

SDS PREPARATIONS PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE: The economic downturn has raised some questions about whether there will be a need to delay the [Southern Delivery System](#) (SDS) project. The construction schedule projects SDS to go online in 2012 based upon our current customer demand forecast.

As is common for any project the size of SDS, we'll recalibrate the projected need date before construction begins. Colorado Springs Utilities is responsible for ensuring there's enough water to meet peak demand at all times. With electricity, utilities can go to the national grid for additional power, if needed. But there's no readily available emergency source of water for Colorado Springs or the other communities participating in the project.

To live up to our responsibility to our customers, we must remain focused on the long-term – not short-term variables. While demand may fluctuate in the short term, SDS is designed to meet our community's long-term water needs.

We are currently reviewing the comments submitted in response to the [Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) (DEIS) and focusing on obtaining numerous local, state and federal permits required before construction can begin. We're also completing other preliminary work – design, engineering, land surveys and appraisals – that must be done before construction can begin. To meet the 2012 completion date called for by our current demand forecast, construction needs to begin next year.

ANTI-STORMWATER INITIATIVE THREATENS PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR SDS: If approved by voters, a pending initiative for the November ballot could potentially eliminate the [Stormwater Enterprise](#). Such an outcome would make getting approval of our preferred alternative for SDS more difficult. Opposition to SDS primarily centers on concerns about flooding and water quality in [Fountain Creek](#). While much of that opposition is based on what Fountain Creek used to be – not what it is or is becoming today – the demise of the Stormwater Enterprise would raise concerns because approval of the initiative will eliminate current effective controls on managing the quality and flow of water into Fountain Creek from our community. This outcome would make it more difficult to permit SDS from Pueblo Dam through Pueblo County – our preferred alternative for the project. For information on how you can help prevent this, contact the Colorado Springs Citizens for Effective Government at concernedcitizens@csceq.org.

CLARIFICATIONS: SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

SECTION 404 PERMIT NEXT MAJOR REVIEW FOR SDS: Colorado Springs Utilities is developing an application for a Section 404 permit (404 Permit) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The 404 Permit is required by the Clean Water Act when a project involves the discharge of dredged or fill materials in waters of the United States, including wetlands, unless the activity is exempt from Section 404 regulation. The 404 Permit process requires a detailed review of the project by the Corps and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and includes an opportunity for public review and comment.

A recent story in the *Pueblo Chieftain* suggested that a separate environmental study for the SDS may be required by the Corps. Reclamation decided not to include the separate

environmental review requirements for a 404 Permit in its DEIS because there's no requirement for combining the two, and there is a possibility that Reclamation could approve an alternative that would not require a 404 Permit. The decision was made at that time to keep the NEPA and 404 Permit processes separate, in the event that the selected SDS alternative did not require a 404 Permit. As part of their consideration of the 404 Permit application, the Corps will review the DEIS and may produce an Environmental Assessment that highlights considerations applicable to the Clean Water Act.

The article also suggests a need to study groundwater use, reuse of return flows and new sources of water. The story implies that these potential sources were neglected by the DEIS.

In fact, both Colorado Springs Utilities and Reclamation studied all of these issues in detail while Reclamation was preparing its DEIS on SDS. For example, in its alternatives screening, [Reclamation considered six reuse alternatives](#) and rejected all of them because of cost and environmental issues. Groundwater was rejected as an alternative because it would require more than 500 wells at a cost of roughly \$500,000 apiece – which was rejected as impractical and too expensive. Consideration of other sources of water, beyond those we own in the Arkansas River would not have resulted in additional viable alternatives to the seven currently considered in the DEIS. Other sources of water are clearly impracticable in terms of environmental impacts and sheer cost.

Also important to note is the fact that SDS will allow us to make more efficient use of our existing water rights, which increases the overall efficiency of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, and means SDS will not require additional Fryingpan-Arkansas Project water from the Western Slope.

KANSAS NOT IMPACTED BY SDS: The Chief Engineer for Kansas has been quoted in the media as expressing concerns about the potential impact of SDS on his state's water supplies. Reclamation does not anticipate changes in flows in the Arkansas River below John Martin Reservoir as a result of SDS.

Southern Delivery System | eNews is an electronic newsletter designed to keep interested public officials and members of the public up to date on developments associated with the Southern Delivery System. Please forward it to anyone you think would be interested. Contact us at sdsinfo@csu.org to subscribe or unsubscribe.

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