

Horsetooth Dam, Soldier Canyon Dam, Dixon Canyon Dam, and Spring Canyon Dam (hereafter referred to as the Horsetooth Dams) are features of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project, which was constructed by the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). They are located above and immediately west of Fort Collins, Larimer County, Colorado (Figure 1-1). Constructed between 1946 and 1950, the Horsetooth Dams do not include internal defensive measures and lack foundation treatment to protect against seepage-induced failures (USDI Bureau of Reclamation 2000:1). The lack of defensive measures at the dams, the changing seepage conditions, and the uncertain future performance of the dams, in conjunction with the large population located immediately downstream of the dams, has prompted the Reclamation to conclude that risk-reduction measures are warranted.

During construction to repair the Horsetooth Dams, the reservoir will be drawn down to as much as 130 ft. below normal pool level (5430 ft. above mean sea level [amsl]). Intensive cultural resources inventories conducted in 1989, 1990, and 2001 identified several cultural resources localities that are below the normal reservoir surface elevation. These localities are considered eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The reservoir drawdown constitutes an adverse effect upon these sites. Accordingly, in compliance with the requirements of 36 CFR 800 under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended), Reclamation is obliged to mitigate these adverse effects. Reclamation has contracted with the Denver office of URS Group, Inc. to conduct the necessary cultural resources investigations at the three sites.

URS accomplished the mitigation in two phases, as set forth in the statement-of-work prepared by Reclamation. Phase I involved the preparation of a detailed data recovery plan to guide the conduct of the studies. This plan was completed and submitted to Reclamation in September 2002 (URS 2002) and was approved by Reclamation and the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Phase II encompassed excavations at the three sites, in accordance with the data recovery plan, and laboratory analyses of all materials recovered by the excavations. In addition, other tasks were accomplished as part of the mitigation efforts. First, the methods and activities associated with the construction of the original dams and reservoirs were studied, with special emphasis on how the available construction equipment governed the pattern of landscape use. Second, topographic maps of the landscape before water was added have been prepared. These maps display previous cultural resources surveys, known sites, and construction disturbance areas. Third, a Public Archaeology Day was held on November 9, 2002, at the Wathen Ranch site (5LR9974). Members of the media and the public were invited to attend and participate in excavations at the site.

Field investigations commenced on October 11, 2002, continued more or less continuously for the next seven weeks, and were completed on November 27, 2002. Snow and cold weather precluded field activities on a few days. Reclamation's Area Archaeologist, Bob Burton, served as the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative and Reclamation's Great Plains Region Archaeologist, Brad Coutant, as an advisor. Both of these gentlemen reviewed and provided comments on a draft of this report. The project Principal Investigator and Task Order Manager is Robert J. Mutaw, URS Cultural Resources Team Leader. The field crew consisted of Dulaney Barclay, Juston Fariello, Monica Maestas, and Gordon C. Tucker Jr. Mr. Fariello directed the laboratory analyses, assisted by Ms. Maestas. Dr. Tucker supervised the preparation of the summary report, assisted by Dr. Mutaw and Mr. Fariello. William Killam provided in-house technical review of the report and participated as Field Supervisor during Public Archaeology

Day, Chad Palm, Joe Rigley, Dawn Chambers, and Jim Crawford prepared the report illustrations and maps. Aileen Torres and Susan Pella formatted the report.

This document presents the background, methods, and results of the excavations at the three sites. It complies in form and contents with the report guidelines issued by the Colorado Historical Society, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (CHS-OAHP 1998).

