

Southern Delivery System

P.O. Box 1103, MC 930
Colorado Springs, CO 80947

Phone: 719-668-7582

Toll Free: 866-719-4737

E-Mail: sdsinfo@csu.org

Web site: www.sdswater.org

SDS Components

- 62 miles of buried pipeline
- 1 water treatment plant
- 3 water pump stations
- 2 reservoirs

Communities Served:

- Colorado Springs
- Fountain
- Security
- Pueblo West

Construction Cost

- Phase 1
\$880 million (2009 dollars)

Construction Schedule

- **2010**
 - Begin Pueblo Dam connection
 - Begin finished-water pipeline construction
- **2011**
 - Begin Pueblo West pipeline construction
- **2012**
 - Begin remaining pipeline, pump stations, water treatment plant
- **2016**
 - Water delivery from SDS begins

Fountain Creek Fact Sheet

Improving and Protecting Fountain Creek

A tremendous amount of work has been underway over the past decade to improve, protect and transform Fountain Creek. Fountain Creek originates from its source near Pikes Peak and flows south through Colorado Springs, Fountain and Pueblo, where it joins the Arkansas River.

This fact sheet provides information on:

- *How Colorado Springs is working to address concerns in the Fountain Creek Watershed and mitigate historic problems.*
- *Regional efforts underway to improve the creek.*
- *How SDS impacts to Fountain Creek will be avoided or mitigated.*
- *The benefits of the SDS to the creek.*

Colorado Springs Actions to Improve Fountain Creek

Colorado Springs has enacted a number of measures to resolve past water quality, erosion, sedimentation, and flooding problems with Fountain Creek. The city also is a key participant and funder of several important regional efforts underway to improve the creek and to make it a regional amenity.

Water Treatment

- State-of-the-art treatment facilities help ensure that Colorado Springs' wastewater is treated to high standards – meeting and often exceeding state and federal regulations – before discharging it into Fountain Creek.
- In the mid-1990s, Colorado Springs Utilities spent more than \$40 million to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant. And since 2000, the utility has spent more than \$100 million upgrading the wastewater collection system. The net result: Water discharged into Fountain Creek today is cleaner than the water already there for most constituents.
- By 2025, Springs Utilities will have invested \$250 million over 20 years in its wastewater collection system to prevent spills. Colorado Springs has also made big investments to control wastewater spills that could affect the creek. Springs Utilities is the only utility in Colorado and one of the few in the country that has a wastewater spill recovery program, which protects the environment in the event of an accidental wastewater spill and prevents it from reaching downstream neighbors. As a result of these efforts, wastewater spills per mile of pipe in the city's system are among the lowest in the country.

Regional Cooperation

Meaningful, long-term solutions for the Fountain Creek Watershed will come from regional cooperation throughout the entire watershed. Colorado Springs Utilities has made it a priority to participate in these regional efforts and in many cases, has provided leadership, expertise and funding. Following is a brief recap of the cooperative efforts for Fountain Creek:

- The Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District was formed by unanimous approval of the Colorado legislature in 2009. The District carries out the goals formulated by the Fountain Creek Vision Task Force, to research, develop, and implement potential solutions for problems in Fountain Creek. The District has land

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use authority in the flood plain along Fountain Creek between Fountain and Pueblo, and an advisory role in the entire 930-square-mile watershed. Colorado Springs Utilities' staff participates on the District's Technical Advisory Committee and Citizens Advisory Group.

As part of the Pueblo County 1041 land use permit for SDS, project participants will pay \$50 million in five annual installments to the Fountain Creek District after SDS is built and water begins flowing through the pipeline. As part of this payment, from 2009 to 2011, SDS is paying \$100,000 annually under an inter-governmental agreement to the District to study flood control measures for Fountain Creek. Additionally, SDS and the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District are each paying \$150,000 annually for two years to fund the Fountain Creek Master Plan work (Phase II) and staff for the District.

- The Fountain Creek Master Corridor Plan (Phase I) was a \$600,000 joint project of Colorado Springs Utilities and the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District (LAVWCD). The Master Plan efforts will provide a blueprint to improve the health of the watershed, create ecosystems that support native wildlife and plants, sustain productive agricultural lands and lay out a trail between Colorado Springs and Pueblo that will provide recreational, educational and tourism opportunities. Demonstration projects along the creek are being developed to make it a hands-on ecological classroom for both the young and old. Approximately \$3.5 million in grants and funds have been awarded thus far to make the plans a reality. Colorado Springs Utilities staff provides project management for the Master Plan work.

SDS and Fountain Creek

The Southern Delivery System (SDS) is a regional water project that will deliver water to Colorado Springs, Fountain, Security and Pueblo West. There have been questions as to how treated water returned to Fountain Creek after the SDS is operational will impact the creek.

The 1041 land use permit required and approved by Pueblo County for the SDS project includes a number of requirements for avoiding or mitigating impacts to Fountain Creek. Additionally, the Environmental Impact Statement conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation contains a number of requirements for avoiding or mitigating impacts to Fountain Creek. There are performance-based requirements in both the Pueblo County 1041 Permit and the Record of Decision that ensure SDS will monitor and mitigate Fountain Creek flow impacts associated with the project's operations.

Fountain Creek will actually see significant benefits from SDS during and after construction. In addition to the \$50 million to improve the Creek through the Fountain Creek District, Colorado Springs Utilities will invest an additional \$75 million in its wastewater collection system rehabilitation programs or wastewater reuse systems through December 31, 2024. This money will be used to improve and fortify wastewater lines, which could adversely affect Fountain Creek or its tributaries. Within the first year of the issuance of the 1041 permit, Colorado Springs had already spent nearly \$9 million of the \$75 million on wastewater improvements in 2009.

An additional mitigation commitment made through the 1041 Permit was protection against flooding by reducing the sediment load in lower Fountain Creek. Colorado Springs and Pueblo County are currently discussing plans for a project SDS will fund to restore flood capacity near the confluence of the creek and the Arkansas River.

Another SDS-related improvement for Fountain Creek will occur at Clear Spring Ranch, located about halfway between Colorado Springs and Pueblo. Clear Spring Ranch is a high priority area for improvements along Fountain Creek south of Colorado Springs for a number of reasons. There are severe erosion problems on the ranch property and upstream from it. This erosion results in downstream sedimentation and flood issues, and poses risks to roads and a nearby rail line.

SDS-related commitments will include stream bank protection, and adding new wetlands and curves along the creek, which are designed to slow flows and help restore creek banks to a more natural state.

Stormwater Management and Fountain Creek

Colorado Springs voters approved a citizen's ballot initiative last year that phased out the city's Stormwater Enterprise fees. As a result, there is a misperception that management of stormwater flowing into Fountain Creek will stop. That is inaccurate and does not tell the entire story. While some capital improvement projects previously funded by the Stormwater Enterprise are on hold, Colorado Springs' stormwater controls for new development remain in place – completely independent from the Stormwater Enterprise. The City imposes requirements on all new developments to manage runoff and mitigate impacts. Colorado Springs is continuing to fund an update to the drainage controls and criteria that will actually strengthen requirements for developers, making them some of the strictest in the state and a model for the entire watershed. The Fountain Creek Watershed, Flood Control and Greenway District will encourage their adoption throughout the watershed to assure consistent and progressive stormwater management.