

## For More Information

If you have questions or concerns about the scoping process, please feel free to contact Kara Lamb at Reclamation. Please also contact Kara for additional copies of this flyer or for directions to the scoping meeting locations.

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To obtain additional information on the NEPA process, please visit Reclamation's website at [www.gp.usbr.gov](http://www.gp.usbr.gov); click on the link for "Environmental Activities." To obtain more information on the proposed Windy Gap Firming Project, please visit [www.ncwcd.org](http://www.ncwcd.org).

## WINDY GAP FIRING PROJECT

*The Bureau of Reclamation and the Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District will hold two public open house meetings to solicit comments on the scope of the EIS. You are invited to attend these meetings to learn more about the project and help identify issues and alternatives. The meetings will be held from 6 to 9 P.M. on July 22, 2003 in Granby, Colorado and on July 23, 2003 in Loveland, Colorado.*

Bureau of Reclamation  
11056 W. County Road 18E  
Loveland, CO 80537-9711



## Scoping Announcement July 2003

*This scoping announcement provides information about the proposed development of a project to improve the reliability of water deliveries from the existing Windy Gap Project. The Windy Gap Firming Project includes nine entities within the Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. Because the project would require connection with Colorado-Big Thompson facilities owned by the Bureau of Reclamation, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. This announcement provides information on the proposed project, alternatives, issues, and how to get involved.*

### Background

During the 1960s, six entities (the cities of Boulder, Greeley, Longmont, Loveland, and Fort Collins and the Town of Estes Park) within northeastern Colorado determined that additional water supplies were needed to meet their projected municipal demands. The Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (Subdistrict), consisting of the incorporated areas of the six entities, was formed to develop the Windy Gap Project (Project). Subsequently, the Platte River Power Authority acquired all of the City of Fort Collins allotment contracts, as well as one-half of the City of Loveland and the Town of Estes Park contracts. The Subdistrict proposed developing what is now the Windy Gap Project using Colorado-Big Thompson Project (C-BT) facilities to store and convey Windy Gap Project water.

In 1981, the Bureau of Reclamation completed an Environmental Impact Statement on the effects of using C-BT project facilities for the "storage, carriage and delivery" of Windy Gap Project water. Reclamation's Record of Decision allowed the conveyance, through C-BT Project facilities, of an average of about 56,000 acre-feet of Windy Gap water annually from the Colorado River, with maximum diversions limited to 93,300 acre-feet in any one year. Average annual deliveries to the Subdistrict were estimated to be about 48,000 acre-feet, following conveyance and evaporation losses and allocations to the Middle Park Water Conservancy District. Reclamation, the Subdistrict, and the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (NCWCD) then entered into a contract for the "storage, carriage and delivery" of Windy Gap Project water in C-BT Project facilities. Construction of the Windy Gap Project reservoir, pipeline, and pumping facility was completed in 1985.



Existing Windy Gap Reservoir

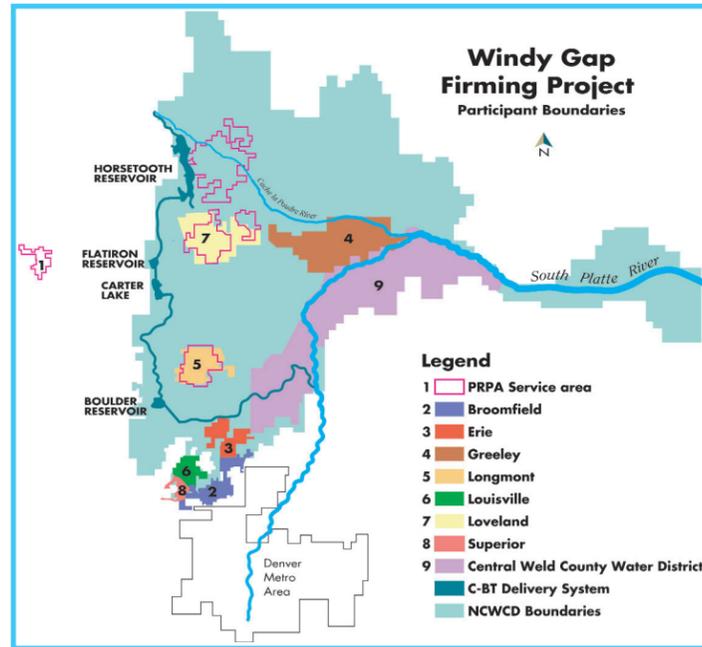
The existing Windy Gap Project diverts water from the Colorado River at the confluence of the Colorado and Fraser rivers and pumps this water into the C-BT system for delivery to Windy Gap Project allottees (see figure). Twelve entities currently own the 480 units of water available in the Windy Gap Project. Each unit is 1/480th of the Subdistrict water supply annually made available by the Board of Directors of the Subdistrict. Average annual yield per unit since completion of construction in 1985 has been approximately 17 acre-feet/unit compared to the original estimate of 100 acre-feet/unit.

There are several reasons for this low yield:

- Water cannot be diverted every year for the Windy Gap Project because there are water rights upstream and downstream of the Project that are more senior and have a higher priority to divert water.
- In years when the C-BT system is full, there is no conveyance or storage capacity in the C-BT system for Windy Gap Project water.

- In years when Windy Gap Project water is stored in the C-BT system, Windy Gap Project water is sometimes spilled from the system to make room for C-BT Project water. Additionally, under the contract between the Subdistrict, NCWCD, and Reclamation, water conveyed and stored for the C-BT Project has priority over water conveyed and stored for the Windy Gap Project.

For these reasons, nine of the Windy Gap Project allottees, referred to collectively as the Firming Project Participants, (the cities of Broomfield, Greeley, Longmont, Louisville, and Loveland, the Towns of Erie and Superior, the Central Weld County Water District, and the Platte River Power Authority) have requested that the Subdistrict investigate and implement measures to cooperatively enhance or improve the reliability of (or to "firm") their Windy Gap Project units. The service area boundaries for the Firming Project Participants are shown in the figure to the right.



2003. One of the goals in developing alternatives for the proposed project was to identify a cooperative regional project that could be integrated with existing water delivery systems. Maximum use of the existing Windy Gap Project diversion, pumping, and pipeline facilities also is desired.

The Firming Project Participants' varying needs and timing of those needs could allow the proposed project to be constructed in stages depending on the alternative configuration. To provide the Firming Project Participants a consistent annual yield of up to 30,000 acre-feet, an estimated 110,000 acre-feet of new storage specifically for Windy Gap water is needed. This is approximately the size of the existing Carter Lake southwest of Loveland, Colorado.

The alternatives study evaluated a variety of project elements including non-structural and operational opportunities; new reservoir sites; enlargement of existing reservoirs; and ground water aquifer storage. Storage on both the East and West Slope of the Continental Divide was evaluated. Technical, environmental, and economic screening criteria were used to identify alternatives capable of meeting the project purpose and need.

### Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the proposed Windy Gap Firming Project is to maximize the use of existing water rights under the Windy Gap Project by improving the delivery and reliability of the existing Windy Gap Project water supply. For some Firming Project Participants, the proposed project does not firm all of their Windy Gap Project units and not all of the owners of Windy Gap Project water are seeking to firm their units. Thus, only a portion of the 48,000 acre-feet of Windy Gap Project water would be "firmed" by the proposed action. The specific purpose of the project is to provide an annual delivery of up to 30,000 acre-feet of water by 2008 depending on the identified needs of the Windy Gap Firming Project participants. Each Firming Project Participant owns varying amounts of Windy Gap Project water and each Firming Project Participant has determined its firm water supply needs from the Windy Gap Project and the timing of those needs. For some of the Windy Gap allottees, an increased water supply is needed immediately to meet current demands; other allottees' needs are expected to increase over the next several years creating a foreseeable future need for their Windy Gap water.

The Windy Gap Firming Project is a non-Federal project. It was planned, and is proposed to be constructed and operated by the Municipal Subdistrict of the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. Federal

actions related to the proposed project may include decisions on permitting the connection of Windy Gap Firming Project facilities to Colorado-Big Thompson Project facilities, granting of right-of-way permits and/or easements across Federal lands, and issuance of a Federal Section 404 permit.

### Alternatives Under Consideration

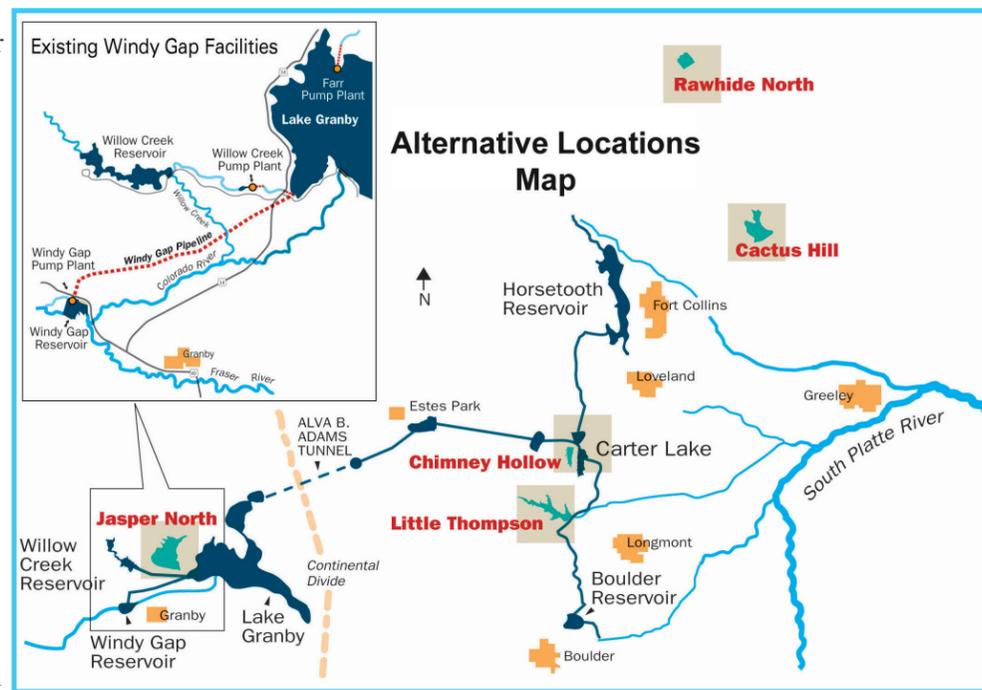
Over the past several years, the Subdistrict has investigated a wide range of alternative actions that have the potential to meet the project purpose and meet the needs of the Firming Project Participants. These investigations concluded with an Alternatives Plan Formulation Report that was finalized in

Alternatives identified to have the potential to meet the project purpose and the needs of the Firming Project Participants include several new reservoir sites listed below and shown in the Alternative Locations Map.

| Reservoir Site  | Storage in acre-feet |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Chimney Hollow  | 44,500-110,000       |
| Little Thompson | 110,000              |
| Cactus Hill     | 112,000              |
| Rawhide         | 13,000               |
| Jasper          | 36,500-79,000        |

A combination of new reservoirs may be necessary to meet the project purpose and need. In addition, refinements in C-BT system operations may be used to enhance the yield of new reservoir storage. These refinements include options for storage of C-BT water in a new Windy Gap Firming Reservoir and borrowing storage from the C-BT Project.

Reclamation, with input from federal, state, and local government agencies and the public, will be evaluating a range of reasonable alternatives for the proposed Windy Gap Firming Project. The public will have opportunities throughout the scoping process and preparation of the EIS to comment on alternatives or suggest new alternatives.



### Questions and Issues

Several questions regarding the proposed project and the alternatives have been identified, and would be considered in the EIS as listed below. Input from the public and other federal, state, and local agencies will help further define issues of concern.

- How would the proposed project affect operation of the C-BT project and the existing Windy Gap Project?
- How would streamflow in the Colorado River be affected?
- Would this project affect water levels in Lake Granby, Carter Lake, and Horsetooth Reservoir?
- What are the impacts to aquatic resources including endangered Colorado River fish?
- How would water quality on the west and east slope be affected?
- What would be the impact to streams and wetlands?
- How would wildlife habitat be affected?
- Would new reservoirs provide recreational opportunities?
- Are there any significant cultural resources located within the project area?

### How to Get Involved

Reclamation and the NCWCD encourage your participation in the EIS public process. Get involved by attending meetings and submitting comments. Two meetings will be held for your convenience.

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| <b>July 22, 2003</b><br>6:00 - 9:00 P.M.<br>SolVista Golf and Ski Ranch | <b>July 23, 2003</b><br>6:00 - 9:00 P.M.<br>McKee Conference Center<br>(2 miles south of Granby,<br>Colorado on Highway 40) |
|   | Loveland, Colorado  |

Your comments will be considered in the preparation of the EIS. Please mail, e-mail, or fax comments on the alternatives or other issues pertaining to the proposed project to the attention of Will Tully at the Bureau of Reclamation by September 5, 2003.

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