

History Of GMS

The Groundwater Management Subdistrict (GMS) was formed in 1973

under the auspices of the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District, providing augmentation service for hundreds of well owners. Before 1969, wells that pumped water from the alluvial aquifer were able to operate when needed. In the 1960's downstream senior water users argued that well operation was "injuring" their senior water rights.

Agreeing with this claim, the State Legislature brought irrigation wells into the Priority System in 1969. They also realized that wells would be in priority so infrequently that it would mean crop failure. In an attempt to keep equity and economic viability, the Legislature passed House Bill 754, allowing wells to pump out-of-

priority as long as they made replacements to the river to cover what they had consumed (depleted), preventing injury to any senior users. An augmentation plan is a court approved system of demonstrating that all depletions have been covered.

How the GMS Augmentation Plan Works.

Well owners pay an annual fee, or "assessment," to obtain a Class D Contract, allowing them to belong to the GMS augmentation plan. This money - combined with property taxes - is used to purchase and develop water sources. It also covers the cost of administering the plan, which requires vast amounts of legal and engineering work, water accountants and field operation staff.

GMS operated under a "substitute water supply plan" approved by the State Engineer while

going forth with the required legal process to obtain a Decree for an Augmentation Plan through water court. The Subdistrict operated under this substitute plan for over 30 years. In 2005, GMS received their permanent decree from Division 1 Water Court.

There are approximately 550 Class D Contracts in the Subdistrict and 1,000 wells in the plan.

New Technology for Old Wells.

A stipulation of the GMS decree stated all wells must have flow meters installed by 2008. Trained and certified Central staff had already begun meter installations in 2004, foreseeing the value of having exact records of water pumped. In 2005, GMS was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.



Example of well meter



The grant money helped mitigate some of the program cost. Contract holders paid for the installation, labor and any special parts, while GMS absorbed all else.

Monthly meter readings are provided by well owners. Quarterly readings are additionally provided by GMS staff. This data has proved invaluable for quota trading, over-pumping prevention, and farm efficiency studies.

Assets and Capitol Projects.

Over the years GMS has purchased surface water rights in 22 different ditch and reservoir companies. There are recharge projects with the Platteville Irrigation & Milling Ditch, the Farmers Independent Ditch, the Western Mutual Ditch and the Lupton Bottoms Ditch. More than two dozen smaller recharge ponds have been built in the last several years. To help increase the pumping quota

annually, staff is constantly seeking and signing lease agreements.

Surface Water Rights Owned

Beeline Ditch
 Big Thompson/Platte River
 Box Elder Ditch
 Box Elder Irrigation
 Brighton Ditch
 Farmers Independent Ditch
 Fulton Irrigation Ditch
 Greeley Irrigation Company
 Greeley & Loveland Ditch
 Lake Canal Company
 Loveland & Greeley Reservoir
 Lupton Bottoms Ditch
 Lupton Meadows Ditch
 New Cache La Poudre Ditch
 North Poudre Irrigation Co.
 Platteville Irrigating & Milling
 Rural Ditch
 Seven Lakes Reservoir
 Union Ditch
 Union Reservoir
 WR Jones Ditch
 Weldon Valley Ditch

GMS has also invested in large water projects, starting as far back as 1981. That year saw the start of construction at the Kiowa Recharge Project. In 1982, work began on the Milliron and Box Elder sites. Creek Recharge. Combined,

The Subdistrict covers approximately 320,333 acres, or 501 square miles. Well owner lands encompass 57,482 acres.

the 3 projects are capable of recharging over 4,000 acre-feet of water annually. The Farmers Independent Recharge and Western Mutual Ditch Recharge sites were added in 1985 and 1987, respectively.

Since that time, seven more water storage reservoirs have been built by GMS, including Nissen and Bernhardt. Shores Lakes is also jointly owned by the Well Augmentation Subdistrict.

GMS will continue assimilating new programs and technology to deliver the best service to their constituents.

