

# DESIGNATED GROUND WATER COLORADO REVISED STATUTES

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# **COLORADO REVISED STATUTES GOVERNING DESIGNATED GROUND WATER**

## **37-90-101 Short Title**

This article shall be known and may be cited as the "Colorado Ground Water Management Act".

## **37-90-102 Legislative declaration - repeal.**

1) It is declared that the traditional policy of the state of Colorado, requiring the water resources of this state to be devoted to beneficial use in reasonable amounts through appropriation, is affirmed with respect to the designated ground waters of this state, as said waters are defined in section 37-90-103 (6). While the doctrine of prior appropriation is recognized, such doctrine should be modified to permit the full economic development of designated ground water resources. Prior appropriations of ground water should be protected and reasonable ground water pumping levels maintained, but not to include the maintenance of historical water levels. All designated ground waters in this state are therefore declared to be subject to appropriation in the manner defined in this article.

(2) The general assembly finds and declares that the allocation of nontributary ground water pursuant to statute is based upon the best available evidence at this time. The general assembly recognizes the unique, finite nature of nontributary ground water resources outside of designated ground water basins and declares that such nontributary ground water shall be devoted to beneficial use in amounts based upon conservation of the resource and protection of vested water rights. Economic development of this resource shall allow for the reduction of hydrostatic pressure levels and aquifer water levels consistent with the protection of appropriative rights in the natural stream system. The doctrine of prior appropriation shall not apply to nontributary ground water. To continue the development of nontributary ground water resources consonant with conservation shall be the policy of this state. Such water shall be allocated as provided in this article upon the basis of ownership of the overlying land. This policy is a reasonable exercise of the general assembly's plenary power over this resource.

(3) (a) The general assembly finds and declares that in water division 3, established pursuant to section 37-92-201 (1) (c), there exists a confined aquifer system underlying portions of the San Luis valley. The hydrologic system in water division 3 and, in particular, the hydrology and geology of the shallow aquifer and confined aquifer systems and their relationship to surface streams in water division 3 are unique and are among the most complex in the state. Unless properly augmented, new withdrawals of groundwater affecting the confined aquifer system can materially injure vested water rights and increase the burden

of Colorado's scheduled deliveries under the Rio Grande compact. There is currently insufficient comprehensive data and knowledge of the relationship between the surface streams and the confined aquifer system to permit a full understanding of the effect of groundwater withdrawals, affecting the confined aquifer, upon the natural stream and aquifer systems in water division 3.

(b) This subsection (3) is repealed, effective July 1, 2003.

### **37-90-103 - Definitions - repeal.**

As used in this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) "Alternate point of diversion well" means any well drilled and used, in addition to an original well or other diversion, for the purpose of obtaining the present appropriation of that original well, from more than one point of diversion.

(2) "Aquifer" means a formation, group of formations, or part of a formation containing sufficient saturated permeable material that could yield a sufficient quantity of water that may be extracted and applied to a beneficial use.

(3) "Artesian well" means a well tapping an aquifer in which the static water level in the well rises above where it was first encountered in the aquifer, due to hydrostatic pressure.

(4) "Board" or "board of directors" means the board of directors of a ground water management district as organized under section 37-90-124.

(5) "Colorado water conservation board" refers to the board created in section 37-60-102.

(6) (a) "Designated ground water" means that ground water which in its natural course would not be available to and required for the fulfillment of decreed surface rights, or ground water in areas not adjacent to a continuously flowing natural stream wherein ground water withdrawals have constituted the principal water usage for at least fifteen years preceding the date of the first hearing on the proposed designation of the basin, and which in both cases is within the geographic boundaries of a designated ground water basin. "Designated ground water" shall not include any ground water within the Dawson-Arkose, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills formation located outside the boundaries of any designated ground water basin that was in existence on January 1, 1983.

(b) (I) However, "designated ground water" may include any ground water in the Crow Creek drainage area in Weld county, upstream from the confluence of Crow Creek and Little Crow Creek, within the Laramie-Fox Hills formation located outside such boundaries when the Laramie-Fox Hills formation is not overlaid by the Dawson-Arkose, Denver, or Arapahoe formations.

(II) If, upon receipt by the state engineer of the findings of the Laramie-Fox Hills study, as authorized by Senate Bill 250, 1985 legislative session, that the upper

Crow Creek drainage area in Weld county, upstream from the confluence of Crow Creek and Little Crow Creek, within the Laramie-Fox Hills formation when the Laramie-Fox Hills formation is not overlaid by the Dawson-Arkose, Denver, or Arapahoe formations should not be a designated ground water basin, this paragraph (b) is repealed.

(7) "Designated ground water basin" means that area established by the ground water commission in accordance with section 37-90-106.

(8) "Ground water commission" or "commission" refers to the ground water commission created and provided for in section 37-90-104 to facilitate the functioning of this article.

(9) "Ground water management district" or "district" means any district organized under the provisions of this article.

(10) "Historical water level" means the average elevation of the ground water level in any area before being lowered by the activities of man, as nearly as can be determined from scientific investigation and available facts.

(10.5) "Nontributary ground water" means that ground water, located outside the boundaries of any designated ground water basins in existence on January 1, 1985, the withdrawal of which will not, within one hundred years, deplete the flow of a natural stream, including a natural stream as defined in sections 37-82-101 (2) and 37-92-102 (1) (b), at an annual rate greater than one-tenth of one percent of the annual rate of withdrawal. The determination of whether ground water is nontributary shall be based on aquifer conditions existing at the time of permit application; except that, in recognition of the de minimis amount of water discharging from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers into surface streams due to artesian pressure, when compared with the great economic importance of the ground water in those aquifers, and the feasibility and requirement of full augmentation by wells located in the tributary portions of those aquifers, it is specifically found and declared that, in determining whether ground water of the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers is nontributary, it shall be assumed that the hydrostatic pressure level in each such aquifer has been lowered at least to the top of that aquifer throughout that aquifer; except that not nontributary ground water, as defined in subsection (10.7) of this section, in the Denver basin shall not become nontributary ground water as a result of the aquifer's hydrostatic pressure level dropping below the alluvium of an adjacent stream due to Denver basin well pumping activity. Nothing in this subsection (10.5) shall preclude the designation of any aquifer or basin, or any portion thereof, which is otherwise eligible for designation under the standard set forth in subsection (6) of this section relating to ground water in areas not adjacent to a continuously flowing natural stream wherein ground water withdrawals have constituted the principal water usage for at least fifteen years preceding the date of the first hearing on the proposed designation of a basin.

(10.7) "Not nontributary ground water" means ground water located within those portions of the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers that are outside the boundaries of any designated ground water basin in existence on January 1, 1985, the withdrawal of which will, within one hundred years, deplete the flow of a natural stream, including a natural stream as defined in sections 37-82-101 (2) and 37-92-102 (1) (b), at an annual rate of greater than one-tenth of one percent of the annual rate of withdrawal.

(11) "Person" means any individual, partnership, association, or corporation authorized to do business in the state of Colorado, or any political subdivision or public agency thereof, or any agency of the United States, making a beneficial use, or taking steps, or doing work preliminary to making a beneficial use of designated underground waters of Colorado.

(12) "Private driller" means any individual, corporation, partnership, association, political subdivision, or public agency which operates as lessee or owner its own well drilling rig and equipment and which digs, drills, re-drills, cases, recases, deepens, or excavates a well upon the property of such entity.

(12.5) "Quarter-quarter" means a fourth of a fourth of a section of land and is equal to approximately forty acres.

(12.7) "Replacement plan" means a detailed program to increase the supply of water available for beneficial use in a designated ground water basin or portion thereof for the purpose of preventing material injury to other water rights by the development of new points of diversion, by pooling of water resources, by water exchange projects, by providing substitute supplies of water, by the development of new sources of water, or by any other appropriate means consistent with the rules adopted by the commission. "Replacement plan" does not include the salvage of designated ground water by the eradication of phreatophytes, nor does it include the use of precipitation water collected from land surfaces that have been made impermeable, thereby increasing the runoff, but not adding to the existing supply of water.

(13) "Replacement well" means a new well which replaces an existing well and which shall be limited to the yield of the original well and shall take the date of priority of the original well, which shall be abandoned upon completion of the new well.

(14) "Resident agriculturist" means a bona fide farmer or rancher residing in the designated ground water basin whose major source of income is derived from the production and sale of agricultural products.

(15) "State engineer" means the state engineer of Colorado or any person deputized by him in writing to perform a duty or exercise a right granted in this article.

(16) "Subdivision" means an area within a ground water basin.

(17) "Supplemental well" means any well drilled and used, in addition to an original well or other diversion, for the purpose of obtaining the quantity of the original appropriation of the original well, which quantity can no longer be obtained from the original well.

(18) "Taxpaying elector" means a person qualified to vote at general elections in Colorado, who owns real or personal property within the district and has paid ad valorem taxes thereon in the twenty months immediately preceding a designated time or event, which property is subject to taxation at the time of any election held under the provisions of this article or at any other time in reference to which the term "taxpaying elector" is used. A person who is obligated to pay taxes under a contract to purchase real property in the district shall be considered an owner. The ownership of any property subject to the payment of a specific ownership tax on a motor vehicle or trailer or of any other excise or property tax other than general ad valorem property taxes shall not constitute the ownership of property subject to taxation as provided in this article.

(19) "Underground water" and "ground water" are used interchangeably in this article and mean any water not visible on the surface of the ground under natural conditions.

(20) "Waste" means causing, suffering, or permitting any well to discharge water unnecessarily above or below the surface of the ground.

(21) (a) "Well" means any structure or device used for the purpose or with the effect of obtaining ground water for beneficial use from an aquifer.

(b) "Well" does not include a naturally flowing spring or springs where the natural spring discharge is captured or concentrated by installation of a near-surface structure or device less than ten feet in depth located at or within fifty feet of the spring or springs' natural discharge point and the water is conveyed directly by gravity flow or into a separate sump or storage, if the owner obtains a water right for such structure or device as a spring pursuant to article 92 of this title.

(22) "Well driller" means any individual, corporation, partnership, association, political subdivision, or public agency which digs, drills, cases, recases, deepens, or excavates a well either by contract or for hire or for any consideration whatsoever.

### **37-90-104 - Commission - organization - expenses.**

(1) There is created a ground water commission to consist of twelve members, nine of whom shall be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate.

(2) The appointed members of the commission holding office as of July 1, 1971, shall continue in office for the term of their appointment and until their successors are appointed.

(3) (a) All appointments to the commission shall be for four-year terms, except those made to fill vacancies, which shall be for the remainder of the term vacated.

(b) Appointments made after July 1, 1971, as terms expire or are vacated, shall be made so that the commission includes six members who are resident agriculturists of designated ground water basins, with no more than two resident agriculturists from the same ground water basin to be members of the commission at the same time; one member who shall be a resident agriculturist and who shall be appointed from water division 3; and two residents of the state who shall represent municipal or industrial water users of the state, one of whom shall be appointed from the area west of the continental divide.

(4) In addition to the appointed members, the executive director of the department of natural resources shall be a voting member, and the state engineer, and the director of the Colorado water conservation board shall be nonvoting members of the commission. Six voting members shall constitute a quorum at any regularly or specially called meeting of the commission, and a majority vote of those present shall rule. The commission shall establish and maintain a schedule of at least four general meetings each year. The chairman, at his discretion, or two members may call special meetings of the commission to dispose of accumulated business.

(5) Members of the commission shall be paid no compensation but shall be paid actual necessary expenses incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members thereof and a per diem of fifty dollars per day while performing official duties, not to exceed two thousand four hundred dollars in any year.

(6) The commission shall biennially select a chair and vice-chair from among the appointed members. The state engineer shall be ex officio the executive director of the commission and shall carry out and enforce the decisions, orders, and policies of the commission. The commission may delegate to the executive director the authority to perform any of the functions of the commission as set forth in this article except the determination of a designated ground water basin as set forth in section 37-90-106 and the creation of ground water management districts. If any person is dissatisfied with any action of the executive director under the exercise of the powers delegated by the commission, the person may appeal said action to the commission, which shall hear the person's appeals as specified in sections 37-90-113 and 37-90-114.

(7) The provisions of section 24-6-402 (3) (a) (II), C.R.S., concerning imminent court action, as applied to the ground water commission and to any member, employee, contractor, agent, servant, attorney, or consultant thereof, shall not include any actions within the scope of sections 37-90-106 to 37-90-109 and section 37-90-111.

**37-90-105 - Small capacity wells.**

(1) The state engineer has the authority to approve permits for the following types of wells in designated ground water basins without regard to any other provisions of this article:

(a) Wells not exceeding fifty gallons per minute and used for no more than three single-family dwellings, including the normal operations associated with such dwellings but not including the irrigation of more than one acre of land;

(b) Wells not exceeding fifty gallons per minute and used for watering of livestock on range and pasture;

(c) (I) One well not exceeding fifty gallons per minute and used in one commercial business.

(II) To qualify as a "commercial business" under this paragraph (c), the business shall be:

(A) A business that will be operated by the well owner and that will have its own books, bank accounts, checking accounts, and separate tax returns;

(B) A business that will use water solely on the land indicated in the permit for the well and for the purposes stated in such permit;

(C) A business that will maintain its individual assets and will own or lease the property on which the well is to be located or where the business is operated;

(D) A business that will have its own contractual agreements for operation of the business;

(E) A business that agrees not to transfer a permit issued under this paragraph (c) to another entity that also holds a small capacity commercial well permit under this paragraph (c); and

(F) A business that agrees to notify any potential buyer that such buyer shall notify the state engineer of any change in ownership of such business within sixty days after any such change in ownership.

(d) Wells to be used exclusively for monitoring and observation purposes if said wells are capped and locked and used only to monitor water levels or for water quality sampling; or

(e) Wells to be used exclusively for fire-fighting purposes if said wells are capped and locked and available for use only in fighting fires.

(2) The state engineer has the authority to adopt rules in accordance with section 24-4-103, C.R.S., to carry out the provisions of this section. Any party adversely affected or aggrieved by a rule adopted by the state engineer may seek judicial review of such action pursuant to section 24-4-106, C.R.S.

(3) (a) (I) Wells of the type described in this section may be constructed only upon the issuance of a permit in accordance with the provisions of this section. A fee of sixty dollars shall accompany any application for a new well permit under this section. A fee of twenty dollars shall accompany any application for a replacement well of the type described in subsection (1) of this section.

(II) Notwithstanding the amount specified for any fee in subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (a), the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may reduce the amount of one or more of the fees if necessary pursuant to section 24-75-402 (3), C.R.S., to reduce the uncommitted reserves of the fund to which all or any portion of one or more of the fees is credited. After the uncommitted reserves of the fund are sufficiently reduced, the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may increase the amount of one or more of the fees as provided in section 24-75-402 (4), C.R.S.

(b) Beginning on August 5, 1998, the state engineer shall not approve a permit for a small capacity well with an annual volume of use in excess of five acre-feet, unless the well is located in a ground water management district that has adopted rules that allow an annual volume in excess of five acre-feet. This limitation shall not apply to a replacement permit for a well where the original permit allows an annual volume of use in excess of five acre-feet or to a permit for a well covered by the provisions of subsection (4) of this section where the actual annual volume of use was in excess of five acre-feet.

(c) If the application is made pursuant to this section for a well that will be located in a subdivision, as defined in section 30-28-101 (10), C.R.S., and approved on or after June 1, 1972, pursuant to article 28 of title 30, C.R.S., for which the water supply plan has not been recommended for approval by the state engineer, the cumulative effect of all such wells in the subdivision shall be considered in determining material injury, and the state engineer shall deny the application if it is determined that the proposed well will cause material injury to existing water rights.

(d) (I) If any person wishes to replace an existing well of the type described in subsection (1) of this section, such person shall file an application pursuant to this subsection (3) for the construction of a well and shall state in such application such person's intent to abandon the existing well that is to be replaced.

(II) If such a replacement well will not change the amount or type of use of water that can lawfully be made by means of the existing well, a permit to construct and use the replacement well shall be issued, and the existing well shall be abandoned within ninety days after the completion of the replacement well.

(e) Wells for which permits have been granted or may be granted shall be constructed within two years after the permit is issued, which time may be

extended for successive years at the discretion of the state engineer for good cause shown.

(4) (a) Any wells of the type described by this section that were put to beneficial use prior to May 8, 1972, and any wells that were used exclusively for monitoring and observation purposes prior to August 1, 1988, not of record in the office of the state engineer, may be recorded in that office upon written application, payment of a processing fee of sixty dollars, and permit approval. The record shall include the date the water is claimed to have been first put to beneficial use.

(b) Any owner of an existing well that was constructed prior to May 8, 1972, or has a well permit issued prior to January 1, 1996, under the provisions of this section, and that was put to beneficial use for watering livestock in a confined animal-feeding operation prior to January 1, 1996, and has been used for that purpose, may apply by December 31, 1999, to obtain a new permit for that well up to the extent of its beneficial use prior to January 1, 1996, for watering livestock in that commercial business pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of this section. Such well shall be in addition to the one commercial business well allowed in paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of this section. Such an application shall include a sixty dollar filing fee and shall provide documentation of the annual volume of water put to beneficial use from the well. The state engineer shall have the authority to determine the adequacy of the submitted information for the purpose of approving completely, approving in part, or denying the application. Permits issued after January 1, 1996, up to August 5, 1998, shall remain valid thereafter according to the terms and conditions of those permits.

(5) The state engineer shall act upon an application filed under this section within forty-five days after such filing and shall support the ruling with a written statement of the basis therefor.

(6) (a) Any person aggrieved by a decision of the state engineer granting or denying an application under this section may request a hearing before the state engineer pursuant to section 24-4-104, C.R.S. The state engineer may, in the state engineer's discretion, have such hearings conducted before such agent as it may designate for a ruling in the matter. Any party who seeks to reverse or modify the ruling of the agent of the state engineer may file an appeal to the state engineer pursuant to section 24-4-105, C.R.S.

(b) Any party aggrieved by a final decision of the state engineer granting or denying an application filed under this section may within thirty days after such decision file a petition for review with the district court in the county in which the well is located. Upon receipt of such petition, the designated ground water judge for the basin in which the well is located shall conduct such hearings, pursuant to section 24-4-106, C.R.S., as necessary to determine whether or not the decision of the state engineer shall be upheld. In any case in which the state engineer's decision is reversed, the judge shall order the state engineer to grant or deny the application, as such reversal may require, and may specify such terms and conditions as are appropriate.

(7) The board of any ground water management district has the authority to adopt rules that further restrict the issuance of small capacity well permits. In addition, the board of any ground water management district has the authority to adopt rules that expand the acre-foot limitations for small capacity wells set forth in this section. However, in no event shall an annual volume of more than eighty acre-feet be allowed for any small capacity well. Rules adopted by the board may be instituted only after a public hearing. Notice of such hearing shall be published. Such notice shall state the time and place of the hearing and describe, in general terms, the rules proposed. Within sixty days after such hearing, the board shall announce the rules adopted and shall cause notice of such action to be published. In addition, the board shall mail, within five days after the adoption of the rules, a copy of the rules to the state engineer. Any party adversely affected or aggrieved by such a rule may, not later than thirty days after the last date of publication, initiate judicial review in accordance with the provisions of section 24-4-106, C.R.S.; except that venue for such judicial review shall be in the district court for the county in which the office of the ground water management district is located.

**37-90-106 - Determination of designated ground water basins - exception - repeal.**

(1) (a) The commission shall, from time to time as adequate factual data becomes available, determine designated ground water basins and subdivisions thereof by geographic description and, as future conditions require and factual data justify, shall alter the boundaries or description thereof.

(b) In making such determinations the commission shall make the following findings:

- (I) The name of the aquifer within the proposed designated basin;
- (II) The boundaries of each aquifer being considered;
- (III) The estimated quantity of water stored in each aquifer;
- (IV) The estimated annual rate of recharge;
- (V) The estimated use of the ground water in the area.

(2) If the source is an area of use exceeding fifteen years as defined in section 37-90-103 (6), the commission shall list those users who have been withdrawing water during the fifteen-year period, the use made of the water, the average annual quantity of water withdrawn, and the year in which the user began to withdraw water.

(3) Before determining or altering the boundaries of a designated ground water basin or subdivisions thereof, the state engineer shall prepare and file in his office a map clearly showing all lands included therein, together with a written

description thereof sufficient to apprise interested parties of the boundaries of the proposed basin or subdivisions thereof. The commission shall publish the same and hold a hearing thereon. Following such hearing, the commission shall enter an order to either create the proposed designated ground water basin, to include modification of the proposed boundaries, if any, or dismiss the original proposal, according to the factual information presented or available.

(4) (a) The commission shall not, after May 23, 1983, determine as part of any designated ground water basin any ground water within the Dawson-Arkose, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills formations which was located outside the boundaries of any designated ground water basin that was in existence on January 1, 1983.

(b) (I) However, the commission may determine as a part of any designated ground water basin any ground water in the Crow Creek drainage area in Weld county, upstream from the confluence of Crow Creek and Little Crow Creek, within the Laramie-Fox Hills formation when the Laramie-Fox Hills formation is not overlaid by the Dawson-Arkose, Denver, or Arapahoe formations.

(II) If, upon receipt by the state engineer of the findings of the Laramie-Fox Hills study, as authorized by Senate Bill 250, 1985 legislative session, that the upper Crow Creek drainage area in Weld county, upstream from the confluence of Crow Creek and Little Crow Creek, within the Laramie-Fox Hills formation when the Laramie-Fox Hills formation is not overlaid by the Dawson-Arkose, Denver, or Arapahoe formations should not be a designated ground water basin, this paragraph (b) is repealed.

**37-90-107 - Application for use of ground water - publication of notice - conditional permit - hearing on objections - well permits.**

(1) Any person desiring to appropriate ground water for a beneficial use in a designated ground water basin shall make application to the commission in a form to be prescribed by the commission. The applicant shall specify the particular designated ground water basin or subdivision thereof from which water is proposed to be appropriated, the beneficial use to which it is proposed to apply such water, the location of the proposed well, the name of the owner of the land on which such well will be located, the estimated average annual amount of water applied for in acre-feet, the estimated maximum pumping rate in gallons per minute, and, if the proposed use is irrigation, the description of the land to be irrigated and the name of the owner thereof, together with such other reasonable information as the commission may designate on the form prescribed. The amount of water applied for shall only be utilized on the land designated on the application. The place of use shall not be changed without first obtaining authorization from the ground water commission.

(2) Upon the filing of such application, a preliminary evaluation shall be made to determine if the application may be granted. If the application can be given favorable consideration by the ground water commission under existing policies, then, within thirty days, the application shall be published.

(3) After the expiration of the time for filing objections, if no such objections have been filed, the commission shall, if it finds that the proposed appropriation will not unreasonably impair existing water rights from the same source and will not create unreasonable waste, grant the said application, and the state engineer shall issue a conditional permit to the applicant within forty-five days after the expiration of the time for filing objections or within forty-five days after the hearing provided for in subsection (4) of this section to appropriate all or a part of the waters applied for, subject to such reasonable conditions and limitations as the commission may specify.

(4) If objections have been filed within the time in said notice specified, the commission shall set a date for a hearing on the application and the objections thereto and shall notify the applicants and the objectors of the time and place. Such hearing shall be held in the designated ground water basin and within the district, if one exists, in which the proposed well will be located or at such other place as may be designated by the commission for the convenience of, and as agreed to by, the parties involved. If after such hearing it appears that there are no unappropriated waters in the designated source or that the proposed appropriation would unreasonably impair existing water rights from such source or would create unreasonable waste, the application shall be denied; otherwise, it shall be granted in accordance with subsection (3) of this section. The commission shall consider all evidence presented at the hearing and all other matters set forth in this section in determining whether the application should be denied or granted.

(5) In ascertaining whether a proposed use will create unreasonable waste or unreasonably affect the rights of other appropriators, the commission shall take into consideration the area and geologic conditions, the average annual yield and recharge rate of the appropriate water supply, the priority and quantity of existing claims of all persons to use the water, the proposed method of use, and all other matters appropriate to such questions. With regard to whether a proposed use will impair uses under existing water rights, impairment shall include the unreasonable lowering of the water level, or the unreasonable deterioration of water quality, beyond reasonable economic limits of withdrawal or use. If an application for a well permit cannot otherwise be granted pursuant to this section, a well permit may be issued upon approval by the ground water commission of a replacement plan that meets the requirements of this article and the rules adopted by the commission. A replacement plan shall not be used as a vehicle for avoiding limitations on existing wells, including but not limited to restrictions on change of well location. Therefore, before approving any replacement plan that includes existing wells, the commission shall require independent

compliance with all rules governing those existing wells in addition to compliance with any guidelines or rules governing replacement plans.

(6) (a) (I) No person shall, in connection with the extraction of sand and gravel by open mining as defined in section 34-32-103 (9), C.R.S., expose designated ground water to the atmosphere unless said person has obtained a well permit from the ground water commission. If an application for such a well permit cannot otherwise be granted pursuant to this section, a well permit shall be issued upon approval by the ground water commission of a replacement plan which meets the requirements of this article, pursuant to the guidelines or rules and regulations adopted by the commission.

(II) Any person who extracted sand and gravel by open mining and exposed ground water to the atmosphere after December 31, 1980, shall apply for a well permit pursuant to this section and, if applicable, shall submit a replacement plan prior to July 15, 1990.

(b) If any designated ground water was exposed to the atmosphere in connection with the extraction of sand and gravel by open mining as defined in section 34-32-103 (9), C.R.S., prior to January 1, 1981, no such well permit or replacement plan shall be required to replace depletions from evaporation; except that the burden of proving that such designated ground water was exposed prior to January 1, 1981, shall be upon the party claiming the benefit of this exception.

(c) Any person who has reactivated or reactivates open mining operations which exposed designated ground water to the atmosphere but which ceased activity prior to January 1, 1981, shall obtain a well permit and shall apply for approval of a replacement plan or a plan of substitute supply pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection (6).

(d) In addition to the well permit filing fee required by section 37-90-116, the commission shall collect the following fees:

(I) For persons who exposed ground water to the atmosphere on or after January 1, 1981, but prior to July 15, 1989, one thousand three hundred forty-three dollars; except that, if such plan is filed prior to July 15, 1990, as required by subparagraph (II) of paragraph (a) of this subsection (6), the filing fee shall be seventy dollars if such plan includes ten acres or less of exposed ground water surface area or three hundred fifty dollars if such plan includes more than ten acres of exposed ground water surface area.

(II) For persons who expose ground water to the atmosphere on or after July 15, 1989, one thousand three hundred forty-three dollars regardless of the number of acres exposed. In the case of new mining operations, such fee shall cover two years of operation of the plan.

(III) For persons who reactivated or who reactivate mining operations which ceased activity prior to January 1, 1981, and who enlarge the surface area of any

gravel pit lake beyond the area it covered before the cessation of activity, one thousand three hundred forty-three dollars.

(IV) For persons who request renewal of an approved substitute water supply plan prior to the expiration date of the plan, two hundred seventeen dollars regardless of the number of acres exposed.

(V) For persons whose approved substitute water supply plan has expired and who submit a subsequent plan, one thousand three hundred forty-three dollars regardless of the number of acres exposed. An approved plan shall be considered expired if the applicant has not applied for renewal before the expiration date of the plan. The state engineer shall notify the applicant in writing if the plan is considered expired.

(VI) For persons whose proposed substitute water supply plan was disapproved and who submit a subsequent plan, one thousand three hundred forty-three dollars regardless of the number of acres exposed. The state engineer shall notify the applicant in writing of disapproval of a plan.

(e) Excluding the well permit filing fee required by section 37-90-116 (2), all fees collected with a replacement plan shall be credited to the gravel pit lakes augmentation fund, which fund is created in section 37-90-137 (11) (f).

(f) A person who has obtained a reclamation permit pursuant to section 34-32-112, C.R.S., shall be allowed to apply for a single well permit and to submit a single replacement plan for the entire acreage covered by the reclamation plan without regard to the number of gravel pit lakes located within such acreage.

(g) Notwithstanding the amount specified for any fee in paragraph (d) of this subsection (6), the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may reduce the amount of one or more of the fees if necessary pursuant to section 24-75-402 (3), C.R.S., to reduce the uncommitted reserves of the fund to which all or any portion of one or more of the fees is credited. After the uncommitted reserves of the fund are sufficiently reduced, the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may increase the amount of one or more of the fees as provided in section 24-75-402 (4), C.R.S.

(7) (a) The commission shall allocate, upon the basis of the ownership of the overlying land, any designated ground water contained in the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers. Permits issued pursuant to this subsection (7) shall allow withdrawals on the basis of an aquifer life of one hundred years. The commission shall adopt the necessary rules to carry out the provisions of this subsection (7).

(b) Any right to the use of ground water entitling its owner or user to construct a well, which right was initiated prior to November 19, 1973, as evidenced by a current decree, well registration statement, or an unexpired well permit issued prior to November 19, 1973, shall not be subject to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this subsection (7).

(c) (I) Rights to designated ground water in the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers to be allocated pursuant to paragraph (a) of this subsection (7) may be determined in accordance with the provisions of this section. Any person desiring to obtain such a determination shall make application to the commission in a form to be prescribed by the commission. A fee of sixty dollars shall be submitted with the application for each aquifer, which sum shall not be refunded. The application may also include a request for approval of a replacement plan if one is required under commission rules to replace any depletions to alluvial aquifers caused due to withdrawal of ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers.

(II) The publication and hearing requirements of this section shall also apply to an application for determination of water rights pursuant to this subsection (7).

(III) Any such commission approved determination shall be considered a final determination of the amount of ground water so determined; except that the commission shall retain jurisdiction for subsequent adjustment of such amount to conform to the actual local aquifer characteristics from adequate information obtained from well drilling or test holes.

(d) (I) Any person desiring a permit for a well to withdraw ground water for a beneficial use from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers shall make application to the commission on a form to be prescribed by the commission. A fee of sixty dollars shall be submitted with the application, which sum shall not be refunded.

(II) A well permit shall not be granted unless a determination of ground water to be withdrawn by the well has been made pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subsection (7).

(III) The application for a well permit shall also include a replacement plan if one is required under commission rules to replace any depletions to alluvial aquifers caused due to withdrawal of ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers and the required plan has not been approved pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subsection (7). The publication and hearing requirements of this section shall apply to an application for such a replacement plan.

(IV) The annual amount of withdrawal allowed in any well permits issued under this subsection (7) shall be less than or equal to the amount determined pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subsection (7) and may, if so provided by any such determination, provide for the subsequent adjustment of such amount to conform to the actual aquifer characteristics encountered upon drilling of the well or test holes.

(8) The commission shall have the exclusive authority to issue or deny well permits under this section. The commission shall consider any recommendation

by ground water management districts concerning well permit applications under this section.

**37-90-107.5 - Replacement plans.**

Any person desiring to obtain an approval of a replacement plan within the boundaries of a designated ground water basin pursuant to the provisions of this article shall make an application to the commission in a form prescribed by the commission. The applicant shall also submit a summary of the application to the commission for publication. If the commission determines the application to be complete, it shall be published pursuant to section 37-90-112 within sixty days after the filing of such an application. If an objection is filed, a hearing shall be held pursuant to section 37-90-113. The commission shall approve the replacement plan if the commission determines that the replacement plan meets the requirements of this article and rules adopted by the commission. A replacement plan shall not be used as a vehicle for avoiding limitations on existing wells, including but not limited to restrictions on change of well location. Therefore, before approving any replacement plan that includes existing wells, the commission shall require independent compliance with all rules governing those existing wells in addition to compliance with any guidelines or rules governing replacement plans.

**37-90-108 - Final permit - evidence of well construction and beneficial use - limitations.**

(1) (a) After having received a conditional permit to appropriate designated ground water, the applicant, within one year from the date of the issuance of said permit, shall construct the well or other works necessary to apply the water to a beneficial use.

(b) The applicant, upon completion of the well, shall furnish information to the commission, in the form prescribed by the commission, as to the depth of the well, the water-bearing formations intercepted by the well, and the maximum sustained pumping rate in gallons per minute.

(c) If the well described in the conditional permit is not constructed within one year from the date of the issuance of the conditional permit as provided in this subsection (1), the conditional permit shall expire and be of no force or effect; except that, upon a showing of good cause, the commission may grant one extension of time only for a period not to exceed one year. If the well has been constructed timely but the completion information required by this subsection (1) has not been furnished to the commission, the procedures specified in subsection (6) of this section shall apply.

(2) (a) If the well or wells described in a conditional permit have been constructed in compliance with subsection (1) of this section, the applicant, within three years after the date of the issuance of said permit, shall furnish by sworn

affidavit, in the form prescribed by the commission, evidence that water from such well or wells has been put to beneficial use; except that the requirements of this paragraph (a) shall not apply to a well described in a conditional permit issued on or after July 1, 1991, to withdraw designated ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers.

(b) Such affidavit shall be prima facie evidence of the matters contained therein but shall be subject to objection by others, including ground water management districts, claiming to be injured thereby and to such verification and inquiry as the commission shall consider appropriate in each particular case.

(c) If such required affidavit is not furnished to the commission within the time and as provided in this subsection (2), the conditional permit shall expire and be of no force or effect except as provided in subsection (4) of this section.

(d) If the well described in a conditional permit issued on or after July 1, 1991, to withdraw designated ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers has been constructed in compliance with subsection (1) of this section, the applicant shall file a notice with the commission of commencement of beneficial use on a form prescribed by the commission within thirty days after the first beneficial use of any water withdrawn from such well.

(3) (a) (I) To the extent that the commission finds that water has been put to a beneficial use and that the other terms of the conditional permit have been complied with and after publication of the information required in the final permit, as provided in section 37-90-112, the commission shall order the state engineer to issue a final permit to use designated ground water, containing such limitations and conditions as the commission deems necessary to prevent waste and to protect the rights of other appropriators. In determining the extent of beneficial use for the purpose of issuing final permits, the commission may use the same criteria for determining the amount of water used on each acre that has been irrigated that is used in evaluating the amount of water available for appropriation under section 37-90-107. The provisions of this subparagraph (I) shall not apply to a well described in a conditional permit issued on or after July 1, 1991, to withdraw designated ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers.

(II) A final permit is not required to be issued for a well described in a conditional permit issued on or after July 1, 1991, to withdraw designated ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers. For such a well, a conditional permit, subject to the conditions of issuance of such a permit, shall be considered a final determination of a well's water right if the well is in compliance with all other applicable requirements of this article.

(b) In determining the extent of beneficial use prior to the issuance of a final permit, the commission may either increase or decrease the quantity of water and the amount of irrigated acreage, if any, according to the evidence presented to the commission, but no increase shall be permitted which will increase the

quantity of water beyond that authorized by the original decree, conditional permit, registration statement, or other well permit issued prior to basin designation or which otherwise will unreasonably affect the rights of other appropriators.

(c) Any owner of an existing valid conditional permit issued before July 1, 1978, may file with the commission an amended statement of beneficial use, in the form prescribed by the commission, on or before December 31, 1979, and not thereafter, if any such change occurred and was approved on or before August 5, 1977.

(4) The procedural requirement that a statement of beneficial use shall be filed shall apply to all permits wherein the water was put to beneficial use since May 17, 1965. If information pertaining to completion of the well as required in subsection (1) of this section has been received but evidence that water has been placed to beneficial use has not been received as of three years after the date of issuance of the conditional permit, the commission shall so notify the applicant by certified mail. The notice shall give the applicant the opportunity to submit proof that the water was put to beneficial use prior to three years after the date of issuance of the conditional permit. The proof must be received by the commission within twenty days after receipt of the notice by the applicant, and, if the conditional permit was issued on or after July 14, 1975, the proof must be accompanied by a filing fee of thirty dollars. If the commission finds the proof to be satisfactory, the conditional permit shall remain in force and effect. The commission shall consider any records of the commission and any evidence provided to the commission and all other matters set forth in this section in determining whether the conditional permit should remain in force and effect.

(5) All final permits shall set forth the following information as a minimum:

- (a) The priority date;
- (b) The name of the claimant;
- (c) The quarter-quarter in which the well is located;
- (d) The maximum annual volume of the appropriation in acre-feet per year;
- (e) The maximum pumping rate in gallons per minute; and
- (f) The maximum number of acres which have been irrigated, if used for irrigation.

(6) The procedural requirement that the well completion information required by subsection (1) of this section be furnished to the commission shall apply to all permits issued after May 17, 1965. If the well has been constructed within twenty-four months after the date of issuance of the permit where the permit was issued before June 7, 1979, or within twelve months after the date of issuance of the permit where the permit was issued on or after June 7, 1979, or by the

expiration date of the permit, including any extension, but the completion information has not been furnished to the commission within six months after said allowable time for the well completion, the commission shall so notify the applicant by certified mail. The notice shall give the applicant the opportunity to submit proof that the well was completed within the time specified above or by the expiration date of the permit and to submit the information required by subsection (1) of this section and a showing that, due to excusable neglect, inadvertence, or mistake, the applicant failed to submit the evidence and information on time. The proof and information must be received by the commission within twenty days after receipt of the notice by the applicant and must be accompanied by a filing fee of thirty dollars. If the commission finds the proof to be satisfactory, the permit shall remain in force and effect. The commission shall consider any records of the commission and any evidence provided to the commission and all other matters set forth in this section in determining whether the permit should remain in force and effect.

(7) Notwithstanding the amount specified for any fee in this section, the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may reduce the amount of one or more of the fees if necessary pursuant to section 24-75-402 (3), C.R.S., to reduce the uncommitted reserves of the fund to which all or any portion of one or more of the fees is credited. After the uncommitted reserves of the fund are sufficiently reduced, the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may increase the amount of one or more of the fees as provided in section 24-75-402 (4), C.R.S.

### **37-90-109 - Priority - discontinuance orders - grounds.**

(1) Priority of claims for the appropriation of designated ground water shall be determined by the doctrine of prior appropriation. All claims based on actual taking of designated ground water for beneficial use prior to May 17, 1965, shall be determined by the doctrine of prior appropriation and shall relate back to the date of placing designated ground water to beneficial use. All claims for the beneficial use of designated ground water initiated after May 17, 1965, shall relate back to the date of filing of an application with the commission, unless such application is rejected.

(2) In order to establish priority of a claim to appropriate designated ground water which has existed prior to May 17, 1965, a priority date shall be awarded to each well based upon the time the water was first applied to a beneficial use. The date shown in the records now filed in the state engineer's office shall be prima facie evidence of the date the water was first applied to beneficial use. All wells constructed as replacements for or as supplements to original wells for the same beneficial use shall be considered as a unit and awarded a priority date of the earliest well.

(3) As soon as practical after the establishment of a designated ground water basin, the commission shall establish tentative priority dates for the respective

wells within such designated ground water basin, or subdivisions thereof, in accordance with the information contained in its files. The commission may require such additional information from the well claimant as will permit it to make a proper determination of the priority date and may request such other information as is required to be set forth in a final permit pursuant to section 37-90-108 (5). If the claimant fails or refuses to furnish the requested information within a period of thirty days, the commission may proceed to make a determination from the records available.

(4) After establishing the proposed priority date and after receiving the information required by section 37-90-108 (5) for the final permit on claims for the beneficial use of designated ground water, the commission shall order the state engineer to issue a final permit to appropriate designated ground water in the manner and pursuant to the standards set forth in section 37-90-108 for final permits; except that a final permit is not required to be issued for a well described in a conditional permit issued on or after July 1, 1991, to withdraw designated ground water from the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers and except that this section shall not apply to any final priority lists established by the commission prior to January 1, 1985, and any final permits issued pursuant to said lists.

(5) and (6) Repealed.

### **37-90-110 - Powers of the state engineer.**

(1) In the administration and enforcement of this article and in the effectuation of the policy of this state to conserve its ground water resources and for the protection of vested rights, the state engineer is empowered:

(a) To require all flowing wells to be equipped with valves so that the flow of water can be controlled;

(b) To require both flowing and nonflowing wells to be so constructed and maintained as to prevent the waste of ground waters through leaky wells, casings, pipes, fittings, valves, or pumps, either above or below the land surface;

(c) To go upon all lands, both public and private, for the purpose of inspecting wells, pumps, casings, pipes, fittings, and measuring devices, including wells used or claimed to be used for domestic or stock purposes;

(d) To order the cessation of the use of a well pending the correction of any defect that the state engineer has ordered corrected;

(e) To commence actions to enjoin the illegal opening or excavation of wells or withdrawal or use of water therefrom and to appear and become a party to any action or proceeding pending in any court or administrative agency when it appears that the determination of such action or proceeding might result in

depletion of the ground water resources of the state contrary to the public policy expressed in this article or might injure vested rights of other appropriators;

(f) To take such action as may be required to enforce compliance with any regulation, control, or order promulgated pursuant to the provisions of this article.

**37-90-111 - Powers of the ground water commission - limitations.**

(1) In the administration and enforcement of this article and in the effectuation of the policy of this state to conserve its designated ground water resources and for the protection of vested rights and except to the extent that similar authority is vested in ground water management districts pursuant to section 37-90-130 (2), the ground water commission is empowered:

(a) To supervise and control the exercise and administration of all rights acquired to the use of designated ground water. In the exercise of this power it may, by summary order, prohibit or limit withdrawal of water from any well during any period that it determines that such withdrawal of water from said well would cause unreasonable injury to prior appropriators; except that nothing in this article shall be construed as entitling any prior designated ground water appropriator to the maintenance of the historic water level or any other level below which water still can be economically extracted when the total economic pattern of the particular designated ground water basin is considered; and further except that no such order shall take effect until six months after its entry.

(b) To establish a reasonable ground water pumping level in an area having a common designated ground water supply. Water in wells shall not be deemed available to fill the water right therefor if withdrawal therefrom of the amount called for by such right would, contrary to the declared policy of this article, unreasonably affect any prior water right or result in withdrawing the ground water supply at a rate materially in excess of the reasonably anticipated average rate of future recharge.

(c) To issue permits for the construction of replacement wells. Any permits issued shall set forth the conditions under which a well may be modified by a change of the well itself or the pumping equipment therefor, by the drilling of a replacement well, or otherwise, in order to make it possible for the owner of a well to obtain the water to which such owner may be entitled by virtue of his original appropriation.

(d) In the exercise of any of the powers or duties conferred by this section, to confer and consult with the board of directors of the ground water management district board in the affected area, if any such board exists, before promulgating any orders or regulations which would affect the district in general;

(e) To order the total or partial discontinuance of any diversion within a ground water basin to the extent the water being diverted is not necessary for application to a beneficial use;

(f) In any area where a ground water management district has not been formed, to prescribe satisfactory and economical measuring methods for the measurement of water levels in and the amount of water withdrawn from wells and to require reports to be made at the end of each pumping season showing the date and water level at the beginning of the pumping season, the date and water level at the end of the pumping season, and showing any period of more than thirty days' cessation of pumping during such pumping season;

(g) Upon application therefor by any permit holder, to authorize a change in acreage served, volume of appropriation, place, time, or type of use of and by any water right, or of any well location, either conditional or final, granted under the authority of the commission but only upon such terms and conditions as will not cause material injury to the vested rights of other appropriators. No such change that increases the volume of appropriation beyond that authorized by the original decree, conditional permit, registration statement, or other well permit issued prior to basin designation shall be authorized, and no such change shall be approved until after publication of such application as provided in section 37-90-112; except that publication shall not be required to approve a temporary change pursuant to the rules adopted by the commission and except that publication shall not be required for replacement wells that are relocated no further than the maximum distance allowed by district rules and regulations without prior board approval or by commission policy where no district exists or where no district rule has been adopted.

(h) To adopt rules necessary to carry out the provisions of this article.

(2) No supplemental wells or alternate point of diversion wells shall be allowed in any area of any designated ground water basin in which the proposed well or wells combined would deplete the aquifer in excess of the rate of depletion prescribed by the ground water commission or by the ground water management district rules and regulations.

(3) In the exercise of any of the powers or duties conferred by this section, the commission shall confer and consult with the board of directors of the ground water management district board in the affected areas, if any such board exists, before promulgating any orders or regulations which would affect the district in general, and shall request written recommendations from the board of any existing district within which the conditional or final permit has been issued, before taking final action on any request or application made pursuant to this section.

(4) In any area within a designated ground water basin which has not been included within the boundaries of a ground water management district, the commission has the authority to exercise any power given by this article to the

board of directors of a ground water management district, but, before instituting control measures pursuant to section 37-90-130, the commission shall follow the procedures set out in section 37-90-131.

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, the commission shall allocate, upon the basis of ownership of the overlying land, any designated ground water contained in the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, or Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers. Permits issued pursuant to this subsection (5) shall allow withdrawals on the basis of an aquifer life of one hundred years.

### **37-90-112 - Notice - publication.**

(1) When any notice is required to be published under any section of this article, including notice of elections, it shall be deemed to mean a publication in a newspaper of general circulation in each of the counties concerned. Publication of all notices shall be once each week for two successive weeks. The notice shall state the hour and date of the commencement of hearings on the subject matter of the notice; the place at which the hearings will be held; the place where written objections may be filed; and the final date by which written objections will be received; or, if for an election, the date, hours, and polling places.

(2) All objections, either to the published notice or any matter contained therein, shall be in writing and shall briefly state the nature of the objection and shall be filed within the time and at the place designated in the notice.

(3) The time for filing any written objections to notices described in this article shall extend to thirty days following the last publication of the notice.

### **37-90-113 - Hearings.**

(1) Hearings on all matters to be heard by the commission shall be held within the boundaries of the designated ground water basin and within the ground water management district, if one exists, in which the water rights directly involved are situated or at such other place as may be designated by the commission for the convenience of, and as agreed to by, the parties involved. The hearings shall be conducted before the commission under reasonable rules and regulations of procedure prescribed by it. All parties to the hearing, including the commission, have the right to subpoena witnesses, who shall be sworn by the chairman or acting chairman of the commission to testify under oath at the hearing. All parties to the hearing shall be entitled to be heard either in person or by attorney.

(2) In any hearings required to be conducted by the commission, it may, in its discretion, have such hearings conducted before such agent as it may designate, either alone or in conjunction with the appearance of the commission if the agent is technically qualified to conduct or assist in such hearings. Unless agreed otherwise by all parties to a hearing or unless ordered otherwise by the commission due to extenuating circumstances, a hearing pursuant to this section

shall be held within one hundred eighty days after the filing of a request for such a hearing. Appeals of rulings of the agent designated by the commission shall be reviewed at any regular or special commission meeting at the location chosen by the commission for that meeting.

(3) At any hearing or proceedings conducted or authorized by the commission affecting any water rights, either existing or potential, within any ground water management district, the commission shall receive and fully consider the testimony and recommendations of the board of directors or authorized agents of said district, if such testimony and recommendations are offered on behalf of the affected district.

### **37-90-114 - Other administrative hearings.**

Any person claiming to be injured within the boundaries of a designated ground water basin by any act of the state engineer or commission under the provisions of this article, or the failure of the state engineer or commission to take any action under the provisions of this article, except as provided for the small capacity wells in section 37-90-105, shall file a written petition with the commission stating the basis of the alleged injury. Thereafter, only upon request by a petitioner and upon thirty days' written notice to any adverse party, the commission shall conduct a hearing upon the petition in the manner provided in section 37-90-113. If notice of any such act has been published pursuant to section 37-90-112 and no hearing has been requested pursuant to such notice, this section shall not be construed to create a subsequent or additional right to request a hearing concerning such act.

### **37-90-115 - Judicial review of actions of the ground water commission or the state engineer.**

(1) (a) Any party, including a ground water management district, adversely affected or aggrieved by any decision or act of the ground water commission, except for the adoption of rules, under the provisions of this article or by a decision or act of the state engineer under section 37-90-110 may take an appeal to the district court in the county wherein the water rights or wells involved are situated.

(b) (l) The notice of such appeal shall be served by the appellant upon the state engineer or the commission and all interested parties within thirty days after the notice of such decision or act and, unless such appeal is taken within said time, the action of the state engineer or the commission shall be final and conclusive. For purposes of service only, "all interested parties" shall be limited to those parties which appeared at, and were granted party status in, any administrative hearing held by the commission or state engineer concerning the decision or act

from which the appeal is taken. If no administrative hearing has been held, notice of such appeal shall be given by publication pursuant to section 37-90-112.

(II) Notice of such appeal, proof of service, and docketing of the appeal in the district court shall be accomplished in the same manner as any other civil suit originally commenced in the district courts of this state. Costs shall be charged to the appellant as in any other civil suit.

(III) Proceedings upon appeal shall be de novo; except that evidence taken in any administrative proceeding appealed from may be considered as original evidence, subject to legal objection, as if said evidence were originally offered in such district court.

(IV) It is the duty of the commission or the state engineer, upon being served with a notice of appeal pursuant to this section, to transmit to the district court to which the appeal is taken the papers, maps, plats, field notes, orders, decisions, and other available data affecting the matter in controversy or certified copies thereof, which certified copies shall be admitted in evidence as of equal validity with the originals.

(V) For the purpose of maximizing continuity in the disposition of designated ground water cases, on or before January 10 of each year, the supreme court shall designate or redesignate a designated ground water judge for each designated ground water basin, who shall be selected from a judicial district within which some part of that designated ground water basin lies, and any vacancy that occurs during such year shall be filled by designation of the supreme court. The services of each designated ground water judge shall be in addition to such judge's regular duties as a district judge but shall take priority over such regular duties, and the schedules of the district judges in each such judicial district shall be arranged and adjusted so that the designated ground water judge shall be free to hear designated ground water cases. All cases relating to designated ground water which are filed in each judicial district shall be assigned to the designated ground water judge, and all proceedings regarding said cases shall be heard by the designated ground water judge. If it becomes necessary during any year for the proper handling of designated ground water cases in any judicial district, the supreme court shall designate one or more additional designated ground water judges from that judicial district or may make temporary assignments of other judges to hear such cases.

(2) Any party adversely affected or aggrieved by a rule adopted by the ground water commission may take an appeal pursuant to section 24-4-106, C.R.S.

### **37-90-116 - Fees - ground water publication fund.**

(1) The state engineer or the commission shall collect the following fees:

(a) With an application for the use of ground water, sixty dollars, which sum shall not be refunded;

(b) Repealed.

(c) For issuing a permit to modify or replace an existing well, sixty dollars;

(d) For making a copy of a document filed in his office, fifty cents per page or fraction thereof;

(e) For certifying copies of documents, records, or maps, two dollars for each certification;

(f) The actual expenses of publication, if any is required, which sums shall be promptly billed to the applicant and paid prior to the approval of any permit or other application, unless the commission requires the applicant to pay these expenses directly to the newspaper, and the applicant provides a proof of such payment to the commission; except that, when a publication is made to process final permits pursuant to section 37-90-108, such publication expenses shall be paid by the state engineer from the division of water resources ground water management cash fund created pursuant to section 37-80-111.5 (1) (d). All such publication expenses collected by the state engineer or by the commission shall be transmitted to the state treasurer, who shall credit the same to the ground water publication fund, which fund is hereby created. All moneys in the ground water publication fund are hereby continuously appropriated to the division of water resources for the actual expenses of publications. The moneys in the ground water publication fund shall not be credited or transferred to the general fund or to any other fund of the state.

(g) With an objection to an application for the use of ground water, ten dollars, which sum shall not be refunded;

(h) With an application for any change in a well permit, whether conditional or final, submitted pursuant to section 37-90-111 (1) (g), sixty dollars, which sum shall not be refunded;

(i) With a request to extend the expiration date on a well permit, other than a well permit issued pursuant to section 37-90-105, sixty dollars.

(2) Departments and agencies of the state of Colorado shall be exempt from the payment of fees for applications for the use of ground water or for a permit to construct a well.

(3) Notwithstanding the amount specified for any fee in subsection (1) of this section, the commission by rule or as otherwise provided by law may reduce the amount of one or more of the fees if necessary pursuant to section 24-75-402 (3), C.R.S., to reduce the uncommitted reserves of the fund to which all or any portion of one or more of the fees is credited. After the uncommitted reserves of the fund are sufficiently reduced, the commission by rule or as otherwise

provided by law may increase the amount of one or more of the fees as provided in section 24-75-402 (4), C.R.S.

**37-90-117 - Water conservation board - duties.**

The Colorado water conservation board has the power, and it is its duty, to investigate and determine the nature and extent of the ground water resources of the state of Colorado. It is also the duty of said board to study and determine the effect, if any, of the withdrawal of ground water upon aquifer supply and upon the surface flow of streams, and the information obtained thereby shall be made available to the state engineer and the ground water commission and any designated ground water management district. Nothing in this section shall be construed as impairing the authority of the state engineer, the ground water commission, or any ground water management district to make such investigation as it may find necessary or desirable to enable it to perform its duties under this article.

**37-90-118 - Ground water management districts - formation.**

Within areas determined as designated ground water basins by action of the commission in accordance with section 37-90-106, ground water management districts may be formed in the manner, and having the power, provided in sections 37-90-118 to 37-90-135; but no district shall be organized unless all ground water aquifers containing designated ground water within the geographic boundaries of the district have been included as a part of the district by the commission.

**37-90-119 - Creation of districts - proposal - submission - changes - proposed boundaries.**

A proposal for the formation of a designated ground water management district must be first submitted to the ground water commission, which shall make a hydrologic, geographic, and geologic evaluation of the proposed boundaries and recommend any changes in such boundaries as are indicated by such evaluation. No further steps for the formation of such district shall be taken until the commission, in writing, gives its consent to the boundaries thereof. The commission shall give either its consent or disapproval of the proposed boundaries within ninety days after the proposal has been submitted to it.

**37-90-120 - Management districts - petition - signatures required - filing.**

Following receipt of the consent required by section 37-90-119, a petition calling for formation of the proposed district may be filed with the commission. The

petition shall be signed by not less than fifteen percent of the taxpaying electors within the proposed district.

**37-90-121 - Management districts - petition - contents - minor defects - amendment.**

(1) The petition referred to in section 37-90-120 shall set forth:

(a) The name of the proposed district and boundaries thereof;

(b) A proposed division of the district into divisions as nearly equal in size as may be practicable, and considering the population thereof, each of which is to be represented by a director who is a resident taxpaying elector in such division;

(c) The number of directors that the district shall have if formed, not less than five nor more than fifteen in number, together with the name and address of each of the proposed directors, the division to be represented by each of them, and their terms of office, which shall be so designated that approximately one-half of them shall expire on the first Tuesday in March of the second year after the organization of the district is completed, and the remainder of them on the first Tuesday in March of the fourth year after the organization of the district is completed;

(d) Where the offices of such proposed district are to be maintained; and

(e) A prayer that the organization of the district be submitted to a vote of the taxpaying electors as provided in section 37-90-124.

(2) No petition for the organization of a district with the requisite signatures shall be declared null and void on account of minor defects, but the commission may at any time, prior to final determination of the sufficiency thereof, permit the petition to be amended in form to conform to the facts. Several similar petitions or duplicate copies of the same petition for the organization of the same district may be filed and shall together be regarded as one petition. All petitions, filed prior to the determination of the sufficiency of such petition, shall be considered as though filed with the first petition placed on file.

**37-90-122 - Management district - petition - certification of signatures - hearing - notice - publication.**

The commission shall examine the petition, and, if it finds that it bears the requisite number of signatures and otherwise meets the stated requirements, it shall thereupon set a date for hearing upon such petition and shall cause notice of such hearing, together with a copy of such petition, to be published, the final publication being not less than ten days nor more than thirty days prior to the

date set for such hearing. The cost of such publication shall be paid by the petitioners and shall be advanced by them prior to publication.

**37-90-123 - Management districts - hearing - objections - change of boundaries.**

At the time set for such hearing, the commission shall examine the petition and hear objections thereto and may order changes in the boundaries thereof by the inclusion or removal of land therefrom upon finding that such change would be hydrologically, geologically, and geographically sound. The action of the commission may be reviewed by the district court in appeal proceedings filed within twenty days after its decision has been announced, which decision shall be announced within ninety days after the hearing.

**37-90-124 - Election on organization.**

(1) If, after the completion of the hearing on the feasibility of the organization of a district, it is determined that such district shall be organized, the commission shall forthwith make an order allowing the prayer of the petition, and, by order duly entered upon its record, shall call an election of the taxpaying electors in the district for the purpose of determining whether such district shall be organized, and shall set the date for such election.

(2) The commission shall thereupon publish a notice, the final publication to be not less than ten days nor more than thirty days immediately preceding the election, which notice shall state: The fact of filing of the petition; in summary form, the information required by section 37-90-121 (1) to be included in the petition; that an election will be held to decide the question of organization of the proposed district; the date of such election; the polling places at which such election is to be held; the qualifications of those eligible to vote at such election; and the specific question to be submitted.

(3) The commission shall appoint three taxpaying electors of the district as judges for each designated polling place. The election shall be held and conducted as nearly as may be in the same manner as general elections in this state. There shall be no special registration for such election, but, for the purpose of determining qualifications of electors, the judges shall be permitted to use the last official registration lists of electors residing in the district and a certified list of taxpayers in the district prepared by the county treasurer and, in addition, may require the execution of an affidavit concerning the qualification of any such taxpaying elector to vote.

(4) At such election the voters shall vote for or against the organization of the district. The judges of each polling place shall certify the returns of the election to the ground water commission. If a majority of votes cast at said election are

against the organization of the district, the commission shall forthwith dismiss the petition, and no election shall be held on the original petition or another petition for organization of the same district within one year of such dismissal.

(5) If a majority of the votes cast at said election are for the organization of said district, the commission, by order duly entered of record, shall declare the district organized, define the boundaries thereof, and give it the corporate name designated in the petition by which in all proceedings it shall thereafter be known and designate the members of the first board of directors, as named in the organization petition and the districts they represent. Thereupon the district shall be a governmental subdivision of the state of Colorado and a body corporate with all the powers of a public or quasi-municipal corporation.

**37-90-125 - Filing decree.**

Within thirty days after the district has been declared a corporation by the commission, it shall transmit to the county clerk and recorder of each of the counties in which the district or a part thereof extends copies of the decree of the commission incorporating the district.

**37-90-126 - Management district - directors - qualifications - oath - bond - vacancies.**

The members of the board of directors shall be resident taxpaying electors within the district. Each member of the board shall take an oath of office, and shall give bond in the sum of five thousand dollars conditioned that he shall faithfully perform the duties of director and of such further office to which he may be elected in such district, and shall account for all funds or property coming into his hands as such director or other officer. Such bonds shall run to the district, shall be signed by a surety approved by the ground water commission, and shall be filed and recorded in the office of the state engineer. When such bond is so filed and approved, such person so elected shall take and hold office until his successor is elected and qualified. When a vacancy occurs on the board, such vacancy shall be filled by the remaining members of the board.

**37-90-127 - Management district - directors - election - term of office.**

As the terms of the members of the board of directors expire, their successors shall be nominated by petitions containing the signatures of not less than fifteen percent of the number of qualified taxpaying electors of the division who voted at the last preceding district election, to be filed with the secretary of the district not less than thirty days before the election; thereafter, the members shall be elected for terms of four years by the plurality vote of the taxpaying electors of the

division of the district which they represent. Such elections shall be held on the first Tuesday in February preceding the expiration of such terms and shall be conducted by the district board in the general manner prescribed in section

**37-90-128 - Management district - directors - no compensation - expenses.**

The members of the board of directors shall receive no compensation but shall be paid their actual expenses while engaged in the business of such district.

**37-90-129 - Management district - officers - election.**

The board of directors shall annually elect a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and such other officers as may be necessary.

**37-90-130 - Management districts - board of directors.**

(1) The district board has the duty and responsibility of consulting with the commission on all ground water matters affecting the district to determine whether proposed restrictions or regulations are suitable for such area, to determine in conjunction with the commission whether the area of the district should be enlarged or contracted, to cooperate with the commission and the state engineer in the assembling of data on the ground water aquifers in the area and the enforcement of regulations or restrictions which may be imposed thereon, and to assist the commission and the state engineer to the end of conserving the ground water supplies of the area for the maximum beneficial use thereof.

(2) After the issuance of any well permit for the use of ground water within the district by the ground water commission as provided in sections 37-90-107 and 37-90-108, the district board has the authority to regulate the use, control, and conservation of the ground water of the district covered by such permit by any one or more of the following methods, but the proposed controls, regulations, or conservation measures shall be subject to review and final approval by the ground water commission if objection is made in accordance with section 37-90-131:

(a) To provide for the spacing of wells producing from the ground water aquifer or subdivision thereof and to regulate the production therefrom so as to minimize as far as practicable the lowering of the water table or the reduction of the artesian pressure;

(b) To acquire lands for the erection of dams and for the purpose of draining lakes, draws, and depressions, and to construct dams, drain lakes, depressions, draws, and creeks, and to install pumps and other equipment necessary to recharge the ground water reservoir or subdivision thereof;

(c) To develop comprehensive plans for the most efficient use of the water of the ground water aquifer or subdivision thereof and for the control and prevention of waste of such water, which plans shall specify in such detail as may be practicable the acts, procedure, performance, and avoidance which are or may be necessary to effect such plans, including specifications therefor; to carry out research projects, develop information, and determine limitations, if any, which should be made on the withdrawal of water from the ground water aquifer or subdivisions thereof; to collect and preserve information regarding the use of such water and the practicability of recharge of the ground water aquifer; and to publish such plans and information and bring them to the notice and attention of the users of such ground water within the district and to encourage their adoption and execution;

(d) To require the owner or operator of any land in the district upon which is located any open or uncovered well to close or cap the same permanently with a covering capable of sustaining weight of not less than four hundred pounds, except when said well is in actual use by the owner or operator thereof;

(e) To promulgate reasonable rules and regulations for the purpose of conserving, preserving, protecting, and recharging the ground water of the ground water aquifer or subdivision thereof, in conformity with the provisions of this article;

(f) To prohibit, after affording an opportunity for a hearing before the board of the local district and presentation of evidence, the use of ground water outside the boundaries of the district where such use materially affects the rights acquired by permit by any owner or operator of land within the district;

(g) In the control and administration of the quantity of ground water extracted from the aquifer, to adopt such devices, procedures, measures, or methods as it deems appropriate to effectuate this purpose;

(h) To promulgate reasonable rules and regulations with respect to the protection and compensation of the owners of any small capacity wells as defined in section 37-90-105 which may be injured by irrigation wells;

(i) To represent the district at any hearings or proceedings conducted or authorized by the commission affecting any water rights, either actual or potential, within the district;

(j) To exercise such other administrative and regulatory authority concerning the ground waters of the district as, without the existence of the district, would otherwise be exercised by the ground water commission.

(3) All special and regular meetings of the board shall be held at locations which are within the boundaries of the district or which are within the boundaries of any county in which the district is located, in whole or in part, or in any county so long as the meeting location does not exceed twenty miles from the district

boundaries. The provisions of this subsection (3) may be waived only if the following criteria are met:

(a) The proposed change of location of a meeting of the board appears on the agenda of a regular or special meeting of the board; and

(b) A resolution is adopted by the board stating the reason for which a meeting of the board is to be held in a location other than under the provisions of this subsection (3) and further stating the date, time, and place of such meeting.

(4) After the issuance of any well permit for a small capacity well within the district pursuant to section 37-90-105, the district has the authority to enforce compliance with the terms and conditions governing the use of the ground water allowed by such permit to ensure that such use is within the scope of what is allowed by section 37-90-105 and the well permit.

**37-90-131 - Management district - board of directors - control measures - hearing - notice - publication - order.**

(1) (a) Whenever the board of directors determines that controls, regulations, or conservation measures are necessary in order to ensure the proper conservation of ground water within the district, it shall confer with the ground water commission and ground water users within the district. No such measures or regulations shall be instituted until after a public hearing. Notice of such hearing shall be published. Such notice shall state the time and place of the hearing and in general terms the corrective measures or regulations proposed. Within sixty days after such hearing, the board shall announce the measures or regulations ordered to be taken and shall cause notice of such action to be published. The board has the authority to compel compliance with such measures or regulations by an action brought in the district court of the county in which any failure to comply is found to exist.

(b) Any person adversely affected or aggrieved by the announcement of control or conservation measures or regulations adopted by the district board may appeal such decision to the ground water commission by filing a notice of appeal and the grounds therefor with the commission not later than thirty days after the date of last publication. The commission shall hear all such appeals pursuant to section 37-90-113. The commission shall have authority to affirm or reject the measures or regulations adopted by the district or to modify such measures or regulations but only upon consent from the district board. Judicial review of commission actions in such appeals may be taken pursuant to section 37-90-115.

(c) Any person adversely affected or aggrieved by an act of the district board, other than the announcement of control or conservation measures or regulations, has the right to be heard by the board. Such person shall file a written request for a hearing that states the basis of the alleged injury. Unless agreed otherwise by

all parties to a hearing or unless otherwise approved by the district due to extenuating circumstances, a hearing shall be held within one hundred eighty days after filing the request for such a hearing. Upon thirty days' written notice to all adverse parties, the district shall conduct a hearing upon the matter. Hearing procedures shall be as informal as possible, with due regard for the rights of the parties. All parties shall have the right to subpoena witnesses and to be heard either in person or by attorney. The district board may have such hearings conducted before an agent or hearing officer. After such hearing, the district board shall issue a written decision containing its findings and conclusions and shall serve its decision upon all parties by first-class mail. Judicial review of such district decisions may be taken in the manner and governed by the standards set forth for review of commission and state engineer decisions in section 37-90-115.

(2) Subject to review by the ground water commission pursuant to subsection (1) of this section, the board may institute control measures or regulations to prescribe satisfactory and economical measuring methods for the measurement of water levels in and the amount of water withdrawn from wells and to require reports to be made at the end of each pumping season showing the date and water level at the beginning of the pumping season, the date and water level at the end of the pumping season, and any period of more than thirty days cessation of pumping during such pumping season.

**37-90-132 - Management district - board of directors - taxes - levy - limitation.**

The board of directors may levy and collect annually taxes necessary to finance the activities of such district to the amount of not more than two mills on the dollar of the valuation for assessment of all taxable property within the district. It shall, in accordance with the schedule prescribed by section 39-5-128, C.R.S., certify its mill levy to the board of county commissioners of the counties wholly or partially within the district, who shall extend the same on the county tax list, and the same shall be collected by the county treasurer in the same manner as state and county taxes are collected. In addition, annually the board of directors of the district may assess and certify a special assessment on all water wells, except those wells described in section 37-90-105, in the district not to exceed fifteen cents per acre-foot of the maximum annual volume of the appropriation of each such well. Said assessment shall be collected by the county treasurer in the same manner as other special assessments. It is the duty of the board to apply for and to receive from the county treasurers all money to the credit of the district.

**37-90-133 - Management district - claims - warrants - payment.**

All claims against ground water management districts may be paid by warrants or orders, duly drawn against the district, as authorized by the board.

**37-90-134 - Management district - issuance of bonds - indebtedness - submission to electors.**

(1) To pay for the construction, operation, and maintenance of any works, and expenses preliminary and incidental thereto, which the board is authorized to construct for the benefit of the district, the board is authorized to enter into contracts providing for payment in installments or to issue negotiable bonds of the district. If bonds are authorized, the same shall bear interest at a rate such that the net effective interest rate of the issue does not exceed the maximum net effective interest rate authorized, payable semiannually, and shall be due and payable not more than fifty years from their dates. The form, terms, and provisions of said bonds or contracts, provisions for their payment, and conditions for their retirement and calling, not inconsistent with law, shall be vested and determined by the board, and they shall be issued in payment of the works, equipment, expenses, and interest during and after the period of construction. Said bonds or contracts shall be executed in the name of and on behalf of the district and signed by the president of the board, the seal of the district affixed thereto and attested by the secretary of the board. Said bonds or contracts must be in such denominations or upon such conditions as the board determines and shall be payable to bearer and may be registered in the office of the county treasurer of each of the counties wherein the district or part of it is situated, with the interest coupons payable to bearer, which shall bear the facsimile signature of the president of the board. Bond interest shall be exempt from all state, county, municipal, school, and other taxes imposed by any taxing authority of the state of Colorado and shall not be sold at less than par and accrued interest.

(2) Whenever the board incorporated under this article, by resolution adopted by majority of said board, determines that the interests of said district and the public interest or necessity demand the acquisition, construction, or completion of any source of water supply, waterworks, or other improvements or facilities, or the making of any contract with the United States or other persons or corporations, to carry out the objects and purposes of said district, wherein the indebtedness or obligation is created, to satisfy which shall require a greater expenditure than the ordinary annual income and revenue of the district permits, said board shall order the submission of the proposition of incurring such obligation or bonded or other indebtedness for the purposes set forth in said resolution to the qualified taxpaying electors of the district at an election held for that purpose. Any election held for the purpose of submitting any proposition of incurring such obligation or indebtedness may be held separately or may be consolidated or held concurrently with any other election authorized by law at which such qualified taxpaying electors of the district are entitled to vote. Notice of the resolution and election shall be published in a form sufficient to apprise the taxpaying electors of the objects and purposes for which the indebtedness is proposed to be incurred, the estimated cost of the works or improvement, the amount of principal of the indebtedness to be incurred therefor, and the

maximum rate of interest to be paid on such indebtedness. Such resolution and notice shall also fix the date upon which such election shall be held, the manner of holding the same, and the method of voting for or against the incurring of the proposed indebtedness. Such election shall be held in the same general manner as in this article provided for the election of directors. The bond issue or indebtedness proposed shall not be valid unless a majority of those voting at the election held for that purpose vote in favor of such bond issue or indebtedness in accordance with the terms of the resolution.

**37-90-135 - Management district - dissolution - procedure - funds - disposition.**

If there are no debts outstanding, the board of directors may, on its own motion or on the written petition of twenty percent of the taxpaying electors of the district, request of the ground water commission that the question of dissolution of such district be submitted to the electors of the district. The commission shall fix the date of such election, notice of which shall be given and which shall be conducted in the same manner as elections for the formation of such districts. If a majority of those voting on such question vote in favor of dissolution, the commission shall so certify to the county clerk and recorders of the counties involved and the district shall thereupon be dissolved. The question of dissolution shall not be submitted more often than once every twelve months. In case a district is dissolved the funds on hand or to be collected shall be held by the treasurer, and the directors shall petition the district court of the county in which the main office is located for an order approving the distribution of funds to the taxpayers of the district on the same basis as collected.

**37-90-139 - Existing beneficial uses not recorded - fee.**

Existing uses of ground water put to beneficial use prior to May 17, 1965, not of record in the office of the state engineer on April 21, 1967, may be recorded upon written application and payment of a filing fee of twenty-five dollars and shall retain the date of initiation when first put to beneficial use, but no such recording shall be accepted after December 31, 1968.

**37-90-143 - Owners of well permits - update for name and address.**

(1) Effective July 1, 1994, any owner of an unexpired well permit issued pursuant to this article or article 92 of this title who changes a name or mailing address from that on file with the office of the state engineer shall file an update to the

name or mailing address with the state engineer by January 1, 1995, on a form prescribed by the state engineer.

(2) Effective January 1, 1995, any owner of an unexpired well permit issued pursuant to this article or article 92 of this title who changes a name or mailing address from that on file with the state engineer shall file, in person, by mail, or by fax, an update with the state engineer within sixty days after the date of the change, on a form prescribed by the state engineer.