

Denver Board of Water Commissioners

Title:

Section 404 Permit Application for Moffat Project

Meeting Date: 8/12/2009

Contract/Proposal

 Action by Consent Action Information

The 2002 drought demonstrated critical water supply shortcomings in the north end of Denver Water's system. Denver Water avoided running out of water for the Moffat Treatment Plant only by taking extraordinary measures such as pumping treated water northward to be discharged into a stream to be retreated by a raw water customer. This water shortage, coupled with wildfires that continue to threaten the south end of the supply system, caused Denver Water to initiate meetings in 2003 with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the permitting agency for any potential project.

The need for a potential project was identified – additional amounts of water were needed on the north end of Denver Water's system to enhance system reliability; reduce the vulnerability resulting from having 80% of the supply reliant on Strontia Springs Reservoir in the south; and increase the yield of the system by 18,000 acre feet to meet demand projections for 2030 (taking into account targeted conservation savings). This project became known as the "Moffat Project," and the Corps started the National Environmental Procedures Act (NEPA) process for a Section 404 permit under the federal Clean Water Act.

The Corps' evaluation of alternatives began with a list of hundreds of possible solutions. These alternatives were narrowed through numerous screening criteria and resulted in five reasonable and practicable alternatives that would satisfy the Project's stated purpose and need: "Develop 18,000 acre-feet per year of new, annual firm yield to the Moffat Treatment Plant and raw water customers upstream of the Moffat Treatment Plant pursuant to the Board of Water Commissioners' commitment to its customers." Each of the five alternatives analyzed in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) includes an enlargement of Gross Reservoir, to various heights. These alternatives are described in the brochure included with this Board item.

On July 25, 2007, the Board received and discussed information about the five alternatives. Based on that information, the Board preliminarily selected one of the five as Denver Water's "preferred" alternative for more in-depth study during preparation of the Draft EIS. The alternative selected was the enlargement of Gross Reservoir by 72,000 acre-feet to a total capacity of 114,000 acre-feet, which would increase the yield of the Denver Water Collection System by 18,000 acre-feet.

The Corps intends to issue the Draft EIS to the public in early September, which will trigger a 90-day period for public comment. The Corps requires that Denver Water submit the Section 404 Permit application prior to the release of the Draft EIS, so that the public comment periods for both the Draft EIS and the permit application could run concurrently. By submitting this permit application, the Board is not yet deciding to construct the Moffat Project. That decision will be brought to the Board after the Corps issues the permit.

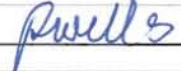
RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board: (1) determine that the entire 18,000 acre feet of yield from the Gross Enlargement must be reserved to the Board to discharge the Board's Charter and contract obligations (including the 1999 contract with Arvada); (2) adopt the 72,000 acre-foot enlargement of Gross Reservoir as the preferred alternative; and (3) authorize Denver Water staff to submit on behalf of the Board a 404 Permit application to the Corps for the 72,000 acre-foot enlargement of Gross Reservoir.

Approvals:



Director of Planning



General Counsel



Manager Approval:

Documents Attached:

 File Attachment