

WINDY GAP FIRING PROJECT

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THE WINDY GAP FIRING PROJECT is a regional collaboration between 13 Northeastern Colorado water providers that would improve the reliability of, or firm up, the Windy Gap Project, which is operated and maintained by Northern Water’s Municipal Subdistrict and started delivering water in 1985. The firming project’s key feature, a new East Slope reservoir called Chimney Hollow, would provide storage to supply a reliable 30,000 acre feet of water a year for future generations.

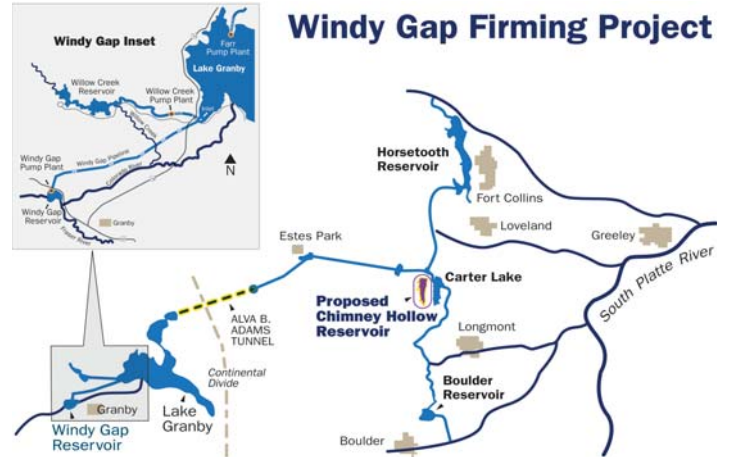
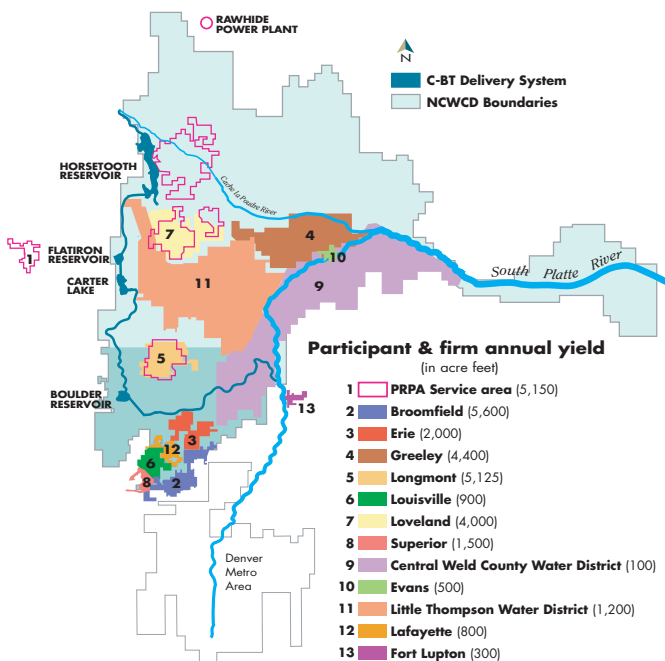
WHO ARE THE PARTICIPATING WATER PROVIDERS, AND WHY DO THEY NEED THE PROJECT?

There are 13 participants: 10 municipalities, two water districts and one power provider. Northern Water’s Municipal Subdistrict is coordinating the permitting process for them.

By 2050, the participants’ total population will have far more than doubled what it was in 2005. The estimated 2050 population is 825,000 people, which does not include the more than 145,000 customers served by the participating power provider, the Platte River Power Authority.

Water demand projections for the participants show a shortage in supply of 64,000 acre feet in 2030 and 110,000 acre feet by 2050.

Firming Project Participant Boundaries



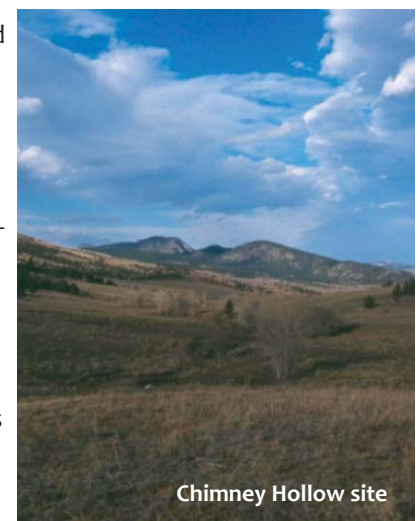
WHY IS BUILDING CHIMNEY HOLLOW RESERVOIR THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE?

Through the federal review process, participants reviewed 170 alternatives to provide the supply they need. Constructing the 90,000-acre-foot Chimney Hollow Reservoir southwest of Loveland came out as both the participants’ and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation’s top choice.

The project uses not only existing water rights, but also existing facilities. It hooks on to the Windy Gap and Colorado-Big Thompson projects and adds a storage reservoir – something the original project participants knew they would need in the future.

Chimney Hollow builds on regional cooperation, therefore saving money and reducing environmental impacts by building one reservoir instead of several and using more efficient diversions.

The firming project makes environmental sense in other ways, too. Windy Gap water is reusable – water providers can use it more than one time. And Chimney Hollow Reservoir is part of Larimer County’s open space plan to provide benefits for habitat and recreationists.



Chimney Hollow site

WHAT MITIGATION WILL BE PROVIDED?

The state has already approved the project's state fish and wildlife mitigation plan, which offers operational considerations to mitigate higher stream temperatures, increased flushing flows to clean sediment from the stream channel, and nutrient removal to offset impacts to water quality in Grand Lake and the Colorado River.

The state also approved a voluntary enhancement plan that offers benefits which include increased funding for future stream restoration work and habitat-related projects. Both the mitigation and enhancement plans were developed in coordination with Denver Water because of its proposed Moffat Collection System Project.

Federally, the NEPA process will incorporate the state mitigation plan into the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

In addition, the Subdistrict is refining a voluntary working agreement with West Slope entities for benefits it will provide. These include water supply for the Middle Park Water Conservancy District and additional water for environmental purposes such as stream habitat.

Nutrient removal will neutralize effects of the firming project on clarity issues in Grand Lake.

In addition, Northern Water and the Subdistrict are working with Reclamation and Grand County as part of a long-term commitment to address existing water quality concerns in Grand Lake.

Thanks to all of these cooperative efforts, the Windy Gap Firming Project will improve conditions on the Colorado River.



Colorado River below Windy Gap

PROJECT TIMELINE: WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR

1985: Windy Gap Project construction completed and water deliveries began

2003: 13 participating water providers entered formal federal process for firming project; Subdistrict published alternatives report detailing evaluation of 170 methods to potentially accomplish the project's goals and how they were narrowed down to seven

2005: Reclamation published two key reports, one describing the purpose of and need for the project, and one identifying a reasonable range of alternatives that could meet the water providers' needs

2006-2008: Reclamation published more than 1,700 pages of technical reports detailing different resource impact analyses for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

2008: Reclamation published the DEIS, which details the project's purpose and need and identifies potential project impacts with corresponding mitigation

2009: Subdistrict offered West Slope benefits to facilitate project implementation; negotiations began

Summer 2011: Colorado Wildlife Commission and Colorado Water Conservation Board unanimously accepted the project's state fish and wildlife mitigation plan as well as a voluntary enhancement plan to provide benefits

November 2011: Reclamation published the Final EIS

WHAT'S LEFT – ANTICIPATED DATES

2012

Federal approvals

Reclamation: Complete modifications to existing Windy Gap carriage contract, which includes procedures and fees for Windy Gap water to move through C-BT facilities

Reclamation: Official Record of Decision on whether project should move forward

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: 404 permit to build

State approvals

401 water quality certification from Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Local agreements

Finalize negotiations with West Slope for benefits Subdistrict will provide

Begin working on recreation plan with Larimer County for Chimney Hollow Reservoir management

2012-2014: Project design

2014-2017: Project construction

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.chimneyhollow.org

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