



Wild Horse Reservoir Newsletter - April 2025:

Updates, Alternative Evaluations and Summer Activities in Park County

Wild Horse Reservoir: Pre-Permitting Activities in Progress



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is leading the federal evaluation process for the proposed Wild Horse Reservoir under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which will evaluate environmental, cultural, and local community impacts. The BLM is conducting this evaluation process and is responsible for preparing a detailed report, called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As part of the pre-permitting activities, data gathering that will be required to inform the EIS process will continue this year.

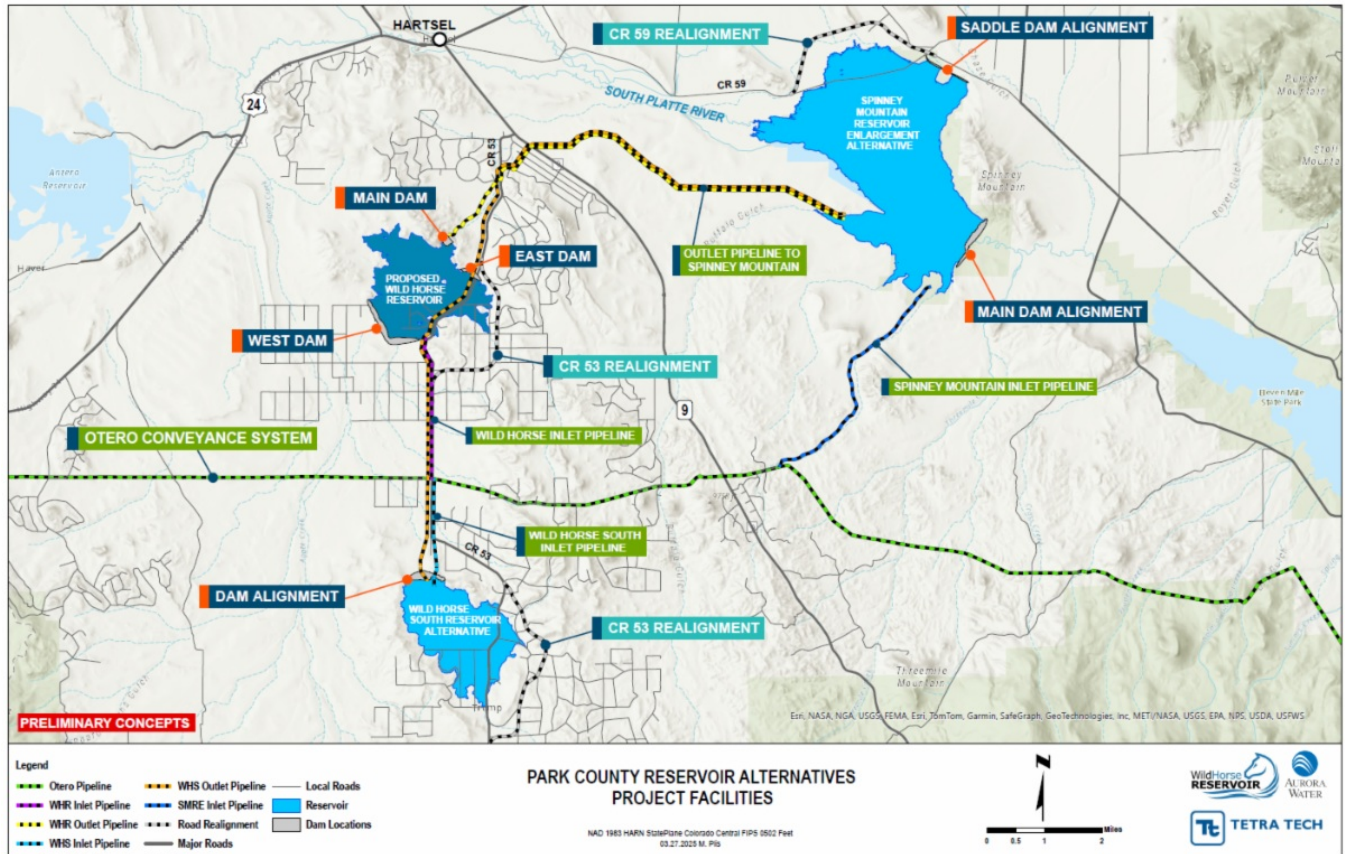
Once the official EIS process begins, anticipated in 2026, the BLM will evaluate and disclose the proposed project's impacts and alternatives that have the potential to meet Aurora's long-term water needs. The public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the project and alternatives during BLM public scoping meetings tentatively scheduled for 2026.

Aurora Water takes pride in having one of the most progressive water conservation programs in the Western United States. However, conservation alone cannot fully ensure the resilience of our water system during times of drought or emergencies. To address this need, it is essential for Aurora to store the water it already owns. The Wild Horse Reservoir is a critical step toward achieving this goal, and Aurora Water strives to have the reservoir constructed and operational sometime in the 2030s. Importantly, this project does not involve acquiring new water rights.

Evaluating Alternative Sites in Park County as Part of NEPA Requirements

Under the NEPA process, agencies must look at different ways to meet the agency's need – these are called alternatives. Each alternative is carefully studied to determine how effectively it meets the agency's objectives while also assessing its potential impacts on a variety of resources, including environmental, social and cultural factors. This thorough analysis helps ensure that the final project selected is both effective and has the least overall impact.

To date, two alternative sites in Park County have been identified for further evaluation: a site just south of the proposed project and a possible expansion of Spinney Mountain Reservoir. View [alternative descriptions and conceptual map](#). Aurora Water is working closely with Park County and other local stakeholders and has sought their input to maximize benefits for the county.



2025 Surveys to Support BLM Evaluation Process

With landowner permission, natural resource and cultural surveys will be conducted on the proposed Wild Horse Reservoir project site and alternatives from May through August this year. To support these efforts, Aurora Water will be sending letters to more than 300 landowners in Park County in mid-late April. Some landowners are being asked for permission to access private property while other landowners are being informed due to their proximity to the alternative locations. The surveys will focus on areas that have not yet been assessed and will not damage property or involve any ground disturbance. Park County property owners may contact Lyle Whitney, Project Manager for Aurora Water, at gwhitney@auroragov.org with questions.

Additional Summer Activities in Park County

This summer, crews may also be collecting geotechnical data to assess construction feasibility and potential constraints. As part of this fieldwork, large equipment, such as drill rigs, may be visible. The work will be limited to one large private property through an access agreement already in place. Additionally, from August-November, standard maintenance work is anticipated to begin on the Otero pipeline in Park County. More details will be communicated to area residents prior to this work beginning.

For More Information:

Updates: WildHorseReservoir.org

Questions: WildHorseReservoir@AuroraGov.org

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