



## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK - 2020-2025

Water Education Colorado

Prepared by Conservation Impact



### Legislative Mandate

*"To promote a better understanding of water issues through educational opportunities and resources so Colorado citizens will understand water as a limited resource and will make informed water decisions." (HB 02-1152)*

### Mission

*We ensure Coloradans are informed on water issues and equipped to make decisions that guide our state to a sustainable water future.*

### Vision

*A vibrant, sustainable, and water-aware Colorado.*

We envision a Colorado in which newcomers, long-time residents, and natives alike appreciate and understand water, and that people of all backgrounds and perspectives, in all localities, are learning, listening, engaging, and working together on collaborative water solutions.

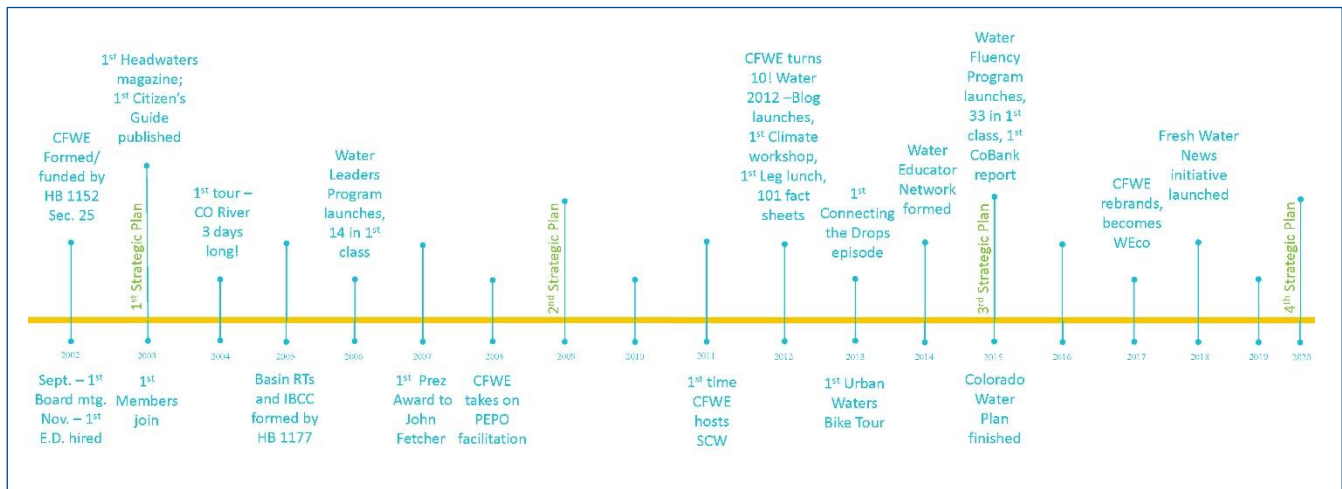
We see a Colorado in which people make individual and institutional decisions and demonstrate thoughtful water stewardship in their behaviors and actions.

We see a WEco that is an inspiring and authentic partner for water educators, water leaders and water users, and whose audience is representative of the state's demographic and geographic diversity.

### Impact

Coloradans from all backgrounds and perspectives understand and appreciate water; decisions at all levels are based on factual information, exposure to different perspectives, and understanding of the tradeoffs inherent in any action; and both water professionals and community members from a wide cross-section of backgrounds and perspectives reflective of Colorado's population are engaged in well-informed discussion, debate and problem solving about water issues.

# WEco Timeline



## Values

### ▲ *Water is Life*

In Colorado and across the globe, our lives literally depend on water. Water sustains our economies, our way of life, and our very existence, therefore we must celebrate it and protect it. We believe that a clean and sustainable water supply must be our communities' top priority.

### ▲ *Information is for All*

We believe that everyone—no matter background, status or belief—has a right to accurate, impartial, timely and transparent information about water, and we are committed to making our programs accessible to anyone who wants to understand and engage.

### ▲ *Objectivity is Fundamental*

Water doesn't take sides and neither do we. As an independent voice, Water Education Colorado is an active leader in bringing together all perspectives and advancing balanced decision-making and outcomes.

### ▲ *Knowledge is Progress*

For centuries, humans have developed smart water solutions by learning truths about our world and then applying knowledge through inspired leadership. We empower Coloradans, from caring individuals to veteran water professionals, to learn and then boldly lead toward progress.

### ▲ *Collaboration is Powerful*

Just as a river is more formidable than individual drops of water, we foster collaboration and innovation among our members, community, partners, and the public to have the greatest impact in ensuring a sustainable water future for Colorado.

## Distinctive Competence

- ▲ Provisioner of high quality, factual, policy-neutral, stylish and relevant content and programs
- ▲ Facilitator of meaningful and compelling experiences and conversations
- ▲ Comprehensive resource and connector with the “global” statewide perspective and the ability to “connect the dots”

## Next-Level Strategy

WEco capitalizes on reputation, quality, position, brand, influence and power to fully occupy the Colorado water education leadership role.

- ▲ WEco has the status to tackle the hard issues and catalyzes and facilitates compelling conversations that incorporate diverse perspectives (the “edgy” factor)
- ▲ WEco optimizes and leverages current products and services for new audiences and to deliver information and programs through multiple channels
- ▲ WEco continues to distinguish itself as highly relationship oriented, customized, and constituent-centric, demonstrating a deep understanding and respect for diverse perspectives
- ▲ WEco’s growth is deliberate and intentional to maintain relationships and quality
- ▲ WEco integrates an equity lens across all program planning, design and implementation

## Audience

All audience outreach will focus on deepening to core audiences, then expanding demographic and geographic diversity, with a particular focus on underserved communities.

- ▲ Water professionals remain a core audience
  - In all sectors and at all levels
- ▲ Decision-makers and influencers
  - Federal, state, regional, local
  - Appointed, elected, positional
- ▲ Water education and outreach professionals and volunteers
  - Formal educators: K-12, Higher Ed
  - Nonformal educators: NGOs, government, utilities
- ▲ Leaders and emerging leaders
  - New generation of leaders in companies, agencies, communities
  - Those in leadership roles in the water industry and those in leadership roles that influence water decisions, or are water consumers, outside of the water industry (e.g. HOA managers)

- ▲ Wholesalers (or distributors) - those who work directly with the public
  - Associations and neighborhood groups
  - Media outlets
  - Museums or other public venues

## Imperatives

- ▲ Stay current on water issues and have staff present for ongoing water dialogue at various levels
- ▲ Produce high quality, factual, compelling, relevant products and programs
- ▲ Deepen penetration within existing audiences and markets
- ▲ Broaden reach to more diversified audiences and serve underserved audiences by making programs more accessible
- ▲ Stay current on latest technologies for information exchange and engagement
- ▲ Establish and maintain loyal, productive, long-term partnerships
- ▲ Have empowered, happy, valued staff team
- ▲ Engage board and consider composition of the board relative to fundraising
- ▲ Have financial resources from diverse sources for long-term sustainability
- ▲ Continue to serve and engage existing base of professionals and supporters
- ▲ Cultivate position of influence for the National Western Center water center - 2022.

## Goals: The “Bucket List,” Objectives and Strategies

- ▲ **Efficacy: WEco’s audiences<sup>1</sup> demonstrate a factual understanding of Colorado’s water and have the knowledge and skills for water-informed actions, decisions, and programs**
  - Review and update content and programs for effectiveness.
  - Update and, where absent, incorporate evaluation on programs, including through the development of logic models.
  - Maintain high standards for content and quality.
- ▲ **Outreach: WEco has increased its core audiences by 20% as average across all categories to be more representative of Colorado demographics and geographic scope**
  - Utilize the most current or relevant technologies to disseminate information and to reach a broader, more diverse audience.
  - Target outreach to at least three underserved audiences or geographic areas.
  - Solicit financial support for diversifying participation in programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Audience refers to those people touched by WEco’s materials and programs, to include but not limited to members, alumni, subscribers, followers, networks, partners, and participants; audiences include the public to the extent that the public reads or hears or participates with WEco information or activities.

- ▲ **Brand and reputation: WEco has an exemplary brand that is seen as trustworthy and well-regarded for its level of excellence and policy-neutral voice**
  - Protect the quality of the WEco brand through highest-level commitment to excellence in production and delivery of content and programs.
  - Protect the integrity of the WEco brand through scrupulous attention to brand voice and values.
  
- ▲ **Partners: WEco has expanded and maintained long-lasting, collaborative relationships with partners across the state working together to advance water education through a shared strategy**
  - Maintain loyal, long-term relationships by taking excellent care of people and always following up.
  - Continue to build and support the Water Educator Network.
  - Take a lead role in implementation of the 2020-2025 Statewide Water Education Action Plan as a coordination tool.
  
- ▲ **Staff: WEco has retained and supported an equitable, competitively compensated, inclusive, highly skilled, empowered, productive staff team**
  - Review, update and maintain salaries and benefits to be competitive with like positions in other nonprofit organizations.
  - Provide professional development opportunities in line with staff goals.
  - Develop equal opportunity policy.
  
- ▲ **Board: WEco has a high-functioning board of directors with the skills, abilities, and resources (time, contacts and/or funds), as well as the structure, to fully support the organization in both an internal governance role and an external public relations role**
  - Board composition to be representative of audiences served and to include a diversity of skills and abilities to meet needs of the organization.
  - Board committees re-envisioned to align with supporting strategic goals.
  - Board succession and mentorship program (to ensure ongoing engagement on par with historical level of engagement and commitment).
  
- ▲ **Finance: WEco has diverse and sustainable revenues to cover annual operating costs, special projects, and to maintain a reserve of a minimum of three months expenses**
  - Review and develop, as necessary, the capacity/infrastructure to support diverse revenue streams.
  - Through the budget process, set and attain specific goals by income category to ensure a diverse portfolio.
  - Include board members with fundraising capabilities.
  - Seek funds to support strategic business plan and be disciplined in not letting grants drive programs or activities.
  - Create and adhere to a plan to meet and exceed three-month reserve.
  - Consider an endowment campaign.