Don’t Sell the Ranch
Alternatives to Buy and Dry in the South Platte Basin

Panelists:
Erik Glenn, Executive Director, Colorado Cattleman’s Agricultural Land Trust
Brad Wind, Deputy Manager, Operations Division, Northern Water
P. Andrew Jones, Esq., Lawrence Jones Custer Grasmick, LLP

Moderator:
Spencer Williams, Ponderosa Advisors LLC
The Issue
Colorado Water Use

- Agricultural Water Use
- Municipal Water Use
- Industrial Water Use
- Amount Exiting State
Colorado Water Use

- Agricultural Water Use: 89%
- Municipal Water Use: 7%
- Industrial Water Use: 4%
Colorado Population Growth

Source: Colorado Water Plan
The Result

Source: Google Images
Buy and Dry in the Front Range

Ditches of the Front Range (cfs depleted)
- 0.00 - 2.00
- 2.00 - 4.18
- 4.18 - 16.38
- 16.38 - 30.23
- 30.23 - 43.76
- 43.76 - 65.53
- 65.53 - 108.46
- 108.46 - 143.52
- 143.52 - 412.73
- 412.73 - 1713.94

Cities of the Front Range (cfs acquired)
- 0.00 - 1.00
- 1.00 - 1.57
- 1.57 - 11.95
- 11.95 - 28.16
- 28.16 - 52.71
- 52.71 - 107.60
- 107.60 - 127.01
- 127.01 - 145.99
- 145.99 - 951.51
- 951.51 - 2056.74

This map illustrates the depletion of ditches and the acquisition of water by cities in the Front Range. Water court decrees were reviewed to collect data and distinguish buy and dry trends.

August 13, 2015
The Result

Ag vs. M&I C-BT Units

Total C-BT Units

C-BT Units (000s)

Ag Units

M&I Units

The Result
The Colorado Water Plan

• The South Platte and Metro Basin Roundtables are concerned about maintaining the viability of agriculture in the South Platte against the pressure of agricultural transfers and urbanization.

• Pressures at state, national, and international levels threaten to reduce agricultural lands in the short term. Future municipal water demands contribute to an increasing pressure to transfer agricultural water rights to help satisfy urban demands and other non-agricultural water needs across the state.

• If Colorado continues down its current path, the South Platte River Basin could lose up to one-third of today’s irrigated land by 2050.

• Across the state, water stakeholders want to minimize buy-and-dry in a way that respects property rights, recognizes the importance of agriculture in Colorado, and supports a sustainable agricultural industry—while identifying solutions to provide water for municipal needs.
Possible Solutions

• Water Storage Projects

• Alternative Water Transfer Mechanisms (ATMs)

• Conservation Easements

• A combination of all three