

## **Springs mayor claims pipeline benefits region** **Some residents question impact of reservoir on surrounding area.** **April 10, 2008**

**By CHRIS WOODKA**  
**THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN**

**COLORADO SPRINGS** - The mayor of Colorado Springs said connecting a pipeline to Pueblo Dam is the best regional solution for the Southern Delivery System because it would serve Pueblo West and contracts could provide revenue to help build the Arkansas Valley Conduit.

“Coming from the dam gives the best quality of water for all users and is the lowest cost option for the customers over the long term,” Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera said Wednesday at an open house hosted by the Bureau of Reclamation to explain the draft environmental impact statement for SDS.

About 80 people attended the open house, the fifth in a series throughout the region affected by SDS. Many had positive comments about the project, although Reclamation is primarily looking for technical information as it refines the EIS.

The final open house will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. today at the Quality Inn, 3075 E. U.S. 50, Canon City.

Some of the people at the open house, however, expressed concern about the project’s storage reservoir at Jimmy Camp Creek, both from the increased possibility of flooding below the dam site and the paleontologic and archaeological significance of the proposed dam site.

Rivera said the growth of Colorado Springs is only one reason for the project, because Colorado Springs is looking for redundancy in its major pipeline delivery systems as well as using the water rights it owns to their fullest benefit. As far as growth, about half of the current growth rate is by natural increase, with much of the remainder coming from expansion at Fort Carson and Peterson Air Force base, Rivera said.

He also addressed calls by some from Pueblo and the Lower Arkansas Valley to move the SDS intake to the Arkansas River east of the Fountain Creek confluence.

Rivera said he believes an outtake below the confluence isn't the solution. “It doesn’t help the Lower Arkansas Valley get better water.”

Rivera said revenues from the long-term contracts Colorado Springs would need to operate the pipeline from the dam - serving partners Pueblo West, Fountain and Security along the 43-mile route - could help finance the Arkansas Valley Conduit. The Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District proposed that concept recently and Rivera said he supports it.

El Paso County Commissioner Dennis Hisey represents the area of the county where the pipeline would come through, as well as residents in the Colorado Centre area downstream of Jimmy Camp Creek. Some of those residents attended open houses Tuesday and Wednesday, bringing up concerns that dam failure and seepage could create new flood plains.

“I think we need to respond to those questions,” Hisey said. “I want to hear what the plan is.” Flooding risk from the dam, either through spills or dam failure, is remote, said Chip Paulson, an engineer with MWH engineering, primary consultants for the EIS.

“It won’t aggravate flooding conditions, except in the very unlikely event of a dam failure,” Paulson said.

There was an analysis of failure risk in the dam engineering report, which is not part of the EIS. The dam would be built on bedrock and drains only the upper tip of the Jimmy Camp Creek watershed, so would not collect a large amount of water in a rainstorm.

Reclamation will evaluate the comments to see if they can be included in the final EIS. Paulson said the biggest risk of flooding for downstream residents in Jimmy Camp Creek could come from increased impervious surfaces when the 24,000-acre Banning-Lewis Ranch is developed.

Colorado Springs proposes to pipe water into Jimmy Camp Creek from Lake Pueblo. Some nearby residents are concerned about the influx of people the new reservoir would bring into the area.

The EIS addresses paleontology in the area, which has yielded many fossil finds and contains a portion of the K-T boundary, a worldwide layer of deposits that marks the end of the age of dinosaurs. There are also archaeological sites in the area both surrounding and within the reservoir site, but a federal act prohibits release of information about those sites.

In addition, residents are trying to stop a dirt bike park from opening adjacent to the Jimmy Camp Creek reservoir site.

“We bought property in 1997, and in 2002 the city knocked on our door and said we’re going to take your property,” said Jeff Cahill, a sign company owner.

Cahill’s 10 acres wound up being outside the project boundaries, but 13 of his neighbors were bought out and are now renting their old homes from Colorado Springs.

Cahill said he was told by zoning officials when he bought the property that the land now being considered for a dirt bike park would be open space and a wildlife corridor.

“The people I talked to left, and I was told ‘things change,’ ” Cahill said. “There went my plans for retirement in a quiet, peaceful area.”

## **SDS COMMENTS**

The draft environmental impact statement describes and analyzes the potential effects of seven Southern Delivery System project alternatives, including a no-action alternative, on environmental and human resources. The draft EIS tentatively identifies the construction of a pipeline from Pueblo Dam as the preferred alternative.

## ON THE NET

**Southern Delivery System:** [www.sdseis.com](http://www.sdseis.com)

To provide a comment, mail, fax or e-mail to the attention of Kara Lamb at: Bureau of Reclamation 11056 W. County Road 18E Loveland, CO 80537 (fax) 970-663-3212 (e-mail) [klamb@gp.usbr.gov](mailto:klamb@gp.usbr.gov)

Comments must be provided in writing no later than April 29.

– For more information, contact Kara Lamb at 970-962-4326.