

Colorado Water Conservation Board
Colorado Water Loss Control & Management Committee

November 13, 2025
9:00am-11:30am

Hybrid meeting. A big thanks to **Kylie Couch** and the Town of Frederick for hosting!

Location:

Town of Frederick | Engineering Services | 323 5th St, Frederick, CO 80530

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Meeting Minutes

Meeting Summary

This meeting focused on updates regarding the Colorado Water Loss Initiative (CWLI), sharing water loss stories and experiences, discussing the transition of the committee to the Rocky Mountain section of AWWA, and developing a two-year strategic plan. The main point of discussion for the committee's future was whether to transition as a standalone committee or a subcommittee under the Water Conservation Committee.

Announcements & Important Dates

- December 2-4, 2025 | AWWA North American Water Loss Conference | Louisville, KY. North American Water Loss Conference: The conference is coming up in December in Louisville, Kentucky. Registration numbers are up this year.
- December 4, 2025 | AWWA Water Loss Control Committee meeting. This committee meets four times a year (two hybrid, two remote). **Michael Thomas** will begin attending as the committee representative and coordinate the Outreach and Education subcommittee to provide a brief update on this committee.
- CWLI Training for New Learners: Training workshops for new learners on the water audit and M36 methodology are scheduled quarterly for the next several years. The next date is November 18th. The training is a great opportunity for new utility staff and consulting engineers supporting small systems. 2025-2026 schedule available at [CWLI - Water Basics New Learner Workshop](#). Questions: **team@coloradowaterloss.org**
- CWCB Grant Round: The next grant round deadline is December 1st, and funding will be highly competitive, with \$12 million available after high demand in the previous round. Having a validated audit through the CWLI makes applicants more competitive. Questions: **Kevin Reidy**

Action Items

- Meet with RMSAWWA regarding stand-alone vs. subcommittee
 - Investigate Standalone Committee Option: The transition team will also investigate the organizational structure of the Rocky Mountain section to identify the appropriate contact for discussing the standalone committee option and will set up a meeting with them. **Drew Blackwell** will provide Kylie with appropriate contact at RMSAWWA for stand-alone committee meeting.
 - Dependent on outcome from this meeting, **Kylie Couch** will set up a meeting poll for the transition team (**Frank Kinder, Scott Thomas, Kylie, Kevin Reidy, and Drew Blackwell**) to meet with Hope Bartlett and Sam Schreier, the co-chairs of the Water Conservation Committee, to gather information about transitioning as a subcommittee.
- Draft Strategic Plan Document: **Drew Blackwell** will draft the two-year strategic objectives and goals into a more formal document for committee review.
- Colorado Drought Coordination Group Liaison: **Frank Kinder** will connect the speaker with Darren (co-chair of the Colorado Drought Coordination Group) to explore recruitment and collaboration opportunities.
- CRB Water Efficiency Network: **Kevin Reidy** will raise the topic of water loss management in the next meeting of the Colorado River Basin Water Efficiency Group to incorporate the committee's work into that network.

Meeting Notes

Water Loss Stories (Open Floor)

- **Loveland – Michelle Erickson**
 - Technical assistance from eSource through CWLI resulted in finding two leaks in the second round of leak detection (4 were found in the previous round).
 - Identified instances of water theft involving neighboring water districts' hydrant meters being used on Loveland's hydrants by contractors.
 - An irrigation meter got stuck while turned on, continuing to provide water without being read, leading to unbilled usage. They are hopeful that transitioning to AMI will help catch these issues more quickly.
- **Northern Water – Michale Thomas**
 - Northern Water is starting to offer water audit validation services to its allottees and small communities they serve, utilizing internal expertise (specifically **Michael Thomas** with CA-NV Water Audit Validation certification).
- **SGM, Inc - Bailey Leppek**
 - Noticed a tendency for water providers with high miles of service line per connection (often Western water providers) to have higher water losses, suggesting that metrics like water loss per mile of distribution system could be helpful in acknowledging these unique challenges.
- **Mount Werner Water District – Tyler Gilman**
 - As a smaller utility, they are in the early stages of developing a monitoring program to recoup water losses and lost revenues, leveraging their recent water audit results to build a critical budget and secure board funding. They are seeking stories and recommendations on budgeting and post-leak repair planning.

- **CWLI Technical Assistance – Maher Lugo**

- Shared results from two weeks of acoustic leak detection conducted in late September/mid-late October for two utilities (Utility A and Utility B), surveying 21-22 miles of mains each.
- The crews listen to all available assets, sometimes at night to mitigate noise. Buried service valves and Halloween decorations covering service boxes were noted as challenges.
- Found a visible leak in a meter pit on the utility side of things that the utility was likely unaware of due to AMR or no change in customer billing.
- Found service line and other suspected leaks in Utility B (which had fewer access points) that showed no surface water, while Utility A (with more access points) did not find as many.

CWCB Updates (Kevin Reidy)

- The next grant round deadline is December 1st, and competition will be high, with \$12 million available after \$39 million in requests in the July 1st round.
- CWCB encourages utilities to go through the CWLI to have a validated audit and prioritize projects, making them more competitive for funding (e.g., Loveland received a grant for AMI).
- CWCB is internally shuffling the 1051 database and has not had a chance to assess the submissions from the last round yet. They have also received audits from systems not required to comply with 1051.
- CWCB is renewing connections with the Special Districts Association (SDA) to engage smaller special districts in the water loss initiative.
- **Scott Thomas** offered that smaller systems are constantly dealing with immediate fires or large capital projects, obscuring water loss issues. It is important to emphasize that grant funding for capital projects is dependent on demonstrating a dedication to addressing water loss.

Committee Transition

The committee is scheduled to transition to the Rocky Mountain section of AWWA in the first quarter of 2026, though the deadline has flexibility. Two options are being considered:

- **Standalone Committee:** The initial goal, but this option would require the committee to raise a modest amount of revenue through workshops. There is concern that this path has a higher entry point and more attached requirements.

Potential Pros	Potential Cons
Increased Visibility and Inclusivity: May be more attractive to professionals outside of pure conservation, like engineers and operations staff. The current name might unintentionally exclude these groups if they feel they don't belong under a "Conservation" banner.	Revenue Generation Requirement: Standalone committees are typically tasked with putting together workshops and generating a modest amount of revenue for the section. This was a key point of trepidation from the executive director of the Rocky Mountain section.
Greater Autonomy: A standalone status could allow the committee to advise on regulation and steer its direction with more freedom compared to operating under a parent committee.	Higher Entry Point: Concerns exist about the additional requirements and complexity attached to becoming a standalone entity.
Clear Focus: Allows the committee to maintain a sharp focus on water loss control without being potentially subsumed or diverted by the broader goals of a parent committee.	Risk of Contention: There is a worry about getting absorbed and never achieving the status the committee <i>could</i> become.

- **Subcommittee under the Water Conservation Committee:** This option is seen as having a lower entry point and is potentially the "path of least resistance". However, there is concern that being under the Water Conservation Committee might exclude some engineers and operations staff who are vital to water loss control.

Potential Pros	Potential Cons
Path of Least Resistance: This option is viewed as having a lower barrier to entry and a more straightforward transition process.	Potential Exclusion of Key Audiences: It might be harder to attract engineers, asset management, and operations staff who deal with the technical and financial aspects of water loss, as they may view it as solely a conservation topic.
Shared Revenue Goal Support: The Water Conservation Committee already holds workshops with a nominal fee to support its operations. Operating as a subcommittee could help the water loss group meet revenue expectations without bearing the full responsibility itself.	Less Autonomy: The subcommittee generally follows the lead of the parent committee.
Transitional Stepping Stone: It could serve as a temporary position until the group is more organized and grown enough to confidently transition to a standalone status later on.	Potential for Subcommittee to Outgrow Parent: There's a chance the water loss focus could become more active than the parent committee, making the structure feel restrictive over time.

A small transition team (**Frank, Scott, Kylie, Kevin, and Drew**) has been formed to gather information on the feasibility, process, and timeline for both options.

2-Year Strategic Plan

The committee is working on a two-year strategic plan, grouped into three main objectives:

Strategic Objective	Goals and Action Items (Draft)
Sustainable Governance & Committee Operations	Formalize committee structure and rules for the transition.
Technical Leadership	Be a technical resource for water loss control. Ideas included launching a validator task group and providing more focused technical training (e.g., drawdown tests, assessing meter testing). Also suggested is Water Loss Leadership Training focused on the business case (costs and revenue gains) for executive leadership and middle management.
Outreach, Visibility, & Influence	Engage and interact with other professionals. New additions include: Developing standard methodologies and regulation across the three states (CO, NM, WY) to build and maintain capacity. Targeted outreach to groups like Special Districts Association, Basin Roundtables, and New Mexico/Wyoming water loss groups. Aligning with Colorado River Basin States efforts, specifically supporting the AWWA CRB water efficiency network.

The working Strategic Plan can be accessed here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1S6cuRHrazEMuQmxNuljQQUmdFU9KWkaqByCYGqBcZ9A/edit?usp=sharing>

Minutes prepared by:

Drew Blackwell, Cavanaugh