

CU Hydrology Seminar Talk 3/11/15 by Matt Bliss, DiNatale Water Consultants

Title: Buy and Don't Dry

*Abstract:*

Faced with the choice of an uncertain multi-year, multi-million dollar new reservoir permit process or the option to purchase and change senior agricultural water rights, many Front Range water providers opt for senior agricultural rights. Transferring water from irrigation use to municipal use and transporting the water from its original place of use to the municipality is a complex legal and engineering process. Once the water is transferred off the farm and to the water provider, the land is usually dried up permanently. Based on current growth projections, Colorado could lose hundreds of thousands of irrigated acres. Variations of alternative transfer methods (ATMs) have been proposed or piloted, but none have been implemented in a widespread manner due to a number of factors. DiNatale Water works with a water provider that is actively attempting to re-irrigate farms from which senior water rights have been transferred. Using junior water rights, wells, recharge facilities and other strategically located infrastructure, the water provider is developing a water supply for irrigation purposes on land that, under the status quo, would have been permanently dried up.