

**Appendix A:
Grand County Public Information
and Drought Awareness
Communications Strategy**

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Purpose and Summary

The Public Information and Drought Awareness Communication Strategy is one of Grand County's largest drought management efforts. Grand County has developed this comprehensive communication and public outreach strategy that can provide timely information explaining the drought situation and to raise awareness and solicit cooperation from the public and business community. A strong communications program is the foundation to successful implementation of the Drought Preparedness Plan (DPP).

Public information campaigns will need to be developed for each unique water shortage. A communication plan (separate from this document) should be adopted annually, sometime during the months of April or May, that attacks the different and unique water shortages at the time using respective budgets at the time of adoption. This document should serve as a guide and provides items to take into consideration when developing a campaign. Campaigns should be utilized by each DPP Committee entity to integrate efforts and enhance efficiencies. As mentioned in the DPP, while each entity is **encouraged** to participate in chosen communication campaigns, each individual entity has the option to choose how to use it. That being said, a widely-adopted campaign will capitalize on synergistic opportunities to convey, where appropriate, a consistent drought message. These campaign(s) will promote the importance of conserving water and achieving water savings in both normal and drought years.

During non-drought years, the drought campaign component will simply provide a general overview on drought and the importance of drought preparedness. During a drought, the drought messages will increase in frequency and intensity and will be expanded to include information on the staged drought response program and the necessity to conserve supplies.

While this strategy includes examples of messages, strategies and tactics for the Grand County DPP Committee to adopt (such as water bill inserts, press releases, informational brochures, community presentations, example verbiage for communications regarding drought stages, social media posts, and more), these toolkits will need to be amended to reflect each water shortage. **As the fields of media, communication, and education are ever-changing, the current best practices for message development and delivery will be utilized and may result in different messages that are contained in this appendix.**

Section One: Communication and Marketing

I. Objectives

The objectives of the Grand County Public Information and Drought Awareness Communications Strategy are:

- Inform the Grand County community about changes in the drought status in a timely manner;
- Educate the Grand County community about their role and responsibilities during the current drought status;
- Coordinate public information campaign efforts with all DPP Committee Members;
- Increase knowledge about water demand and supply throughout the community;
- Provide resources to track updates, other drought status rules, and additional drought information;
- Promote water-saving behaviors during a drought; and
- Encourage water-efficient behaviors during non-drought periods.

II. Key Messages

Below are key messages, both primary and secondary, to help the community understand our water supply situation and the potential subsequent restrictions.

Education is key. Citizens can help reduce water use by educating family, neighbors and co-workers. Education is a critical first step of enforcing restrictions.

We can all make a difference. Everyone in our community can help conserve water at home and at work. co.grand.co.us will provide links to relevant programs and resources to assist our County.

Water Providers and Districts may go to higher levels of restrictions. Stay updated on the current status. Higher levels of restrictions include rate increases to further promote conservation and recognize the reduction in revenue due to less water use.

It all begins in Grand County. The Colorado River is the lifeblood of the West, and it all begins in Grand County. We demand a lot from our river - From recreation, wildlife and agriculture, to our drinking water, scenery and diversions to the Front Range. As the headwaters of the Colorado River, it is incumbent to be leaders in the conversation in being stewards to our river.

Drought is a naturally occurring consequence in semi-arid climates like Colorado. Droughts happen when there is not enough water in our streams and reservoirs due to low precipitation, snowpack and climate factors. Reduced water supplies cause lower storage levels, so there is

less water for local residents, businesses, agriculture, and recreation. Grand County has a Drought Preparedness Plan. Our response strategy identifies ways to extend water supplies through a drought and is consistent with similar plans of surrounding cities and counties. To ensure we all have enough water for our most essential uses, sometimes customer restrictions are necessary, depending on which of the four stages of drought we are in.

Share water supply and demand information throughout the community in a single, unified source. A single, unified source of information on drought status, restrictions, and current water demand and supply provides consistent messaging to all members of the community and helps reduce confusion arising from multiple, conflicting sources. This single information source would likely live on the County's webpage, and/or a separate drought preparedness page, and on social media accounts.

III. Strategies and Tactics for Messaging

A drought is not a localized event; it generally affects entire regions. When drought conditions seem possible, the message to our community can be reinforced and amplified by consistent messaging through coordination of the DPP Committee network. Consistent messaging helps create a regional awareness while allowing for different responses, by provider, based on each provider's water situation.

Coordination of the provider's drought response and planning will help all measures be more effective. For instance, while individual providers must each respond based on their needs, using the same restriction base schedule recognizes that we all share a common media market. Providers will implement at different levels but at least the base schedule is common.

Coordination can also occur on a menu of offerings that have a record of proven savings. There is no benefit of each provider learning the same lesson individually. Care must be taken to explain the benefits of coordination to utility departments, boards, and councils. There is a benefit to all in knowing the level of need across providers. When known, extra effort can be made to time announcements and implement drought response measures so that the greatest overall result is obtained.

Below are possible strategies for reaching our communication goals. These include outreach materials, advertising and media contacts. Spanish translation should be considered for strategies and tactics. This list is not comprehensive.

Print Collateral

- Water restrictions brochure to explain the DPP
- Poster campaign
- Tabletop cards for "Water Served Only Upon Request" for restaurants

- Hotel/lodging cards with current DPP logo, restrictions, and encouragement to reuse linens and towels
- Utility Bill Inserts (for respective Water and Sanitation Districts and Special Districts)
- Printed coasters with water conservation messages
- Direct mail campaigns all customers (for respective districts/towns) or targeted group mail using PO Boxes
- Door hangers (to be used on multi-family projects and to be distributed door to door on each resident's door. There are higher likelihoods that these units are not used by County residents and are here more frequently on a temporary basis)

Internal Communication Platforms

- Grand County's Tributary Newsletter
- DPP Committee Member's Internal Newsletters/Intranets

Website

- Create and update a website on co.grand.co.us
- Spotlight on Utilities (Water and Sanitation Districts, Special Districts, etc) website pages and respective Town and County home pages
- Update conservation tips for each stage of drought: watering, landscape/tree care, lawn dormancy, etc.

County News Articles/Broadcasting Networks

- SkyHi News
- Winter Park Times
- Grand Gazette
- Grand County Television TV18

County Radio Networks

- KFFR 88.3 FM
- KRKY 930 AM and 101.9 FM

Media Articles

- News/Press releases
- Media outreach
- Advertorials

Other Source Advertising

- NWCOG Newsletters
- Guest Guide Newsletters (Visit Grand County, Play Winter Park, etc.)
- Alterra Mountain Company/Winter Park
- Short Term Rental Guidance and Promotion
- Work in Grand Promotions

Outdoor Advertising

- The Lift benches
- Bus shelters
- Bus panels
- Town and County parks, recreation, and other public facilities
- Signs with DPP logo (similar to Fire Hazard Signs) placed at Berthoud Pass and other locations around town (Fire Stations, Rabbit Ears, Willow Creek, HWY 9).

Digital Marketing

- Email blasts to all accounts within the DPP membership network
- Digital ads
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Nextdoor) organic advertising
- Grand County Online Garage Sale
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Messages on phone system
- Provide direct text messages and alerts through the Code Red System used by the County LEPC.
- Sign up to receive water efficiency tips and updates and corresponding email campaigns
- Messages in bills, usage reports and portals
- Presentation materials

Displays

Design to have at events and public locations, such as Town and County buildings, libraries and other venues. Messages should include information about restrictions and efficient water use.

Other

- Graph(s) that illustrate water supplies relative to water demands to be updated regularly prior to and during a water shortage (consider using during non-water shortage times as well, to develop customer awareness)
- Door panel magnets for Utility, County, and Town vehicles with conservation message
- Distribute water conservation kits – hose nozzles, showerheads and aerators
- Internal communication plan for DPP Committee Members

Water Restrictions Icon

Design a graphic icon for newspapers and other media for customer awareness of restriction action levels. The icon can be updated to show different restriction levels.

Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) should be developed to help clarify and consistently answer questions about the restrictions. General FAQs should be on the Website.

IV. Recommended Messages for Drought Stages

Routine:

It is important, regardless of Drought Stage, to encourage individuals to review the County's Drought Preparedness Plan, and interface with the DPP Committee. The Education and Public Outreach Committee shall generate public messages that promote the conservation of water that are easy to understand and are concise. Messages can stand alone regardless of stage, or the group can develop various messages that change depending on the stage of drought, or reflect the current water shortage. Messages should be developed immediately to reflect this using chosen strategies and tactics chosen by the DPP Committee.

General Public Outreach Message Example One (Regardless of Stage):

"We understand water use is individual, and limiting your use can be a short-term inconvenience, but the long-term outcome is dependent on your conservation.

Thank you for valuing your water as much as we do.

For complete details, tips, and to learn more about what your specific restrictions will be for residential, businesses, events, public parks, public spaces, and other types of usage, get the complete Grand County Drought Preparedness Plan at co.grand.co.us."

General Public Outreach Message Example Two (Regardless of Stage):

It all begins in Grand County. The Colorado River is the lifeblood of the West, and it all begins in Grand County. We demand a lot from our river - From recreation, wildlife and agriculture, to our drinking water, scenery and diversions to the Front Range. As the headwaters of the Colorado River, it is incumbent to be leaders in the conversation in being stewards to our river.

Drought Watch:

Facts* for Messaging:

- Snowpack is below average.
- Streamflows are below average.
 - Flows are checked at the USGS gage on the Fraser River at Highway 40, the Colorado River above the confluence with the Williams Fork River, and the Colorado River below KB Ditch.
- The US Drought Monitor Index has Grand County in abnormally dry conditions.
- Stream temperatures exceed 68 degrees F.
- Neighboring West Slope counties or Front Range entities using water diverted from Grand County rivers are already in drought watch response.
- Grand County residents believe that a Drought Watch and its corresponding actions are appropriate.

*all of the following may be true, or portions of these indicators may be correct depending on the year and the drought

Recommended Messaging Response:

- Increase communication and outreach to residents and stakeholders to explain that Grand County is beginning to see indicators of drought.
- Encourage residents to continue to use water efficiently and provide suggestions for further reducing water use in order to reduce the risk of progression to mandatory restrictions. During this stage, warn residents about the following:
 - Possibility of mandatory water restrictions.
 - Voluntary watering of turf to two days per week from 6 p.m., to 10 a.m..
 - Use handheld watering or drip irrigation on municipal streetscapes and on private flower and vegetable gardens and throughout community gardens.
 - Use only what you need.
 - Discourage frequent filling of pools, hot tubs and other water features
 - Wash cars with a bucket or using a handheld hose with a nozzle that shuts off when not in use. If possible, try to have water run-off go into landscape features.
 - Encourage restaurants to only serve water by request regardless of drought stage.
- Warn of and prepare for the possibility of mandatory watering restrictions.
- Enhance water use education.

Stage One:

Facts* for Messaging:

- Watershed characteristics indicate severe and prolonged dryness.
- State water officials are engaged in drought response activities.
- Circumstances warrant possible adverse impacts on water-dependent businesses.
- Snowpack is less than 80% of average.
- Streamflows are less than 80% of average.
- The US Drought Monitor Index has Grand County in moderate drought conditions.
- Stream Temperatures reach 70 degrees F.
- Other West Slope counties or Front Range entities that divert water from Grand County are already in a stage 1 response.
- Grand county residents believe that mandatory watering restrictions are appropriate.

*all of the following may be true, or portions of these indicators may be correct depending on the year and the drought

Recommended Messaging Response:

Generally, the Education and Public Outreach Committee shall amplify their communications by 25 percent once we reach Drought Stage One. Most importantly, officials should recommend to not waste water and stay alert to drought status changes. Subsequently, DPP Committee members should start implementing recommended restrictions and market said restrictions to their constituents.

- Do not waste water and stay alert to drought status changes.
- Do not water lawn grass more than two days per week from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m.
- Communicate more regularly with agricultural water users, golf courses, sports fields, and parks about drought conditions. Assist sport fields and parks with achieving 10% reduction in water use.
- Creation of new landscaping is not recommended.
- Encourage handheld watering and drip irrigation of landscapes, streetscapes, flowers and vegetables no more than two days per week between the hours of 6 p.m. to 10 a.m.
- Discourage frequent filling of pools, hot tubs and other water features.
- Wash cars with a bucket or using a handheld hose with a nozzle that shuts off when not in use. If possible, try to have water run-off go into landscape features.
- Reduce water for street-sweeping.

Stage Two:

Facts* for Messaging:

- The Percentage of snowpack is less than 60% of average.
- Streamflows are 60% of average.
- The US Drought Monitor Index has Grand County in severe drought conditions.
- Stream Temperatures exceed 72 degrees.
- State water officials have declared a drought emergency.
- Other West Slope counties or Front Range municipalities diverting water from Grand County have already declared a Stage 2 drought.
- Grand County residents believe that severe water-use restrictions are appropriate.

*all of the following may be true, or portions of these indicators may be correct depending on the year and the drought

Recommended Messaging Response:

Generally, the Education and Public Outreach Committee shall amplify their communications by 50 percent once we reach Drought Stage Two. Most importantly, officials should describe said water-use restrictions as appropriate and necessary. Subsequently, DPP Committee members should start implementing recommended restrictions and market said restrictions to their constituents.

- Water-use restrictions are appropriate and necessary.
- Municipal water providers choose to use drought pricing as a tool to reduce water use.
- Communicate frequently with agricultural water users, golf courses, sports fields, and parks about drought conditions. Assist sport fields and parks with

achieving 20% reduction in water use. Ask for reductions from golf courses and agricultural water users.

- Discourage new landscaping from June through August
- Encourage handheld watering and drip irrigation of landscapes, streetscapes, flowers and vegetables no more than one day per week between the hours of 6 p.m. to 10 a.m.
- Single Family Dwelling pools, hot tubs and other water features should not be refilled. Public pool and hot tub operations will be permitted.
- Use only commercial car washes.
- Reduce water for street-sweeping.
- Wash fleet vehicles once per month.
- Change linens and towels only by request at short term rentals, hotels, and lodging.
- Do not water lawn grass more than one day per week from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m.
- Hydrant flushing is allowed only in the cases of public safety and health.

Stage Three:

Facts* for Messaging:

- The Percentage of snowpack is less than 40%.
- Streamflows are less than 40% of average.
- The US Drought Monitor Index has Grand County in an extreme drought.
- Stream temperatures exceed 75 degrees F.
- News media are sending messages that we are in exceptionally dry conditions.
- Grand County Residents believe that we are in exceptionally dry conditions.
- Elected officials are calling for water rationing.
- The situation suggests that severe impacts to water-dependent businesses are unavoidable
- Other West Slope counties and Front Range entities diverting water from Grand County are already in Stage 3 restrictions.

*all of the following may be true, or portions of these indicators may be correct depending on the year and the drought

Recommended Messaging Response:

Generally, the Education and Public Outreach Committee should be at maximum communication capacity at Drought Stage Three. Most importantly, officials should already be calling for water rationing. Subsequently, DPP Committee members should start implementing recommended rationing restrictions and marketing said tactics to their constituents.

- Water-use restrictions are appropriate and necessary.
- Municipal water providers are recommended to use drought pricing as a tool to reduce water use.
- No lawn watering.
- Communicate frequently with agricultural water users, golf courses, sports

fields, and parks about drought conditions. Assist sport fields and parks with achieving 30% reduction in water use. Ask for reductions from golf courses and agricultural water users.

- New landscaping is not allowed.
- Handheld watering and drip irrigation of landscapes, streetscapes, shall be done no more than one day per month.
Flowers and vegetable gardens are not allowed to be watered.
- No filling pools, hot tubs and other water features.
- Use only commercial car washes.
- Reduce water for street-sweeping.
- Fleet vehicle washing is not allowed.
- Change linens and towels only by request at short term rentals, hotels, and lodging.
- Hydrant flushing is allowed only in the cases of public safety and health.

Section Two: Public Outreach and Engagement

A well-planned public engagement program is critical to success in achieving water savings goals established by each action level. Public engagement is an extremely important step, as it asks the community to be a part of the solution during a water shortage and can minimize enforcement efforts. A wide range of engagement strategies should be pursued to inform internal and external stakeholders, and all customer types.

I. Internal and External Organization Engagement

Internal DPP Committee Communication and Engagement

Speakers Bureau: As soon as a drought is a possibility, a speaker's bureau should be established (likely reflecting members of the DPP Committee). Its members should be trained on talking points. The Speakers Bureau is then available to make presentations to the public for drought education purposes.

Internal DPP Committee Engagement: The DPP Committee has many roles in the case of a drought. The manner in which DPP representatives respond to drought sets an example for the community. All members must be kept informed so that appropriate decisions on drought response can be made. Engaging this group and having meetings internally will likely increase depending on the severity of a drought stage.

External Organization Engagement

Presentations: Creating a slide deck of talking points with messages to fit each individual DPP Committee member's audience is key. Slides can be taken out or put in depending on the audience. Once the slide deck has been created, and a speaker's bureau has been identified, the Education and Outreach Committee will accommodate requests for presentations and will proactively offer presentations to known groups and organizations in partnership with the speaker's bureau.

Examples of organizations and existing groups that might receive a presentation are (in alphabetical order):

Certified Landscape Professionals, Colorado Headwaters Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, East Grand and West Grand School Districts, Granby Chamber of Commerce, Grand Beginnings, Grand County Board of Realtors, Grand County Christian Academy, Grand County Historical Society, Grand County Library Foundation, Grand County Road and Bridge, Grand County Rural Health Network, Grand County Search and Rescue, Grand County Wilderness Group, Grand County Wildfire Council, Grand Lake and Fraser Valley Recreation Districts, Grand Lake Area

Historical Society, Grand Lake Chamber of Commerce, Habitat for Humanity - Grand County, Headwaters Trails Alliance, Kremmling Area Chamber of Commerce, Lion’s Clubs, Local Trout Unlimited Chapter (Colorado Headwaters Chapter), Middle Park Conservation District, Middle Park Fair and Rodeo, Middle Park Medical Foundation, Middle Park Stockgrowers Association, Mountain Parks Electric, Mountain Family Center, Mule Deer Foundation, Open Lands Rivers and Trails Advisory Committee, Project Sanctuary, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Rotary Clubs, The Grand Foundation, Winter Park Chamber of Commerce, 4-H Programs, affordable housing providers, student organizations in existing school districts, faith based organizations, etc.

Education and Training: Education and training presentations are a good way to build awareness of drought conditions and describe recommended actions. Topics can include: current conditions, the restrictions themselves, programming irrigation controllers, tree watering, repairing irrigation deficiencies, indoor leak detection and fixing leaks, availability of water saving appliances and fixtures as well as their installation. Locations for presentations can include the community rooms at public libraries, town and county building community rooms, Recreation Centers or throughout the County, schools, or Water Districts. Generally, any location that can facilitate training or presentations can be used for these efforts. Audiences can be the general public, businesses, students, elected officials, employees of organizations promoting water conservation messaging, or whoever else requests training. The first priority should always be employees of organizations promoting DPP messages so that they can direct immediate questions to representatives of the Speaker’s Bureau.

As the drought begins to ebb, training on landscape revival, including xeriscape and alternative turfs may be appropriate. Sources for the training may be internal staff, master gardeners, and local gardening centers. Resource Central (<https://resourcecentral.org/>) should be utilized as a training resource.

Open Houses: Providing opportunities for both internal and external organizations to learn more about the Drought Preparedness Plan, and to learn more about different drought stages we are in is an important consideration. These open houses can combine presentation formats, and education and training programs that have been developed.

Digital Public Engagement: If due to unforeseen circumstances or acts of God, in-person public meetings, presentations, open houses, and education training are not suitable, offering these types of programs in a virtual format is important. This can be done via webinars, virtual meetings, and interactive online education tools.

<u>Other Public Engagement Opportunities:</u>	
Internal	External
Develop a general script for Speaker’s Bureau and DPP Committee members with key	Public and National Events such as Earth Day, Watershed Tours, etc.

messages.	
Develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) - provide on the website and to DPP Committee.	Generate partnerships with existing groups and their respective public engagement programs such as GCWIN, Headwaters Land Trust, Trout Unlimited, etc.
Give the same presentations used to the external community, to the internal DPP committee's respective organizations.	Create Water Conservation Challenges
Have internal presentation training meetings.	Developing a Business/Household water smart certification program that allows them to track their water use and consumption.
Presentations at existing DPP meetings.	Booths at local events (craft fairs, Buffalo BBQ, Kremmling Days, Hot Sulphur Springs Days, Fairs, Rodeos, etc.)
Provide communication materials to the entire DPP committee.	

II. Business Outreach

It is likely that the business community of Grand County would be heavily impacted during a water shortage. While these businesses may be limited in what they can restrict, they should be considered a partner to provide consistent messages to the general public. Information and presentations should be provided for facilities staff, and disseminated throughout their businesses.

The following list of businesses should be considered for targeted engagement:

- Breweries and Distilleries
- Retail, grocery stores, and coffee shops:
 - o Store visits/meetings
 - o In-store flyers and posters
- Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce meetings throughout the County
- Car Washes
 - o Direct mail
- Power Washing Companies
 - o Contact Chambers of Commerce's about sidewalk washing (meeting or mailing)
- Landscapers/Nurseries/Garden Centers
- Popular Recreational Locations and their respective businesses
 - o Alterra (Winter Park Resort)
 - o Granby Ranch

- o Devil's Thumb
- o The Y
- o Bluebird Backcountry
- o Rocky Mountain National Park
- o Whitewater Rafting Groups
- o Fishing Tour/Tackle Shop Businesses
 - o In-store/location flyers and posters
 - o Group meetings and workshops
- Certified Landscape Professionals bi-annual meeting or email
 - o Group meeting
 - o Direct mailing
- Homeowner Associations (HOA)
 - o Set up meeting/workshop
 - o Information with HOA audits/Landscape Water Budgets
 - o Direct mailing/water fountain information
 - o Information at Neighborhood Service's HOA meetings
 - o Property management companies - send information/fountain information
- Health Clubs and Fitness Centers
 - o Meeting
 - o Signage for showers, faucets
- Hotels/Motels/Short Term Rentals
 - o Distribute linen and towel reuse cards
- Restaurants
 - o Meeting/workshop
 - o Information with pre-rinse program

III. Tracking Public Outreach and Engagement

Goals for public engagement should be established and progress toward completion should be monitored and tracked. This allows activities and efforts to be reported on during a water shortage, supports successful water savings and allows the DPP Committee to evaluate whether gaps exist in engagement efforts or sectors. The following are metrics that can be used to track progress toward the goal(s):

- Number of presentations.
- Number of people present during presentations.
- Diversity of audience
- Number of ambassadors trained, including tracking ambassador efforts and considering recognizing coworkers' contributions.
- Evaluation of effectiveness with a survey or live polling during a presentation to possibly assess familiarity with the water shortage and understanding of associated restrictions.

Budgeting For Public Outreach, Engagement, and Marketing

Budgeting Suggestions

A communication plan (separate from this document) should be adopted annually, sometime during the months of April or May, that attacks the different and unique water shortages at the time using respective budgets at the time of adoption.

It is suggested that an entity associated with the Drought Preparedness Plan apply for funding for these efforts through the Colorado Water Conservation Board, or other reputable organization within the Grand County community, or at the state-level for this type of funding annually.

Updates To The Public Information and Communications Strategy

Strategy Updates

As the fields of media, communication, and education are ever-changing, the current best practices for message development and delivery will be utilized and may result in different messages, strategies, and tactics. Specific outreach strategies may be developed and included in this strategy at any time with the approval of the DPP Committee.