

Full-width on the 6-column  
grid by 7.8 inches tall

## Where did our water go?

Nebraska alleges in a recently filed U.S. Supreme Court lawsuit that Colorado has violated 1923 South Platte River Compact by failing to consistently provide a required 120-cubic-foot-per-second annual minimum flow at Julesburg, Colorado, into Nebraska from April 1 to Oct. 15. The suit also accuses Colorado of obstructing Nebraska's compact right to finish the 1894 Perkins County Canal from Sedgwick County, Colorado, into Keith County, and trigger a similar 500 cfs minimum flow from Oct. 16 to March 31. For this story, the North Platte Telegraph analyzed daily Julesburg flow data since 1926, the year Congress ratified the compact, as well as Colorado South Platte water rights by priority date from 1859 through the end of 2024. It found that Colorado has increasingly tapped into groundwater below the South Platte River – which supply downstream above-ground “return flows” on which the compact depends – since World War II and especially since the start of the 21st century.

