

## For More Information

If you have questions or concerns about the scoping process, please feel free to contact Kara Lamb at Reclamation. Please also contact Kara for additional copies of this flyer or for directions to the scoping meeting locations.

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To obtain additional information on the NEPA process, visit Reclamation's website at [www.gp.usbr.gov](http://www.gp.usbr.gov); click on the link for "Environmental Activities." To obtain more information on the proposed Windy Gap Firming Project, visit [www.ncwcd.org](http://www.ncwcd.org).

## WINDY GAP FIRING PROJECT

*The Bureau of Reclamation and the Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District will hold three public open house meetings to solicit comments on the scope of the EIS. You are invited to attend these meetings to learn more about the project and help identify issues and alternatives. The meetings will be held from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M. on September 30, 2003 in Granby, Colorado, on October 1, in Loveland, Colorado and on October 2, 2003 in Lyons, Colorado.*

Bureau of Reclamation  
11056 W. County Road 18E  
Loveland, CO 80537-9711



## Scoping Announcement September 2003

*This scoping announcement provides information about the proposed development of a project to improve the reliability of water deliveries from the existing Windy Gap Project. The Windy Gap Firming Project includes nine entities within the Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. Because the project would require connection with Colorado-Big Thompson facilities owned by the Bureau of Reclamation, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. This announcement provides information on the proposed project, alternatives, issues, and how to get involved.*

### Background

During the 1960s, six entities (the cities of Boulder, Fort Collins, Greeley, Longmont, Loveland, and the Town of Estes Park) in northeastern Colorado determined that additional water supplies were needed to meet their projected municipal demands. The Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (Subdistrict), consisting of the incorporated areas of the six entities, was formed in 1970 to develop the Windy Gap Project. Subsequently, the Platte River Power Authority acquired all of the City of Fort Collins allotment contracts, as well as one-half of the City of Loveland and the Town of Estes Park contracts. The goal of the original Windy Gap Project was to divert and convey water through Colorado-Big Thompson Project (C-BT) facilities prior to delivery to Windy Gap Project allottees for storage and ultimate use.

In 1981, Reclamation completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) on the effects of using C-BT project facilities for the "storage, carriage and delivery" of Windy Gap Project water. The Record of Decision for that EIS allowed Reclamation to negotiate a contract with the Subdistrict for the conveyance through C-BT Project facilities of an average of about 56,000 acre-feet of Windy Gap Project water annually from the Colorado River, with maximum diversions limited to 93,300 acre-feet in any 1 year. Reclamation, the Subdistrict, and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (District) then entered into a contract for the "storage, carriage and delivery" of Windy Gap Project water in C-BT facilities. Construction of the Windy Gap Project reservoir, pipeline, and pumping facility was completed in 1985.

After conveyance and evaporation losses and allocations to the Middle Park Water Conservancy District, the average annual deliveries to the allottees of the Windy Gap Project were estimated to be about 48,000 acre-feet. Each unit (100 acre-feet/unit) of Windy Gap water is 1/480th of the



Existing Windy Gap Reservoir

annual yield of the Windy Gap Project. Average annual yield per unit since completion of construction has been approximately 17 acre-feet/unit. There are several reasons for this low yield:

- During the early years after construction, not all of the Project allottees needed their full allocation of water from the Project. They had not grown into the full demand for which the Project was developed and diversions were less than allowed.
- The Windy Gap Project cannot divert water every year because more senior water rights upstream and downstream have a higher priority to divert water.
- Under the contract between the Subdistrict, the District, and Reclamation, water conveyed and stored for the C-BT Project has priority over water conveyed and stored for the Windy Gap Project. In years when the C-BT system is full, there is no conveyance or storage capacity in the C-BT system for Windy Gap Project water. In years when Windy Gap Project water is stored in the C-BT system, Windy Gap Project water is sometimes spilled from the system to make room for C-BT Project water.

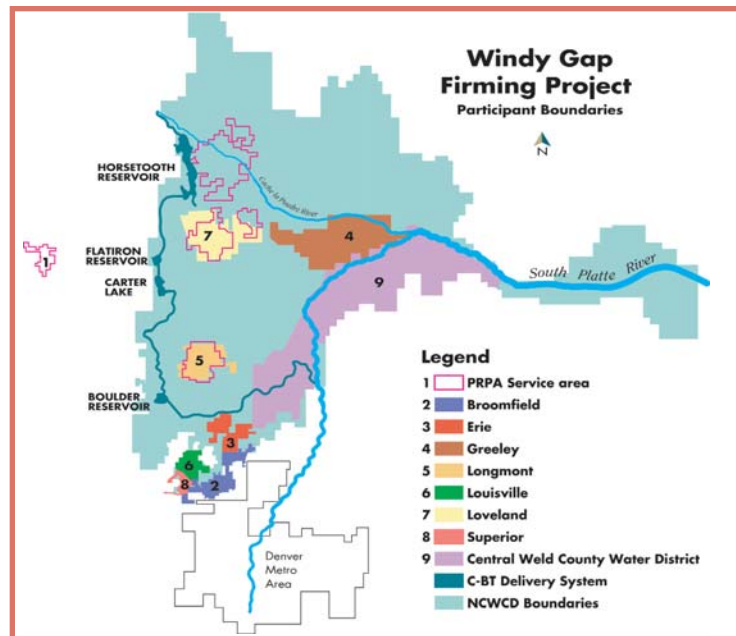


For these reasons, nine of the Windy Gap Project allottees (the cities of Broomfield, Greeley, Longmont, Louisville, and Loveland, the Towns of Erie and Superior, the Central Weld County District, and the Platter River Power Authority), referred to collectively as the Firming Project Participants, have requested that the Subdistrict investigate and implement measures to cooperatively enhance or improve the reliability of (or to "firm") their Windy Gap Project units. The service area boundaries for the Firming Project Participants are shown in the Figure to the right.

## Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the proposed Firming Project is to maximize the use of existing water rights associated with the Windy Gap Project by improving the delivery and reliability of the existing Windy Gap Project water supply. For some Firming Project Participants, the proposed project does not firm all of their Windy Gap Project units and not all of the owners of Windy Gap Project water are seeking to firm their units. Thus, only a portion of the 48,000 acre-feet of Windy Gap Project water would be "firmed" by the proposed action.

The specific purpose of the project is to provide an annual delivery of up to 30,000 acre-feet of water by 2008 depending on the identified needs of the Firming Project Participants. Each Firming Project Participant owns varying amounts of Windy Gap Project water and each Firming Project Participant has determined its firm water supply needs from the Windy Gap Project and the timing of those needs. For some of the Firming Project Participants, an increased water supply is needed immediately to meet current demands; other Participants' needs are expected to increase over the next several years creating a foreseeable future need for their Windy Gap Project water.



The Firming Project is a non-Federal project. It is proposed to be constructed and operated by the Subdistrict. Federal actions related to the proposed project may include decisions on permitting the connection of Firming Project facilities to C-BT facilities, granting of right-of-way permits and/or easements across Federal lands, and issuance of a Federal Clean Water Act Section 404 permit.

## Alternatives Under Consideration

Over the past several years, the Subdistrict has investigated a wide range of alternative actions with the potential to meet the needs of the Firming Project Participants. These investigations concluded with an Alternative Plan Formulation Report that was finalized in 2003. The primary goals in developing alternatives for the proposed project were:

- To identify a cooperative regional project that could be integrated with existing water delivery systems;
- To allow maximum use of the existing Windy Gap Project diversion, pumping and pipeline facilities, and water rights.

To provide the Firming Project Participants a consistent annual yield of up to 30,000 acre-feet, approximately 110,000 acre-feet of new storage is needed specifically for Windy Gap Project water. This is approximately the size of the existing Carter Lake southwest of Loveland, Colorado.

The 2003 Alternatives Report evaluated a variety of project elements including non-structural and operational opportunities; new reservoir sites; enlargement of existing reservoirs; and ground water aquifer storage. Storage on both the East and West Slope of the Continental Divide was evaluated. Technical, environmental, and economic screening criteria were used to identify and compare alternatives capable of meeting the project purpose and need. A combination of alternatives may be necessary to meet the project purpose and need. In addition, C-BT system operations may be refined to enhance the yield of new reservoir storage. These refinements might include options for storage of C-BT Project water in a new Firming Project reservoir or borrowing storage from the C-BT Project. The Firming Project Participants' varying needs and timing of those needs could allow the proposed project to be constructed in stages depending on the alternative configuration.

A full range of reasonable alternatives will be evaluated in the EIS. These alternatives will include No Action and others that will meet the stated purpose and need for the Firming Project. The EIS will evaluate potential environmental impacts of specific alternatives together with engineering and socioeconomic considerations. A preferred alternative has not been identified at this time. Reclamation, with input from Federal, State, and local government agencies and the public, will evaluate the alternatives.

Alternatives identified to have the potential to meet the project purpose and the needs of the Firming Project Participants include several new reservoir sites listed below and shown in the Alternative Locations Map.

Reservoir Site	Storage in acre-feet
Chimney Hollow	44,500-110,000
Little Thompson	110,000
Cactus Hill	112,000
Rawhide	13,000
Jasper	36,500-79,000

## Preliminary Identification of Environmental Issues

The Subdistrict, in cooperation with Reclamation, held informational meetings on the proposed project in Granby on July 22, 2003 and in Loveland on July 23, 2003. Public input from these meetings has helped to identify issues. The following issues have been tentatively identified for analysis in the EIS. This list is preliminary and is intended to facilitate public comment on the scope of this EIS.

- What are the impacts to aquatic resources including endangered Colorado River fish?
- How would water quality on the West and East Slope be affected?
- How would the proposed project affect operation of the C-BT Project and the existing Windy Gap Project?
- How would streamflow in the Colorado River be affected?
- Would this project affect water levels in Lake Granby, Carter Lake, and Horsetooth Reservoir?
- What are the effects to existing property owners?
- What would be the impact to streams and wetlands?
- How would wildlife habitat be affected?
- Would new reservoirs provide recreational opportunities?

## How to Get Involved

Reclamation and the Subdistrict encourage your participation in the EIS public process by attending meetings and submitting comments. Three open houses will be held for your convenience.

### September 30, 2003

Inn at Silver Creek  
Granby, Colorado  
(2 miles south of Granby, off Highway 40)

### October 1, 2003

McKee Conference Center  
2000 North Boise Avenue  
Loveland, Colorado

### October 2, 2003

Lyons Elementary School  
338 High Street  
Lyons, Colorado

All of the open house meetings will be held from 6:30 to 9:00 P.M., with a brief presentation at 7:00 P.M. There will be an opportunity to make written or verbal comments on the proposed project. If you cannot attend the meetings, please send comments on the alternatives or other issues pertaining to the proposed project to the attention of Will Tully by November 3, 2003.

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