

RECLAMATION



Managing Water in the West

Public Scoping Report

**Arkansas Valley Conduit and
Long-Term Excess Capacity Master Contract
Environmental Impact Statement
Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, Colorado**

December 2010

Mission Statements

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Public Scoping Report

Arkansas Valley Conduit and Long-Term Excess Capacity Master Contract Environmental Impact Statement Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, Colorado

Prepared by:

MWH Americas, Inc. - Fort Collins, Colorado
GSA Contract No. GS-00F-0040L, Task Order No. R10PD60085
ERO Resources Corporation - Denver, Colorado
Susan Watkins Communications - Colorado Springs, Colorado
GEI Consultants, Inc. - Denver, Colorado

Prepared for:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Eastern Colorado Area Office
Loveland, Colorado



December 2010

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Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will analyze and disclose effects associated with construction of the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC), a proposed feature of the Fryingpan-Arkansas (Fry-Ark) Project and issuance of an Excess Capacity Master Contract (Master Contract) to the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District (Southeastern).

Public involvement is a key component of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and is a significant step in the development of the EIS for the proposed actions. The first phase of public involvement is called "scoping." Scoping helps Reclamation identify early in the process what issues the public feels are most important, the scope of issues to be addressed through the EIS, and possible alternatives to the proposed actions. During the public scoping phase of this project, Reclamation actively solicited comments from the public as well as interested organizations and agencies in the geographic areas that would be directly affected by the proposed actions. This report documents the results of public scoping activities conducted July 30 through September 13, 2010.

The formal public scoping period began on July 30, 2010, with publication of the Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register*. The notice explained that public scoping comments would be most effective if postmarked, e-mailed, or sent via facsimile no later than September 13, 2010. All comments received at the time of publication of this document are included in the analysis for this report, although other substantive comments received after this date will be considered.

In order to encourage participation in the scoping process, news releases were sent to 231 local and state news media organizations, public agencies and officials, and other potentially interested parties. Paid advertisements announcing public scoping meetings and soliciting participation in the scoping process were published in eight local newspapers in the service area. Reclamation hosted five public scoping meetings to solicit issues and concerns from the public about the proposed actions. A meeting was also held with cooperating agencies that are assisting Reclamation with the EIS.

During the scoping phase 141 written comments were received from 10 letters, e-mails, and comment cards. An additional 26 comments were recorded on the easel note pads during the public scoping meetings. These comments were grouped into the following general categories:

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS Executive Summary

- Air quality
- Alternatives
- Aquatic resources
- Climate change
- Clean Water Act
- Cumulative effects
- Endangered Species Act
- Environmental justice
- Historic properties
- Hydrology
- Invasive species
- Mitigation measures
- NEPA process
- Purpose and need
- Recreation
- Social and economic
- Transportation
- Vegetation
- Water conservation
- Water quality
- Wildlife
- Wetlands

Information gathered during scoping will assist Reclamation in the development of alternatives and environmental issues for further study through the EIS process. Reclamation will prepare and issue a Draft EIS providing a thorough analysis of all the alternatives evaluated in detail. Following release of the Draft EIS, Reclamation will host a series of public hearings to gather comments. The times, dates, and locations of those meetings will be published on the AVC/Master Contract website (www.usbr.gov/avceis) and mailed to those on the mailing list compiled from the public scoping meetings.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is preparing an EIS for the proposed AVC and the Master Contract. The proposed AVC is an authorized, but not constructed feature of the Fry-Ark Project. The Fry-Ark Project is a Reclamation project that was signed into law in 1962 (Public Law 87-590) and constructed from 1964 – 1982. Although originally authorized as part of the Fry-Ark, AVC was not constructed primarily because of the inability of the communities who would benefit from it to repay the allocated construction costs. On March 30, 2009, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-11) amended the original Fry-Ark authorization, allowing for annual appropriations as necessary for construction of the AVC and included a cost-sharing plan. Construction costs would be paid from federal appropriations, with 65 percent non-reimbursable and 35 percent reimbursable from other sources.

The Master Contract is being pursued by Southeastern to provide about 28,000 – 32,000 acre-feet of excess capacity storage space in Fry-Ark Project reservoirs for non-Fry-Ark project (non-project) water. Non-project water stored under the Master Contract would be used to meet existing and future municipal, domestic, industrial, and agricultural water demands throughout the participant service areas. The participating entities include Upper and Lower Arkansas basin, Fountain Creek, and AVC participants within Southeastern’s service area boundaries.

A map generally depicting the proposed project and participants is presented in Figure 1.

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS

Chapter 1 – Introduction

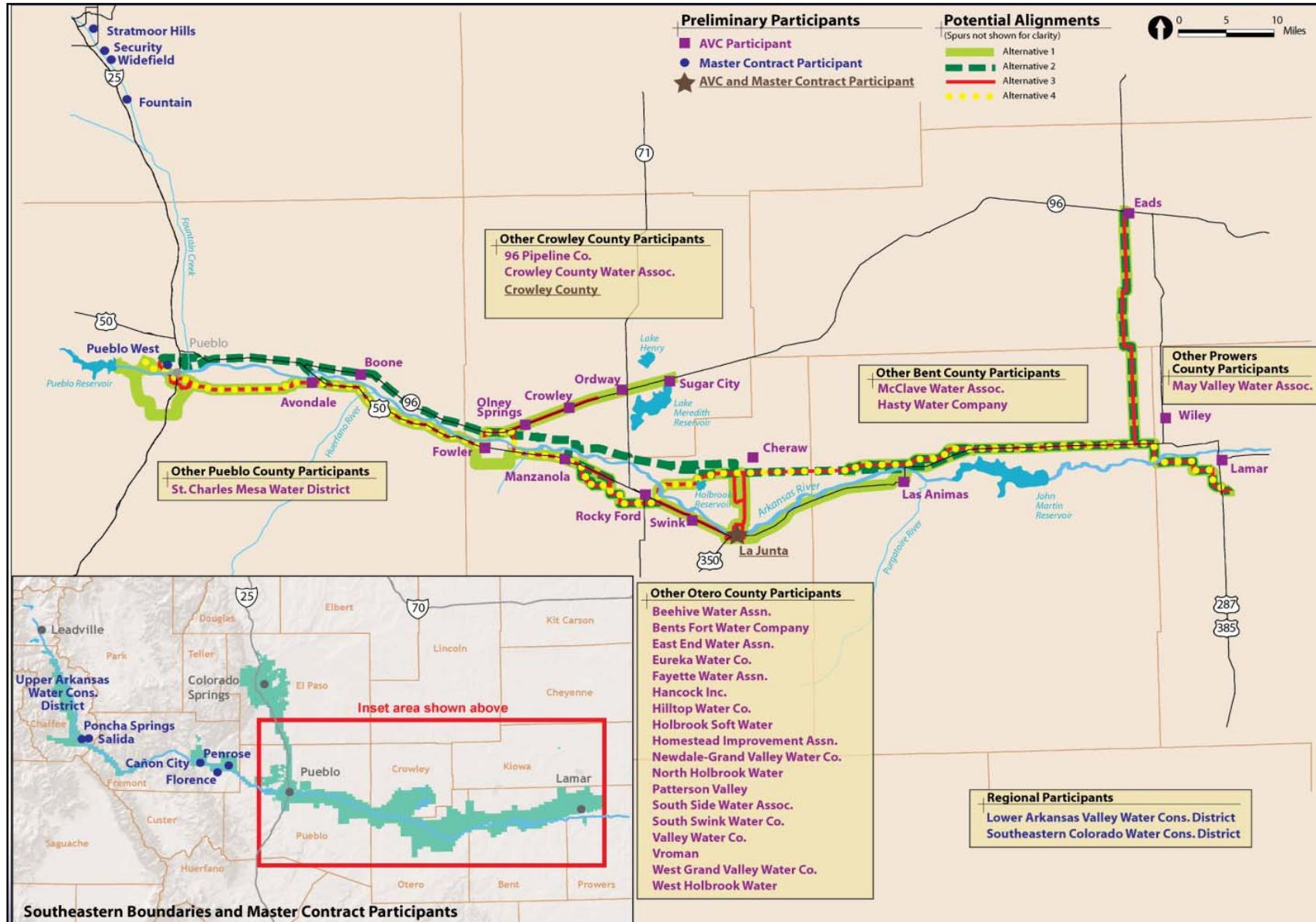


Figure 1. AVC/Mater Contract Service Area

Chapter 2 – Public Scoping Outreach Activities

The intent of the scoping process is to gather comments, concerns, and ideas from those who have an interest in, or who may be affected by, the proposed actions. Responses received from the public, organizations, and agencies throughout the scoping phase help to define the focus of evaluations conducted as part of the EIS.

A number of methods were used to inform the public about the EIS process and solicit comments. They included publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register*, news releases, paid advertisements announcing public scoping meetings, a series of five public scoping meetings, a meeting with AVC and Master Contract Cooperating agencies, and publication of project information on an AVC/Master Contract EIS website. These activities are described in the following sections.

Notice of Intent

Reclamation initiated the formal public scoping period on July 30, 2010, with publication of the NOI in the *Federal Register* (75 FR 44982). The NOI (Appendix A) notified the public of Reclamation's intent to begin the EIS process, provided project information and the dates for the public scoping meetings, and solicited public comments.

The NOI explained that public scoping comments would be most effective if postmarked, sent via facsimile or e-mailed no later than September 13, 2010. Comments received through that date, as well as comments received after that date but prior to the publication of this document, are included in the analysis for this report. Any substantive comments received after publication of this document will still be considered during preparation of the EIS.

News Releases

In order to announce the AVC and Master Contract proposed actions and the EIS process, solicit public participation, and invite the public to the public scoping meetings, news releases (Appendix B) were sent to 231 local and state news media organizations, public agencies and officials, as well as other potentially interested parties (Appendix C).

Paid Advertisements

Advertisements announcing the public scoping meetings and encouraging participation in the scoping process (Appendix D) were placed in eight publications within the geographic areas that would be affected by the proposed actions (Table 1).

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS Chapter 2 – Public Scoping Outreach Activities

Table 1. Publication and Dates of Paid Advertisements

Newspaper	Number of Advertisements Published	Date of Publication
Salida Mountain Mail	1	Friday, August 6, 2010
La Junta Tribune Democrat	1	Friday, August 6, 2010
Fowler Democrat	1	Thursday, August 5, 2010
Bent County Tribune	1	Thursday, August 5, 2010
Lamar Ledger	1	Friday, August 6, 2010
Fountain News	1	Wednesday, August 11, 2010
Colorado Springs Gazette	1	Sunday, August 8, 2010
Pueblo Chieftain	1	Sunday, August 8, 2010

Website

Reclamation established an AVC/Master Contract website which will be updated throughout the process in order to provide easy access to the processes, documents, and timeline of the NEPA process. The website also offers contract information for the submission of written comments as well as dates for upcoming public meetings and hearings. The website, www.usbr.gov/avceis, posted information throughout and following the scoping period, including:

- Overview of the AVC EIS
- NEPA Process Overview
- AVC Introduction and Participants
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Information about the Fry-Ark Project

Public Scoping Meetings

Reclamation hosted 5 public scoping meetings to provide information to the public and interested organizations and agencies (Table 2). The meetings presented information about the proposed actions and gave the public an opportunity to ask questions as well as to submit both verbal and written comments.

Table 2. Public Scoping Meetings

Location	Date	Venue	Time
Salida	August 16, 2010	Salida Community Center	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
La Junta	August 17, 2010	Koshare Indian Museum	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Lamar	August 18, 2010	Lamar Community Center	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Fountain	August 19, 2010	Lorraine Education and Community Center	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Pueblo	August 19, 2010	Southeastern Office	6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS Chapter 2 – Public Scoping Outreach Activities

Each scoping meeting began in an open house format. Attendees were personally greeted at the door and invited to sign in. They were then encouraged to visit six informational stations (Appendix E) to ask questions of and provide comments to representatives of Reclamation as well as members of the Interdisciplinary Team, represented by MWH Americas, Inc. (MWH) and ERO Resources (ERO). In addition, a comment card was provided to each attendee to submit written comments to Reclamation, either at the meeting or after the meeting via mail, facsimile, or e-mail.

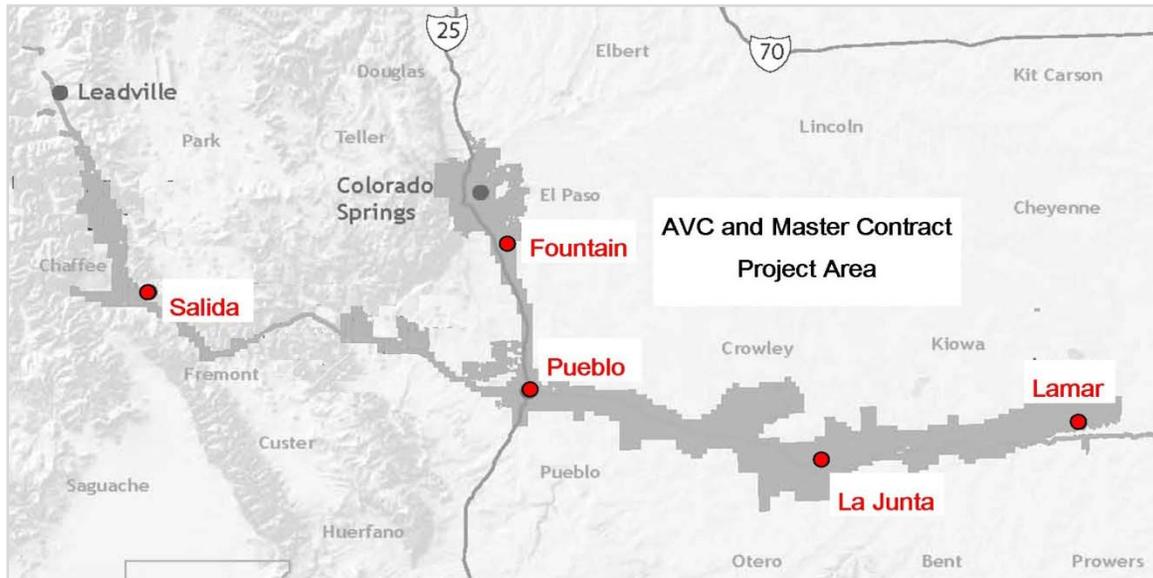


Figure 2. Sites of AVC/Master Contract Public Scoping Meetings

Following the open house portion of the meetings, the Reclamation Team Leader provided a presentation (Appendix E) about the proposed actions, followed by an open comment and question period. All comments and questions were recorded on easel note pads and compiled as part of the meeting record.

The meetings in Pueblo and La Junta had the largest number of attendees, with 23 each. The meeting held in Lamar was attended by 16 people. The meetings in Fountain and Salida had 8 and 6 attendees, respectively.

These counts reflect only those attendees who elected to sign in at the door; at the La Junta meeting three attendees declined to sign in.



Reclamation Team Leader Signe Snortland answers questions and takes comments at the meeting in Lamar on August 18, 2010.

**Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS
Chapter 2 – Public Scoping Outreach Activities**

Cooperating Agency Meeting

The NEPA process encourages coordination and cooperation among federal, state, and local governmental agencies through the designation of “cooperating agencies.” Such agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise for proposals covered by the EIS. The cooperating agencies listed below (Table 3) have agreed to assist Reclamation in developing the AVC/Master Contract EIS.

A cooperating agency meeting was held on August 17, 2010, at the Southeastern office in Pueblo. The cooperating agencies were represented by 13 attendees at the meeting. This meeting represented the first in a series of periodic meetings Reclamation will hold with the cooperating agencies during EIS preparation. The cooperating agency letter and presentation are presented in Appendix F.

Table 3. AVC/Master Contract EIS Cooperating Agencies

Agency	Expertise
Bent County	1041 Permitting and regulatory authority over land use in the County
City of Pueblo	Land Development Permitting, Special Use Permitting, rights-of-way, Building Permitting, and Pueblo Flow Management Program
Colorado Department of Natural Resources	Colorado natural resources, regulatory authority over water administration and wildlife mitigation planning, and state parks
Colorado Department of Transportation	Colorado transportation and roads, regulatory authority over road crossings, and pipeline alignments within highway rights-of-way
Colorado Division of Wildlife	Colorado wildlife, raptor buffer compliance, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, and wildlife mitigation planning
Fountain Creek Watershed and Flood Control District	Operation of Fountain Creek and flood control mitigation planning
Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District	Water supplies from within the District
Otero County	1041 Permitting and regulatory authority over land use in the County
Prowers County	1041 Permitting and regulatory authority over land use in the County
Pueblo County	1041 Permitting and regulatory authority over land use in the County
Southeastern	Fryingpan-Arkansas Project operations and allocations, development and financing of AVC, representation of AVC project beneficiaries, and Master Contract applicant
State of Kansas	Kansas water resources and Arkansas River Compact
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act Sections 402 and 404, Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Act of 1899 Section 10, and operation of John Martin Reservoir
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and NEPA compliance
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services	Endangered Species Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Migratory Bird Treaty, and Executive Order 13186

Appendix G contains a summary of verbal comments received during the scoping and cooperating agency meetings, as well as copies of formal comment letters received by Reclamation.

Chapter 3 – Scoping Results

Reclamation collected comments, questions, and concerns about the AVC/Master Contract through public meetings, a cooperating agency meeting, letters, e-mails, and facsimiles. Written comments were encouraged through general public involvement processes including news releases, media interviews, website postings and by providing comments cards at each meeting. All comments were read and evaluated to determine specific issues or concerns. Each document was reviewed carefully and each substantive comment was categorized according to a specific issue. All commenters and comments were recorded in a database and organized according to the following major categories:

- Air quality
- Alternatives
- Aquatic resources
- Climate change
- Clean Water Act
- Cumulative effects
- Endangered Species Act
- Environmental Justice
- Historic properties
- Hydrology
- Invasive species
- Mitigation measures
- NEPA process
- Purpose and need
- Recreation
- Social and economic
- Transportation
- Vegetation
- Water conservation
- Water quality
- Wildlife
- Wetlands

Source and Subject of Comments Received

Reclamation received 10 written comment documents during scoping, including 7 from individuals and/or Participants, 1 comment from an environmental group, and 2 from agencies. Agency comments were received from the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. An additional 26 verbal comments from the public were recorded on the easel note pads during the scoping meetings.

Multiple comments on the same issue by the same commenter were only considered as one comment. For example, if an individual expressed his/her concern for overall environmental impacts several times throughout his/her letter, it was counted one time. Table 6 summarizes the category of comments, the number of commenters within each category, and the general response to the category comments.

**Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS
Chapter 3 – Scoping Results**

Table 4. Summary of Scoping Comments and Responses

Comment Category	Number of Comments	Comment Summary	General Response
Air Quality	2	Comments focused on potential air quality impacts.	A qualitative assessment of air quality impacts will be included in the EIS.
Alternatives	26	Several alternatives were suggested for analysis in the EIS. The alternatives suggested focused on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location and size of the conduit; • Having an alternative water supply; • Land acquisition; • Connections by small water systems to the conduit; • Water treatment and treatment locations; • Enlargement of Pueblo Reservoir; • Conduit operation and maintenance; • Source of conduit water; • Alternative approaches to construction of a conduit; • Sustainable water management practices; and • Water metering, dual use, and/or non-potable recycling. 	Nearly all alternatives suggested in the comments will be screened as part of the EIS alternatives analysis process and/or supplemental engineering analysis. Alternatives suggested that are specifically precluded because of authorizing legislation, such as water storage alternatives beyond the project boundaries or extension of the AVC service area, will not be considered in this EIS.
Aquatic Resources	11	Suggestions were made to address several aquatic-related issues, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on trout fishery; • Availability of fishery data; and • Methodology for evaluating flow variable impacts on fish. 	The EIS will address all aquatic-related issues raised in the scoping process.
Climate Change	2	Requests were made to include an analysis of climate change in the EIS.	The EIS will conduct a qualitative analysis of climate change that will include those documents listed by the commenters.
Clean Water Act	1	A request was made for a description of impacts under individual or nationwide permits authorizing the discharge of fill or dredge materials to waters of the U.S.	The EIS will provide these descriptions.
Cumulative Effects	5	Comments focused on the need to study the effect of the proposed actions and other reasonably foreseeable activities on hydrology, aquatic habitat, ecosystem disruption, wetland loss, changes in water quality and quantity, and on Fountain Creek.	The EIS will identify and evaluate reasonably foreseeable actions within the study area and evaluate cumulative effects.
Endangered Species Act	2	A request was made to review the impacts to all federally-listed and/or candidate species in the proposed area.	The EIS will evaluate the potential effect to all federally-listed and/or candidate species in the project area.
Environmental Justice	1	A commenter requested that the EIS address whether any minority or economically-disadvantaged communities will be disproportionately and adversely affected by the project.	Potential Environmental Justice issues will be addressed in the EIS. Information related to the pipeline layout, construction-related impacts, areas of regional economic impact, and potential water rate impacts will be overlapped with identified areas of potential concern to evaluate Environmental Justice problem areas.

**Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS
Chapter 3 – Scoping Results**

Comment Category	Number of Comments	Comment Summary	General Response
Historic Properties	1	A commenter asked how the EIS would address cultural resources and Section 106 issues along the corridor.	Reclamation will consult with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Office and tribes under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A file and literature search, and sensitivity analysis will be used to evaluate potential cultural resource impacts for all of the alternatives in the EIS. A Class III pedestrian survey would be used to further evaluate the effects of the preferred alternative.
Hydrology	13	Several commenters had suggestions regarding the hydrologic modeling, including the use of a daily analysis, comparison of all alternatives to existing conditions, and assessment of water supply shortages during representative hydrologic conditions.	The EIS will include a detailed hydrologic analysis using a daily operations model of the Arkansas River. This analysis will include simulation of daily stream flow and reservoir contents throughout the study area. Results will be provided in the formats needed for resources analyses, as daily summaries for representative dry, average and wet years, and as monthly and annual averages. The study period for the daily model includes dry, average and wet years. Per Reclamation NEPA policy (Reclamation Draft NEPA Manual, Section 8.8), the EIS will compare the No Action Alternative with existing conditions, and the action alternatives with the No Action Alternative.
Invasive Species	6	Two specific concerns regarding invasive species were presented in the comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern about the spread of tamarisk; and • Concern about the spread of zebra and quagga mussel larvae and other invasive species. 	The EIS will evaluate the potential for introduction and spread of noxious weeds and invasive species as the result of project actions. Mitigation measures to reduce effects also will be identified.
Mitigation Measures	4	Comments were received that recommend avoiding and minimizing impacts, minimizing unavoidable impacts, and developing monitoring and mitigation plans for adverse effects that meet the requirements of Colorado statutes.	Reclamation anticipates developing measures to mitigate the project's direct, indirect, and cumulative adverse effects. Cooperating agencies will be consulted as necessary to determine mitigation measures.

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS
Chapter 3 – Scoping Results

Comment Category	Number of Comments	Comment Summary	General Response
NEPA Process	15	Several questions and comments were received regarding the NEPA process itself, including description of the actions, disclosure of effects and reasonably foreseeable actions, identification of federal statutes used to evaluate impacts, and identifying baseline conditions.	<p>The NEPA process and EIS documents will be prepared consistent with Department of Interior regulations regarding the Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; Final Rule (43 CFR Part 46). There will be a single EIS for both the AVC and Master Contract and a single Record of Decision will be issued. It is estimated that the EIS will take about two years to complete. The Master Contract will not be issued until after the Record of Decision is signed and a contract negotiated between Reclamation and Southeastern.</p> <p>A Draft EIS will be distributed to all who attended public scoping meetings, including a description of the purpose and need for the project, alternatives analysis process, affected environment, environmental consequences, and any other information pertinent to the EIS. The Draft EIS, the Scoping Report, comments submitted as part of the scoping process, and other documents and information relative to the AVC EIS will be posted on the project web site at www.usbr.gov/avceis.</p>
Purpose and Need	11	Some commenters supported the need for the AVC and Master Contract. Other commenters requested that the purpose and need be carefully documented, including water supply and demand evaluations with water conservation. There were requests that the purpose and need be crafted to support a range of reasonable alternatives.	The EIS will document the purpose and need for the AVC and Master Contract both cumulatively and on a Participant-by-Participant basis. Population projections, water conservation goals, and water demand projections will be independently evaluated by Reclamation.
Recreation	7	<p>Comments regarding recreation resources included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impacts to sport fish recreation; • Potential impacts to Pueblo Reservoir's water level and related effects on visitation to and revenues collected by Lake Pueblo State Park, and the need for a management plan for Pueblo Reservoir; • Potential impacts to water flows in the Arkansas River and the effect on recreational opportunities; and • A request for evaluation of the feasibility of providing a recreational trail easement along the AVC connecting Pueblo to the Lower Arkansas Valley. 	The results of the aquatic analysis of impacts to fish will be used to address potential impacts to recreational fishing. The EIS will evaluate impacts to recreational opportunities in Pueblo Reservoir; however, development of a management plan for Pueblo Reservoir is outside of the scope of the EIS. The EIS will also evaluate the effect of any changes in Arkansas River streamflow on boating and other recreational opportunities in the River. The feasibility of a recreational trail easement along the conduit will be evaluated in the EIS.

**Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS
Chapter 3 – Scoping Results**

Comment Category	Number of Comments	Comment Summary	General Response
Social and Economic	6	One commenter was concerned about the cost to the ecosystem of the AVC and Master Contract. Other concerns included the economic effects of agricultural-to-municipal water transfers and requests to evaluate alternatives to water transfers, effects on property values, and effects resulting from economic and population growth. There was a request to use the most up-to-date population projections.	The cost of ecosystem impacts will be evaluated qualitatively. The social and economic impacts of proposed water supplies will be addressed, including the impacts of converting irrigation water to municipal water. Growth impacts related to the project itself (construction and operation activities) will be estimated, including use of the best available data. However, growth that could occur due to water available as a result of the project will be described qualitatively. Property and real estate value impacts will be addressed in the EIS.
Transportation	2	Comments regarding transportation included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of the relationship of the water projects to the transportation and land use planning process occurring in the impacted areas; and • Impacts to roads in Lake Pueblo State Park during construction could diminish recreational use or enjoyment of the park. 	The project's effect on transportation and land use planning will be evaluated as part of the EIS. The effects of construction on roads, access, and recreational enjoyment within Lake Pueblo State Park will be evaluated in the EIS.
Vegetation	2	The commenters requested that impacts to vegetation from the proposed actions be evaluated and a re-vegetation plan be developed.	Impacts to vegetation will be assessed in the EIS, including revegetation potential. Best management practices for protection and restoration of impacted vegetation will be incorporated into the mitigation measures.
Water Conservation	2	There was a comment about changes in water levels at Pueblo Reservoir due to the Master Contract. There was also a comment that AVC would conserve water that would otherwise be lost to evaporation in the Arkansas River.	Effects of changes in water level at Pueblo Reservoir will be evaluated in the EIS. Evaporation and transit losses will be accounted for in the hydrologic model. Additionally, Southeastern is preparing a water conservation plan for the AVC project.
Water Quality	9	Commenters were concerned about the quality of water that the AVC would deliver. There were also concerns about water quality effects to streams due to changes in surface water hydrology resulting from operation of the AVC and Master Contract. These concerns included direct and cumulative effects on physical and chemical parameters, discharge permit limits, and ability to meet water quality standards.	The EIS will include water quality analyses of direct and cumulative effects on a variety of physical and chemical parameters. These analyses will be based on the results of hydrologic analyses described above. Additionally, each alternative will be evaluated based on its ability to meet drinking water standards using conventional treatment.

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS
Chapter 3 – Scoping Results

Comment Category	Number of Comments	Comment Summary	General Response
Wildlife	9	Comments regarding wildlife included requests to assess the impacts of the proposed actions on the terrestrial wildlife resource: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commenters requested that impacts be assessed for specific species and in specific areas; • A comment included the desire to have the information collected and evaluated be recent relative to the construction timeline for the proposed actions; • A recommendation that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service be engaged as early in the analysis as possible; and • One comment requested adequate appraisal of the potential impacts to state-listed endangered or threatened species. 	Impacts to terrestrial wildlife will be evaluated using the best available information. A general wildlife habitat reconnaissance will be used to compare the effects of all the alternatives. After the preferred alternative is identified in the Draft EIS, a more detailed habitat analysis will be conducted for the preferred alternative. The time lag between the data collection for the EIS and project construction is unknown at this time, if an action alternative is selected in the record of decision. Any subsequent monitoring or survey prior to construction could be a component of a mitigation plan. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a cooperating agency for the preparation of the EIS.
Wetlands	2	Comments included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for a thorough assessment of the existing habitat along the proposed corridors for pipeline construction, including the delineation of wetlands along each possible alternative and the quantification of the amount of affected wetland under each alternative; • A request for clear maps including wetland delineation and regional water features, as well as detailed analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to all wetlands in the system. 	Reconnaissance-level wetland mapping will be conducted for all alternatives. Additional wetland delineation information will be collected for the preferred alternative.

Chapter 4 – Next Steps in the EIS Process

Information gathered during scoping will assist Reclamation in the development of alternatives environmental issues for further study through the EIS process. Reclamation will prepare and issue a Draft EIS providing a thorough analysis of all the alternatives evaluated in detail. Following release of the Draft EIS, Reclamation will host a series of public hearings to gather comments. The times, dates, and locations of those meetings will be published on the AVC/Master Contract website (<http://www.usbr.gov/avceis/>) and mailed to those on the mailing list compiled from the public scoping meetings.

Environmental Impact Statement Process

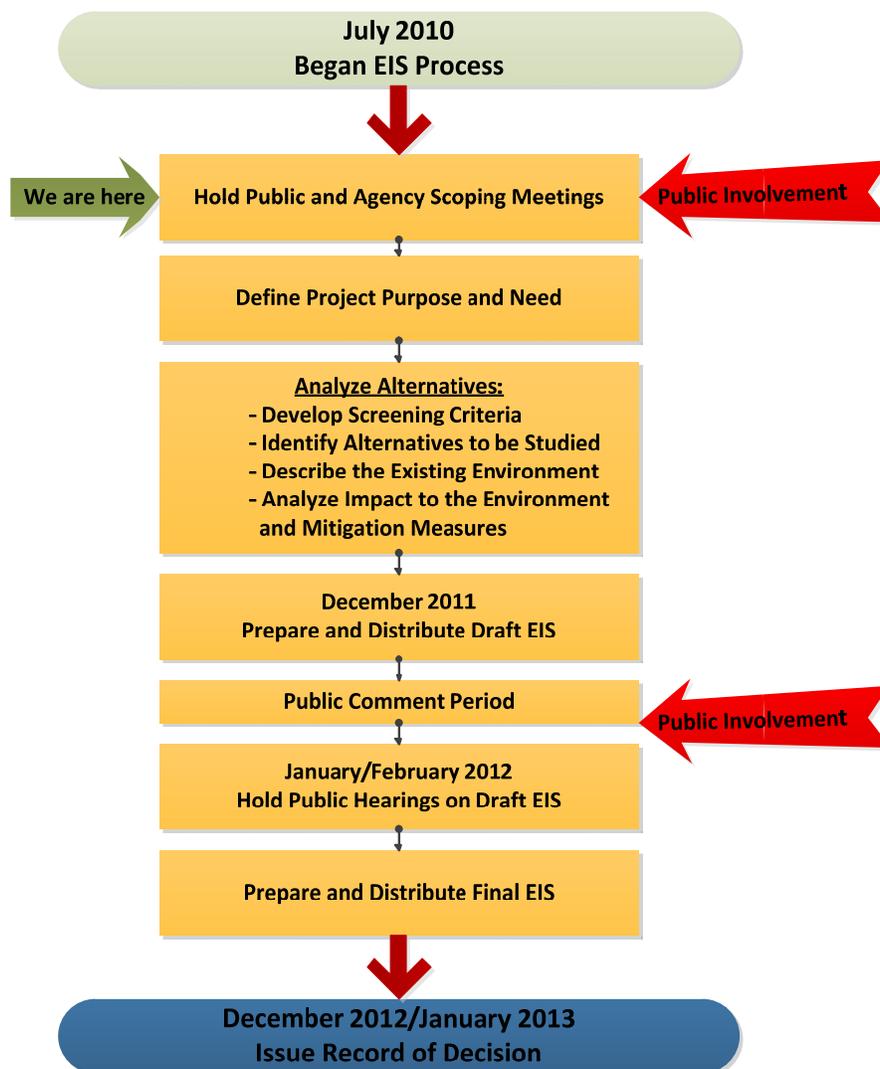


Figure 3. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process

Arkansas Valley Conduit/Master Contract EIS Chapter 4 – Next Steps in the EIS Process

Although the formal scoping period has passed, Reclamation welcomes comments any time during the planning process. Please visit the project website for information and updates about the NEPA process (<http://www.usbr.gov/avceis/>). Periodic newsletters providing updates on the EIS will be sent to all agencies, organizations, and individuals on the mailing list. To be added to the mailing list, to request a copy of the newsletter, or to obtain a copy of the scoping report, please contact Kara Lamb at 970-962-4326 or by e-mail at klamb@usbr.gov.

For questions specific to the proposed actions or the EIS, please contact Signe Snortland at:

Signe Snortland
Bureau of Reclamation
Dakotas Area Office
304 East Broadway Avenue
P.O. Box 1017
Bismarck ND 58502
Phone: 701-221-1278 (office)
Facsimile: 701-250-4326
E-mail: JSnortland@usbr.gov