Hydroelectric Power

Pueblo Dam Hydroelectric Project

Pueblo, Colorado

The Southeastern District is constructing a hydroelectric generation plant at Pueblo Dam. Operations are expected to begin in the spring of 2019, and will provide the District’s Enterprise Activity with a new revenue stream when it is completed. The plant is the first hydroelectric feature added to the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project since the completion of the Mount Elbert pump-back hydroelectric plant at Twin Lakes in 1981.

Project History

Hydroelectric power is generated by falling water flowing through turbines. No water is consumed during the generation of electricity. The district will connect to a pipeline build for the Southern Delivery System at the North Outlet. That pipeline, like Pueblo Dam, is owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Reclamation granted the District a Lease of Power Privilege in 2017, following a planning and permit process that began in 2011. Colorado Springs Utilities and the Pueblo Board of Water Works were originally partners, but the project is being solely undertaken by the District.

Project Description

The proposed 7.5 megawatt (MW) facility will be able to generate electricity at flows ranging from 35-810 cubic feet per second. A powerhouse will use the Dam’s authorized released to the Arkansas River to generate an annual average 28 million kilowatt hours (kWh) and approximately $1,500,000 in average revenue per year. The project’s total capital cost is estimated to be $19.5 million, which includes a $17.2 million loan from the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Revenues from the hydro plant will repay the District’s Enterprise Activity and the CWCB.

Project Use

The City of Fountain and by Colorado Springs Utilities (for use at Fort Carson) will purchase the power generated. After 10 years, Fountain will purchase all of the power generated by the plant for the following 20 years. These utilities are looking for ways to broaden their energy portfolios to include clean, renewable energy.

Project Update

Project Update (November 30, 2018) - The project is nearing completion, and testing for the Hydro Plant will begin early 2019. Full Operation of the Hydro Plant is expected to begin later in the Spring, when the Arkansas River flows are expected to increase.

Project Documents
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For More Information Contact:
Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District
31717 United Avenue
Pueblo, CO 81001
Phone: 719-948-2400
e-mail: kevin@secwcd.com

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