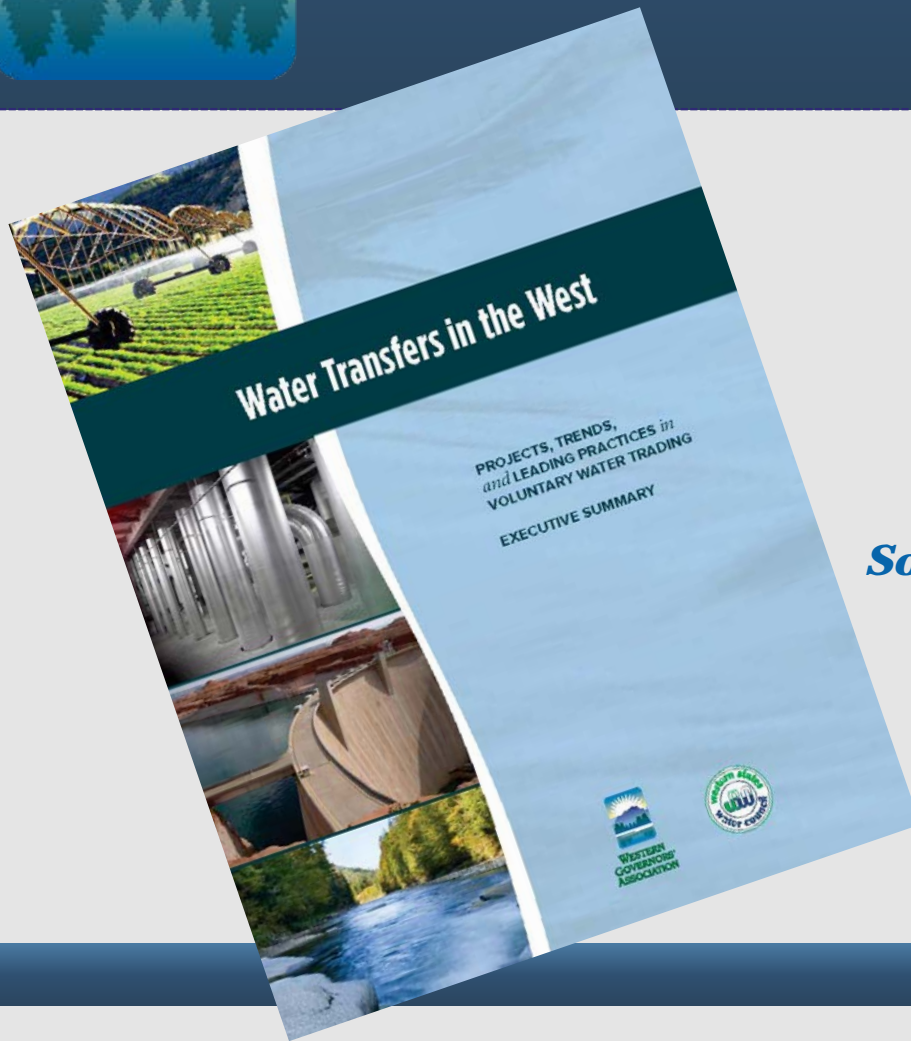




# Water Transfers in the West:

*Projects, Trends, and Leading Practices in Water Trading*



**Carlee Brown**

Western Governors' Association

***Southwestern Water Conservation District***

*April 5, 2013*



WESTERN  
GOVERNORS'  
ASSOCIATION



[www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org)



# The Western Governors' Association



*Western Governors believe states should identify and promote innovative ways to **allow water transfers from agricultural to other uses (including urban, energy and environmental) while avoiding or mitigating damages to agricultural economies and communities.***

*Policy 11-7*





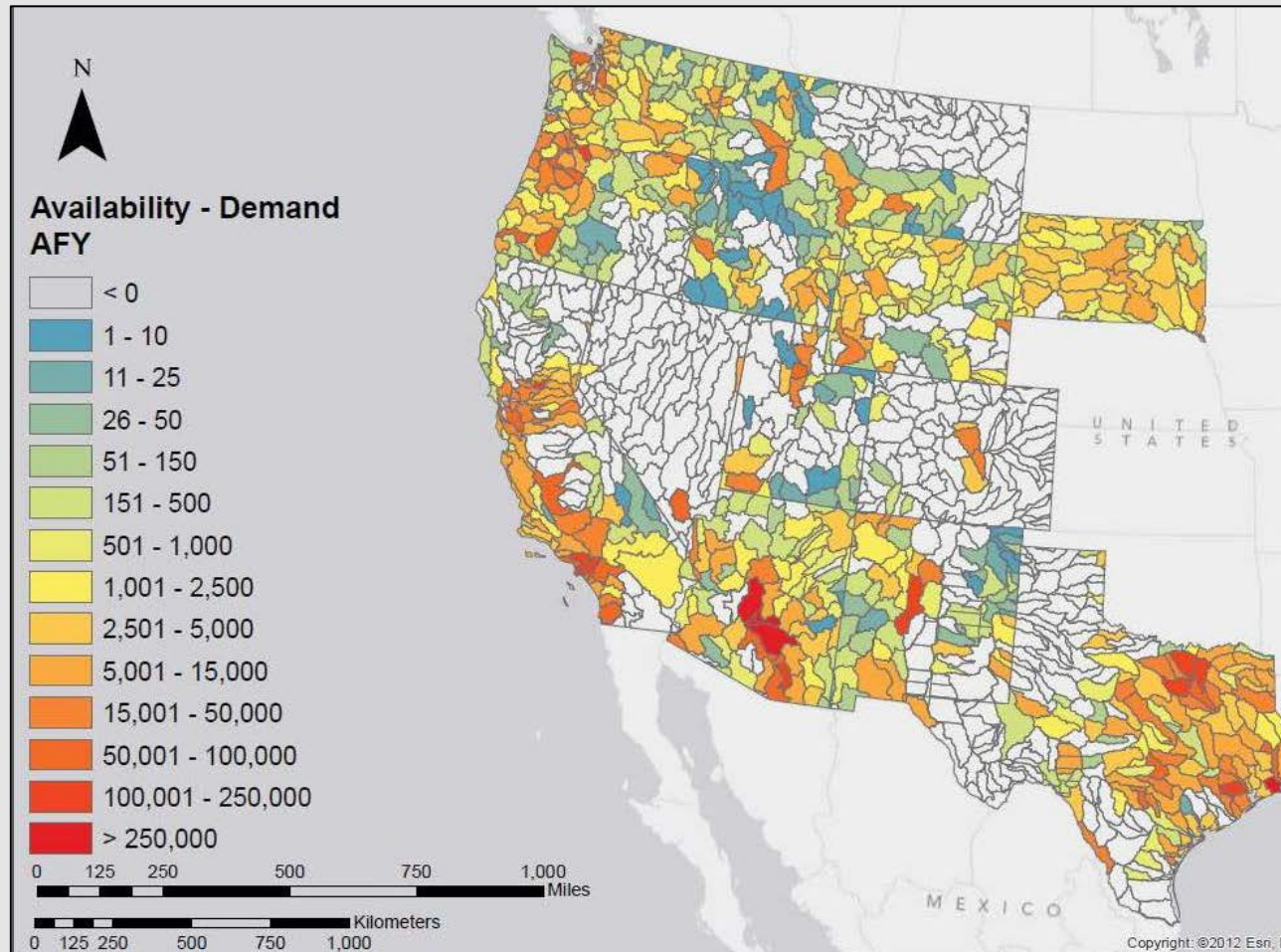
# Water Withdrawals in the WGA States



Freshwater withdrawals in the 17 western states. Source: USGS Report, *Estimated Water Use in the United States in 2005*.



# Projected Change in Water Demand, Present – 2030



Map by Sandia National Labs. Change in consumptive use, not including thermoelectric power. Projections made using states' water plan data.





# How do we meet new demands?

- New supplies
- Conservation
- Reuse
- Desalination
- **Water Transfers**



# Water Transfers

def.: Water Transfer

*A water transfer is a voluntary agreement that results in a temporary or permanent change in the type, time, or place of use of water and/or a water right.*

*Water transfers can be local or distant; they can be a sale, lease, or donation; and they can move water among agricultural, municipal, industrial, energy, and environmental uses.*

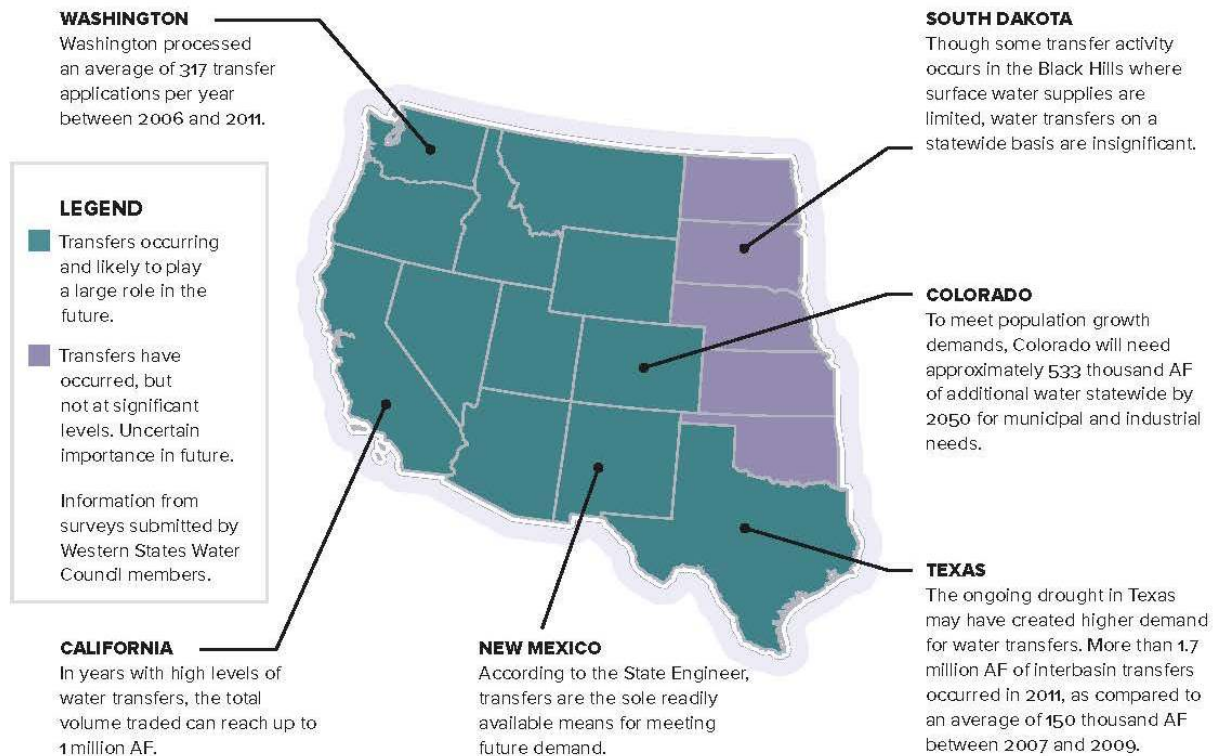
- **Sale, lease or donation**
- **Voluntary**
- **Intra-state**



# State Perspectives

figure 1

## CURRENT AND FUTURE ROLE OF WATER TRANSFERS IN THE WEST



The current and future role of water transfers in the West. Figure by WGA/WSWC.



# Why Water Transfers?

- Voluntary
- Decentralized
- Flexible
- Allocate Water to New Uses
- Incentivize Conservation
- Drive Investment





# Challenges Associated with Water Transfers

- Impacts to Other Users
- Food Production
- Complex Institutions
- Environment
- Local Economies
- Speculation



# Alternative Transfer Mechanisms

- **Rotational Fallowing**
- Deficit Irrigation
- Water Banks
- Interruptible Supply Agreements
- Split-Season Leases
- Buy/Lease Back
- **Piping and Lining Canals and Ditches**
- Alternative cropping types
- Community Mitigation Funds



# Case Study: Arkansas Valley ‘Super Ditch’

“This is the best way to extend our farming operations as long as possible.” - Dale Mauch, Lamar, CO farmer



The small rural community of La Junta has been largely untouched by “buy-and-dry” transfers and maintains a healthy downtown area. Photo by Carla Quezada.





# Case Study: The Deschutes Water Alliance



Left: Deschutes River Conservancy;  
Top and Right: Lynn Howlett Photography



# Tools, Programs, and Policies for States



## ***Tools***

*Options Include:*

- Foster local solutions and flexibility
- Provide funding assistance
- Collect and share basic data on transfers



# Tools, Programs, and Policies for States

## ***Policies***

### *Options Include:*

- Promote conservation and efficiency
- Protect rural communities
- Promote infrastructure to support transfers





# Opportunities for Colorado and SWCD



- Leadership among Western states
- CWCB Alternative Agricultural Water Transfer Methods Grants
  - Interruptible supply agreements
  - Long-term rotational fallowing
  - Water banks
  - Deficit/partial irrigation practices
  - Alternate cropping types



# Questions?



Report, meeting materials, and more available at

[westgov.org/water](http://westgov.org/water)



Carlee Brown: [cbrown@westgov.org](mailto:cbrown@westgov.org)



# Other WGA Projects

- Water Data Exchange (WaDE)
- Infrastructure
- Drought and Extreme Weather

