

WINDY GAP PROJECT BYPASS AGREEMENT

Summer 2014 chimneyhollow.org

THE WINDY GAP FIRING PROJECT is a collaboration between 13 Northeastern Colorado water providers to improve the reliability of supplies from the 1985 Windy Gap Project by building a new East Slope reservoir called Chimney Hollow. The firing project reached a major milestone in December 2012 when Grand County's commission approved a 1041 permit and several related agreements.

THE FIRING PROJECT BYPASS AGREEMENT is related to Grand County's issuance of a 1041 permit. The bypass agreement's objective is to improve the aquatic biological health of the Colorado River at and below Windy Gap Reservoir. Signatories include Northern Water's Municipal Subdistrict, Grand County, Trout Unlimited and the Upper Colorado River Alliance.



Colorado River water flows into Windy Gap Reservoir and is either diverted and pumped to Lake Granby or continues flowing through the reservoir outlet and then downstream. Biologists have been interested in learning what a bypass through or around the reservoir could do to benefit aquatic health.

SUBDISTRICT FUNDING COMMITMENTS

Bypass study: \$250,000
Bypass implementation: \$2 million
Perpetual maintenance and operation

ADDITIONAL FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Colorado Water Conservation Board: \$2 million to implement
Colorado Parks and Wildlife: In-kind services to implement
Signatories will obtain additional funding, if needed

GUIDELINES FOR THE BYPASS

Reduce sedimentation and stream channel armoring problems
Support a healthy riparian zone
Accommodate flows anticipated in the future
Complement restoration/habitat improvements downstream
Maintain collaboration (through "Learning By Doing")

PROGRESS TO DATE

February 2014: Bypass study completed by Colorado Parks and Wildlife that identified alternatives to improve aquatic environment.
April 2014: Subdistrict funding study of more detailed evaluation of two alternatives.

TROUT UNLIMITED HAS SAID THE BYPASS AGREEMENT IS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL COMPONENTS of the project's approvals. According to TU, the collaborative process that led to the bypass and other related agreements also offers "an opportunity for a new way of business — where stakeholders work side by side with water providers."

Additionally, TU referenced this cooperation as an example for future water planning in Colorado.

"These permit conditions provide critical measures for protecting the health of the Upper Colorado River and its world-class fishery."
- Mely Whiting, counsel for TU

"Through a balanced portfolio including smart supply projects like WGFP, Colorado can meet diverse water needs, from municipal needs to recreation, while keeping our rivers healthy."
- Drew Peternell, director, TU's Colorado Water Project

**For more information: northernwater.org
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