

# PROJECT INFORMATION

## Regional Watershed

S U P P L Y   P R O J E C T



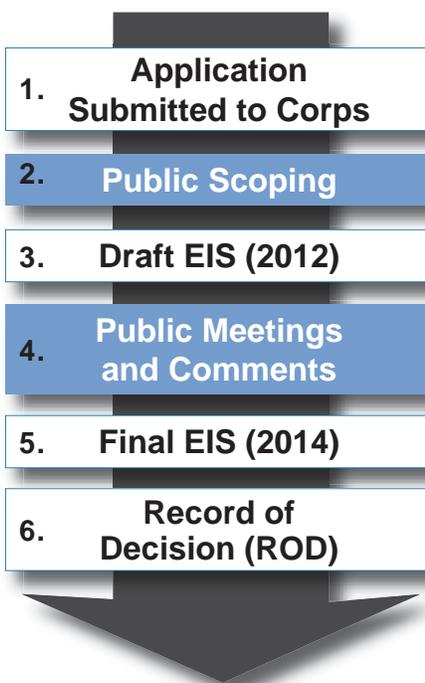
**Newsletter #1**

**June 2009**

The US Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, Regulatory Branch (Corps) has received a permit request from a private entity to construct a proposed water supply pipeline project in Wyoming and Colorado. The proposed project is referred to by the proponent as the Regional Watershed Supply Project (RWSP). The Corps' Regulatory Branch will evaluate the proposal under the highest level of permit review, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), to assess the environmental consequences of the proposal. The permit review is estimated to take 5 years.

The RWSP is proposed by Million Conservation Resource Group (MCRG), a private water development entity. MCRG proposes to withdraw approximately 250,000 acre-feet (AF) of water annually from the Green River and Flaming Gorge Reservoir in Wyoming, and transport it by pipeline to existing and proposed new reservoirs in southeastern Wyoming and the Front Range of Colorado.

### NEPA Process



### What is an Environmental Impact Statement ?

An EIS is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for federal government agency actions "significantly affecting the quality of the human environment."

Through the NEPA process, the Corps will evaluate a range of alternatives and identify those alternatives, including the No Action alternative, to be analyzed in detail in the EIS.

The EIS will provide a detailed discussion of the human and natural environments to be affected by the RWSP and its alternatives, and the potential adverse and beneficial effects related to constructing and operating the RWSP and its alternatives. The environmental effects or impacts to be analyzed can be positive or negative, have direct or indirect results, and can be of short- or long-term duration.

Mitigation measures, along with the appropriate monitoring and enforcement, will be identified to avoid or minimize

*The fact that the Corps has started the EIS process does not imply that the Corps supports the project or will issue a permit for the proposed project. The Corps Regulatory Program is neither a proponent nor an opponent of any project that must undergo the permit process.*

anticipated significant adverse impacts. Unavoidable adverse impacts that cannot be mitigated will be identified. The EIS also will evaluate the cumulative effects of this project when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

The environmental resources in the table below have been identified for possible analysis in the EIS. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or final, but contains resources that can reasonably be expected to require environmental analysis. Additional issues will be identified in the course of the scoping process and a determination will be made as to whether these issues are significant and warrant analysis.

Although the Corps is not proposing, designing, funding or constructing the RWSP, a Section 404 Permit, which is a federal permit under the Clean Water Act administered by the Corps, will be required. Because a Section 404 Permit is required, the Corps is the lead federal agency managing the EIS process.

The NEPA process is designed to involve the public and gather the best available information regarding the project so decision makers can be fully informed when they make their choices. An EIS describes the positive and negative environmental effects of proposed actions and recommends alternative actions.

The components of the EIS process are public involvement, scoping, preparation of a Draft EIS, and preparation of a Final EIS, and Record of Decision. The Draft EIS for the RWSP is estimated to be released in 2012 and the Final EIS in 2014.

<b>Physical Resources</b>	<b>Biological Resources</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soils</li> <li>• Geology</li> <li>• Mineral Resources</li> <li>• Surface Water Resources</li> <li>• Groundwater Resources</li> <li>• Water Rights and Water Use</li> <li>• Air Quality</li> <li>• Noise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wetlands</li> <li>• Wildlife</li> <li>• Aquatic Resources</li> <li>• Threatened and Endangered Species and Other Special Status Species</li> <li>• Vegetation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Visual Resources/Aesthetics</li> <li>• Cultural and Paleontological Resources</li> <li>• Land Use</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Socioeconomics</li> <li>• Hazardous Materials</li> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• Environmental Justice</li> </ul>

*The first step of the EIS process is scoping, in which the Corps notifies the public of the proposed project and solicits comments on what issues should be studied.*

## U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Involvement with the EIS

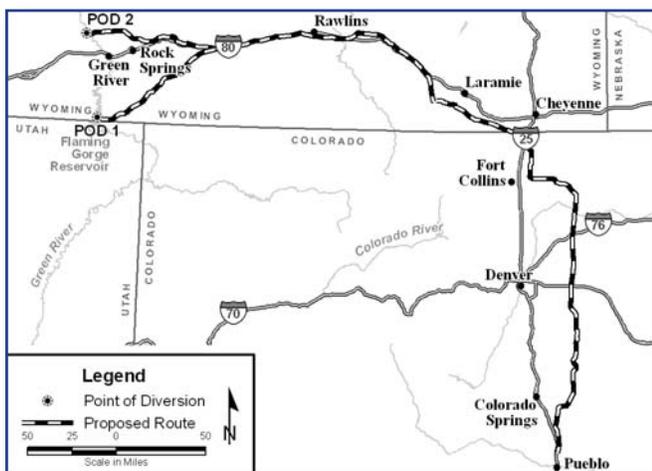
The Corps, through requirements contained in Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, regulates activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. Any individual or agency, public or private, must receive authorization from the Corps before conducting such discharges, and documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) must occur before a permit may be issued. For projects where the potential impacts to the environment are significant, an EIS is required.

Under Section 404, any person has the right, at any point in time, to apply for a permit. The Corps' role in this process is to develop a thorough study that can guide the agency in making an informed decision about whether to approve or deny the permit. The Corps is neither an opponent nor a proponent of any project that must undergo the permit process.

## Proponent's Project Description

The RWSP proposes to provide approximately 250,000 AF per year of additional reliable water supply to meet the projected water needs of southeastern Wyoming and the Front Range of Colorado. The water would be used by municipal, agricultural, and industrial users in Wyoming and Colorado on a perpetual basis through 2030 and beyond. The water would be obtained from the Green River Basin as part of the unused portion of water allocated to the States of Wyoming and Colorado under the Colorado and Upper Colorado River Basin compacts. As a non-federal venture, the RWSP would be constructed, owned, and operated by MCRG.

The applicant's proposed action specifies that the water would be delivered through a large buried pipeline (between 72-120 inches in diameter) extending from two points of diversion in Wyoming (one from the Green River and one from the Flaming Gorge Reservoir) to a storage terminus near Pueblo, Colorado (see Map). From the identified diversion points, water would be pumped through an approximately 578-mile long pipeline. Water storage currently is anticipated to occur at Lake Hattie, located west of Laramie, Wyoming; the proposed Cactus Hill Reservoir site, located northeast of Fort Collins, Colorado; and the proposed T-Cross Reservoir site, located north



of Pueblo, Colorado. Water treatment facilities would be a part of the intake system and water storage reservoirs.

Other project components include approximately 16 natural gas-powered pump stations, pipeline valves (air release/vacuum, isolation, and drain), access roads (temporary and permanent), electrical power for water withdrawal and storage reservoir facilities, and water delivery systems.

## Water Rights Issues

The Corps Regulatory Program does not have authority to grant any property rights or water rights. The States of Colorado and Wyoming will determine how much water is available for use in their respective states. By law, the Corps' evaluation of the environmental and economic impacts is based on the assumption that the project proponent can obtain such rights. However, the final decision on whether or not such rights are granted rests with the States of Wyoming and Colorado.

## Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Agency Involvement

During this scoping period, the Corps is inviting other Federal, Tribal, State, local agencies and officials, and other interested parties to participate in the EIS review process to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Some agencies which have already agreed to participate include:

- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Additional cooperating agencies may be added as the EIS process proceeds.

## How to Get Involved

The Corps initiated the scoping process for the EIS by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the RWSP in the Federal Register. The original NOI for this project was published on March 19, 2009 and a subsequent NOI was published on May 8, 2009 to identify additional meetings and extend the comment period. The Corps encourages you to participate in the EIS public process by attending scoping meetings and submitting comments prior to the close of the scoping period (July 27, 2009). Scoping meetings have or will



## **Additional Scoping Meetings**

**June 9, 2009**  
6:30pm - 9pm

Rock Springs East Junior High  
School Auditorium  
831 Gobel St.  
Rock Springs, WY

**June 10, 2009**  
6:30pm - 9pm

Center of Craig  
601 Yampa Ave.  
Craig, CO

**June 11, 2009**  
6:30pm - 9pm

Mesa County Fairgrounds  
2785 U.S. Hwy 50,  
Grand Junction, CO

be held at eight locations on the following dates in 2009: Green River (April 14), Vernal (April 15), Laramie (April 15), Fort Collins (April 20), Denver (April 21), Pueblo (April 22), Rock Springs (June 9), Craig (June 10), and Grand Junction (June 11). Project information was available for viewing and agency representatives and resource experts were present to answer questions. Meeting attendees and other interested parties were encouraged to submit written and oral comments on the RWSP.

Additional scoping comments will be considered if received by **July 27, 2009**. You can submit comments via U.S. Mail or e-mail to [mcrgeis@usace.army.mil](mailto:mcrgeis@usace.army.mil)

Additional information on this project is available at the following website:

<https://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/html/od-tl/eis-info.htm>

(Note: Because this is a secure Army website, you may get a "Certificate Error" when first visiting the Corps website. It is safe to click to continue, and this will link you to the Corps EIS website.)

## **Tips on Providing Scoping Comments:**

The Corps needs your input regarding the RWSP proposal, and what issues should be studied. Considering the following questions can help to formulate scoping comments:

1. What are some possible benefits or detriments of the proposed project?
2. What key issues should be addressed in the EIS when assessing the potential effects of this proposal?
3. What should be considered with respect the applicant's proposed need for the project?
4. What alternatives to the proposed project should be considered?

### **For More Information**

Address questions and comments regarding the proposed action, applicant-identified alternatives, and the EIS to:

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