale
- Expand to other areas and other water users
- Start discussion on how a formal program is structured and managed

Key Questions

- Who pays?
- Who runs the program?
- What about the law?



Questions?

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