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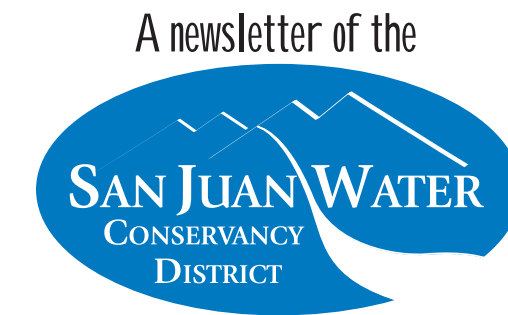
# WATER *Matters*



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# WATER *Matters*

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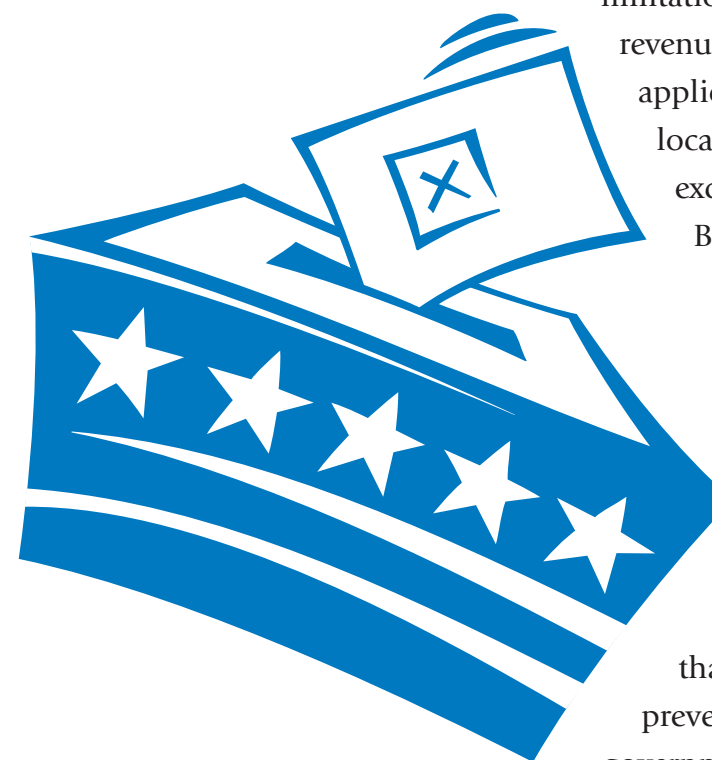


A newsletter of the

## And what is "de-Brucing" ?

### November Ballot Issue to Assist District in Receiving State Grants

The taxpayer bill of rights (TABOR) is the Colorado approved constitutional amendment of 1992 that puts a limitation on taxes, spending, revenue, and debt and applies to all State or any local government, excluding enterprises.



Boiled down, TABOR is a limitation on the amount of revenue a government entity may receive and keep. The problem for

Pagosa Springs is that TABOR may also prevent state and quasi-governmental agencies from accepting state grants. The San

Juan Water Conservancy District is one such entity.

"De-Brucing" is a term that is used to describe a voter approved change allowing a governmental entity to keep and spend revenue in excess of TABOR limitations, including state grants. Most of our local

districts and governmental entities have already "de-Bruced" by receiving voter approval to retain revenue from all sources including state grants.

In November, the District will place on the ballot a "de-Brucing" measure to help the District prepare for the design and building of Dry Gulch Reservoir. **This measure is sought in order to allow the District to pursue grants and retain funds it may not do currently because of the confines of TABOR.** Without "de-Brucing," the District may not be able to obtain state grants to help us with environmental studies, engineering, design costs, and any other permitting and financial requirements.

San Juan Water Conservancy District/  
Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District

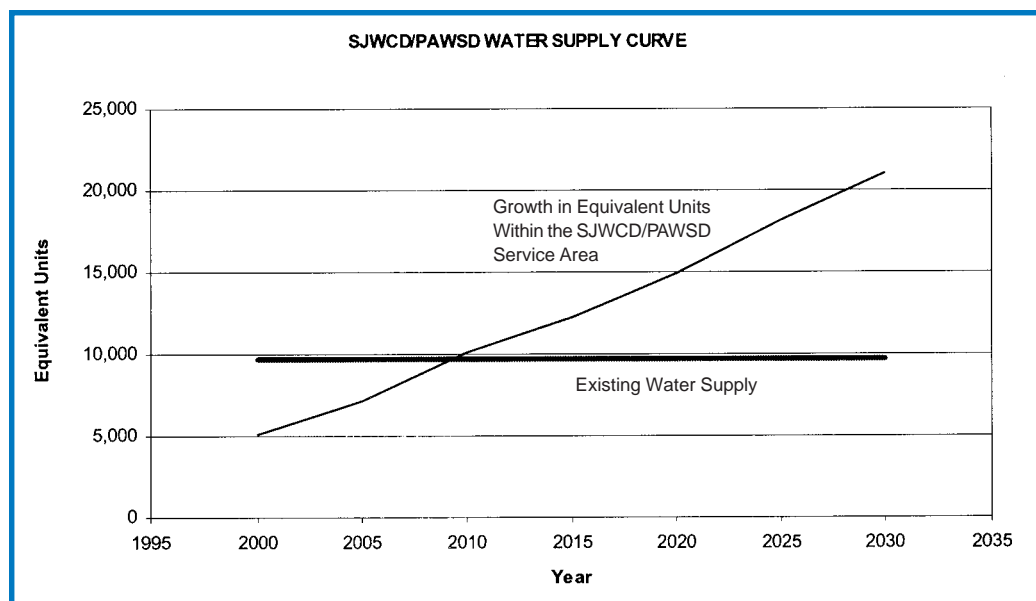
## Water Demand

This graph compares the existing capability to supply water (horizontal line) with the increase in equivalent units<sup>1</sup> (sloping line) within the San Juan Water Conservancy District (SJWCD) and Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District (PAWSD) service areas.

Source: Harris Water Engineering, 2006.

<sup>1</sup> The water usage for all types of facilities (e.g., motels, stores, condos, etc.) are converted to equivalent units (EU), the equivalency of a single family home.

## WATER *Watchers*



The graph shows that between 2009 and 2010, while maintaining the safety supply margin, we need additional water capacity. Both Districts are working together to secure facilities to meet these demands.



*"The purpose of the San Juan Water Conservancy District (SJWCD or District) is to conserve, maximize and utilize the water resources of the San Juan River and its tributaries, and that property within the District will be benefited by this purpose."*

*Another primary function of the SJWCD is to address future water supply needs within the District.*

We value your comments and concerns. Please direct questions and/or suggestions to:  
 SJWCD Board of Directors  
 Post Office Box 4632,  
 Pagosa Springs, CO 81157

## PROJECT *Points*

*“Water storage in reservoirs, designed to capture rapid spring and summer snowpack runoff, is essential to bridge supply shortfalls.”*

### Water Supply Background

Colorado's water supply has its origins high in the Rocky Mountains. The State is referred to as the "Mother of Rivers," because the headwaters of five major rivers flow from their origin on the Continental Divide to areas of lower elevation. Despite the fact that we are home to the "Mother of Rivers," Colorado is considered semi-arid. We receive, on average, only 17 inches of precipitation a year. Much of this precipitation is in the form of snow. According to the USDA Snotel report, the San Juan Mountains normally have

24.8 inches of snow water equivalent on June 6th of every year. However, on June 6, 2006, the San Juan Mountains had only 1.3 inches of snow water equivalent, or six percent of average. This is a serious indicator of water shortage and continued drought.

### Planning for Drought

Drought, defined as a prolonged period of dryness, is a fact of life in the West. Currently, we are in the seventh year of what some believe to be a 30-year drought. Although 2004/2005 was a wet year, recent tree ring studies indicate that even in an extended drought, it is not unusual to have a spike of a couple of wet years. While Coloradans can do little to change the climate, we can anticipate the onset of adverse conditions with planning. Since we need to prepare for extended periods of drought, water storage is critical. Water storage in reservoirs, designed to capture rapid spring and summer snowpack runoff, is essential to bridge supply shortfalls.

### Dry Gulch Reservoir

Locally, the Dry Gulch Reservoir project plays an integral role in the San Juan Water Conservancy District's (SJWCD) long-term plans to meet water demands. The Reservoir will provide a critical safety storage supply to buffer area residents from the effects of severe drought, such

# Planning and Dry Gulch Reservoir

as the one experienced in 2002.

Could the proposed Dry Gulch Reservoir dry up the San Juan River? The answer is a resounding "No." It is not

possible, primarily due to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). The CWCB is the state agency responsible for protecting the state's rivers through its instream flow program. In 1980, the CWCB received an instream flow water right on the San Juan River of 50 cubic feet per second (cfs) from March 1 to August 31 and 30 cfs from September 1 to February 28. Due to the CWCB's instream water flow rights, the SJWCD can not take any water from the river if the flow falls below 50 cfs or 30 cfs, respectively (depending on the time of year).

The water rights that the SJWCD has applied for to use at the Dry Gulch Reservoir site are conditional and subject to the restrictions imposed by the CWCB's instream water flow right. Every six years, due diligence is required to perfect these conditional water rights and ultimately make them absolute. To do so, the SJWCD must demonstrate to the Water Court that they are putting these rights to beneficial use.

The diversion and fill schedules will be determined by the legal availability of the river's supply (generally during the peak run off and non-irrigation season).

As drought and growth continue, more and more demands are put on the use of our water resources. Without the assurance of an adequate water supply, we will all be adversely affected. That is why the SJWCD is working hard to plan for our community water supply needs. This planning includes the development of Dry Gulch Reservoir.

