

**CONTINUOUS WATERSHED MONITORING AND DISCHARGES OF
COALBED METHANE PRODUCED WATER**

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The Raton Basin of Las Animas County Colorado is an area of coalbed methane (CBM) operations and the associated discharge of CBM produced water. In this arid region some view CBM produced water as a resource that should be put to beneficial use; others view it as a potential threat to irrigation water quality. To collect the data needed to manage this water resource, CBM operators have funded the installation and operation of a continuous watershed monitoring system, linked via satellite to a website. The website and satellite link foster transparent communication, providing water quality and flow data collected throughout the watershed, and making it available to the public in real-time with additional monthly reports provided via the website. The system is providing valuable data that can be used to assess the impact of CBM discharges on irrigation diversions and water quality, and identify opportunities to manage the produced water in ways that maximize its beneficial uses and protect water quality.

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