

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

**Lake Nighthorse**

**Community Meeting**

**June 18, 2014**



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation

# Welcome and Introductions

**Bureau of Reclamation Staff**

**Purpose of the Meeting**

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# Purpose of the Project

- **Animas-La Plata Project**
  - Lake Nighthorse
  - Ridges Basin Dam
  - Durango Pumping Plant

A federal water project under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation.

# Purpose of the Project

**Key Component:**

**Settlement of Tribal Water Rights**

**Primary Purpose:**

**Municipal & Industrial (Drinking) Water Supply**

**Secondary Purpose:**

**Recreation**

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# Roles and Responsibilities

- Reclamation
- Animas-La Plata Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement Association
  - Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District
  - City of Durango
  - Colorado Water Conservation Board
  - Colorado Water Resources & Power Development Authority
  - La Plata Conservancy District
  - Navajo Nation
  - San Juan Water Commission
  - Southern Ute Indian Tribe
  - Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

# Project Overview

## Ridges Basin Dam and Lake Nighthorse

Reservoir Capacity – 123,541 acre-feet

Water Surface Area – 1,500 acres

Reservoir Area – 5,500 acres



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# Project Overview (con't)

## Durango Pumping Plant



Water from Animas River pumped into Lake Nighthorse through the Ridges Basin Inlet Conduit – 72-inches diameter & 2.1 miles long buried pipeline.

# Project Overview (con't)

## Management of the Area

- Lake Nighthorse is currently closed.
- The area will remain closed until.....
  - Recreation manager
  - Appropriate recreation facilities to protect the water and land



# Recreation Update

- Due to funding constraints, the State of Colorado was not able to develop and manage recreation facilities at Lake Nighthorse except for funding construction of a boat ramp.
- Boat Ramp - 40 foot wide concrete ramp
  - Gravel access road from County Road 210
  - Paved Parking Area & Vault Toilet

# Recreation Update (con't)

- Recreation Master Plan
- Community planning effort sponsored by Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District.
- The City of Durango became interested in becoming the recreation manager.

# Recreation Update (con't)

## Major Areas of Concern:

- Develop recreation & ensure compatibility with the primary purpose of the project – drinking water supply.
- Annexation of the recreation area for law enforcement purposes.
- Protect: Tribal cultural resources
- Water quality
- Environmental commitments
- Tribal trust responsibilities & treaty rights

# Recreation Update (con't)

## Steps in the Process:

- Ongoing discussions with all Project partners & stakeholders –  
Recreation Lease Agreement  
Annexation Agreement  
Planning Agreement
- Determine level of capital improvements.

# Recreation Update (con't)

## Steps in the Process:

- Capital Improvements (minimum needed)
  - Entrance station
  - Boat inspection and decontamination facilities
  - Additional parking and road improvements
  - Courtesy dock for boat ramp
  - Picnic areas

# Recreation Update (con't)

## Steps in the Process:

- Environmental Analysis
  - Analyze environmental impacts
  - Write draft environmental assessment
  - Solicit public review and comment
  - Review public comments – amend document - finalize

# Recreation Update (con't)

## Steps in the Process:

- Work with Tribes to draft Cultural Resource Management Plan

### **National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)**

*Ensure protection of historic properties and cultural resources*

- Identify effect of actions on historic properties/cultural resources
- Consult with Tribes/SHPO/THPO
- Resolve adverse effects

# Recreation Update (con't)

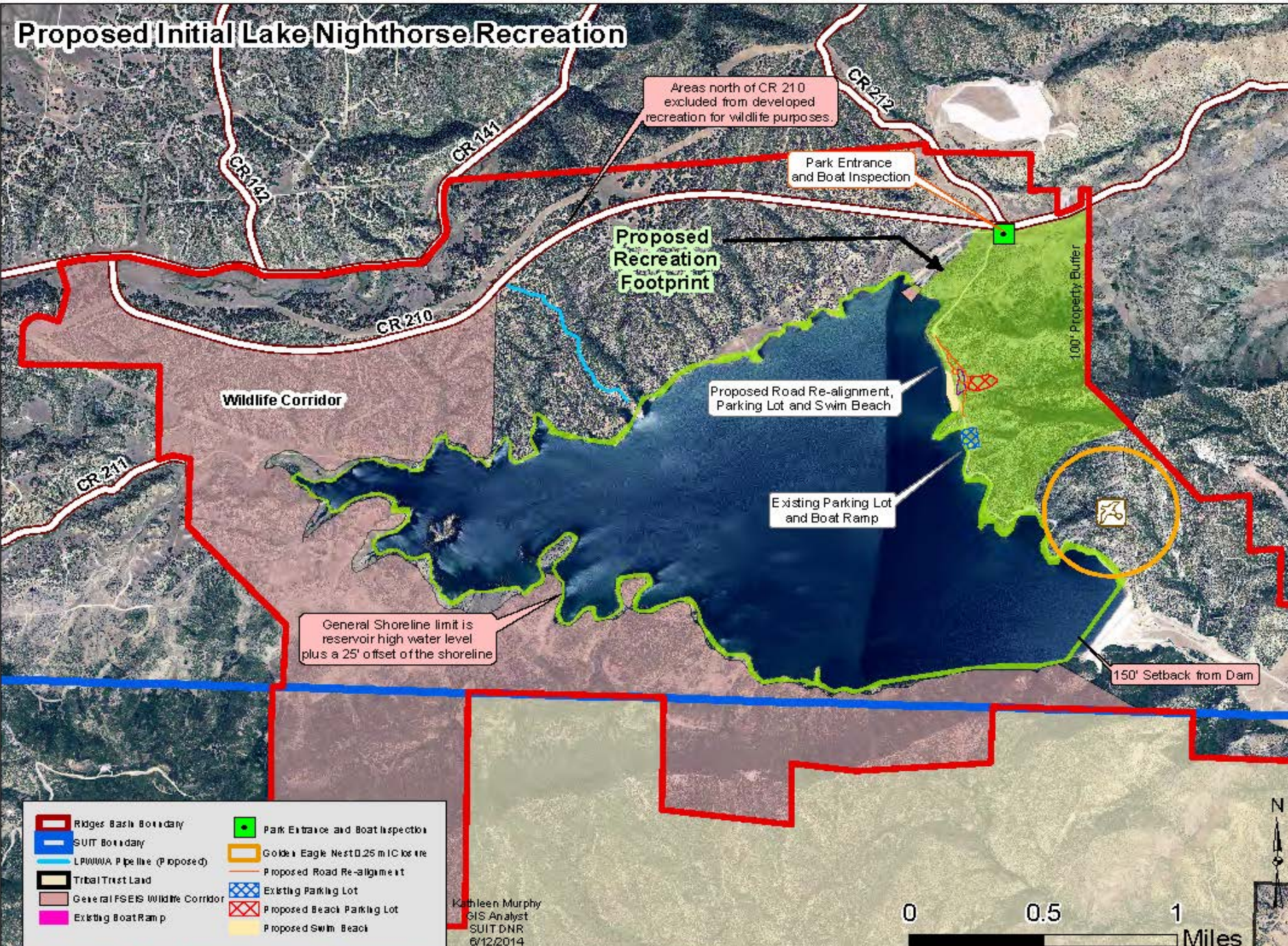
## Potential Recreation Footprint:

Based on ongoing discussions – a proposed recreation footprint has been envisioned which provides:

- A limited area to be developed for recreation.
  - Keeps the door open for future discussions regarding recreation development.



# Proposed Initial Lake Nighthorse Recreation



- |                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ridges Bash Boundary            | Park Entrance and Boat Inspection   |
| SUIT Boundary                   | Golden Eagle Nest 0.25 mile closure |
| LPWMA Pipeline (Proposed)       | Proposed Road Re-alignment          |
| Tribal Trust Land               | Existing Parking Lot                |
| General FSEIS Wildlife Corridor | Proposed Beach Parking Lot          |
| Existing Boat Ramp              | Proposed Swim Beach                 |

Kathleen Murphy  
GIS Analyst  
SUIT DNR  
6/12/2014



# Recreation Update (con't)

## What's Next?

- Continue ongoing process to seek consensus among stakeholders to allow recreation at Lake Nighthorse.
  - Reclamation Lease Agreement
  - Annexation Agreement
  - Planning Agreement
  - Cultural Resource Management Plan
  - Environmental Assessment
  - Construction of minimum recreation facilities

- In the meantime - please respect Lake Nighthorse closure for protection of resources and public safety.

QUESTIONS??????

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# Contact Information

For more information about the Animas – La Plata Project:

- [www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/animas/index.html](http://www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/animas/index.html)
- Phone: 970-385-6500
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