

## FAQs | Continental Hoosier System project



### What is the Continental Hoosier System (CHS) project?

This project will allow Colorado Springs Utilities to fully develop their existing water rights from their Continental Hoosier (Blue River) System. The project includes enlargement of an existing reservoir in Park County - Montgomery Reservoir - from 5,699 acre-feet (ac-ft) capacity to a total storage volume of approximately 13,799 ac-ft\*. The enlargement will allow us to collect and convey an additional average annual yield of 4,000 ac-ft of water from legally and physically available supplies in the Colorado River and South Platte River Basins.



Montgomery Reservoir, Park County

Montgomery Reservoir was built in 1957. It provides reliable water storage for the City of Colorado Springs and is also a popular recreational amenity for Park County residents and visitors.

The CHS project will help meet Colorado Springs' water management needs by addressing current storage capacity constraints. It will increase the resiliency of the system to respond to and recover from drought, and planned and unplanned outages that may impact available water supplies.

*\*An acre-foot of water is 325,851 gallons.*

### What is the timeline for the project?

**2026** | Permit applications submitted

**2026-27** | Federal, state, local permitting reviews and decisions

**2028-32** | Construction

### Why has Colorado Springs Utilities decided to pursue a permit for this project at this time?

The CHS project is one of multiple options identified in [our long-term planning](#), all of which are in varying stages of implementation. This project is desirable because:

- Enlarging the reservoir at some point in the future was contemplated when it was originally built more than 60 years ago.
- It makes sense to leverage existing water rights and complete an enlargement while we are completing necessary life-cycle infrastructure upgrades.
- High elevation storage minimizes evaporation losses.
- The system's gravity delivery pipeline is very efficient in bringing water to Colorado Springs.

A Memorandum of Agreement reached in 2024 with six West Slope parties regarding conditional water rights we hold in the Blue River resolves outstanding issues and sets a pathway forward for project permitting in Summit County. Permitting in Park County will also be required.

### **Does Colorado Springs Utilities need to acquire additional water rights for this project?**

No. The additional annual yield that Montgomery Reservoir will be able to store in average-to-wet years is already legally available to Colorado Springs via decreed water rights in the Blue River and Middle Fork of the South Platte River Basins. Currently, the reservoir does not have capacity to hold the additional supplies when they are available.

The CHS project is a recognized project in the Arkansas River, South Platte River and Colorado River Basin Implementation Plans (BIPs).

### **Could the 4,000 ac-ft additional supply gained through this project be achieved through other means, such as reducing consumption?**

We are pursuing approximately 25,000 ac-ft of new water supply to meet the city's anticipated buildout needs. The CHS project will help us meet a portion of that goal by leveraging existing water rights to develop supplies that are legally and physically available to us in a way that provides redundancy to other components of our integrated raw water system.

We continue to diversify our system to provide better water security for our customers, including water sharing with agricultural users in the Lower Arkansas River basin. At the same time, we've implemented multiple programs that reduce water consumption to manage long-term need for new supply. Our community has done a good job so far and we're working to achieve additional savings. Continued successful implementation of conservation programming over our 50-year planning horizon will give us the potential to reduce our full city buildout need of 129,000 acre-feet of water to 121,000 acre-feet.

### **How does Colorado Springs Utilities calculate its need for projects like CHS?**

Multiple factors are considered when deciding the right time to pursue a project. Our water resource planners evaluate the mix and customer types (e.g., business, residential, industry), growth patterns and probable risk scenarios (e.g., drought) to assess the long-range demand and reliability needs of our system. We also consider the length of time it takes to plan, permit and construct projects, before determining when they might have the best chance of being realized over a 50-year period.

### **What can be expected during construction at Montgomery Reservoir?**

Upon successful permitting, construction is expected to occur 2028-2030 in the summer and fall seasons. During this time, increased activity and construction traffic at the reservoir is expected.

The reservoir must be emptied for some of the work to occur. We will work with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to identify fish salvage opportunities ahead of construction. During construction, access to the reservoir and U.S. Forest Service area behind the reservoir will be limited for safety reasons. Access to winter recreation sites behind the reservoir during construction is still being determined.

We are committed to working with Park County officials, the U.S. Forest Service and area residents to keep everyone informed throughout the construction process.

**Questions may be directed to [projectinfo@csu.org](mailto:projectinfo@csu.org) or (719) 668-8504.**