

Growth impact on water table is subject of study

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The impact of growth on the area water table is the subject of a \$215,070 cooperative study by the Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District and the U.S. Geological Survey.

The agencies are collecting data for a water study in the Upper Arkansas River Basin between Salida and Buena Vista, and west to the Maysville area.

The study is funded by a \$150,460 contribution from the UAWCD and \$64,610 from the USGS. "This is an investment in the future," said UAWCD Manager Terry Scanga. "This is putting together a database that can be used to show changes in the water table, so we can plan appropriately." The areas that are experiencing the largest growth are along the South Fork of the Arkansas River, from Maysville to Salida, and along the Cottonwood drainage.

"There is an earlier general study of the whole area. When we have the results from this (new) study, we can compare them and see what kind of changes have occurred."

USGS Pueblo Subdistrict Chief Keith Lucey said water levels are collected from a network of more than 100 wells to investigate directions of groundwater flows and seasonal changes in water levels.

"Water samples from about 40 wells will provide information about quality of ground water and could provide information about flow between shallow and deep ground water," Lucey said.

"The data identifying ground water conditions for 2000 to 2002 can be compared to data from previous studies and the data will be stored in the USGS National Water Information System for future reference."

The last general water study of the Arkansas River Basin was conducted in the early 1970s. Ground water levels have been measured from a smaller sample of wells by USGS researchers for the last 20 years.

The new research is expected to be completed in 2003.