

INTRASTATE POLL RESULTS – October 26, 2023
Colorado River Drought Task Force

Short List Items

Part 1: Items that Task Force members have expressed interest in potentially pursuing recommendations to the legislature on.

Identified Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Continue Community Technical Assistance Grants	4
Allow Water Plan Grant funds to be used for aging infrastructure projects that support drought resiliency	4.3
Provide increased funding levels throughout state programs for aging infrastructure projects	4.3
Provide tools to facilitate flexibility in the use of water rights, including storage	3.7
Increase state funding for turf removal programs, and tie state funding to disincentives for new non-functional turf and/or codes disallowing new non-functional turf	3.3

Part 2: Items that Task Force members have expressed interest in looking into further and started discussing.

Identified Tool, Program, or Category	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Protection of Industrial water rights during energy transition	3.3
Stream and Riparian Area Management Tools	3.2
Water Sharing Tools	3.7
Expand existing Water Banking statute to include direct flow water rights	3.3
Keep Ag land in Ag	3.7

Comments on items listed above:

- The concepts placed in the medium and lower priorities are not because they are bad ideas, but rather because they have very little local benefit during drought or have impacts and potential unintended consequences.
- Details on how tools will be implemented are important to priority.
- Why are these tools ranked in the Top 10 and not the others?
 - o #2 - Unclear on what statutory change is recommended. Aging infrastructure projects are already eligible under Water Plan Grants statute and guidelines, although CWCB prioritizes projects that can show multiple benefits. Is the ask that Water Plan grants be prioritized for aging infrastructure at the exclusion of environmental, recreational, or municipal benefits?
 - o #4 - What does this mean? Is this different than water sharing tools?
- You did not list building new storage in strategic areas. This needs to be on the list and needs to be discussed with all interstate tools. Additionally, your questions assumed we agreed with the implementation of the tools, which for several tools is not the case for the CRWCD or at least our support very much depends upon the sideboards and operation of the project consistent with the directives of SB -295. It appears that this poll is not in the right order, the group should actually formally vote on which tools they want to recommend to the legislature and then prioritize those that have significant support and build them out pursuant to the criteria in the statute.
- Many of these have not yet been defined so it is difficult to rank them. For example "water sharing tools" is not a proposal. This was just the title of Kevin Rein's presentation on existing tools. The stream and riparian restoration category also needs more definition, which I think we should see in a future meeting. Suggest we go back and rank these once we have similarly defined tools to evaluate next to one another.
- Some "tools" I can't provide an answer to because I don't have enough information to evaluate.
- We believed that the storage priority on the short list from the September 14th meeting didn't capture the input that we heard... The storage items listed under the latter part of this survey were the more important storage tools... We voted to put the 4th item as high priority since storage remains a key priority for UVWUA.

Thoughts on the classification system used on the Short Listed items. (The classification system is an attempt to start trying to sort tools and programs discussed by the Task Force for the final report)

- Generally representative of the options, but a few may only require changes to policies not necessarily a new statute.
- The classification system is useful.
- There is no option to disagree with the use of the tool completely. This, unfortunately is not useful. For example, additional flexibility in the use of stored water may be something we can support, it is unlikely that we support additional flexibility in the use of other water rights except on a very specific case by case basis.

- While I agree in principle that we should protect ag lands, I don't know what the tool entails so can't judge whether a new statute would be required.
- Not all tools are defined enough for it to Work, but good start.
- Some "tools" I can't provide an answer to because I don't have enough information to evaluate.
- This format requires greater understanding of existing statutes. The Water Sharing agreements remain on our agenda to discuss gaps and reasons why existing tools are not being used... The low complexity water sharing tools are low hanging fruit and can make impacts NOW, while the more complex tools are long term, costly, and complicated tools. Ag Land issues are a regional or local concern and very site specific. We didn't discuss or vote on this to be in the short list so much more conversation is needed and perhaps beyond the scope of this Task Force. If it is a placeholder to avoid 'buy and dry' we would prioritize it differently. Same concerns on stream and riparian management tools. The presentation provided details on certain streams but it seems like an entire program and on a local level we already manage for stream health and have recreation and aquatic management concepts. A statewide legal approach is hard to envision.

Storage Tools (These are limited to the tools not yet discussed in detail)

Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Storage to protect and enhance existing agricultural uses under future uncertainty	3.9
Storage to provide supply and flexibility to augmentation plans	3.7
Strategic and smaller storage facilities that meet multiple needs	4.4
Rehabilitation and repair of storage facilities	4.5
Aquifers as storage	3.6

Other & Comments:

- Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) that optimized reservoir operations and enhance storage through high-tech water measurements tools (i.e. Colorado Airborne Snow, Soil Moisture Monitoring, Stream Gage Telemetry, etc.)
- Increase storage capability in Colorado!
- We reiterate that storage is a key drought management tool. We don't have aquifers so it isn't a high priority on the West Slope. The CO Water plan executive summary covers storage in a more comprehensive way and all the 'storage tools' could be merged into a high priority topic that is inclusive of all the separate storage tools on the spreadsheet. Colorado Water Plan Executive Summary page 4

- “Storage is Necessary (and There Are Options). The Water Plan supports traditional and non-traditional storage. Traditional water storage (e.g., reservoirs) is a needed tool. On paper, existing water rights could double the current storage in the state (up to 6.5 million acre-feet). Traditional reservoirs are not the only tool available to increase storage, though. A range of alternatives exist including aquifer storage and recovery, enlargement or rehabilitation of existing reservoirs, and reallocation of existing storage space. Additionally, tools like water conservation, efficiency, and collaborative water sharing agreements can help mitigate or delay the need for additional storage. Stream and forest health improvements using nature-based solutions can support both the natural environment and existing water infrastructure and storage by building resiliency for drought, fire, and floods; reducing sedimentation; improving water quality; attenuating high flows; and enhancing groundwater recharge. In all cases, both traditional and non-traditional storage projects should involve thoughtful, thorough, collaborative, and inclusive planning that can uplift all water uses.”

Infrastructure Improvements

Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Replacing and upgrading diversion structures	4.3
Headgate and conveyance efficiency improvements	4.6
Improving fish passage through replacement of agricultural diversions	3.9

No comments or additions

Measurement

Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Measurement of agricultural water uses	3.9
Airborne Snow Measurement with LiDAR	4.4
Soil Moisture Monitoring	3.9

Other & Comments:

- All of these are good things to do, but don't in and of themselves provide drought resiliency and on the ground benefits.
- Depth-based and radar-based remote sensing methods (e.g., lidar, synthetic aperture radar) for remotely measuring snow water equivalent (SWE) (different than Airborne Snow Measurement program)

- Need better measurement tools throughout the system if we are ever going to measure and track conserved consumptive use water on its way through the system, especially if anyone in the state thinks we are going to shepherd it to the state line past other headgates.
- Improved measurement and telemetry could best improve the accuracy of consumption reports. This becomes most important at the system level vs farm by farm. Soil moisture is tied to soil health.

Forest Health/Wildfire Ready Watersheds

Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Forest health improvements	4.7
Protecting storage from wildfire impacts	4.7
Understanding forest hydrology	4.3

Other & Comments:

- CWCB Wildfire Ready Watersheds Framework for local communities
- Forest health and wildfire concerns are high on the Western Slope. Refer to Wildfire Ready Watershed for resources that can be expanded. Community Wildfire Protection plans need to be updated to meet CWP² - standards. We can add detail if needed.

Municipal Conservation

Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Municipal water efficiency	4.1
Holistic planning for urban landscapes	4.2
Artificial turf programs for sports facilities	2.5
Urban agriculture	2.9
Outdoor One Water strategies	3.4
Advanced metering infrastructure	3.9
Graywater control programs	3.6

Other & Comments:

- Colorado Water Loss Initiative & Integrating Water & Land Use Planning
- Require reuse of all trans-basin water to extinction.
- Didn't vote on elements I don't fully understand.

- Municipal conservation must be considered as important as ag conservation. Specific expertise on municipal tools need is not in our area of expertise.

Other Intrastate Tools

Tool or Program	Average Score (1 low priority to 5 high priority)
Support for natural and working lands (MP1,2)	3.2
Biochar soil amendments (MP3)	2.3
Weather Modification (W1)	3.0
Local water efficiency and drought management plans (DM1,2,4)	4.2
Conservation-oriented outreach and education (EO1)	3.4
Hydrology Assessments (site-specific) (DM5)	3.2
Drought Resiliency Program (IN1)	3.9
Exploring alternative crops (IN2)	4.1

Other & Comments:

- Didn't vote on elements I don't fully understand.
- Priorities in these areas are very site specific. Drought management plans should be regional and local, advisable but hard to mandate. Alternative crops is popular but is very site specific, often very costly so incentives would be necessary. Cost benefit analysis and markets and logistics are components. Biochar is great but very costly without subsidies.

Out of all the Intrastate Tools/Programs (not including "Short List"), what are the top 3 you'd like to discuss further?

Forest Management, Strategic New Storage, Regional Urban Landscape Planning

Augmentation Storage, Aquifer Storage, Exploring alternate crops

Storage, diversion measurement and snow-pack measurement

Forest Health improvements, local water efficiency and drought management plans, drought resiliency program

shepherding, strategic water reserve, compact compliance as a beneficial use

1) Water Measurement - Soil Moisture and Airborne Snow; 2) Replacing and Upgrading Diversion Structures; 3) Holistic Planning for Urban Landscapes

Storage

alternative crops, measurement (both ag and muni), forest health

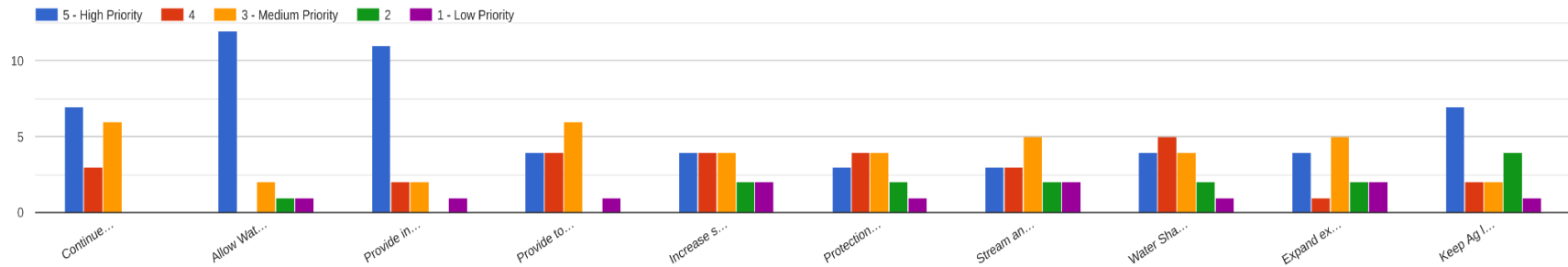
NM water reserve; Mike Camblin's idea

Conservation programs not just projects!

Government red tape- It has been mentioned constantly how it takes so long to implement projects.

Storage, Infrastructure improvements, and measurement.

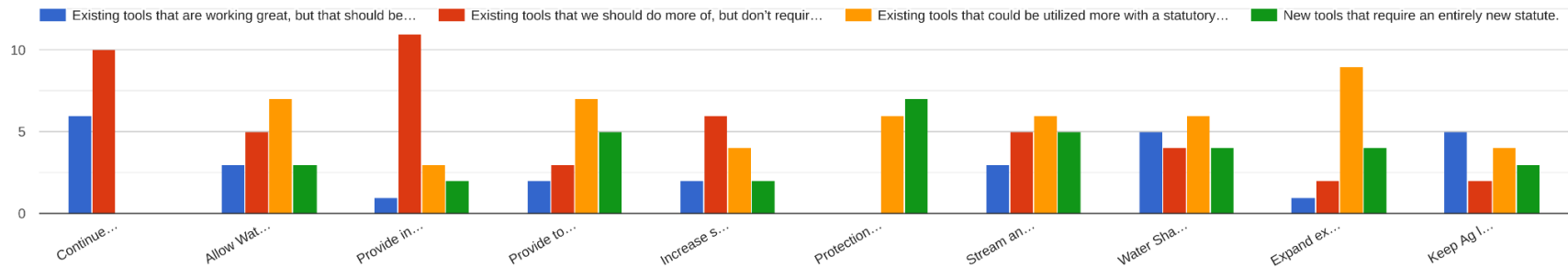
"SHORT LIST": Top 10 Areas Identified to Date



Legend (in order of appearance above):

1. Continue Community Technical Assistance Grants
2. Allow Water Plan Grant funds for aging infrastructure
3. Provide increased funding for aging infrastructure
4. Provide tools to facilitate flexibility in use of water rights
5. Increase state funding for turf removal
6. Protection of industrial water rights
7. Stream and Riparian Area Management Tools
8. Water Sharing Tools
9. Expand existing Water Banking Statute
10. Keep Ag land in Ag

How would you classify the Short List Tools? (Select all that apply)



Legend (in order of appearance above):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Continue Community Technical Assistance Grants | 6. Protection of industrial water rights |
| 2. Allow Water Plan Grant funds for aging infrastructure | 7. Stream and Riparian Area Management Tools |
| 3. Provide increased funding for aging infrastructure | 8. Water Sharing Tools |
| 4. Provide tools to facilitate flexibility in use of water rights | 9. Expand existing Water Banking Statute |
| 5. Increase state funding for turf removal | 10. Keep Ag land in Ag |

Chart 2 classification:

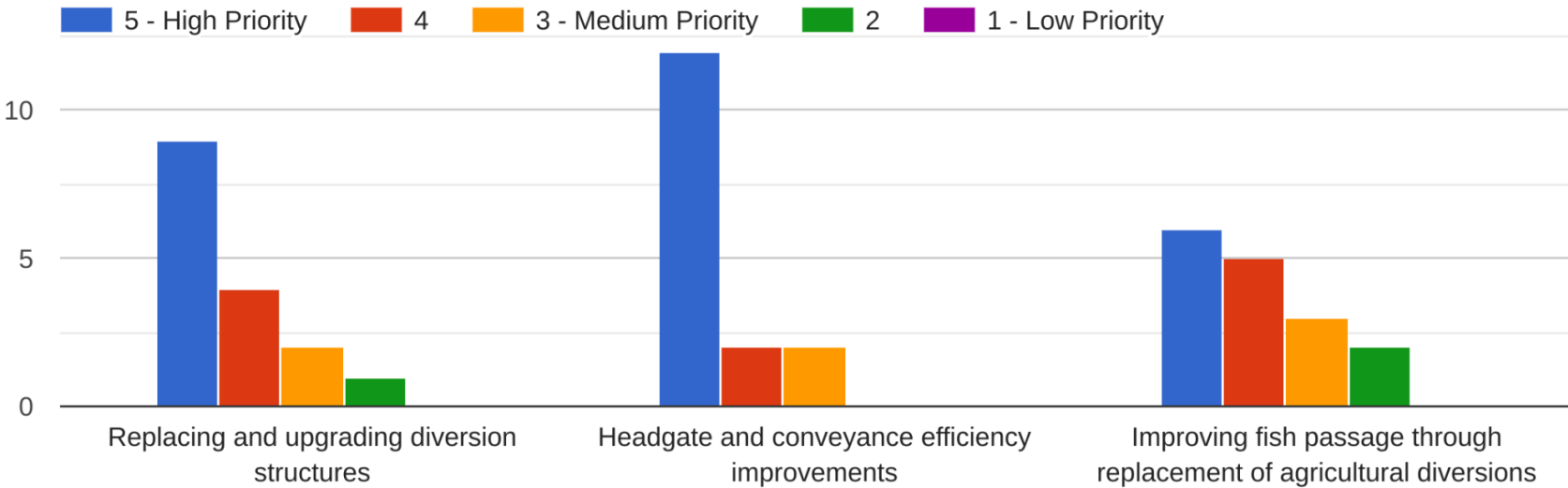
Blue: Existing tools that are working great, but that should be recognized and communicated.

Red: Existing tools that we should do more of but don't require a statutory change (although they may require a budget)

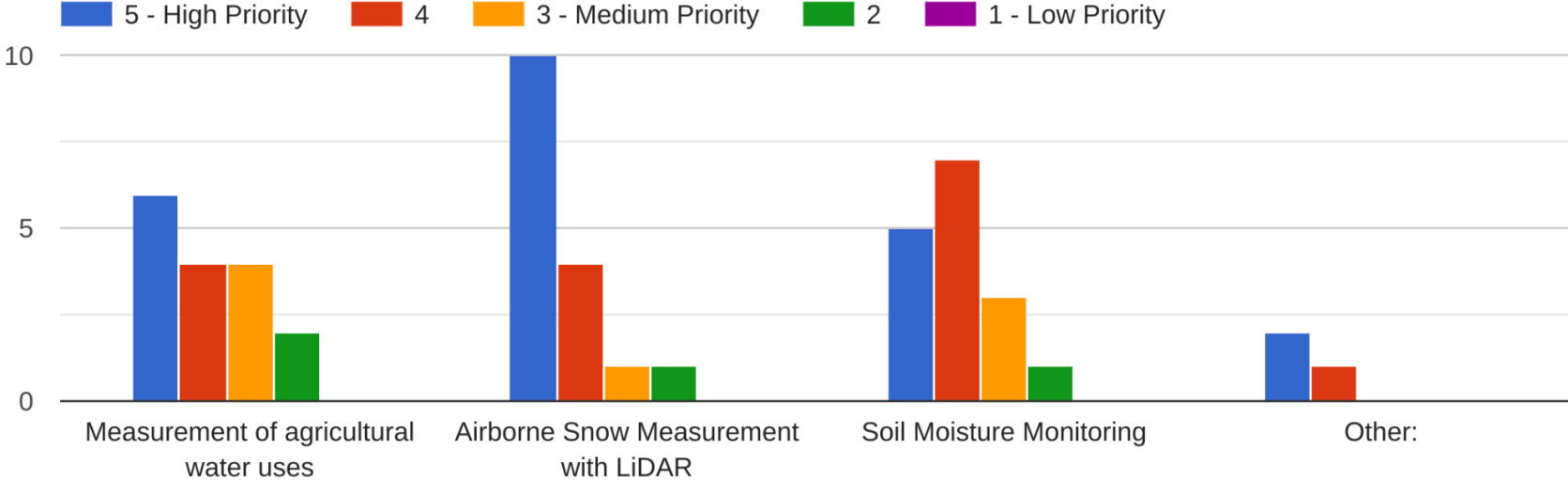
Yellow: Existing tools that could be utilized more with a statutory amendment

Green: New tools that require an entirely new statute

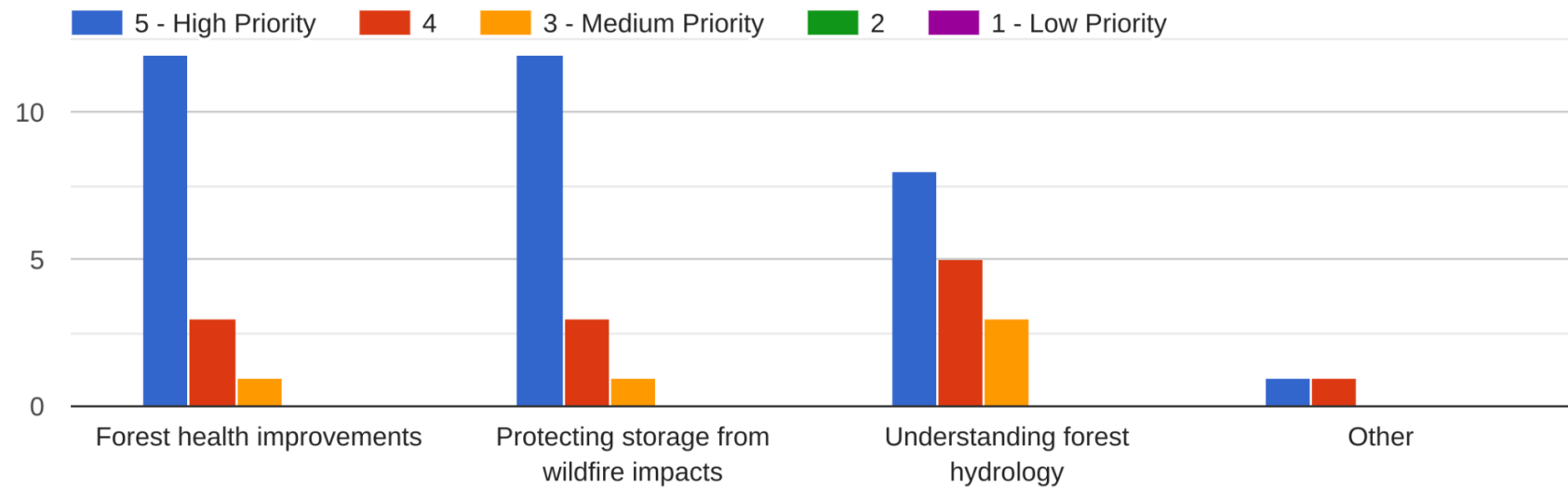
Infrastructure Improvements (These are limited to the tools we have not yet discussed in detail)



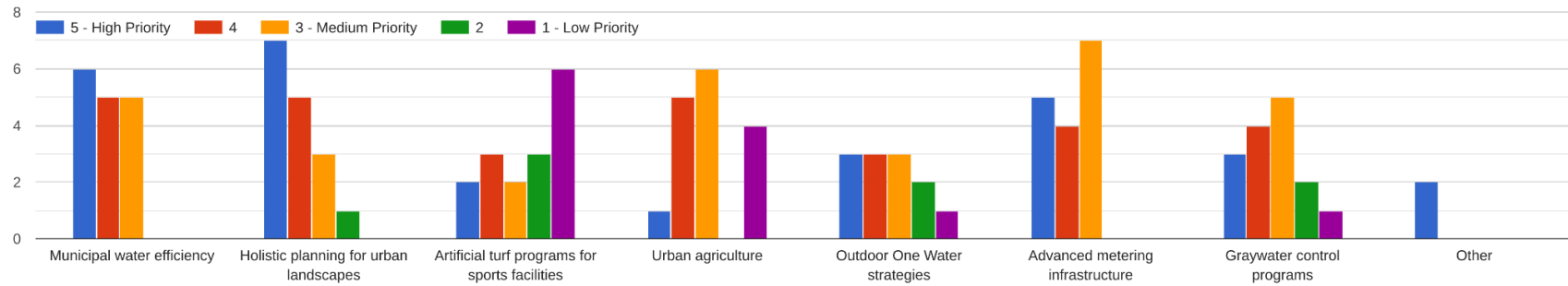
Measurement (These are limited to the tools we have not yet discussed in detail)



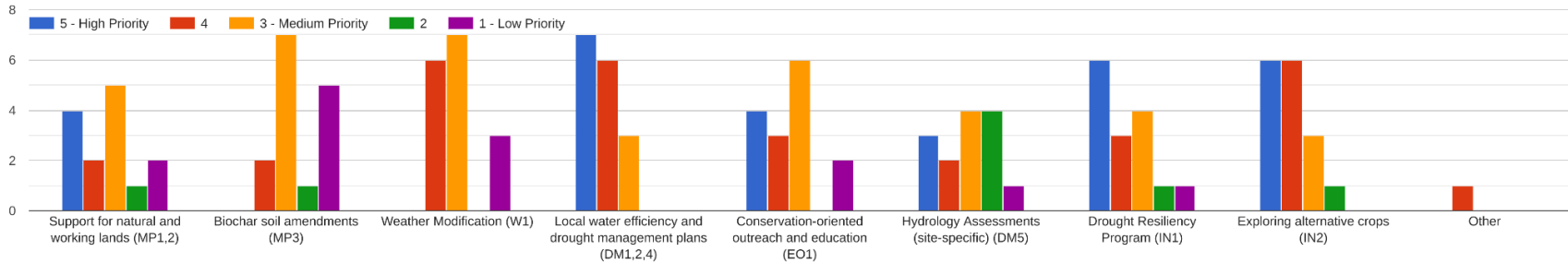
Forest Health/Wildfire Ready Watersheds (These are limited to the tools we have not yet discussed in detail)



Municipal Conservation (These are limited to the tools we have not yet discussed in detail. See "Turf" in Top 10.)



Other Intrastate Tools (These are the remaining tools from smaller categories. Please use the code at the end of the tool to locate its description on the spreadsheet)



“TOP 3” RANKING

Storage:

- Strategic new storage
- Augmentation storage
- Aquifer storage
- Storage (3)

Forest:

- Forest Management
- Forest health improvements
- Forest health

Urban Landscapes:

- Regional Urban Landscape Planning
- Holistic planning for urban landscapes

Explore alternative crops (2)

Measurement:

- Diversion measurement
- Snow pack measurement
- Water measurement - soil moisture and Airborne Snow
- Measurement, both ag and muni
- Measurement

Local water efficiency and drought management plans

Drought resiliency program

Shepherding

Strategic water reserve

Compact compliance as a beneficial use

Replacing and upgrading diversion structures

NM Water Reserve

Make Camblin's idea

Conservation programs not just projects

Government red tape

Infrastructure Improvements

INTRASTATE TOOLS & PROGRAMS
Prioritization Radar
Scores mapped out by quadrant

