

DISTRICT COURT, WATER DIVISION 1 WELD COUNTY, COLORADO Weld County Courthouse, 901 9 th Ave., P.O. Box 2038, Greeley, Colorado 80632	DATE FILED: August 31, 2017 10:16 AM CASE NUMBER: 2017CW3054
Concerning the Application for Water Rights of: DALE D. MCGEHEE AND STEPHANIE B. MCGEHEE In EL PASO COUNTY	<p style="text-align: center;">▲ COURT USE ONLY ▲</p> Consolidated Case Nos. 17CW3054 (Div. 1) and 17CW3015 (Div. 2)
FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, JUDGMENT AND DECREE	

The Court, having reviewed the application, the State Engineer's Determinations of Facts dated May 8, 2017, the Division Engineer's Summary of Consultation dated June 30, 2017, the Applicants' Response thereto dated July 15, 2017, and the other pleadings in this case, hereby enters the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Judgment and Decree.

FINDINGS OF FACT

I. Basic information.

1. The applicants for adjudication of the water in the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers underlying certain land in El Paso County, and for approval of a plan for augmentation, are Dale D. McGehee and Stephanie B. McGehee, 10958 Mt. Evans Road, Falcon, CO 80831, e-mail dalemcgehee@comcast.net; phone 719.749.7327.
2. The application in this case was filed on March 31, 2017, in Water Divisions 1 and 2.
3. The application was published in the resumes for Water Divisions 1 and 2 and in a newspaper of general circulation in El Paso County, as required by law. Proof of publication has been filed.
4. No statements of opposition were filed, and the time for filing statements of opposition has expired. No motions to intervene have been filed.
5. Pursuant to Applicants' Motion, on June 29, 2017, the Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court consolidated the Water Division 1 and Water Division 2 applications in Water Division 1 in Greeley. Also pursuant to Applicants' Motion, on July 6, 2017, the water judge referred the consolidated cases to the water referee.
6. The Court has reviewed the State Engineer's Determinations of Facts and the Division Engineer's Consultation Report of the Division Engineer, as well as the Applicants' Response thereto which was filed on July 18, 2017. The decree entered herein is consistent with those documents.

7. The land and water involved herein are not within the boundaries of a designated ground water basin.

II. Denver Basin Water Rights.

8. The property beneath which the water is sought to be adjudicated is described as “Lot 3 Mountain Shadows Ranch Second Phase,” a 10.5 acre parcel of land located in the SW1/4 Section 19, T. 11 S., R. 65 W., 6th P.M. The street address is 16860 Thompson Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80908. A map showing the location of the Property is attached as Figure 1.

9. Applicants have not conveyed or otherwise transferred their inchoate right to appropriate the water in the Denver Basin aquifers underlying the Property.

10. There are no liens of record against the Property; thus, the notification requirements of C.R.S. §37-92-302(2)(b) are not applicable.

11. The State Engineer’s Determinations of Facts indicate that the amounts of water underlying the Property which are available for appropriation and may be adjudicated herein are as set forth on Table I:

Table I

Aquifer	Acreage	Specific Yield	Saturated Thickness (ft)	Total Amount (AF)	Annual Amount (AF) ¹
Dawson	10.5	.20	490	1,029	10.3
Denver	10.5	.17	510 ²	910	9.1
Arapahoe	10.5	.17	240	428	4.3
L-Fox Hills	10.5	.15	200	315	3.2

12. The estimated depths and tributary status of the four aquifers beneath the Property are shown on Table II:

¹ This amount is based on annual withdrawals of one percent of the total amount appropriated, as provided in C.R.S. §37-90-137(4)(b). The plan for augmentation decreed herein provides that some of the water in the Dawson and Denver aquifers must be withdrawn at a lower rate.

² This amount includes 253 acre feet which the State Engineer had allocated to permit no. 257593, which has not been constructed. Applicants will allow that permit to expire without constructing the well. Any future well constructed into the Denver aquifer shall be permitted pursuant to C.R.S. 37-90-137(4). In addition no new exempt wells approved pursuant to C.R.S. 37-92-602 will be allowed pursuant to the water supply plan for the subdivision of August 18, 1999 since the Denver aquifer water is decreed and reserved to replace the post pumping augmentation requirements.

Table II

Aquifer	Depth below surface	tributary status
Dawson	near surface to 1,060 feet	not nontributary
Denver	1,075 feet to 1,935 feet	nontributary
Arapahoe	1,970 feet to 2,475 feet	nontributary
Laramie-Fox Hills	2,830 feet to 3,115 feet	nontributary

13. Subject to the limitations in this decree, Applicants may withdraw water from one well in each of the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifers, plus any additional wells required in order for Applicants to withdraw the full decreed amounts. Such wells may be constructed at any location on the Property, subject to the provisions of C.R.S. §37-90-137(4); provided, however, that no wells may be located within 100 feet of the Property boundary.

14. Subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of this decree, and the issuance by the State Engineer of a well permit that authorizes the specific use or uses, the water rights adjudicated herein may be used for all beneficial uses except municipal uses.

III. Plan for Augmentation.

15. Applicants seek the right to divert 0.82 acre foot (267,198 gallons) annually for 300 years from the Dawson aquifer through one well on the Property, and any supplemental or replacement wells. The water may be used for indoor residential uses and a guest cottage, commercial uses, livestock water, home office use, irrigation, hot tub and /or swimming pool purposes, and augmentation of depletions in this plan for augmentation through return flows from a non-evaporative septic system.

16. The State Engineer has issued an informal guideline estimating that conservatively, water use in single family dwellings will equal at least 0.2 acre feet of water annually for indoor uses, and that use of non-evaporative septic systems results in consumption of not more than 10 percent of such use, resulting in return flows of at least 0.18 acre foot annually. Because various components of this plan for augmentation are predicated on these estimations, Applicants are required to use a non-evaporative septic system to treat and dispose of water used for indoor residential uses.

17. Replacement of depletions during pumping. Applicants shall replace all depletions caused during pumping of the Dawson aquifer water. Based on constant annual pumping of 0.82 acre feet over a 300 year pumping period, combined depletions to the Arkansas and South Platte River systems will gradually increase to a maximum of approximately 21.95 percent of annual pumping, or 0.18 acre feet annually, in the 300th year. Applicants' septic system return flows will be used to replace depletions during the projected 300 year pumping period. As indicated in paragraph 16, septic system return flows are assumed to equal at least 0.18 acre feet annually, so they will equal or exceed the greatest amount of annual depletions that are projected to occur during the projected 300 year pumping period. Because septic system return flows alone are adequate to replace stream depletions, if the remaining 0.62 acre feet of the 0.82 acre feet of

allowable annual pumping is used and re-used to extinction, at any location and for any purpose, its consumption will not cause injury to the owners of or persons entitled to divert water under vested or conditionally decreed water rights.

18. Replacement of post-pumping depletions.

A. Unless modified by the Court under its retained jurisdiction, Applicants shall replace the actual depletions from pumping the Dawson aquifer well that impact the stream after pumping ceases. The Court finds that this requirement is adequate to comply with existing law and to prevent injury to others.

B. To determine the post-pumping replacement obligation, after the earliest of the four following events have occurred: (1) 300 years of pumping from the Dawson aquifer have occurred; or (2) ten consecutive years have passed with no pumping from the Dawson aquifer well; or (3) when Applicants or their successors acknowledge in writing that all withdrawals for beneficial use from the Dawson aquifer have permanently ceased; or (4) accounting shows that return flows from the use of the water being withdrawn from the Dawson aquifer well is insufficient to replace depletions that already occurred, Applicants or their successors shall at that time cause a depletion analysis to be conducted, using the computer model generally accepted as being most accurate at that time, to calculate the amount and timing of post-pumping depletions which must be replaced, based on average annual withdrawals over the applicable pumping period. That amount of water shall then be pumped at the appropriate times from the Denver aquifer, or from such other source of water as receives judicial approval after notice, and delivered to the South Platte River system in a manner that will adequately replace all depletions from pumping of the Dawson aquifer well listed in this decree or any replacement or additional wells constructed on the Property. Applicants' successors in interest shall be required by the terms of this decree to construct a Denver aquifer well pursuant to this plan for augmentation at the time replacement of post-pumping depletions must commence pursuant to this decree, unless a different source of water is approved by the court for replacement of post-pumping depletions, or unless the obligation is modified or terminated pursuant to ¶ 18.A. above.

C. Applicants shall reserve and dedicate to this plan for augmentation 225 acre feet of the Denver aquifer water decreed herein for the purpose of replacing all post-pumping depletions to the South Platte River system. This amount has been calculated as follows:

I. Based on a maximum allowable annual pumping of 0.82 acre foot for 300 years, a total of 246 acre feet may be pumped under this plan for augmentation. Approximately 27 acre feet of stream depletions will occur during the pumping period, and there will be approximately 219 acre feet of post-pumping depletions.

II. Rule 8 of the Denver Basin Rules, 2 CCR 406-2, requires that only 98 percent of nontributary Denver Basin water may be consumed. The amount of water which must be reserved to replace post-pumping depletions is 224 acre feet, which was calculated by dividing post-pumping depletions of approximately 219 acre feet by 0.98 and rounding to the next larger whole acre foot.

D. If at some time replacement of post-pumping depletions is no longer required pursuant to ¶18.A. above, or if Applicants receive judicial approval to use a different water source for augmentation purposes, Applicants may petition the Court pursuant to its retained jurisdiction to modify or terminate the reservation of Denver aquifer water to replace post-pumping depletions. Unless and until the reservation is modified by the Court, the reserved Denver aquifer water shall be appurtenant to the Property and its use shall be limited as described herein.

19. All septic system return flows are dedicated to this plan for augmentation, and shall not be sold, leased or otherwise used for any other purpose. Septic system return flows are necessary to provide an adequate source of water to replace stream depletions during the pumping period under the plan for augmentation as decreed. Accordingly, in order to pump the Dawson aquifer ground water described in the plan for augmentation: (1) there must be a single family dwelling on the Property; (2) the Dawson aquifer well must provide water to the single family dwelling on the Property for indoor residential use (to ensure maintenance of septic system return flows); (3) the Dawson aquifer well must be limited to withdrawal of 0.82 acre feet annually and 246 acre feet total; (4) the State Engineer must approve the uses to be made of the Dawson aquifer water in a manner not inconsistent with this decree and the plan for augmentation approved herein, or any modified decree and plan; and (5) replacement of post-pumping depletions must be made in accordance with the requirements of this decree or any modified decree.

20. A certified copy of this decree shall be recorded in the real estate records of El Paso County and shall constitute a covenant running with the land, notifying Applicants and their successors in interest of the requirements of this decree and plan for augmentation, including the requirement to construct a Denver aquifer well or take other measures as necessary to replace post-pumping depletions. Said covenants shall indicate clearly that failure of the property owner to comply with the terms of this decree may result in an order from the State Engineer office to curtail pumping from the Dawson aquifer. Said covenants shall be amended as necessary to conform to the provisions of any amendment to this augmentation plan. Any proposed change in the method of wastewater treatment and disposal shall require water court approval after notice in the water resume and publication in a newspaper of general circulation in El Paso County. This plan for augmentation, the right to 246 acre feet of Dawson aquifer water which may be pumped pursuant to the plan for augmentation, and the right to 225 acre feet of Denver aquifer water reserved for replacement of post-pumping depletions, shall be considered as appurtenances to the Property and shall be conveyed as such in any deed conveying the Property, whether or not the plan for augmentation and the water rights are specifically referenced in the deed; provided, however, that if a different source of augmentation water for replacement of post-pumping depletions is approved pursuant to ¶18.A. and C. above, then subsequently, whether a deed which does not specifically reference the reserved Denver aquifer water conveys such water rights shall be interpreted pursuant to conventional rules regarding interpretation of deeds.

21. All wells permitted pursuant to this decree shall be equipped with a properly installed and calibrated meter. Applicants shall record their metered usage on a monthly basis, and shall submit reports of such pumping as required by the water commissioner, but no less frequently than annually.

22. The Court finds that under the terms and conditions herein the requirements of C.R.S.

§37-90-137(9)(c) have been met, and that no injury will be caused to the owner of or anyone entitled to use water under a vested water right or decreed conditional water right.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

23. The Court has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action and over all persons who could have appeared herein, whether or not they did so appear.

24. All conditions precedent to the granting of this decree have been performed.

25. The plan for augmenting depletions caused by pumping the not nontributary Dawson aquifer is required by C.R.S. §37-90-137(9), and is subject to the requirement of C.R.S. §37-92-305(3) and 305(8) that no injury will occur to the owners of or persons entitled to use water under an absolute water right or decreed conditional water right as a result of implementing such plan for augmentation. Applicants have complied with all the conditions of C.R.S. §37-92-305(3), (8) and all other relevant statutes.

26. Applicants have maintained dominion and control over the septic system return flows by determining the quantity of such return flows, as set forth above, and thus have the legal ability to use said return flows in this plan for augmentation. See, Public Service Co. v. Willows Water District, 856 P.2d 829 (Colo. 1993).

JUDGMENT AND DECREE

27. The forgoing findings of fact and conclusions of law are hereby incorporated into this judgment and decree.

28. Adjudication of Denver Basin water rights.

A. Applicants are granted a vested right to 1,029 acre feet of ground water in the Dawson aquifer underlying the Property, as may be modified by the Court under its retained jurisdiction. Pursuant to the augmentation plan set forth in this decree, Applicants may withdraw and use 246 acre feet of the Dawson aquifer water at a rate not to exceed 0.82 acre feet annually, or more than 15 gpm. The remaining Dawson aquifer water is not included in the augmentation plan approved in this decree and shall not be withdrawn for any purpose unless and until this decree is amended to allow such withdrawal and use, or until a separate court-approved plan for augmentation authorizing that water's withdrawal and use has been decreed.

B. Applicants are granted a vested right to the ground water from the Denver aquifer in the amount of 910 acre feet. Of that amount, 225 acre feet are reserved for replacement of post-pumping depletions after cessation of pumping the Dawson aquifer well as described in ¶18.B. and C., *supra*.

C. Applicants are granted a vested right to the ground water from the Arapahoe aquifer

in the amount of 428 acre feet. The Arapahoe aquifer water decreed herein may be pumped at an annual rate not to exceed 4.3 acre feet annually except pursuant to the “water banking” procedures of Rule 8.A. of the Statewide Nontributary Ground Water Rules, 2 CCR 402-7.

D. Applicants are granted a vested right to the ground water from the Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer in the amount of 315 acre feet. The Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer water may be pumped at an annual rate not to exceed 3.2 acre feet annually except pursuant to the “water banking” procedures of Rule 8.A. of the Statewide Nontributary Ground Water Rules, 2 CCR 402-7.

E. The “water banking” procedures of Rule 8.A. of the Statewide Nontributary Ground Water Rules, 2 CCR 402-7, cannot be applied to the Dawson aquifer water, which may be pumped only pursuant to the provisions of the plan for augmentation decreed herein, or to that portion –225 acre feet – of the Denver aquifer water which is reserved for replacement of post-pumping depletions as described above. However, water banking procedures do apply to the “unreserved” 685 acre feet of the Denver aquifer water, to all of the Arapahoe aquifer water and all of the Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer water. The allowed annual amount of withdrawal from the unreserved portion of the Denver aquifer water and all of the Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer water may exceed the allowed average annual amount of withdrawal for that aquifer as long as the total volume of water withdrawn from the well or wells does not exceed the product of the number of years since the date of entry of this decree, multiplied by the allowed average annual amount of withdrawal.

F. The water rights so decreed are vested water rights, and no applications for findings of diligence are required. Pursuant to C.R.S. §37-92-305(11), the Court will retain jurisdiction to finally determine the amount of water available for appropriation, based on site-specific data when it becomes available, and to adjust upward or downward as appropriate the amount available for withdrawal from each aquifer. The Applicants need not refile, republish, or otherwise amend this decree to request or obtain such adjustment.

G. The water rights are decreed for all beneficial uses except municipal uses. However, as set forth in ¶31 of this decree, such uses are subject to the State Engineer’s discretion to deny a well permit for uses that the State Engineer determines to be speculative at the time of the application for the permit.

29. Approval of Plan for Augmentation. The plan for augmentation described herein is approved. Depletions caused by pumping water from the Dawson aquifer shall be replaced as provided and decreed herein. Annual withdrawals from the Dawson aquifer shall not exceed 0.82 acre foot (267,198 gallons), and total Dawson aquifer withdrawals pursuant to the plan for augmentation decreed herein shall not exceed 246 acre feet. Any additional Dawson aquifer pumping may occur only if additional augmentation sources are approved by the Court under its continuing jurisdiction in this decree, or in a new plan for augmentation. The State Engineer shall curtail all diversions, the depletions from which are not replaced in a manner to prevent injury to vested water rights or decreed conditional water rights. In order to ensure replacement of depletions during the pumping period, pumping and use of the Dawson aquifer well for any beneficial uses other than indoor residential use shall not be allowed unless ground water is also being pumped and used for indoor residential use.

30. The water in the Denver aquifer which is not reserved for replacement of post-pumping depletions, and all of the Arapahoe and Laramie-Fox Hills aquifer water decreed herein, may be used at any location, including locations in other water divisions, provided that no less than two percent of the water pumped on an annual basis must be relinquished to the South Platte River system.

31. Upon a properly completed application by the Applicants, accompanied by the requisite fee, the State Engineer shall issue a new permit for each well on the Property, consistent with the terms of this decree and all applicable statutes and rules, provided that the State Engineer shall identify the specific uses which can be made of the ground water to be withdrawn, and shall not issue a permit for any proposed use, which use the State Engineer determines to be speculative at the time of the application or which would be inconsistent with the requirements of this decree and the plan for augmentation approved herein, or any modified decree and plan for augmentation.

32. All new wells on the Property must be constructed pursuant to applicable Colorado laws and regulations of the Division of Water Resources. Each well must be equipped with a totalizing flow meter. All wells shall be cased so as to prevent withdrawal of water from more than one aquifer. The entire length of the open bore hole shall be geophysically surveyed prior to casing and copies of the geophysical log submitted to the Division of Water Resources unless an exception is granted pursuant to Rule 9.A of the Statewide Nontributary Ground Water Rules, 2 CCR 402-7, or pursuant to any other exemption approved by the State Engineer.

33. Additional provisions.

A. Applicants may construct additional and replacement wells in order to maintain levels of production, to meet water supply demands or to recover the entire amount of groundwater in the subject aquifers underlying the Property. As additional wells are planned, applications shall be filed in accordance with C.R.S. §37-90-137(10).

B. Two or more wells constructed into a given aquifer shall be considered a well field. In effecting production of water from such well field, Applicants may produce the entire amount which may be produced from any given aquifer through any combination of wells within the well field.

C. In considering applications for permits for wells or additional wells to withdraw the groundwater which is the subject of this decree, the State Engineer shall be bound by this decree and shall issue said permits in accordance with provisions of C.R.S. § 37-90-137(4) and C.R.S. § 37-90-137(10).

D. Groundwater production shall be limited to the subject aquifers. Plain, unperforated casing must be installed and properly grouted to prevent withdrawal from or intermingling of water from zones other than those for which the well was designed.

E. Each well shall be permanently identified by its permit number, this Water Court case number, and the name of the producing aquifer on the above-ground portion of the

well casing or on the pump house.

F. In the event that the allowed average annual amounts decreed herein are adjusted pursuant to the retained jurisdiction of the Court, Applicants shall obtain permits to reflect such adjusted average annual amounts. Subsequent permits for any wells herein shall likewise reflect any such adjustment of the average annual amounts decreed herein.

34. Retained jurisdiction provisions regarding quantity of water appropriated.

A. The Court retains jurisdiction as necessary to adjust the average annual amounts of ground water available under the Property to conform to actual local aquifer characteristics as determined from adequate information obtained from wells, pursuant to C.R.S. §37-92-305(11). Within 60 days after completion of any well decreed herein or any test hole(s), Applicants or any successor in interest to these water rights shall serve copies of such log(s) upon the State Engineer.

B. At such time as adequate data is available, any person, including the State Engineer, may invoke the Court's retained jurisdiction to make a Final Determination of Water Right. Within four months of notice that the retained jurisdiction for such purpose has been invoked, the State Engineer shall use the information available to him to make a final determination of water rights findings. The State Engineer shall submit such finding to the Water Court and the Applicants.

C. If no protest to such finding is made within 60 days, the Final Determination of Water Rights shall be incorporated into the decree by the Water Court. In the event of a protest, or in the event the State Engineer makes no determination within four months, such final determination shall be made by the Water Court after notice and hearing.

D. In the interim, the Court retains jurisdiction pursuant to C.R.S. §37-92-305(11).

35. Retained jurisdiction regarding consideration of injury. Pursuant to C.R.S. §37-92-304(6), the Court shall retain continuing jurisdiction over the plan for augmentation decreed herein for reconsideration of the question of whether the provisions of this decree are necessary and/or sufficient to prevent injury to vested water rights of others. The Court shall retain continuing jurisdiction for so long as the Applicants are required to replace depletions to the South Platte River stream system to determine whether the replacement of depletions only to the South Platte River stream system, with no replacements being made to the Arkansas River stream system, is causing material injury to water rights tributary to the Arkansas River stream system. Any person may invoke the Court's retained jurisdiction at any time Applicants are causing depletions (including ongoing post-pumping depletions) to the Arkansas River system and are aggregating such depletions and replacing them to the South Platte River system. The person invoking the Court's retained jurisdiction shall have the burden of establishing a *prima facie* case that Applicants' failure to replace depletions to the Arkansas River system is causing injury to water rights owned by the person invoking the Court's retained jurisdiction, except that the State and Division Engineers may invoke the Court's retained jurisdiction by establishing a *prima facie* case that injury is occurring to any vested or conditionally decreed water rights. Applicants shall retain the ultimate burden of proving that no injury is occurring, or shall propose terms and

conditions to prevent such injury. Among any other remedies it may impose, the Court may require that Applicants replace depletions to the Arkansas River system.

36. Retained jurisdiction regarding compliance with plan for augmentation. The Court also retains jurisdiction for the purposes of determining compliance with the terms of the augmentation, and to reconsider the post-pumping depletion replacement obligation for the Dawson aquifer withdrawals and the reservation of 225 acre feet of the Denver aquifer water decreed herein for that purpose. Any person seeking to invoke the retained jurisdiction of the Court pursuant to this paragraph shall file a verified petition with the Court. The petition to invoke retained jurisdiction or to modify the decree shall set forth with particularity the factual basis upon which the requested reconsideration is premised, together with proposed decretal language to effect the petition. The person lodging the petition shall have the burden of going forward to establish *prima facie* facts alleged in the petition. If the Court finds those facts to be established, Applicants shall thereupon have the burden of proof to show: (1) that any modification sought by Applicants will prevent injury to other appropriators, or (2) that any modification sought by the person filing the petition is not required to prevent injury to other appropriators, or (3) that any term or condition proposed by Applicants in response to the petition prevents injury to other appropriators.

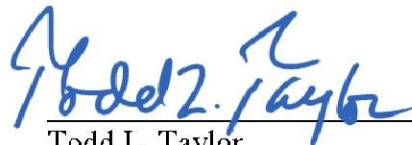
Date: August 9, 2017



John S. Cowan
Water Referee
Water Division 1

The court finds that no protest was filed in this matter. The foregoing ruling is confirmed and approved, and is made the judgment and decree of this Court.

Date: August 31, 2017



Todd L. Taylor
Alternate Water Judge
Water Division 1

FIGURE 1
Section 19, T. 11 S., R. 65 W. 6th P.M.

