



News Release

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Reservoir Project Moves Forward

BERTHOUD – The Windy Gap Firming Project received its Record of Decision Dec. 19, 2014, during a signing ceremony at Northern Water’s headquarters in Berthoud. Mike Ryan, Great Plains Regional Director for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, signed the firming project’s long-anticipated ROD.

Officials from Northern Water, Northern Water’s Municipal Subdistrict and Reclamation also signed a new Carriage Contract allowing Windy Gap water to be transported from the West Slope to Chimney Hollow Reservoir using existing Colorado-Big Thompson Project facilities.

The ROD identifies and confirms Chimney Hollow Reservoir as the firming project’s preferred alternative. If built as proposed, Chimney Hollow Reservoir would store up to 90,000 acre-feet of water southwest of Loveland and just west of Carter Lake.

“Signing the Record of Decision and new Carriage Contract is a major milestone for the project,” said Jeff Drager, Project Manager for the Windy Gap Firming Project. “With Chimney Hollow Reservoir, the Windy Gap Firming Project will be able to provide 26,000 acre-feet of water year in and year out to growing communities in Northeastern Colorado.”

Dennis Yanchunas, President of Northern Water’s Municipal Subdistrict, applauded the participants’ perseverance. “While this has taken a number of years, it is worth the effort as Chimney Hollow Reservoir is that much closer to reality.”

The Windy Gap Firming Project is a collaboration of 12 Northeastern Colorado water providers and Platte River Power Authority to improve the reliability of their Windy Gap water supplies. Windy Gap began delivering water in 1985.

The participants include 10 municipalities: Broomfield, Erie, Evans, Fort Lupton, Greeley, Lafayette, Longmont, Louisville, Loveland and Superior; two water districts: Central Weld County and Little Thompson; and one power provider: Platte River.

The firming project’s federal permitting process began in 2003 under the National Environmental Policy Act. Reclamation issued a final Environmental Impact Statement in 2011 along with the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission’s approval of a fish and wildlife mitigation plan.

Construction of Chimney Hollow Reservoir could begin in 2018.

Northern Water's Municipal Subdistrict is a separate and independent conservancy district formed by six municipalities in 1970 to build and operate the Windy Gap Project. The Windy Gap Project consists of a diversion dam and pump plant on the Colorado River, and a six-mile pipeline to Lake Granby.

Northern Water is a public agency created in 1937 to contract with Reclamation to build the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, which collects water on the West Slope and delivers it to the East Slope through a 13-mile tunnel beneath Rocky Mountain National Park. Northern Water's boundaries encompass portions of eight counties, 640,000 irrigated acres and a population of about 880,000 people. For more information, visit www.northernwater.org.