

COLORADO WATER CONSERVATION BOARD  
823 State Centennial Building  
1313 Sherman Street  
Denver, Colorado 80203

March, 1978

FRUITLAND MESA PROJECT

The Fruitland Mesa project is located in west-central Colorado in the Gunnison River Basin of the Upper Colorado River Basin. The project would develop unused water supplies from Soap, Curecanti, and Crystal Creeks, for irrigation of supplemental and full service land between the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument and the town of Crawford. Benefits would also be provided for recreation, fish and wildlife.

Status

The Fruitland Mesa project was authorized for construction September 2, 1964 (Public Law 88-568) as a participating project under the Colorado River Storage Project Act of April 11, 1956 (Public Law 84-485). A definite plan report was completed in June, 1967. Because of changes in plan, costs, and benefits, the definite plan report has been revised and submitted to the Commissioner for approval. The draft environmental statement was filed with the Council on Environmental Quality September 3, 1976 and the final environmental statement was filed March 25, 1977. The President recommended the deletion of construction funds for this project. Congress deleted funding from the FY 1978 budget and the budget authority for FY 1977 was rescinded.

A repayment contract with the Fruitland Mesa Water Conservancy District was signed in 1969. Archaeological surveys of the project area were conducted in 1975 and 1976. Designs for the Soap Park access road were prepared by a consulting engineering firm in accordance with a contract awarded in 1976. Total federal project expenditures through September 30, 1977 amount to \$3,288,600.

Plan

Project water would be obtained from Soap, Curecanti, and Crystal Creeks. Regulation of project water supplies would be provided at the potential Milly K. Goodwin Lake on Soap Creek and at the existing Gould Reservoir on Iron Creek.

Releases from Milly K. Goodwin Lake would be conveyed about 10.6 miles by the Black Mesa Conduit to the head of the Fruitland Canal near Crystal Creek. Along its course, the conduit would intercept natural flows of Curecanti Creek. The Fruitland Canal would be 18.3 miles long. It would distribute flows received from the Black Mesa Conduit as well as flows of Crystal Creek Diversion Dam. The canal would provide water to several turnouts, the six largest being to: (1) Dyer Creek, a tributary of Crystal Creek, for diversion from Crystal Creek downstream into the Crystal Valley Ditch for irrigation of lands along that stream; (2) the existing Dyer Fork Ditch for irrigation of lands above Gould Reservoir; (3) the Cattleman's Ditch for irrigation of presently irrigated lands below Gould Reservoir; (4) turnout to provide storage water to Gould Reservoir; (5) Castle Canyon, a natural channel which would convey water directly to the existing Gould Canal; and (6) Poison Springs, a natural channel that would carry flows to the lands between the Gould Canal and Poison Springs draw. Minor turnouts from the canal would be made directly to project lands and to distribution laterals. Sections of the Gould Canal west of Castle Canyon would be enlarged by the owners. Two siphons in the canal have already been replaced by the Bureau of Reclamation under a construction contract.

Operation of the existing Gould Reservoir would be integrated in project operation. Project water as well as present supplies would be released from the reservoir to the existing Gould Canal and several small existing ditches.

Laterals would be constructed to distribute water from Fruitland Canal to full service lands. Land drains would be constructed wherever the need for them is demonstrated in project operations.

Fishery pools would be maintained in both Milly K. Goodwin Lake and Gould Reservoir. Minimum fishery flows would be maintained in Soap and Curecanti Creeks. Recreational facilities would be provided and operated by the Forest Service at Milly K. Goodwin Lake and in Little Soap Park.

A pipeline would be constructed by the National Park Service to convey a small amount of project water from the Fruitland Canal for public use at the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument. Water would be provided to the Bureau of Land Management at the terminus of the Gould Canal for livestock and wildlife use in the Black Ridge area on lower Fruitland Mesa. Conveyance of this water would be the responsibility of BLM.

## Water Supply

Irrigation supplies (acre-feet)	45,400
Effects on Colorado River	
Increase in salt load (tons)	10,930
Stream depletion (acre-feet)	21,300
Increase in salinity concentration at Imperial Dam (mg/l)	
Increase in salt load	1.1
From concentration due to stream depletion	2.6

## Irrigation Service Area (acres)

Full service land	11,940
Supplemental service land	<u>6,310</u>
Total	18,250

## Project Features

Soap Park Dam	
Height (feet)	254
Crest length (feet)	1,170
Milly K. Goodwin Lake capacity (acre-feet)	
Active	50,165
Inactive and dead	<u>1,235</u>
Total	51,400

	<u>Crystal Creek</u>	<u>Curecanti Creek</u>
Diversion dams		
Overflow crest length (feet)	60	10
Diversion capacity (second-feet)	250	250
	<u>Length (miles)</u>	<u>Diversion capacity (second-feet)</u>
Distribution		
Black Mesa Conduit	10.9	275
Pipe line section	2.5	275
Tunnel section	8.4	275
Fruitland Canal	18.8	275
Laterals	13.6	4 to 25



under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965. Completion of the project would be of great economic value to the area, including an increase of over 2 million dollars to the local tax base.

The recreational benefits derived from local fisheries along the streams and at Gould and Soap Park Reservoirs would serve to take local pressure away from the Curecanti National Recreation Area and provide additional facilities for the overflow from Curecanti and Black Canyon of the Gunnison area.

No construction funds for the project were included in the President's FY 1979 budget message. Although the project had a favorable benefit-cost ratio at time of authorization, constantly changing criteria and conditions have greatly increased the costs without a similar reflection of benefits. There is a possibility that some re-formulation of the project could result in a more favorable benefit-cost ratio.

In view of the unfavorable benefit-cost ratio, there appears to be little or no likelihood that construction funds can be secured at this time. However, the project should not be allowed to drift in limbo. It is the staff recommendation that the board request the Governor and Colorado's congressional delegation to seek the sum of \$75,000 for further advance planning on the Fruitland Mesa project.

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