

**SDS Reviews Draft Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Plan During Colorado Wildlife Commission Workshop:**

In compliance with the requirements of the Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision (ROD) and consistent with our commitment to build an environmentally responsible project, Colorado Springs Utilities has been working with the Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) for nearly a year to develop a Draft Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Plan (FWMP) for the [Southern Delivery System](#) (SDS). The plan, which was presented to the Colorado Wildlife Commission today, outlines projected impacts to fish and wildlife as a result of SDS operations and provides a blueprint to address those impacts.

While the draft plan references potential fish and wildlife mitigations from the ROD and the Pueblo County 1041 permit, its primary purpose is to outline mitigations requested by DOW to address specific impacts to fish and wildlife, not addressed in those other permitting processes, such as:

- Mitigations to maintain viable fisheries in the reservoirs where SDS operations will impact lake levels (Pueblo Reservoir, Lake Henry and Lake Meredith), including funding for increased hatchery production capacity and improved fish habitat and fish retention. Additionally, stocking would be done to establish and maintain a fishery at Upper Williams Creek Reservoir.
- Research within Monument and Fountain Creeks to examine fish health in relation to water flow, water quality and habitat parameters most likely influenced by SDS operations.

The funding of the new hatchery ponds will not be implemented until Phase 2 of SDS to coincide with the construction of the new reservoirs. Partial funding for baseline fish data collection will be provided prior to initial implementation of SDS while the fish habitat improvement and fish retention structure mitigation activities will commence soon after the SDS project becomes operational. Phase 2 is currently scheduled for the 2020 to 2025 timeframe.

Over the next month, the SDS and DOW teams will finalize the FWMP and present it to the Colorado Wildlife Commission for approval at their March meeting. DOW will be accepting public comment during that time. Then the FWMP will be presented to the Colorado Water Conservation Board for approval. The plan was developed pursuant to provisions of state law and related requirements of the ROD.

Colorado Department of Natural Resources Executive Director Jim Martin, who attended today's presentation, recognized DOW staff and Colorado Springs Utilities for the work they have undertaken to complete the plan and the partnership they have forged. Martin also commended Colorado Springs' efforts to work collaboratively with neighboring communities to address project impacts and improve Fountain Creek.

For more information on the Southern Delivery System, visit [www.sdswater.org](http://www.sdswater.org).

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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](mailto:sdsinfo@csu.org) to subscribe or unsubscribe.

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For more information, please contact us:

Southern Delivery System  
P.O. Box 1103, MC 940  
Colorado springs, CO 80947  
719-668-7582  
866-719-4SDS (4737) toll free  
[sdsinfo@csu.org](mailto:sdsinfo@csu.org)

Media contact: 719-668-3848