



**TRI-COUNTY
WATER**
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Connections



Hydropower Development on Ridgway Dam



Fall 2011

Reflections ... 2

Hydropower Hindsight

Water Year 2011 ... 2

Are We Still In A Drought?

Fresh Perspective ... 3

South Africa ... Megan Berry

Operating Policy ... 3

The Tri-County Water Conservancy District (TCW) is planning to develop hydropower at Ridgway Dam and Reservoir in Ouray County of Western Colorado.

TCW is applying for a Lease of Power Privilege (LOPP) from the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to develop the hydropower resources. A LOPP is an alternative to Federal hydropower development. It is a contractual right given to a non-Federal entity to use a Reclamation facility for electric power generation consistent with Reclamation project purposes.

The purpose of the project is to provide a clean, renewable energy source that is locally controlled. The electricity generated will provide TCW a source of revenue that can be used to defray annual operating expenses and assist in the repayment of the Dallas Creek Project, and may provide the entity that ultimately purchases the power an opportunity to help diversify their portfolio and to meet legislatively-mandated requirements for renewable energy sources.

Ridgway Reservoir is the major water storage facility of the Dallas Creek Project with a capacity of 84,410 acre-feet. The Dam and Reservoir are located on the Uncompahgre River about six miles north of Ridgway, Colorado, and about a mile upstream of the River's confluence with Cow Creek. The Dam stores flows in the

Uncompahgre River to supply water for irrigation, municipal, domestic, and industrial uses to portions of Montrose, Delta, and Ouray counties, including the communities of Delta, Olathe, Montrose, and Colona.

TCW has not finalized the design, although a dual unit option appears to be the most attractive at this time. Two Francis turbines of unequal size would be placed downstream of and connected to the river outlet. The larger turbine would produce about 4.9 megawatts (MW) of power at a flow of 370 cfs and the other would produce 2.1 MW of power at 140 cfs. These units would combine to produce an average of 22.6 gigawatt-hours per year, enough energy to power about 3,000 houses for one year.

The hydropower project would generate electricity using the existing water releases from Ridgway Dam throughout the year. Existing minimum streamflow commitments would be maintained during construction and eventual operation of the plant.

Energy produced would be carried to the regional transmission grid. TCW anticipates that the units would be operated so as to allow the purchasing utility to dispatch power to the local grid from its operating center.

(Continued on page 2)

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Please write, call or fax Tri-County Water with any questions, concerns, comments or helpful hints.

WE VALUE YOUR INPUT!

Reflections

“Hydropower Hindsight”

The vision of hydropower at Ridgway Dam came into focus when the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) began planning and designing the Dallas Creek Project, back in the early 1970’s. Construction on the Dam began in 1978 which included a bifurcation in the river outlet works to divert a portion of the releases through a hydropower plant. The Board at Tri-County commissioned a study in 1984 to look at the feasibility of owning and operating the hydro facility. The decision was made at that time to delay the installation

until the economics became more favorable to the District. The District again took a look at the opportunity after the Dam was fully operational in 1996 when it again failed the economic test.

As “green” energy became more valuable in 2002, a feasibility study concluded that the District should forge ahead with the project and develop the hydropower project at Ridgway. Finally in June 2010, Reclamation issued a Federal Register announcement to

solicit private development of hydro at Ridgway under a Lease of Power Privilege which is Reclamation’s version of a FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission) permit. Tri-County submitted the only application received by Reclamation and were granted the opportunity to negotiate the permit with Reclamation. The District is proud to announce that we hope to have a 7 Megawatt plant up and running for the runoff season in 2014 producing a renewable energy resource of clean, “green” power.



Water Year 2011

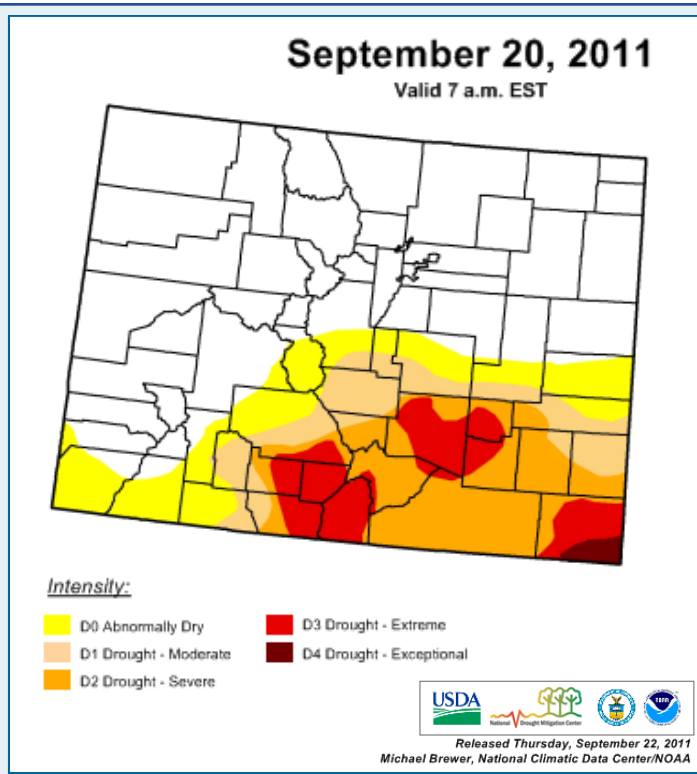
Are We Still In A Drought?

As of September 20, 39% of the state is now experiencing some level of drought conditions. D3, exceptional drought conditions, in the San Luis Valley, Baca County shows D3 conditions. However, short and long term forecast show little improvement for the extreme southeastern corner of the state.

As of September 10, 226,629 acres of crop land have failed while an additional 97,594 acres have not been planted due to dry conditions. To put that in perspective, that is almost four times the irrigated acreage in the Uncompahgre Valley.

While reservoir storage remains above average in the Yampa/White, Gunnison, Colorado, South Platte Basins, and San Miguel/Dolores/ Animas/San Juan at 107%, the Rio Grande and the Arkansas River basins continue to show the lowest reservoir storage levels at 58% and 85% of average, respectively.

Visit www.cwcb.state.co.us for additional information on current state-wide drought conditions.



Hydropower Development on Ridgway Dam

(Continued from page 1)

The hydropower plant would be constructed inside Reclamation’s Primary Jurisdiction Area (PJA) at the downstream toe of the dam near the river outlet works control house. The PJA is owned by Reclamation; therefore, no land purchase is contemplated. Construction of a transmission line and facilities may require licensing with Reclamation for construction and permanent easements.

Potential environmental issues under consideration in the planning of the project include but are not limited to:

- Location/appearance of transmission line and transformer facilities.

- Operating the project using existing water release patterns from Ridgway Dam.
- Improve current water quality by lowering dissolved nitrogen concentrations in the releases from the dam.
- Maintenance of streamflows and water quality during construction.
- Control of impacts to recreation during construction.

A draft Environmental Assessment has been made available to the public and interested agencies and organizations for review. You can access the EA at www.tricountywater.org.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at 249-3369.



Fresh Perspective

South Africa ... A World of Water Away

By Megan Berry

By this point in the year we have all wasted our fair share of water by indulging in an excessively long shower, letting the faucet run while brushing our teeth, or overwatering our lawn. Every time I fill up my water bottle from the tap (*with what is literally the CLEANEST water in the world*), I am reminded of my friends in Mthatha, South Africa, a city of five million in the Eastern Cape Province where I spent three months earlier this year.

Water is a fickle friend in Mthatha. The torrential rains make their presence known on a regular basis often causing you to have to pull off the road because you literally can't see two feet in front of the vehicle for the sheets of water coming from the sky. The Mthatha Dam appears to push back a very full reservoir of muddy-brown water, and though there are often trucks full of the stuff buzzing around town, fresh drinking water can still be hard to come by. While I'm not sure of the exact percentages and figures, it's safe to say that most of the city does NOT have running water.



The main part of town, composed of large homes and businesses, has running water that is definitely safe to drink. However, if you go about three feet out of the city, it's a whole new ballgame. There, in the rows and rows and acres of government-issued, pre-fab, one-to-three room box houses, it's kind of hit or miss. Friends who live in these houses have running water, but in the neighborhoods near Bedford Hospital, where I stayed, there were very young children fetching water from community spigots 24/7.

One Residence ONLY Per Tap

How many water taps do you need?

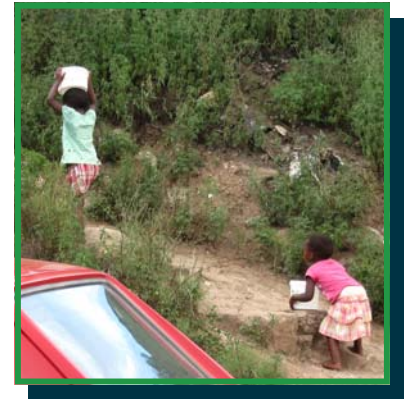
A common misconception is that only one tap is needed to service your property regardless of the number of separate buildings located on the property.

TCW District Operating Policy requires each residence on your property must

have it's own tap or you may purchase a "multi-use" right to service additional residences on the same parcel. Residence is defined as ... a house, an apartment, a trailer, or guest house that is only used "once in a while," anything that provides for independent living.

TCW continues to audit our distribution

The marked majority of "water-fetchers" are girls. Sometimes I saw young boys pushing wheelbarrows of water jugs up and down the road, but mostly it was youngish girls (8-18 year olds) balancing huge 10 gallon buckets on their heads. Yes ... instead of doing homework after school, more often than not, the youth of Mthatha get to walk a loooooong way home and then, walk sometimes an equally long way to collect water just so they and their families can stay alive.



The Itipini community, a collection of corrugated tin shacks in what used to literally be the city dump, is like this. There are TWO COMMUNITY TAPS for 3,000-4,000 people. Being completely dependent on a community tap means:

- Never having taken a hot shower (or even a cold one) in your whole life.
- Never having had the luxury of a flushing toilet.
- Washing every dish and piece of laundry by hand in a bucket.
- Collecting rain.
- Never washing your hands...at all.

When the water goes off, whether by choice or just bad luck ... *there is no water at all*. Not just for a few moments or hours while you wait for the problem to be resolved ... it can take days ... there is literally no water at all.

This is a concept that most cannot begin wrap to our brains around. We need to remember just how precious water is the next time we turn on the tap.



Operating Policy Reminder

system to be sure that our customers are in compliance with the Operating Policy. If you are concerned about compliance with this policy, please contact us with your questions as soon as possible.

ACT NOW TO SAVE \$\$ because tap fees continue to increase. The sooner you pay, the lower the cost.





CELEBRATE WATER 2012

The Colorado Foundation for Water Education (CFWE) is organizing a state-wide campaign for 2012 to increase water awareness, educate and recognize agencies and individuals who've made significant contributions to the water landscape in Colorado!

Join a consortium of folks from across Colorado who plan to celebrate Colorado's most important natural resource.

More information, events schedule, and other resources are available by visiting www.cfwe.org.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFO!!

Tri-County's Office Hours:

Monday—Friday from 8:00am to 4:30pm

For emergency service, please call **249-3369**

AutoPay



Tri-County Water together with Xpress Bill Pay is proud to offer AutoPay. Our free, checkless payment plan offers both convenience and savings. Have your payment automatically charged to your credit/debit card account, or deduct from your checking or savings account on the due date shown on your bill. You will no longer need to remember to make a payment, plus you'll save time and postage. This is a popular option and has proven to be secure and trouble-free. You'll never have to worry about late fees again.

To sign up, go to our website at www.tricountywater.org or by calling the District office at 970-249-3369 and we would be glad to help you. Once you have signed up for AutoPay, you will continue to receive a copy of your water bill statement in the mail with the notation "AutoPay is paid on Due Date" printed on it or you can add paperless billing by providing a valid email address and selecting the paperless billing option. Sign up! You'll be glad you did!



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CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

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