

Date: April 27, 2023

To: Governance Committee (GC), Water Advisory Committee (WAC) and Executive Director's Office (EDO) of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP)

From: Jon Altenhofen, P.E., Colorado Water User Member, WAC

Memo Subject: Colorado's Annual Report for 2022 for Tamarack 1

## **Colorado's Initial Water Project (Tamarack 1)—Annual Review 2022**

The Colorado Tamarack 1 Project based on the historic study period of 1947-1994 developed a negotiated average annual yield of 10,000 acre-feet of target flow shortage reduction at Grand Island as determined by OPSTUDY analysis. This yield is the result of diversions to managed groundwater recharge sites during times when the river flows are in excess to target flows. The accretions returning to the river later from these recharge diversions and reaching below the Nebraska Stateline when no river calls are credited to Tamarack 1 during times of shortage to target flows. As with the CPFDD (Colorado Plan for Future Depletions) operations, SPWRAP operates and pays electrical costs and maintains dedicated recharge projects (i.e., Tamarack Wildlife Area and Heyborne projects) and pays for Tamarack 1 creditable accretions not used by existing recharge plans. South Platte Water Related Activities Program (SPWRAP) is a non-profit group of mainly municipal Colorado water users collecting assessments (\$1.26 per tap in 2022) to pay for Colorado's water obligations for PRRIP in partnership with the State of Colorado where the State covers other Program costs. For 2007-2022, SPWRAP paid a total of about \$9,100,000 for CPFDD and Tamarack 1 creditable supplies. The Table below shows the Tamarack 1 credits actually developed from all these operations since the start of the PRRIP in January 2007 with an average annual yield available for shortage reduction of 8,255 acre-feet for the years of full operations.

The goal has not yet been reached on average with current hydrology because the flow frequency for excess to targets has been less for the years of PRRIP of 2007 through 2022 as compared to the historic period. December through March are the months of greatest excess and for the historic period of 1947 through 1994, 59% of these months had excess flows above target flows. However, for the first 16 years of the Program for December through March, only 41% of these months had excess flows, thus limiting the amount of water available for Tamarack 1 operations. An estimate of the Tamarack 1 credit achievable below the Nebraska Stateline during times of shortage to target flows if actual flows similar to historic excesses had occurred can be estimated as follows: divide the actual 8,255 ac-ft average in table below by the water availability ratio of 0.695 (=41/59) which results in 11,879 ac-ft.

As Seth Turner of the EDO noted in the Memorandum dated October 22, 2021, titled "PRRIP Water Project Accounting Update", Colorado's annual report tabulates credits for shortage reduction below the Nebraska Stateline; the EDO takes the next step of routing those credits to Grand Island by applying factors derived from the WMC Loss Model. This EDO Memorandum lists an average conveyance factor of 89% and when applied to the 11,879 ac-ft is 10,572 ac-ft of average shortage reduction at Grand Island.

The Program document recognizes the possibility that reductions in actual yield might occur in paragraph IIIC of the Tamarack 1 description in PRRIP Attachment 5 Section 3 which states "...as long as Tamarack 1 is constructed and operated as described herein, the target flow shortage reduction credited to Tamarack 1

individually or to the three initial water projects collectively will not be reduced even if the real time frequency and magnitude of flows in excess to targets at Grand Island causes Tamarack 1 to produce an average annual yield that is less than that projected under historic flow conditions, regardless of the reasons for the change.”

Colorado recognizes that with changing hydrologic conditions, additional capacity is required to meet the Tamarack 1 objectives, and therefore the Tamarack Wildlife Area water right allows the addition of 7 more recharge wells. The drilling of 6 of these wells at a cost of about \$1.2M (paid for by SPWRAP and State of Colorado) was completed in December 2013 but floods in May 2015 damaged these 6 wells and all repairs were not completed until March 2021. SPWRAP has also completed a pipeline south under Interstate 76 to recharge further from the river so more flexibility in when accretions return to the river and recharge began in this new system in December 2017. All 16 recharge wells were pumped at Tamarack Wildlife Area for November 2022 through March 2023 with a total flowrate of 54 cfs from all 16 wells and a monthly electrical bill of \$60,000 to pump all 16 wells. Tamarack 1 project has an overall limit on average annual net diversions (diversions into and seeped from recharge ponds minus accretions back to the river when diversions occurring) of 30,000 ac-feet and for the first 16 years of operations these actual net diversions have annually averaged 19,610 ac-ft, so additional diversion capacity exists. The Table below lists by month the Tamarack 1 credit available for shortage reduction. Also, the far-right column lists the annual net diversion to recharge when excess to target flows by year routed to the Colorado-Nebraska Stateline.

	Tamarack 1 Credits for Shortage Reduction at Stateline; acre-feet (PRRIP start January 2007)												Total	Total Annual Net Diversions	
	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT		Diversions-Accretions at Stateline	
2007			641	587	506	345	0	698	0	0	0	515	3291	10597	
2008	480	0	0	3038	1666	721	0	0	66	274	50	460	6754	14543	
2009	0	1024	932	951	699	680	278	377	345	441	436	430	6593	1457	
2010	0	0	0	2520	1255	1828	861	0	0	0	0	824	7288	13428	
2011	374	0	0	2365	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2739	30753	
2012	0	0	0	2562	3130	2291	100	0	134	109	84	807	9219	10219	
2013	614	0	0	2544	1697	1295	0	0	0	0	452	0	6602	10495	
2014	886	791	0	2707	2108	1870	1443	0	723	724	594	1082	12927	10133	
2015	868	0	0	1951	3608	2554	691	0	0	0	0	1407	11079	15714	
2016	0	0	0	2235	2315	1801	0	0	0	147	0	1906	8404	20091	
2017	0	0	0	2272	1111	2500	462	953	187	0	0	1134	8620	11960	
2018	0	0	0	3385	3174	2893	0	0	190	731	0	1149	11522	14151	
2019	0	0	0	3788	1224	0	0	1226	0	0	0	1229	7466	22634	
2020	0	0	0	2633	2091	0	0	548	0	0	0	1180	6453	24243	
2021	941	1262	0	2964	0	729	1354	1156	0	279	738	1129	10553	7535	
2022	426	0	0	3196	1695	479	568	0	151	130	144	812	7601	8431	
													Avg 2008-2022	8255	14386