

Regional Water Supply Resiliency Program

Colorado Parks & Wildlife
Commissioners Public Hearing

May 8, 2025

WHO WE ARE: *A unique cooperative effort among seven water entities to provide high-quality potable water to the municipalities and rural areas of the Uncompahgre River Valley.*

Project 7 Water Authority

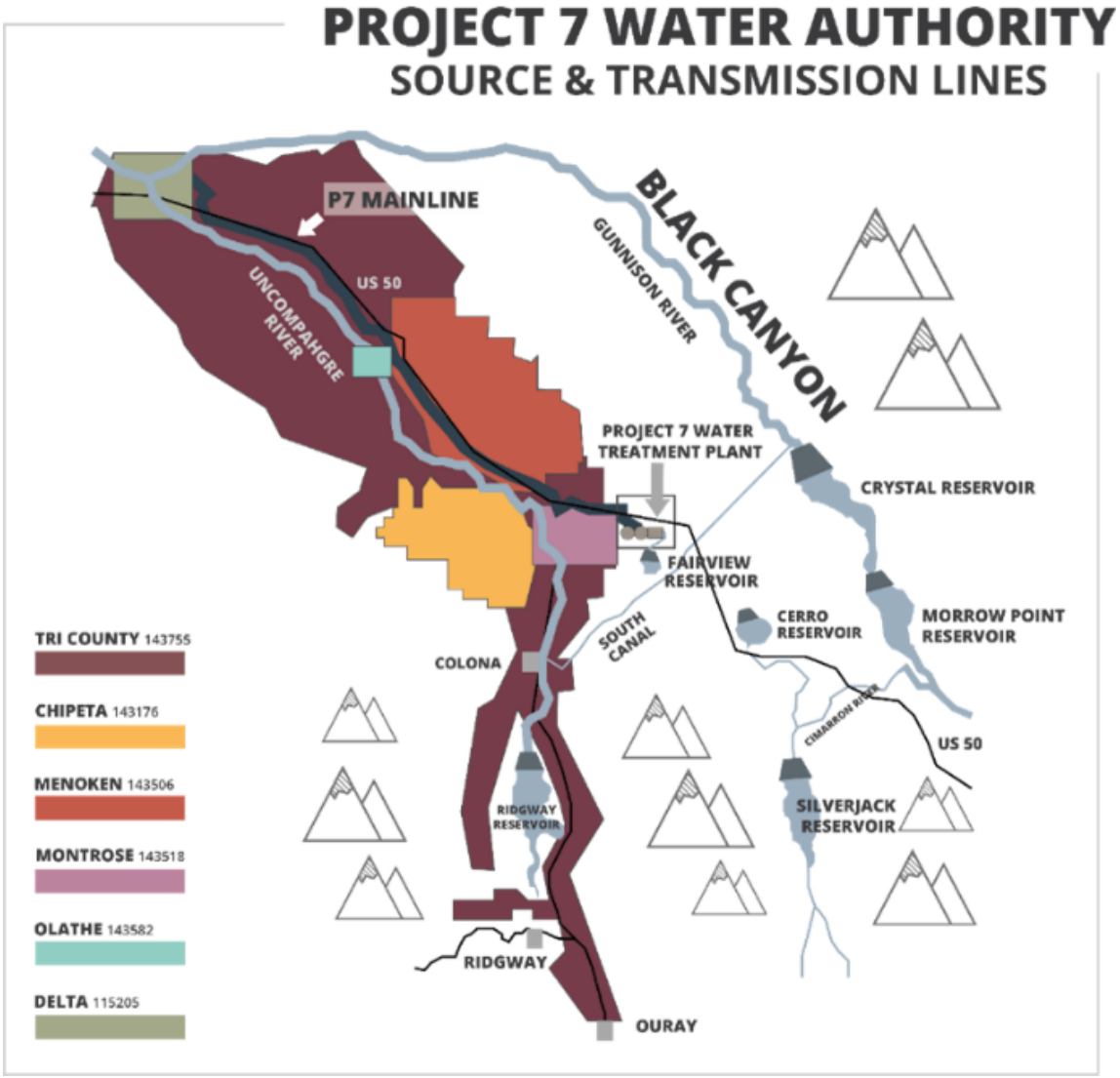
The six entities that represent Project 7 Water Authority (P7WA) are:

- City of Montrose
- City of Delta
- Town of Olathe
- Tri-County Water Conservancy District
- Chipeta Water District
- Menoken Water District



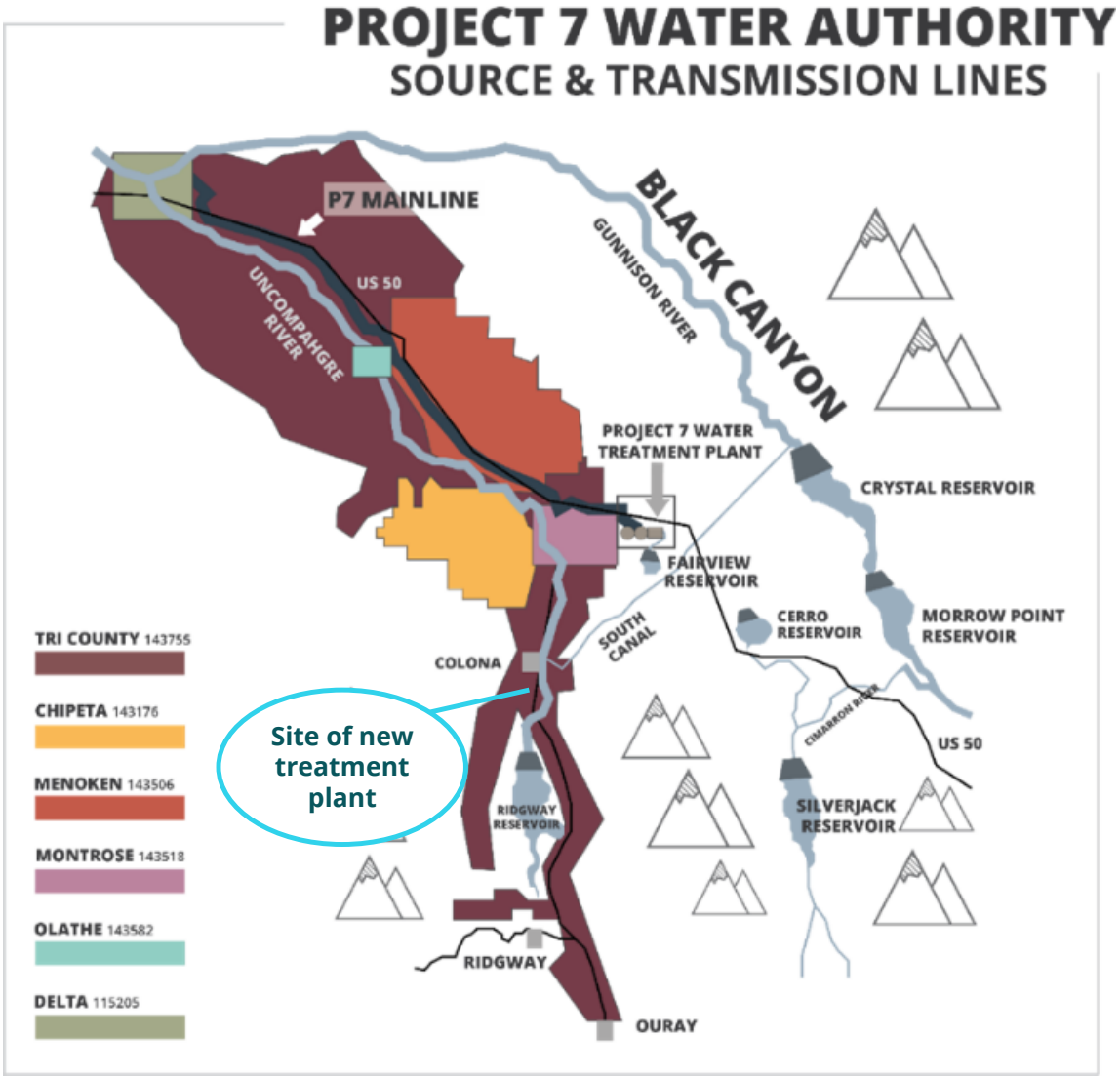
Project 7 serves 60,000 residents in the Uncompahgre Valley with one plant, source and transmission line.

Multiple single points of failure exposes the valley to risks of drinking water shortages



Regional Resiliency Supply Program

Adding a second treatment facility and water source to our existing single source system will reduce risk to our regional drinking water supply from wildfire, drought and infrastructure failure.



Elements of the Resiliency Program:

1. ***A new raw water transmission line*** *installed between Ridgway Reservoir and the new facility (approximately 5.5 miles of 24" pipe)*

2. ***A new drinking water transmission line*** *from the WTP site to serve all members via an adequately sized tie in point within Tri-County WCD*
   (approximately 5.5 miles of 24" pipe)

3. ***A new water treatment facility*** *with a 6 mgd capacity*

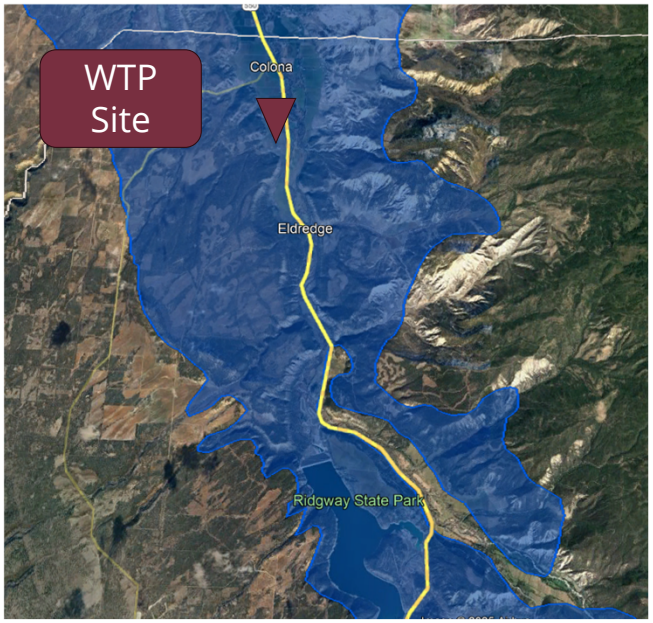
   - *Construction Costs estimated at $153 million*
   - *Mitigation Costs estimated at $3 million*



Value and Significance of Wildlife Resources



Highest visitation numbers on the west slope

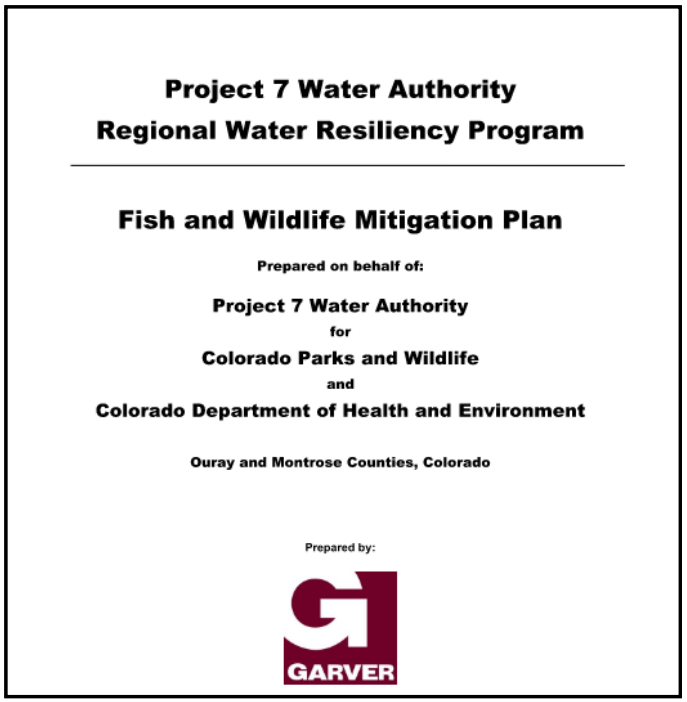


High-priority habitat for wintering big game



Uncompahgre sport fishery

The project has worked with CPW staff to develop mitigation plan.



Project 7 Water Authority
Regional Water Resiliency Program

Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Plan

Prepared on behalf of:

Project 7 Water Authority
for
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
and
Colorado Department of Health and Environment

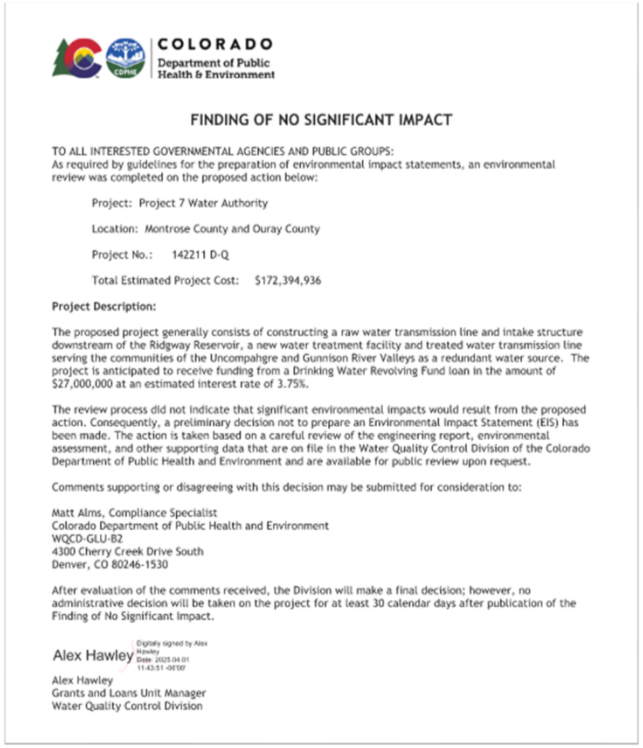
Ouray and Montrose Counties, Colorado

Prepared by:

GARVER

- The FWMP details avoidance of impacts to:
  - Popular recreation areas
  - Uncompahgre River fishery
  - Wintering big game
  - Threatened and endangered species
  - Migratory birds and raptors

The project has received a FONSI, Ouray County SUP, and NWP



COLORADO
Department of Public Health & Environment

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:
As required by guidelines for the preparation of environmental impact statements, an environmental review was completed on the proposed action below:

Project: Project 7 Water Authority

Location: Montrose County and Ouray County

Project No.: 142211 D-Q

Total Estimated Project Cost: $172,394,936

Project Description:

The proposed project generally consists of constructing a raw water transmission line and intake structure downstream of the Ridgway Reservoir, a new water treatment facility and treated water transmission line serving the communities of the Uncompahgre and Gunnison River Valleys as a redundant water source. The project is anticipated to receive funding from a Drinking Water Revolving Fund loan in the amount of $27,000,000 at an estimated interest rate of 3.75%.

The review process did not indicate that significant environmental impacts would result from the proposed action. Consequently, a preliminary decision not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been made. The action is taken based on a careful review of the engineering report, environmental assessment, and other supporting data that are on file in the Water Quality Control Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and are available for public review upon request.

Comments supporting or disagreeing with this decision may be submitted for consideration to:

Matt Alms, Compliance Specialist
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
WQCD-GLU-B2
4300 Cherry Creek Drive South
Denver, CO 80246-1530

After evaluation of the comments received, the Division will make a final decision; however, no administrative decision will be taken on the project for at least 30 calendar days after publication of the Finding of No Significant Impact.

Alex Hawley Digitally signed by Alex Hawley Date: 2025.04.01 11:43:51 -06'00'

Alex Hawley
Grants and Loans Unit Manager
Water Quality Control Division



RESOLUTION NO. 2025-010

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO APPROVING A PUBLIC UTILITY - SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR A PROPOSED WATER TREATMENT FACILITY, PIPELINE & ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, The Project 7 Water Authority, applied to the Land Use Department for approval of a Public Utility - Special Use Permit to construct and operate a water treatment facility, transmission line and associated infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, The Project 7 Water Authority owns the parcels located at 35679 & 35675 HWY 550, the site of the proposed Water Treatment facility; and

WHEREAS, 'Public Utility' is a use allowed by Special Use Permit in the Valley Zone; and

WHEREAS, Land Use Staff reviewed the subject application submittal and prepared a report and packet for the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Ouray County Planning Commission reviewed the subject application in a properly noticed public hearing on October 29, 2024; and

WHEREAS, during the hearing the Ouray County Planning Commission heard testimony from Staff, the Applicant, and time was allowed for comments by members of the public; and

WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the hearing, the Ouray County Planning Commission voted unanimously to forward the application to the Board of County Commissioners with a recommendation of approval with certain conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners reviewed the subject application along with the recommendation from Staff and the Ouray County Planning Commission in a properly noticed public hearing on December 17, 2024; and

WHEREAS, during the hearing the BOCC heard testimony from Staff, the Applicant, and time was allowed for comments from members of the public.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners finds that the proposed Special Use Permit - Public Utility to operate a water treatment facility meets the conditions and provisions set forth in Section 5 of the Land Use Code and therefore approves the subject application with the following conditions:

Voting for: Commissioner Niece, Nauer, Padgett
Voting against: None

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OURAY COUNTY, COLORADO

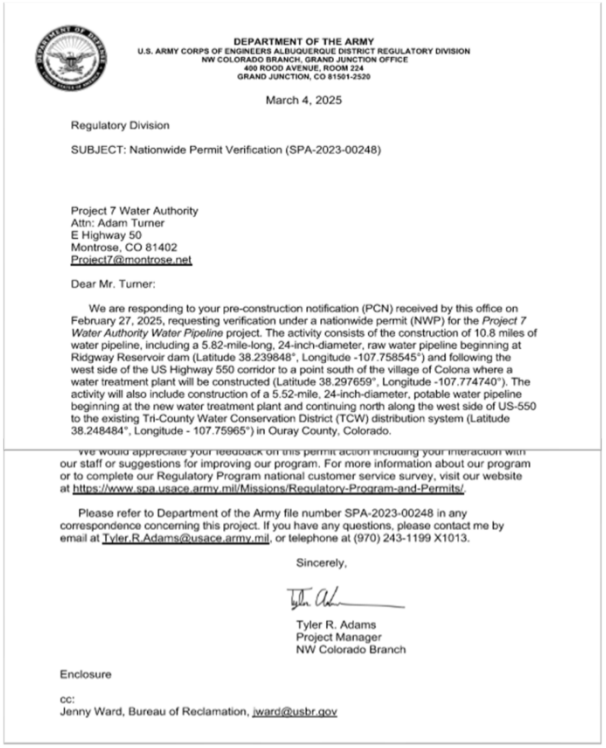
Attest:

Jack Niece, Chair

Michelle Nauer, Vice-Chair

Cristy Lynn, Clerk and Recorder
By: Eli Holmes, Deputy Clerk of the Board

Lynn Padgett, Commissioner



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT REGULATORY DIVISION
NW COLORADO BRANCH, GRAND JUNCTION OFFICE
400 ROOD AVENUE, ROOM 224
GRAND JUNCTION, CO 81501-2520

March 4, 2025

Regulatory Division

SUBJECT: Nationwide Permit Verification (SPA-2023-00248)

Project 7 Water Authority
Attn: Adam Turner
E Highway 50
Montrose, CO 81402
Project7@montrose.net

Dear Mr. Turner:

We are responding to your pre-construction notification (PCN) received by this office on February 27, 2025, requesting verification under a nationwide permit (NWP) for the *Project 7 Water Authority Water Pipeline* project. The activity consists of the construction of 10.8 miles of water pipeline, including a 5.82-mile-long, 24-inch-diameter, raw water pipeline beginning at Ridgway Reservoir dam (Latitude 38.239848°, Longitude -107.758545°) and following the west side of the US Highway 550 corridor to a point south of the village of Colona where a water treatment plant will be constructed (Latitude 38.297659°, Longitude -107.774740°). The activity will also include construction of a 5.52-mile, 24-inch-diameter, potable water pipeline beginning at the new water treatment plant and continuing north along the west side of US-550 to the existing Tri-County Water Conservation District (TCW) distribution system (Latitude 38.248484°, Longitude - 107.75965°) in Ouray County, Colorado.

We would appreciate your feedback on this permit action including your interaction with our staff or suggestions for improving our program. For more information about our program or to complete our Regulatory Program national customer service survey, visit our website at https://www.spa.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory-Program-and-Permits/.

Please refer to Department of the Army file number SPA-2023-00248 in any correspondence concerning this project. If you have any questions, please contact me by email at Tyler.R.Adams@usace.army.mil, or telephone at (970) 243-1199 X1013.

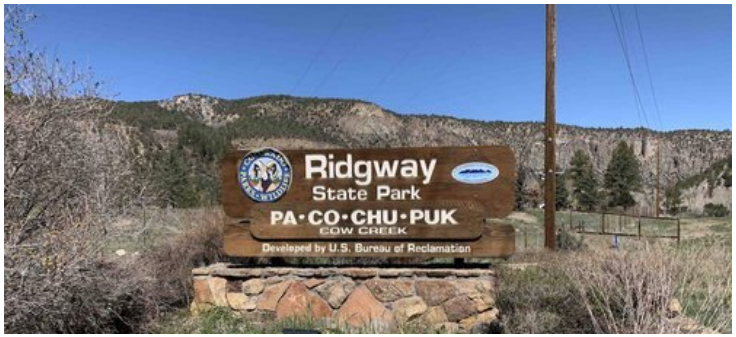
Sincerely,

Tyler R. Adams
Project Manager
NW Colorado Branch

Enclosure

cc:
Jenny Ward, Bureau of Reclamation, jward@usbr.gov

Mitigation efforts will prevent impacts to Pa Co Cuh Puk campground

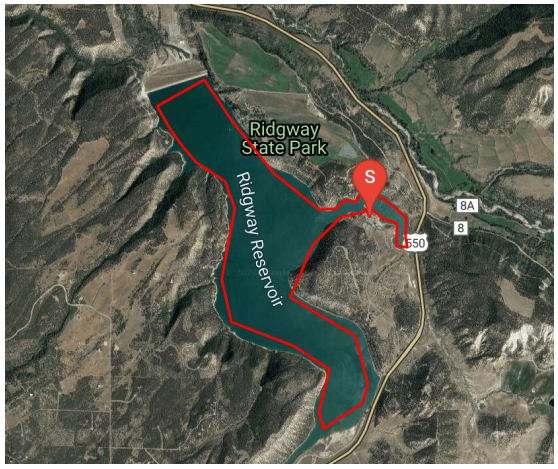




- Construction to occur during winter off-season to avoid impacts to recreators
- Day access to campground will be maintained throughout construction
- Construction area will be clearly identified and fenced off
- No permanent impacts to campground with full restoration to existing conditions through revegetation
- CPW prescribed seed mix will be used to revegetate

This project will facilitate access to Project 7's own water rights in the Ridgway Reservoir



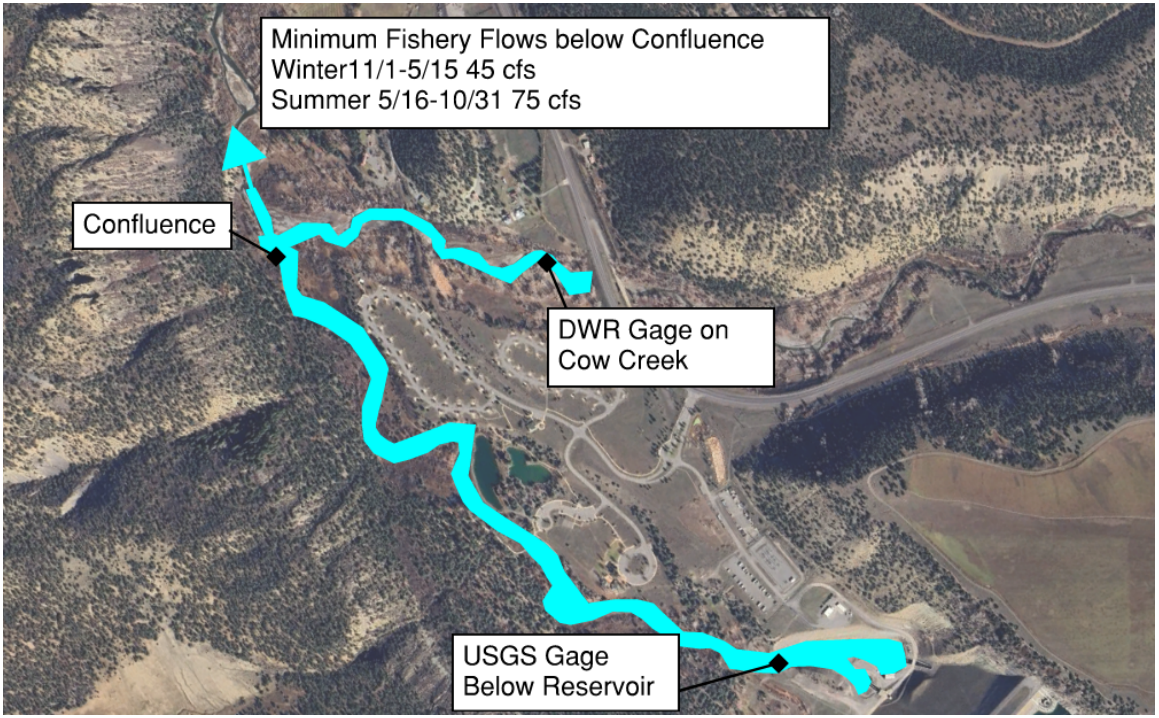


- A five-year water analysis study was conducted to determine impacts to Reservoir level and surface area
- Drought years (2018, 2020, and 2021) were analyzed to understand reservoir impact
- Impacts will depend on water year and Tri-County operations

A decrease or increase could be seen in Reservoir level and surface

Change in Reservoir Level (ft) and Surface Area (acres) from Existing to Proposed Conditions				
WY	Level (ft)		Surface Area (acres)	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
2018	**-1.8**	**3.1**	**-13.1**	**20.4**
2019	**-3.9**	**0.5**	**-41.6**	**4.8**
2020	**-1.2**	**0.1**	**-8.7**	**1.0**
2021	**-3.0**	**0.0**	**-23.8**	**0.0**
2022	**-1.2**	**0.4**	**-8.8**	**3.4**

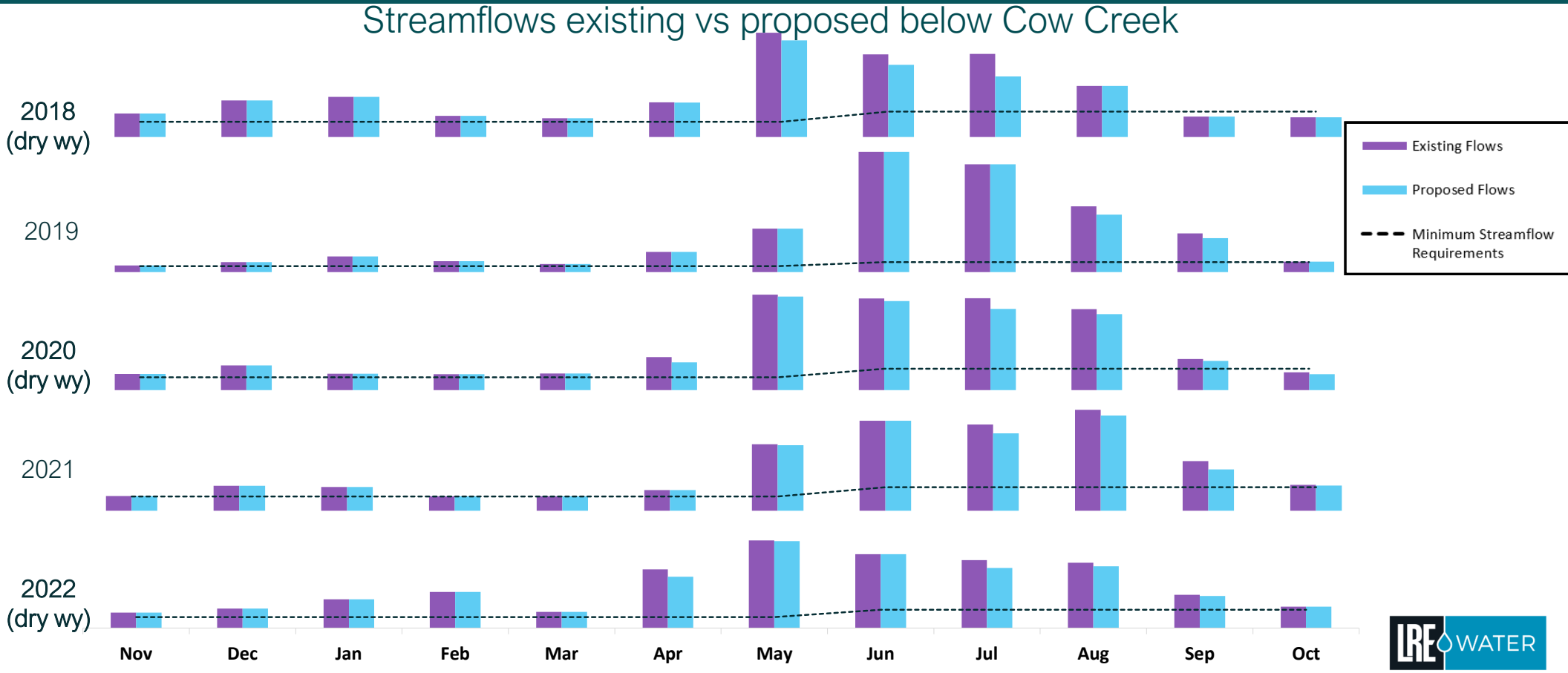
No impacts to winter streamflow conditions in the Uncompahgre River below Ridgway Dam streamflow



Minimum fishery flow requirements on the Uncompahgre River per BOR Contract 1-07-40-R1300:

- Streamflow maintained by Tri-County Water District
- No impacts on winter habitat conditions - the primary stressor for fish
- Summer flow reductions will depend on water year and irrigation usage
- Minimum fishery flows from the USBR EIS will be maintained

A 5-year water analysis to understand project impacts to streamflows was conducted



Best management practices for river crossings as approved by USACE



Bluehead Sucker



Rainbow Trout

- Crossing during low flows to minimize sediment mobilization and avoids impacts to Rainbow Trout and Bluehead Sucker spawning
- Temporary cofferdams with supersacks that have an impermeable casing
- Two phased crossings to allow for water/aquatic species movement
- Soils will be stored in uplands outside of water ways
- Delineated limit of disturbance with erosion control such as wattles and fencing
- Cow Creek and Uncompahgre Crossings approval from USACE NWP-58
- All construction equipment previously used in wet areas will be cleaned, disinfected, and completely dried prior to bringing it to the construction area to avoid the spread of aquatic nuisance species and diseases.

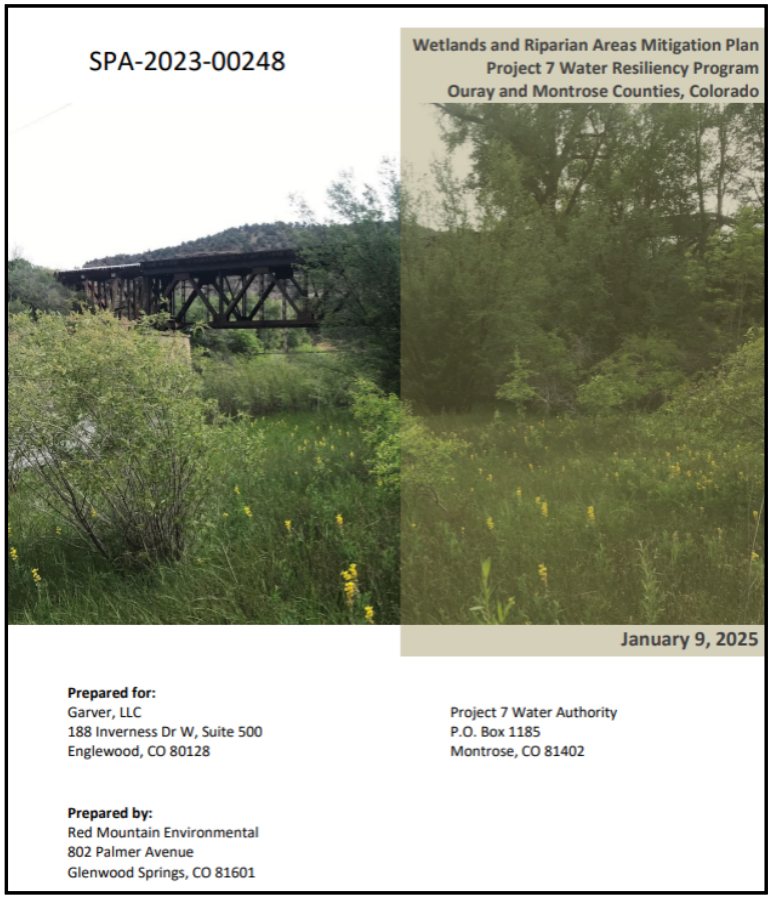
Protecting the big game species by implementing CPW best practices





- Pipeline construction avoiding big game winter period December 1st through April 30th
- Construction to occur at one wildlife crossing structure at a time
- Time spent with heavy equipment within a half mile of the underpass will be limited to the lowest amount possible to accomplish the project.
- All wildlife exclusion fencing will remain functional during construction to prevent ungulates from entering the road corridor.
- All open trenches will have wildlife escape ramps at a minimum of one ramp per ¼ mile of trench.
- All open trenches within a half mile of a wildlife underpass will be covered when construction is not actively occurring

Restoration will be a priority for the project



- Adhere to CPW reclamation and revegetation requirements on Reclamation property, including using a CPW-recommended and approved seed mix.
- All construction equipment will be power-washed and free of soil and debris prior to entering the construction site to reduce the spread of noxious and invasive weeds.
- Timely and consistent weed treatment will occur within the project area to minimize weed spreading during construction.
- Project 7 will comply with the Colorado Noxious Weed Act and will obtain appropriate pesticide use permits in accordance with Section 402 of the Clean Water Act

Project will continuously monitor during construction





- Pre-construction yellow-billed cuckoo surveys if any riparian vegetation clearing activities are required between June 15 and August 15.
- Monitoring and continued revegetation would occur to prevent the establishment and spread of noxious weed populations.
- Cleaning equipment to avoid the spread of aquatic nuisance species, disease, and invasive weeds
- Pre-construction raptor and migratory bird surveys any vegetation clearing activities are required between April 1 and August 31.
- Nesting raptor survey conducted within 0.25 to 0.5 miles of the project area the year(s) of construction.

Thank you for your time.

Questions?