

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD  
823 State Centennial Building  
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Denver, Colorado 80203

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DALLAS CREEK PROJECT

The Dallas Creek Project is located in the Uncompahgre River Basin of west-central Colorado. The project was authorized by the Congress in 1968 under the provisions of the Colorado River Basin Project Act as a participating project of the Colorado River Storage Project Act. The Tri-County Water Conservancy District was organized in 1957 to act as a sponsoring and contractual agency for the project. This district includes portions of Delta, Montrose, and Ouray Counties.

Current Status

Advance planning studies were initiated on the Dallas Creek Project in FY 1971. These studies are completed and the report has been reviewed. The draft environmental impact statement has been completed and was distributed and filed with the Council on Environmental Quality on March 8, 1976. The final EIS was filed on September 28, 1976. A repayment contract was signed on January 14, 1977.

Total Federal expenditures to September 30, 1976, including feasibility and advance planning, amount to \$3,005,671. Approximately \$75,000 has been expended by the State of Colorado on the project. By far, the greatest sum has been spent by the Tri-County Water Conservancy District, which to date has expended over 4.5 million dollars. This includes the construction of a domestic water system, which is predicated upon the eventual construction of the Dallas Creek Project.

After Congress authorized the project, the people of the Uncompahgre Valley approved a bond issue to construct a rural water system. This system has now been completed and serves 1,432 rural families in three counties. This rural water system was constructed on the basis that project water from the Dallas Creek Project would be available by 1979. In the interim period, the water conservancy district entered into a temporary arrangement with the City of Montrose to purchase water from the city for a ten-year period, provided that such water would be available.

At the present time, the Montrose area is expanding rapidly. In recent years, the Bureau of Reclamation has constructed a power operation center in Montrose which controls the distribution of power from the entire Colorado River Storage Project. The operating headquarters for the Colorado-Ute Electric Association is also situated in Montrose. A major candy-making facility has been constructed in the area by the Russell Stover Company and employs about 600 people.

## Plan of Development

The Dallas Creek Project would develop water of the Uncompahgre River and tributaries for municipal and industrial use and for irrigation. It would also provide benefits to recreation, fish, and flood control.

The only storage facility involved would be Ridgway Reservoir on the Uncompahgre River. In addition to regulating the flow of the river this reservoir would also store surplus flows of Dallas Creek. It would provide storage for municipal and industrial uses both above and below the reservoir and for increased irrigation supplies above the reservoir by exchange. It would also provide for flood control, recreation, and fishery enhancement.

The largest portion of the irrigation supply would be to augment existing supplies for the Uncompahgre Project. A large share of the municipal water would be available to the communities of Colona, Montrose, Olathe, and Delta. Tri-County Water Conservancy District or the water users would be responsible for any facilities necessary for diversion, treatment, and distribution of project water.

A large minimum pool would be provided at Ridgway Reservoir and recreation facilities would be constructed to handle the anticipated large recreation usage. To provide access for fishermen, land would be acquired along stretches of the Uncompahgre River below Ridgway Dam. Land would also be acquired and developed for wildlife habitat to mitigate project-caused losses to wildlife. Fencing for wildlife protection would be included along both sides of relocated U.S. Highway 550.

### Estimated Costs (January 1976 prices)

Municipal and industrial water	\$24,612,000
Irrigation	15,279,000
Fish and wildlife enhancement	1,773,000
Recreation	10,100,000
Flood control	1,206,000
Highway improvement	<u>1,430,000</u>
Total	\$54,400,000

### Water allocations:

Municipal	22,600 a.f.
Industrial	5,500 a.f.
Irrigation	11,200 a.f.
Recreation	<u>100 a.f.</u>
Total	39,400 a.f.

Annual depletion of the Colorado River	17,100 a.f.
Benefit-cost ratio	1.48:1
Total annual benefits	\$3,383,000

### Environmental Impact

1. Temporary disturbance of water quality during construction.
2. Fishery quality of the Uncompahgre River will be increased by including a variable outlet in Ridgway Dam for temperature control of water released and by providing minimum flows substantially in excess of what has been historically recorded.
3. Minor impacts on aesthetics, big game movement, and stream flows used as fisheries are expected to be resolved.

### Local Interest

Local residents, western slope interests in Colorado, State officials and outside interests are urgently backing the development of the Dallas Creek Project as a means of utilizing water resources of the Uncompahgre River Basin. Project supporters were influential in having the project included in the list of potential developments designated by Congress as having priority in the completion of planning reports in the Colorado River Storage Project Act of April 11, 1956. Project sponsorship was the primary purpose for organization of the Tri-County Water Conservancy District in September 1957 by local residents. The district has actively supported the project investigation and has obtained water rights needed for the development. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has made financial contributions for project investigations and has helped coordinate activities of the various agencies engaged in the investigations. The City of Montrose is energetically supporting the project and meeting with various interests to promote its development.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The Dallas Creek Project appears to be one of the better projects now under consideration in Colorado. Its primary purpose would be to provide a municipal, domestic and supplemental irrigation water supply for a predominantly rural area which is now experiencing considerable residential and industrial growth. The project would stabilize the irrigation supplies for presently irrigated lands.

The environmental impact of the project will be minimal. The existing Uncompahgre River below the proposed reservoir site at the present time has very little fishery value. As a matter of fact, the entire Uncompahgre River has very little fishery value. However, with the construction of the reservoir and subsequent controlled releases, fishery values of the river would increase many times over. The recreational aspect of the reservoir itself would have a high value to the area.

Additional municipal and domestic water for the area is most obviously required for the immediate future. This is evidenced by the fact that the Tri-County Water Conservancy District has already constructed a domestic pipeline at a cost of approximately 4.5 million dollars, based upon the anticipated construction of the Dallas Creek Project.

Construction funds in the amount of \$5,000,000 are available for the current fiscal year (FY 1977). This is a combination of appropriated and carry-over funds. The President has requested that the sum of \$12,175,000 be appropriated to continue construction of the Dallas Creek Project during FY 1978. These funds appear to be adequate. It is therefore recommended that the Governor and the members of Colorado's congressional delegation be urged to support that request.