

# Bigger pipe planned at dam

Colorado Springs proposes oversizing structure, selling it to Reclamation at cut rate.

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COLORADO SPRINGS — A \$30 million connection to Pueblo Dam at the North Outlet Works would be sized larger than needed as part of the Southern Delivery System and control turned over to the federal government.

SDS, a water project benefitting Colorado Springs, Security, Fountain and Pueblo West, would provide a pipeline to deliver up to 96 million gallons per day to the four communities.

However, an oversized connection at Pueblo Dam would allow benefits for other users in the future.

It could provide a cross-connection for users of the South Outlet Works to provide redundancy in case of emergency shutdowns, aquatic species invasions or future in-basin users.

On Friday, Colorado Springs proposed building a 90-inch pipeline from the North Outlet Works to the point where the SDS pipeline would turn out to provide Pueblo West water, several hundred feet from the dam.

SDS would use a maximum of 150 cubic feet per second in the pipeline, which would have a capacity of roughly four times that.

“The SDS partners would use 25 percent,” John Fredell, SDS project director told Reclamation’s negotiating team. “The excess-capacity, you would control.”

That was a step back for Colorado Springs.

During contract negotiations with the Bureau of Reclamation during the past two months, the use of the excess-capacity in the first few hundred feet of the pipeline has been a contentious issue.

At the first negotiating session in Pueblo, Colorado Springs asked Reclamation to consider allowing it to use future revenues from connection to the North Outlet Works to help pay for the \$30 million cost.

By the second meeting, Reclamation made it clear the North Outlet Works would be turned over to the federal government and operated in conjunction with Pueblo Dam.

When this week’s negotiating sessions opened, Colorado Springs proposed building the line to serve only SDS.

That would mean sizing it to deliver only 96 million gallons per day to the Pueblo West tap, located just east of the dam, and 78 million gallons per day for the remainder of the 50-mile route to El Paso County.

Reclamation Area Manager Michael Collins offered Colorado Springs a payment of \$287,500 — Colorado Springs estimated \$500,000; Reclamation, \$75,000 — over three years to oversize the line to 90 inches to the point where SDS becomes a single-purpose project.

“Future generations would say we were short-sighted if we did not do this,” Collins said.

David Robbins, Colorado Springs attorney, argued that while the cost of using larger pipe is minimal, SDS participants should not bear the costs of building the \$30 million North Outlet Works alone if others hook on in the future.

“If third parties want to use it, they should be asked to pay the cost,” Robbins said.

Friday’s proposal backed off that position.

Under Colorado Springs’ calculations, the oversized portion of the pipeline would cost \$23 million, but in negotiations reimbursement for only \$5 million was requested.

Collins did not immediately respond, but said the proposal will be taken under consideration.

Colorado Springs and Reclamation made progress toward a conveyance contract Friday that would be separate from the excess-capacity storage and exchange contracts that are being negotiated. Robbins suggested numerous changes in the contract language that did not substantially alter the substance of the deal.

Reclamation backed off its original stance of charging for conveyance from Pueblo Dam, instead letting the SDS participants use the North Outlet Works they build at no additional charge.