Water Court

The Water Right Determination and Administration Act of 1969 created seven water divisions based upon the drainage patterns of major rivers in Colorado: the South Platte, Arkansas, Rio Grande, Gunnison, Colorado, White and San Juan rivers. Each water division is staffed by a division engineer appointed by the state engineer; a water judge appointed by the Colorado Supreme Court; a water referee appointed by the water judge; and a water clerk assigned by the district court.

Water judges are district judges who have jurisdiction in the determination of water rights, the use and administration of water, and all other water matters within the jurisdiction of the water division. There are no jury trials in water courts, and all appeals are filed directly with the Colorado Supreme Court.

All water courts operate under a standard case definition approved by the Colorado Supreme Court in 1981. This made possible the establishment of water court filing standards, which have been reported annually by water divisions since July 1, 1981.

Specific information regarding each of the seven water divisions is available at http://www.courts.state.co.us/supct/supctwaterctindex.htm.