

# STATE OF COLORADO

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Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

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Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

May 8, 2007

K. John Stahl, President  
Greater Grand Lake Shoreline Association  
P.O. Box 1096  
Grand Lake, CO 80447

Dear Mr. Stahl,

Thank you for your letter of March 27, 2007 regarding the correlation between the transparency of Grand Lake and pumping of C-BT water through Grand Lake.

In your letter you ask that the Division organize and lead a collaborative effort with the many different agencies and organizations involved in Grand Lake water quality. Your proximate goal for this effort is to "maintain 4 meter transparency" and ultimately to find a way to restore 9-meter transparency to Grand Lake.

While compelling the different agencies and organizations to join such an effort is beyond the Water Quality Control Division's authority and scope, we agree that the time may be ripe to begin the formal debate about water quality goals for Grand Lake, including water clarity.

Because of the unique nature of Grand Lake as the largest natural lake in Colorado, the Water Quality Control Division believes that a site-specific water quality standard that establishes a water clarity goal is worthy of consideration. The Basic Standards and Methodologies for Surface Water (Regulation No. 31) provide authority for such a standard at section 31.13(3), which states:

In special cases where protection of beneficial uses requires standards not provided by the classification above, special standards may be assigned after full public notice and hearings. Cases where special protection may be needed include but are not limited to wildlife preserves and waterbodies endangered by eutrophication. In addition, the Commission may adopt site-specific criteria based standards based on site-specific analyses to protect agriculture, water supply or recreational uses.

The timing is good for a focused dialogue on this issue because of the regularly scheduled review of the Water Quality Classifications and Numeric Standards for the Upper Colorado River Basin (Regulation No 33). This review includes an "Issues Formulation" hearing in November of this year and a formal rulemaking hearing in June 2008.

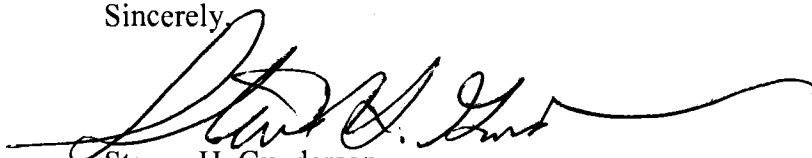
The Issues Formulation hearing is the time when proponents bring forward issues that they would like the Commission to address in the summer rulemaking hearing. We would welcome your broaching this issue with the Commission in November and will support consideration of water clarity goals for Grand Lake as part of the scope of the June 2008 hearing.

As part of this effort, dialogue must begin between the Northern District, Colorado River District, Colorado Division of Wildlife, the Bureau of Reclamation, and other stakeholders. Some initial questions that should be included are:

- What should be the basis for establishing a numeric clarity standard in light of the limited pre-C-BT data set?
- What are the potential trade offs between improved clarity and potential decline in fisheries productivity impacts? If the improvement in clarity is accompanied by a decrease in aquatic productivity, will the recreational value of the fishery be undermined significantly?
- How realistic is the ultimate goal of 9-m clarity given the development that has occurred within the watershed?
- Should the goal of improved water clarity be fit within the context of nutrient criteria, which are now under development for lakes in Colorado?

If you have questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact Sarah Johnson, our Standards Unit Manager, at 303-692-3609. Jim Saunders, who has researched the Grand Lake transparency issue, now works for Sarah. I can be reached at 303-692-3509.

Sincerely,



Steven H. Gunderson  
Director  
Water Quality Control Division

cc: Sarah Johnson, WQCD  
Dick Parachini, WQCD  
Paul Frohardt, WQCC  
Jim Saunders, WQCD  
Dan Beley, WQCD  
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