

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

Green Mountain Reservoir Substitution and Power Interference Agreements Environmental Assessment

REGULATORY AGENCIES



U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) www.usbr.gov

Mission:

- Manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Project Role:

- Reclamation is the lead federal agency for the Green Mountain Reservoir Substitution and Power Interference Agreements EA. In this role they will be in charge of the NEPA process and make the final determination.



U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) www.wapa.gov

Mission:

- Market and deliver reliable, cost-based hydroelectric power and related services within a 15-state region of the central and western U.S.
- Market and transmit electricity from multi-use water projects operated by Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Project Role:

- WAPA would be part of the long-term Power Interference Agreement with Colorado Springs Utilities and Reclamation.



Colorado Springs Utilities (Springs Utilities) www.csu.org

Mission:

- Springs Utilities is a community-owned utility that provides reliable natural gas, electricity, water and wastewater services to customers in the Pikes Peak region.

Project Role:

- Springs Utilities is the Applicant.

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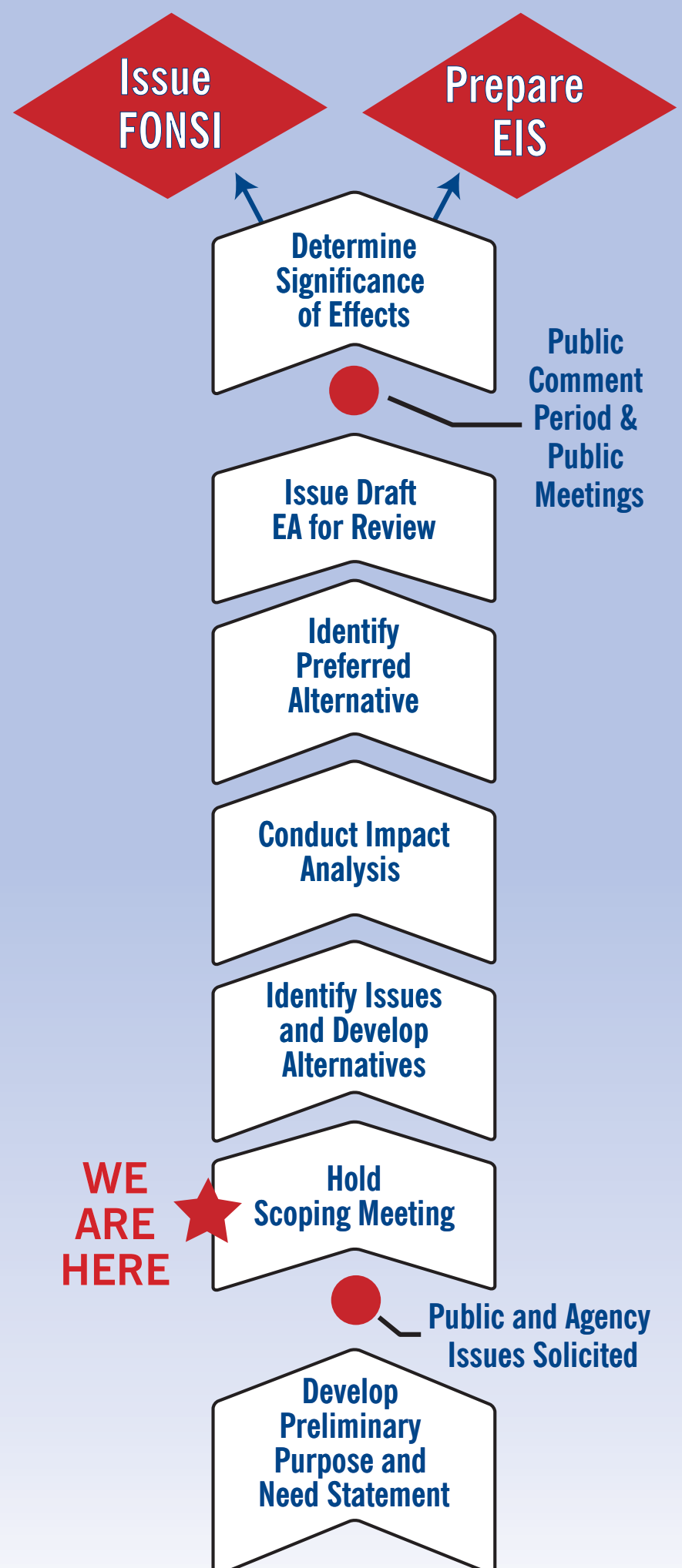
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The EA will describe:

- Proposed Action and alternatives
- Purpose and Need
- Existing environmental conditions
- Potential effects (direct, indirect and cumulative)
- Proposed mitigation, if needed

Public involvement is an important part of the NEPA process. Opportunities for public involvement exist during scoping and during review of the Draft EA.

Steps in an... Environmental Assessment (EA)



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ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

The following environmental resources have been identified for analysis in the EA.

- Water Rights, Reservoir Operations, Hydroelectric Generation
- Surface Water and Hydrology
- Water Quality
- Aquatic Resources
- Wildlife Resources
- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Floodplains, Wetlands, and Riparian Resources
- Vegetation and Soils
- Recreation and Land Use
- Socioeconomics
- Cultural Resources



West Hoosier Creek Diversion



Montgomery Reservoir



*Blue River water flowing into
North Catamount Reservoir*



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PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

Springs Utilities is obligated to provide substitute water for diversions from the Blue River in years when Green Mountain Reservoir may not fill. Springs Utilities currently does this subject to the terms of the Blue River Decree. During both substitution and non-substitution years, Springs Utilities repays WAPA for interfering with power generation from the Green Mountain Reservoir hydroelectric plant. In the past, this has been accomplished through informal, annual, as-needed agreements with WAPA.

Springs Utilities' need for the proposed project is based on the following issues:

- **Need for a long-term substitution plan with Reclamation** – A formalized long-term plan would ensure that Springs Utilities could effectively manage existing water supplies and be assured of a reliable plan to achieve consensus on meeting the terms and conditions of the substitution requirements.
- **Need for the addition of new water sources of substitution water** – Springs Utilities requires flexibility in operations to ensure that adequate water supplies from alternate sources are available in dry years.
- **Need for a long-term power interference plan with Reclamation and WAPA** – A formalized long-term plan would ensure that Springs Utilities would not interfere with power generation from the Green Mountain Reservoir hydroelectric plant.

Reclamation must operate and maintain Green Mountain Reservoir to fulfill its purpose of assuring replacement water and power generation to the west slope of Colorado. Approval of a long-term agreement would provide Reclamation with a reliable substitution plan for Springs Utilities' diversions.



Hoosier Pass Tunnel



Upper Blue Reservoir



Upper Blue Reservoir Spillway



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PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

- If Reclamation does not issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), Springs Utilities would continue to operate under the Blue River Decree using a combination of water from the Blue River and Williams Fork River. Under the Blue River Decree, Springs Utilities cannot use Wolford Mountain Reservoir or Homestake Reservoir as sources of replacement water.
- Power interference would remain short-term, annual agreements.
- Terms and conditions agreed to in the May 2003 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) are not part of the No Action, except those portions that deal directly with the Blue River Decree.

PROPOSED ACTION

- Reclamation would enter into up to a 40-year Substitution Agreement with Springs Utilities. This Agreement would approve Springs Utilities' proposed substitution plan according to the terms and conditions set forth in the 2003 MOAs Springs Utilities already has with other entities. The MOAs allow Springs Utilities to use Wolford Mountain Reservoir and Homestake Reservoir (not authorized to be used as substitution sources under the Blue River Decree) as sources of substitution water when Reclamation determines that Green Mountain Reservoir will likely not fill in dry years.
- A long-term Power Interference Agreement would be formalized with Reclamation and WAPA. Under the agreement, Springs Utilities would compensate for lost hydropower with power generated from their own facilities, at a location determined by WAPA.



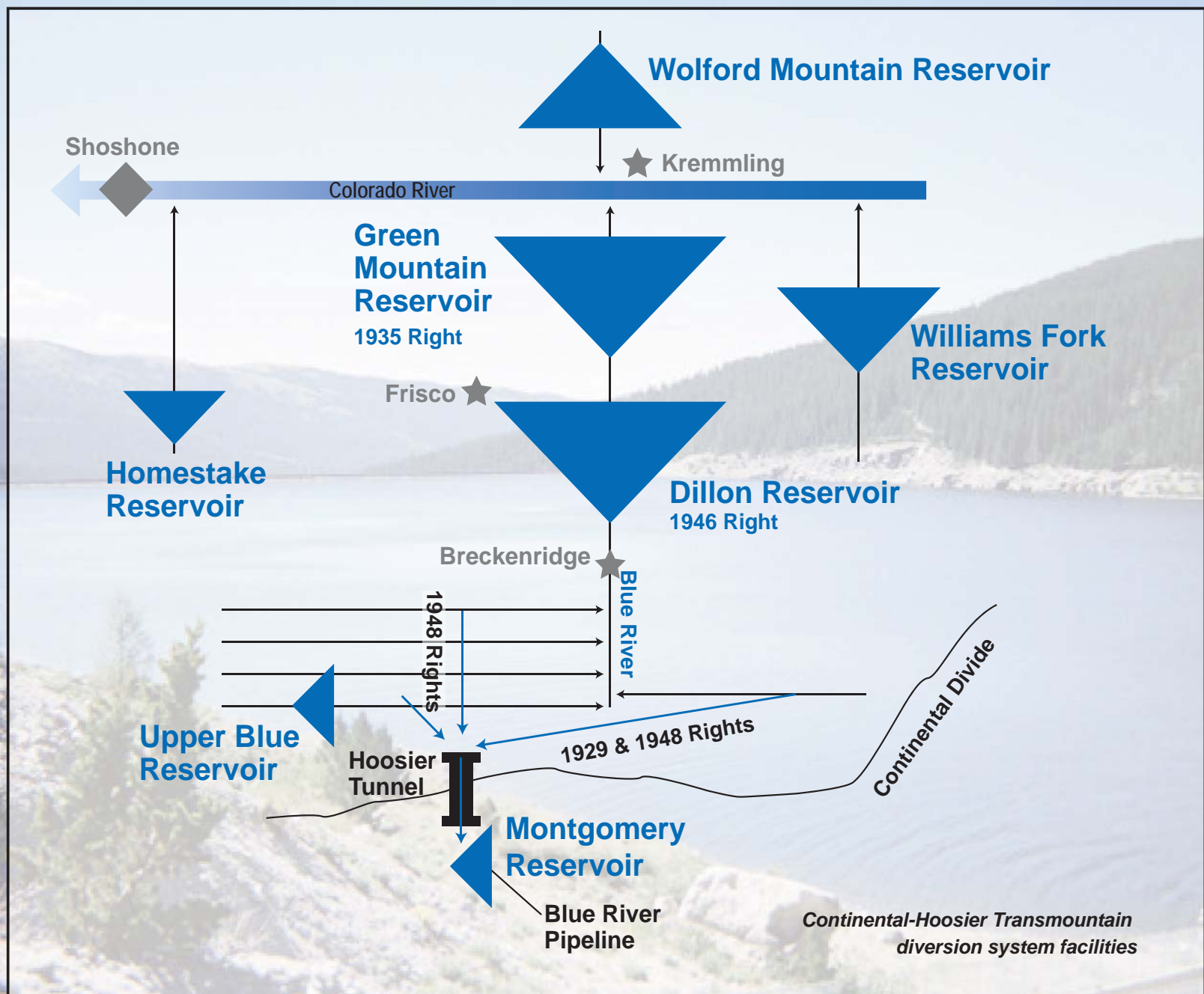
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Project Background

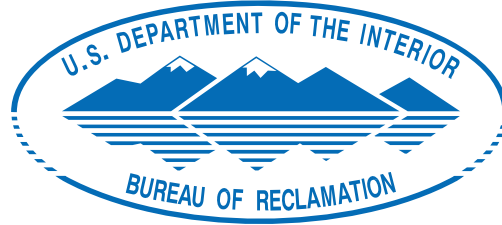
Green Mountain Reservoir is owned and operated by Reclamation with rights to fill the reservoir senior to Springs Utilities' 1948 water rights. In dry years when Green Mountain Reservoir does not fill, Reclamation requires water from Springs Utilities and Denver Water to help meet the fill deficit. Springs Utilities must obtain approval from Reclamation for a substitution plan to make replacements to Green Mountain Reservoir, or otherwise forego diversions from their Continental-Hoosier System. Historically, there have been numerous short-term substitution plans that have been implemented using varying sources of water and operational conditions, including releases from Dillon, Upper Blue, Williams Fork, and Wolford Mountain reservoirs.



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Welcome

to the

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

for the

**Green Mountain Reservoir
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March 6, 2008

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Continental-Hoosier Diversion System Reference Map

