

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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Manager's Message

Welcome to Northern Water's Annual Report reviewing achievements, observations and, in some instances, a glimpse of a path forward.

A few months ago, my attention was drawn to a nautical map (more accurately called a portolan chart) that was published in 1633 by Pascoal Roiz. The map depicts the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent continents with striking details including illustrations of coastlines and ports, compass directions and prevailing winds. At the time, it was an almanac for intercontinental mariners. A description of the artifact highlighted that "mapping is a cumulative process." Makes sense—maps are an accumulation of facts and findings from numerous contributors over many, many years.

I believe "cumulative process" can likewise precisely describe the outcome of past and ongoing water supply development efforts in Northeastern Colorado. Since the early 1860s, thousands of water rights have been developed in pursuit of economic enrichment, increased community resiliency and in more recent years, for the improvement to the aquatic environment and added riverine recreation. The collective of water rights,

infrastructure and supplies that have been developed by our region, for the benefit of our region, have been accomplished through a "cumulative process" which has resulted in a near-ample supply almost every year.

Achieving such a level of regional water security requires visionary planning, tenacity, significant investments of time and resources, and courage. A Northern Water perspective suggests we should celebrate the hard work of those who came before us in developing a robust supply, and likewise the ongoing commitment toward thoughtful water resource management going forward. The outcome of this "cumulative process" is foundational to the quality of life we enjoy. When portions of these water supplies depart our region, the options for future generations are greatly diminished.

On behalf of Northern Water's Board of Directors and staff, thank you for taking time to review our 2025 Annual Report. Please feel free to contact us as we advance ongoing and new initiatives in 2026.



Bradley D. Wind
General Manager

Board of Directors



Dennis Yanchunas
Boulder County,
Northern Water
President



Bill Emslie
Larimer County
Municipal Subdistrict
President



Steve Buckbee
Boulder County



Jennifer Gimbel
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Weld County



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Logan County



Rob McClary
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Weld County



John Rusch
Morgan &
Washington
Counties



Dave Stewart
Larimer County



Dale Trowbridge
Weld County



Dick Wolfe
Broomfield County



Mike Applegate
Director Emeritus

About 400 people visited Northern Water's back yard on June 28 to take part in Northern Water's first Conservation Gardens Fair since 2019. The day featured gardens tours, seminars, kids' activities, free plants, prizes and more.




2025 Water Year In Review

The 2025 water year highlights why the Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) Project is essential to Northern Colorado. A year of near-average snowpack but below-average streamflows, followed by a summer drought in western Colorado, demonstrate dramatic weather patterns that are not uncommon.

At the start of the 2025 water year, the C-BT Project contained 115 percent of long-term average storage. Snowpack and precipitation were near average until February, when a series of significant storms through early April led to well-above-average snowpack. However, dry and warm weather persisted for the rest of the spring. Snowpack peaked earlier than normal with West Slope sites at 103 percent and East Slope sites at 100 percent. However, seasonal streamflow totals ranged from 71 percent to 88 percent of average on both sides of the divide.

Near-average conditions in April prompted the Northern Water Board of Directors to set the 2025 C-BT Project delivery quota at 70 percent. However, due to the decline in the snowpack and below average precipitation in April and May, the Board increased the C-BT Project quota to 75 percent in June. Dry conditions persisted in early summer, and C-BT Project supplies helped water users bring crops to harvest. By late August, however, the pattern shifted: large rainstorms delivered two or three times the average for the period, improving conditions on both the East and West slopes at the end of the water year. Mean areal precipitation within Northern Water boundaries for water year 2025 was 105 percent of average. C-BT Project reservoirs ended the water year with 110 percent of average storage.



Northern Water awarded \$396,800 as part of its Water-Efficient Landscape Grant Program to support 20 new projects. With this year's funding, Northern Water has contributed nearly \$1.4 million in grants to 100 projects.

Board Bids Farewell to Members Harrison and Williams

Two longtime members of the Northern Water Board of Directors were honored in September as they attended their final meeting as Board members. Sue Ellen Harrison and Todd Williams, who both represented Boulder County on the 13-member Board of Directors, moved on after serving on the Board. Harrison served on the Board for 16 years, while Williams was on the Board for eight years.



Colorado River

The primary source of water for the Colorado-Big Thompson Project and Windy Gap Project is the Colorado River. Northern Water continually worked to protect its vested interests in these Colorado River water supplies in 2025.

Northern Water played a key role in discussions about the Shoshone water rights, named for the Shoshone hydroelectric plant near Glenwood Springs. The Colorado River Water Conservation District negotiated an agreement with Xcel Energy to purchase the water rights associated with the hydropower plant, with plans to lease the water back to Xcel Energy for as long as the facility continues to produce power. When that use ceases either temporarily or permanently, the water would transition to “in-stream flow” use co-managed by the State of Colorado and the River District. In 2025, Northern Water advocated to the Colorado Water Conservation Board that the ability to use the water rights for in-stream flow purposes not impact the yield of the Colorado-Big Thompson and Windy Gap projects. Discussions and work on the issue are ongoing.



Throughout the Colorado River Basin, work continued to negotiate the future operating criteria for Lake Powell and Lake Mead for use by the Colorado River basin states. Northern Water supported the efforts of the State of Colorado and the Upper Colorado River Commission to advocate for sustainable use of the Colorado River and its tributaries as new agreements come into focus.

The agreement currently in place for management of the two largest federal reservoirs expires at the end of the operating year in 2026.

Northern Integrated Supply Project

The Northern Integrated Supply Project made significant advances in 2025.

In February, Northern Water reached a settlement in federal litigation with the advocacy group Save the Poudre, clearing the final major federal regulatory hurdle for completion of the project. The \$100 million settlement, to be paid over the next 17 years, demonstrates a commitment by Northern Water and the NISP participants for ongoing work to enhance the Poudre River and support recreation and wildlife conservation along its banks.

As the project advances toward construction, both existing and new participants are being confirmed to share in its benefits.

Learn more at www.NISPwater.org.

The Colorado River Connectivity Channel (CRCC) was recognized by the Colorado Contractors Association, with the Northern Water-led CRCC earning Best Project in River Restoration honors in the over \$10 million category. The project was additionally recognized at the Colorado Trout Unlimited's annual River Stewardship Gala.



Chimney Hollow Reservoir Project Construction Complete

Marking a major milestone, 2025 was the year construction wrapped up on Chimney Hollow Reservoir—the tallest new dam built in the United States in the past 25 years. Construction milestones continued steadily throughout 2025. In February, crews completed the spillway and received the final two valves on site. By April, the last quarry blast occurred, and all leakage testing on pipes and valves was successfully completed. In July, final testing wrapped up, the crusher was demobilized and the main dam received its final asphalt layer. By August, the main dam was complete. Then, in late October, the Colorado Division of Water Resources Dam Safety Branch performed its final inspection of the structure.

Barnard Construction demonstrated an unwavering commitment to safety throughout four years of construction on Chimney Hollow. With over 3.4 million work hours logged, the project achieved an average Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR), significantly lower than the industry average. These results reflect a culture where safety is not just a priority—it's a core value.

The work completed over the last four years stands as a testament to the perseverance and dedication of everyone involved, not only during construction, but also throughout the two decades of permitting and planning that made this project a reality.

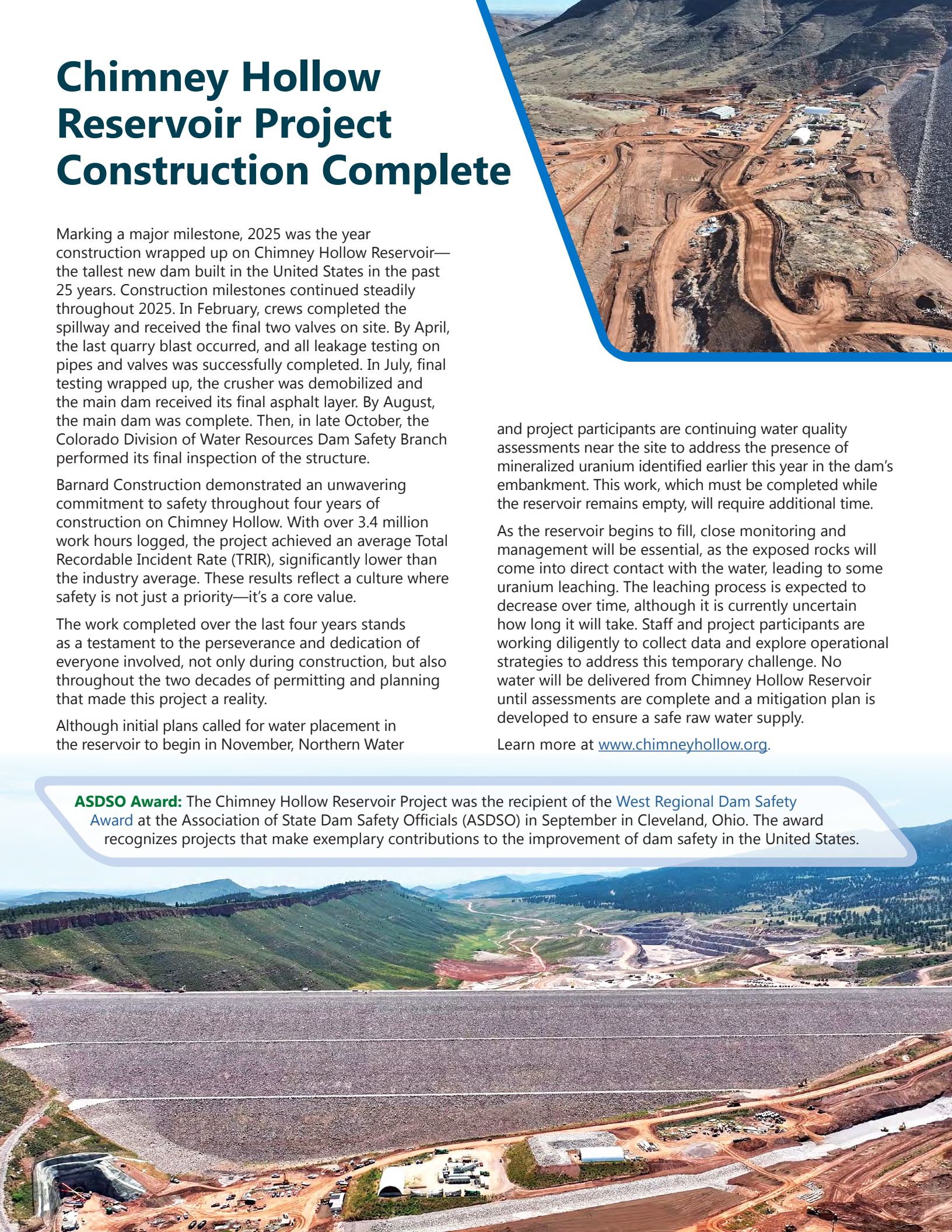
Although initial plans called for water placement in the reservoir to begin in November, Northern Water

and project participants are continuing water quality assessments near the site to address the presence of mineralized uranium identified earlier this year in the dam's embankment. This work, which must be completed while the reservoir remains empty, will require additional time.

As the reservoir begins to fill, close monitoring and management will be essential, as the exposed rocks will come into direct contact with the water, leading to some uranium leaching. The leaching process is expected to decrease over time, although it is currently uncertain how long it will take. Staff and project participants are working diligently to collect data and explore operational strategies to address this temporary challenge. No water will be delivered from Chimney Hollow Reservoir until assessments are complete and a mitigation plan is developed to ensure a safe raw water supply.

Learn more at www.chimneyhollow.org.

ASDSO Award: The Chimney Hollow Reservoir Project was the recipient of the [West Regional Dam Safety Award](#) at the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) in September in Cleveland, Ohio. The award recognizes projects that make exemplary contributions to the improvement of dam safety in the United States.



Watershed Initiatives

Northern Water reaffirmed its commitment to delivering a high-quality water supply in 2025 by expanding river and watershed health initiatives. The year also marked a stronger emphasis on data collection and project analysis to demonstrate effectiveness and purpose.

East Troublesome Fire Watershed Restoration – Five years after the 2020 East Troublesome Fire, water quality in Northern Water’s downstream reservoirs continues to improve, with inorganic nitrogen levels nearing pre-fire conditions. These improvements are the result of natural revegetation combined with approximately \$55 million in restoration projects led by Northern Water, the U.S. Forest Service and other partners. Efforts have accelerated regrowth, stabilized hillslopes and repaired damaged areas.

Grand Lake Clarity and Three Lakes Water Quality – Northern Water’s environmental initiatives to ensure reliable options continued to show results within its collection systems, including Grand Lake. In 2025, both clarity targets—3.8-meter average and 2.8-meter minimum were once again achieved. Since 2016 clarity goals have been met about twice as often—about 55 percent of the time—compared to the decade prior, when success rates averaged around 27 percent.

Colorado River Connectivity Channel – Colorado Parks and Wildlife’s first raft-based electrofishing survey of the Connectivity Channel, noted “an increase in the native fish population numbers more quickly than anticipated.” The survey estimated roughly 848 brown trout and 221 rainbow trout over 6 inches within a one-mile stretch of the newly constructed channel, which was completed in 2024 to reconnect two segments of the Colorado River around Windy Gap Reservoir near Granby.

Northern Water’s environmental partnerships and successes in 2025 also extended to:

- Comprehensive water quality monitoring programs, collecting hundreds of samples across 55 baseline sites and tracking temperature, salinity, macroinvertebrates, aquatic plants and compounds of emerging concern through collaborative efforts.
- Projects to protect source water, including forest health planning and managing aquatic nuisance species like Eurasian Milfoil in Boulder Reservoir.
- Continued planning and implementation of the \$90 million in environmental measures associated with Chimney Hollow Reservoir.
- Playing an instrumental role in leading the Kawuneeche Valley Restoration Collaborative alongside Rocky Mountain National Park, helping to install 29 beaver dam-mimicking structures in the Colorado River headwaters.



2025 Budget Summary – Northern Water

Northern Water maintains a strong financial position while continuing its commitment to provide a reliable and high-quality water supply.

Revenues to Northern Water come from a variety of sources, with about half resulting from a 1-mill ad valorem tax levied on property within Northern Water's boundaries. In addition, Colorado-Big Thompson Project allottees pay assessments annually that contribute to operations and maintenance projects, water management and water delivery services. Northern Water continues to build its reserves to manage the numerous risks and uncertainties that threaten the ability to fully and reliably deliver water through the C-BT Project. The 2025 budget reflects the fiscal year, from October 1 to September 30. The fiscal year 2025 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report is still being finalized and will be posted to our website alongside the completed budget documents at www.northernwater.org/financialreports.

Northern Water and the Municipal Subdistrict were awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards for 2024 for meeting the highest principles in budgeting, as well as the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its Annual Comprehensive Financial Reports.

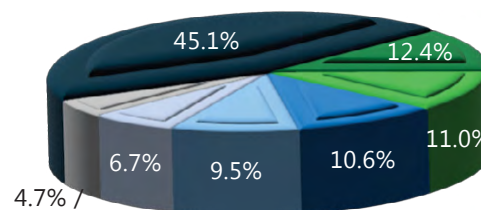
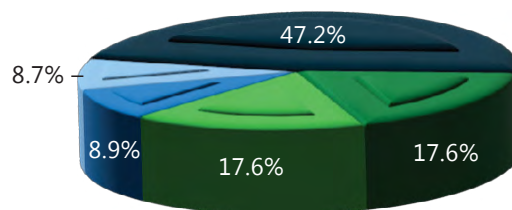


Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Note: Does not include Southern Water Supply Project, Pleasant Valley Pipeline, Northern Integrated Supply Project and Hydropower enterprises

Property and Specific Ownership Tax	\$39,360,902
Water Assessments	14,685,857
Other Revenues (incl. revenue from enterprise funds)	14,645,995
Initiatives and Studies	7,488,954
Other Non-Operating Revenues	7,124,298
TOTAL SOURCES	\$83,306,006

Program Expenses	\$37,542,652
Capital and Projects	10,307,400
Operation and Maintenance	9,171,277
Initiatives and Studies	8,853,605
Reserve Funding	7,934,634
Debt Service	5,576,978
Fleet and Facilities	3,919,460
TOTAL USES	\$83,306,006



2025 Budget Summary – Municipal Subdistrict

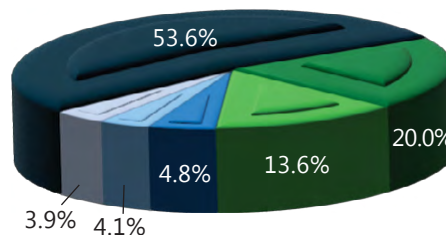
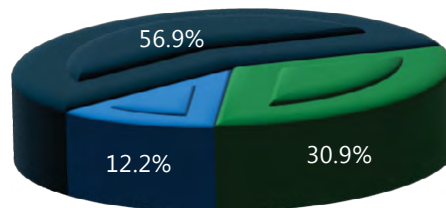
Northern Water's Municipal Subdistrict is a separate and independent conservancy district formed in 1970 to build and operate the Windy Gap Project. The annual budget is one part of a long-term commitment to provide quality services while preserving long-term financial viability of the Municipal Subdistrict. Construction of Chimney Hollow Reservoir was complete in 2025.

Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Note: Does not include Windy Gap Firming enterprise (Chimney Hollow construction)

Operating Cash	\$11,962,510
Operating Revenue	6,490,412
Other Revenues	2,571,564
TOTAL SOURCES	\$21,024,486

Unrestricted Cash	\$11,266,588
Carriage Delivery	4,199,500
Capital and Projects	2,860,000
Pumping Energy and Wheeling	1,018,150
Program Expenses	870,248
Operations and Maintenance	810,000
TOTAL USES	\$21,024,486



C-BT Operations

Throughout the water year, Northern Water crews carried out essential repairs, upgrades and maintenance across the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, ensuring the system operated smoothly and efficiently.

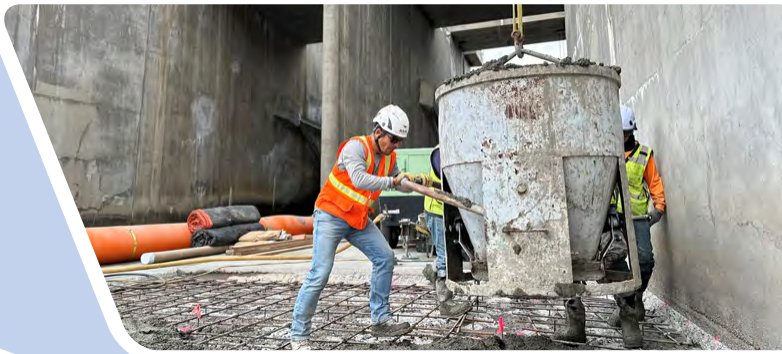
In a coordinated effort involving Operations, Project Management, Water Scheduling and external contractors, crews successfully repaired a leak on the Southern Water Supply Project initially caused by damage from the 2013 flood. During the seven-day outage, Northern Water staff took the opportunity to complete additional SWSP projects.

Distribution Systems staff, in collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, completed inspection and testing at Horsetooth Outlet Works which required divers to place a bulkhead on the intake structure 130 feet below the water surface.

Five years after the East Troublesome Fire, Collection Systems staff relocated a floating debris collection system from Grand Lake to Lake Granby. The system—

comprising of interconnected floating booms with underwater screens—helped reduce the risk of debris clogging the West Portal fish screens following the fire.

Late in the season, external contractors and staff completed concrete replacement and gate repairs at the Shadow Mountain Reservoir's spillway. Further work is required in upcoming years to replace several more floor panels and make repairs to wall panels.



Northern Water Continues Mission to Protect Native Water Supplies

When water leaves our region, we forever lose the building blocks that are foundational to our economy, regional well-being and sense of place. If water exports continue to go unchecked, we will be faced with a less secure, more-uncertain future. As water leaves, so does opportunity, wealth and what makes Northeastern Colorado a great place to live, work and play.

Northern Water continued its mission to protect native water supplies in Northeastern Colorado, engaging in important conversations with Colorado-Big Thompson Project allottees and regional leaders. Entities in the Denver Metro Area continue to eye our water resources as opportunities for their own urban expansion, and the currently visible Thornton Water Project pipeline, a deal struck in the 1980s, is a tangible reminder of what we will continue to lose if we don't think differently about the way water resources today affect future generations.

Outreach and Engagement

Northern Water is committed to education, transparency and ensuring access to information. We offer a variety of training and engagement opportunities focused on water-related topics. We also maintain multiple communication channels to keep you informed and connected.

To learn more, visit our website, www.northernwater.org, or email us at contactus@northernwater.org.

For detailed updates and in-depth videos, sign up for our monthly newsletter, [e-Waternews](#).

