Lake Nighthorse
Community Meeting
June 18, 2014
Welcome and Introductions

Bureau of Reclamation Staff

Purpose of the Meeting
Purpose of the Project

• Animas-La Plata Project
  – Lake Nighthorse
  – Ridges Basin Dam
  – Durango Pumping Plant

A federal water project under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Reclamation.
Purpose of the Project

Key Component:
Settlement of Tribal Water Rights

Primary Purpose:
Municipal & Industrial (Drinking) Water Supply

Secondary Purpose:
Recreation
Roles and Responsibilities

- Reclamation

- Animas-La Plata Operation, Maintenance, and Replacement Association
  - Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District
  - City of Durango
  - Colorado Water Conservation Board
  - Colorado Water Resources & Power Development Authority
  - La Plata Conservancy District
  - Navajo Nation
  - San Juan Water Commission
  - Southern Ute Indian Tribe
  - Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Project Overview

Ridges Basin Dam and Lake Nighthorse

Reservoir Capacity – 123,541 acre-feet

Water Surface Area – 1,500 acres

Reservoir Area – 5,500 acres
Project Overview (con’t)

Durango Pumping Plant

Water from Animas River pumped into Lake Nighthorse through the Ridges Basin Inlet Conduit – 72-inches diameter & 2.1 miles long buried pipeline.
Management of the Area

- Lake Nighthorse is currently closed.
- The area will remain closed until…..
  - Recreation manager
  - Appropriate recreation facilities to protect the water and land
Recreation Update

• Due to funding constraints, the State of Colorado was not able to develop and manage recreation facilities at Lake Nighthorse except for funding construction of a boat ramp.

• Boat Ramp - 40 foot wide concrete ramp

  - Gravel access road from County Road 210

  - Paved Parking Area & Vault Toilet
Recreation Update (con’t)

• Recreation Master Plan

• Community planning effort sponsored by Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District.

• The City of Durango became interested in becoming the recreation manager.
Recreation Update (con’t)

Major Areas of Concern:

- Develop recreation & ensure compatibility with the primary purpose of the project – drinking water supply.

- Annexation of the recreation area for law enforcement purposes.

- Protect: Tribal cultural resources
- Water quality
- Environmental commitments
- Tribal trust responsibilities & treaty rights
Recreation Update (con’t)

Steps in the Process:

• Ongoing discussions with all Project partners & stakeholders – Recreation Lease Agreement
  Annexation Agreement
  Planning Agreement

• Determine level of capital improvements.
Recreation Update (con’t)

Steps in the Process:

• Capital Improvements (minimum needed)
  - Entrance station
  - Boat inspection and decontamination facilities
  - Additional parking and road improvements
  - Courtesy dock for boat ramp
  - Picnic areas
Recreation Update (con’t)

Steps in the Process:

• Environmental Analysis
  - Analyze environmental impacts
  - Write draft environmental assessment
  - Solicit public review and comment
  - Review public comments – amend document - finalize
Recreation Update (con’t)

Steps in the Process:

• Work with Tribes to draft Cultural Resource Management Plan

**National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106)**

*Ensure protection of historic properties and cultural resources*

- Identify effect of actions on historic properties/cultural resources
- Consult with Tribes/SHPO/THPO
- Resolve adverse effects
Recreation Update (con’t)

Potential Recreation Footprint:

Based on ongoing discussions – a proposed recreation footprint has been envisioned which provides:

- A limited area to be developed for recreation.

  - Keeps the door open for future discussions regarding recreation development.
Recreation Update (con’t)

What’s Next?

• Continue ongoing process to seek consensus among stakeholders to allow recreation at Lake Nighthorse.
  – Reclamation Lease Agreement
  – Annexation Agreement
  – Planning Agreement
  – Cultural Resource Management Plan
  – Environmental Assessment
  – Construction of minimum recreation facilities
• In the meantime - please respect Lake Nighthorse closure for protection of resources and public safety.

QUESTIONS???????
Contact Information

For more information about the Animas – La Plata Project:

• www.usbr.gov/uc/progact/animas/index.html

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