



ARKANSAS VALLEY CONDUIT MONTHLY REPORT

Thursday, April 16, 2026

This monthly newsletter summarizes activities related to the Arkansas Valley Conduit and is made available to the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District Board of Directors and Arkansas Valley Conduit stakeholders. To request a subscription to the Report, please contact info@secwcd.com or view it at <https://www.secwcd.org/>



AVC Committee

The next meeting of the Arkansas Valley Conduit Committee has not been scheduled.

Want to learn more about the AVC?

If your organization would like a presentation on AVC, contact Chris Woodka, 719-289-0785 or email chris@secwcd.com



Read past newsletters

For Past issues of the AVC Report:

<https://www.secwcd.org/>



Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District Project Manager Hunter Willits gets settled in for his first day on the job.

Project Manager joins AVC team

Hunter Willits began the next chapter in his career as Project Manager for the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District on Monday, April 13.

Among other responsibilities, he will be responsible for keeping the Arkansas Valley Conduit on track.

“With the history behind the AVC Project, and how long it’s been coming, to have a role in it is super-exciting,” Willits said. “For any engineer, to be a part of a project on this scale is fun to be a part of.”

Willits will also be part of the District’s team on other projects, such as the Hydropower Plant at Pueblo Reservoir.

“I’m interested in learning more about water and all that it entails,” he said.

Willits, 27, is from Pueblo originally and makes his home there with his wife Abigail.

He is a graduate of Pueblo County High School, where he was a standout wrestler.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Oregon State University in 2022, where he was an All-American wrestler.

He came back to Pueblo, and was employed by Rocky Mountain Steel Mills, where he was Project Engineer, Commissioning Engineer and Commissioning Supervisor for the new rail mill.

“We’re excited to welcome Hunter to the AVC team, with the skills and experience he will bring to the Project,” said Executive Director Leann Noga.



Reclamation Realty Specialist Jeff Bollman (left) and Engineer Amy Hribar (center) meet with Prowers County Commissioners (from left) Ron Cook, Roger Stagner and Ty Harmon on April 7 about changes in the AVC trunk line realignment.

Prowers Commission Gets Update on AVC changes

Prowers County Commissioners got an update on route changes on the AVC trunk line from a Bureau of Reclamation team and the Southeastern District on April 7, 2026.

Southeastern Senior Policy and Issues Manager Chris Woodka spoke about the history and current status of the AVC Project.

Reclamation team members explained a new route for the trunk line, which is in the design phase. The new route goes down Colorado Highway 134 and crosses private property to the water treatment plant south of Lamar. The 9-mile line allows water to be delivered to May Valley Water Association and Wiley and avoids more technical-challenging problems on the original route.

Forsgren Associates and subcontractors will provide realty, surveying, geotechnical investigation and utility location for the line from Reg Tank 1 (Otero-Bent County Line) to Lamar and design the Bent County portion of the trunk line, while Reclamation is designing the Prowers County portion of the trunk line. Railroad and waterway crossings are under a separate contract.

AVC in Prowers County

- Pipeline Alignment in District 3
- Participating Communities
 - Wiley
 - May Valley Water Association
 - Lamar
- Design Challenges
 - 9 miles within Prowers Co.
 - End of the line where changes/reroutes may impact hydraulics
 - BNSF Railroad Crossing
 - Arkansas River Crossing
 - Fort Bent Canal Crossing

— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

The Bureau of Reclamation Missouri Basin Region Eastern Colorado Area Office is seeking information from qualified firms for:

Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) – Crowley Reach 1

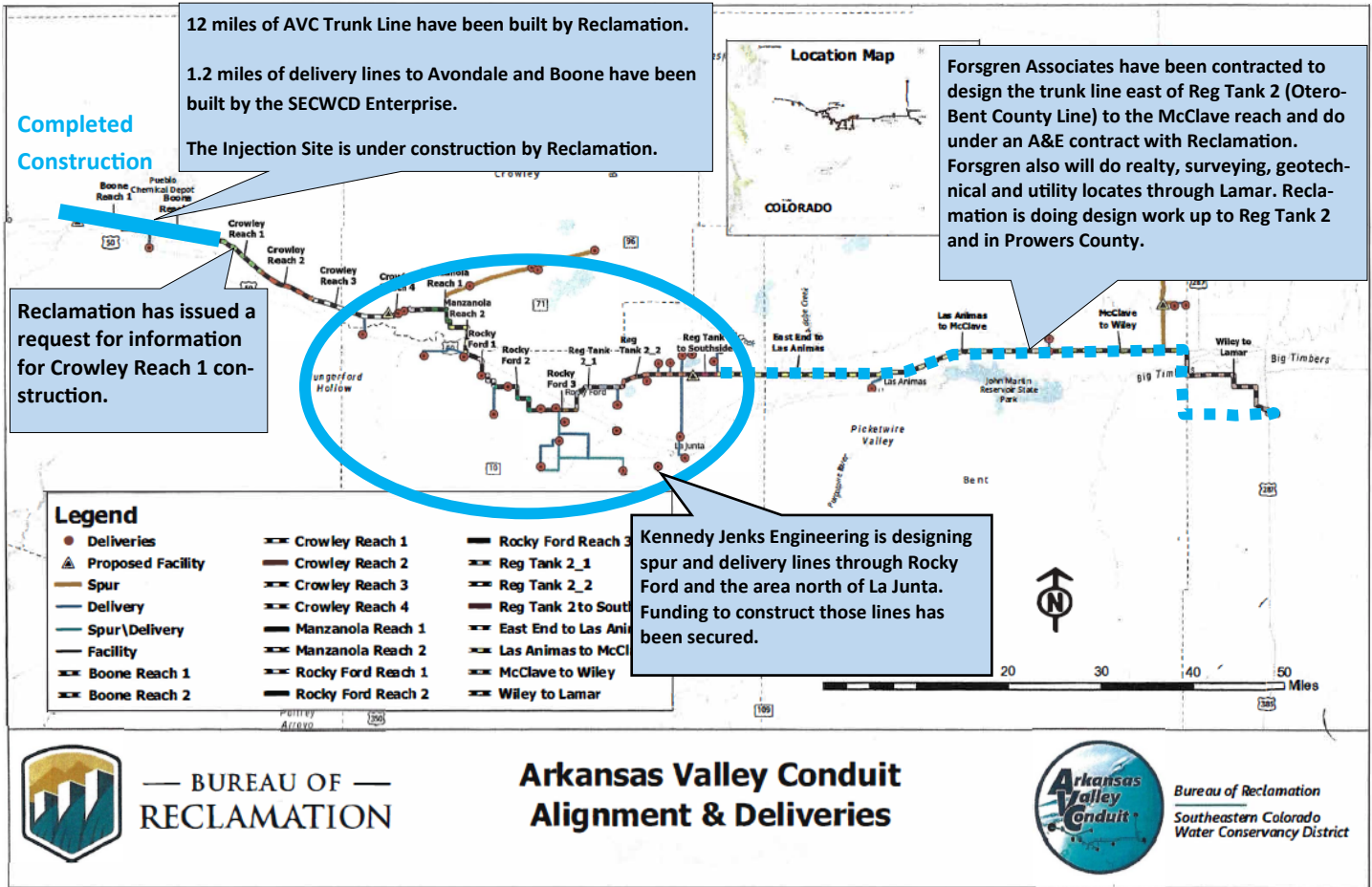
View Request for Information (RFI) documents at SAM.gov reference 140R6026R0001.

For additional information, contact:

- Monica Burgio, Contracting Specialist, monica_burgio@ios.doi.gov



AVC PROJECT UPDATE



Work is continuing along the entire route of the AVC with design contracts that will lead to construction in following years.

AVC FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Coming Soon from Washington, D.C.

The administration’s budget was released in early April. It includes a request of \$1.294 million for the Arkansas Valley Conduit.

We know this is a low number but want to remind readers that much of the \$500 million the AVC was awarded from the infrastructure bill is still to be spent on project construction! We have considerable “money in the bank” and are working with the Bureau of Reclamation to get it on...and *IN*...the ground as soon as possible.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water is scheduled to mark up the FY 2027

bill including this funding on May 15.

Our work on enacting H.R. 131, the previously vetoed legislation making the terms of repayment of our 35 percent cost share more affordable, continues. Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper and Representatives Lauren Boebert and Jeff Hurd have asked that this legislation be included in the upcoming Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

Word on the street is that WRDA is expected to move before Memorial Day in both the House and the Senate. We are monitoring closely and will keep you updated.



Southeastern District Board President Bill Long and Southeastern staff members met with Bureau of Reclamation officials at District Headquarters in Pueblo on April 1 to review AVC planning, schedule and funding status. The quarterly meetings are for project principals to hear updates on the Reclamation and Enterprise Sub-Projects in order to better coordinate activities.

AVC Committee Reviews Change in Scope for Design Contract

More communities facing enforcement for radionuclides in their drinking water supply will be reached sooner under a change in scope for the AVC Package 1 design contract. That will also translate into sooner deliveries of AVC water for those communities.

The Arkansas Valley Conduit Committee met on April 2, 2026, heard about the change which occurred because of recent events involving the Town of Sugar City.

Crowley County Director Matt Heimerich, a member of the AVC Committee, explained that Sugar City government is in an uncertain state, with talk of dissolving the town.

The design contract with Kennedy-Jenks is \$2.5 million and is being financed by a Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) grant through Otero County serving as the District's fiscal agent,

The District also has approval for a \$45 million con-

struction package through the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority (CWRPDA).

Executive Director Leann Noga explained that the savings in funding by deferring the Sugar City delivery line will allow design for the water systems north of La Junta along the Holbrook Canal as well as all other systems through Rocky Ford.

"This doesn't mean Sugar City is in or out of the AVC, and the line could be designed in a future package," Mrs. Noga said.

The District also is investigating how two small water systems now connected to Sugar City could still receive AVC water, possibly by aligning to the 96 Pipeline Company.

Southeastern Board President Bill Long thanked Mr. Heimerich and District staff for their work, saying: "This sounds like a good business decision."