

# Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District White River - State of the River April 5, 2022



# Presentation Overview

1. Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District
2. Taylor Draw Dam 2022
3. Request for Administration
4. White River Regional Water Supply Project – Wolf Creel Reservoir





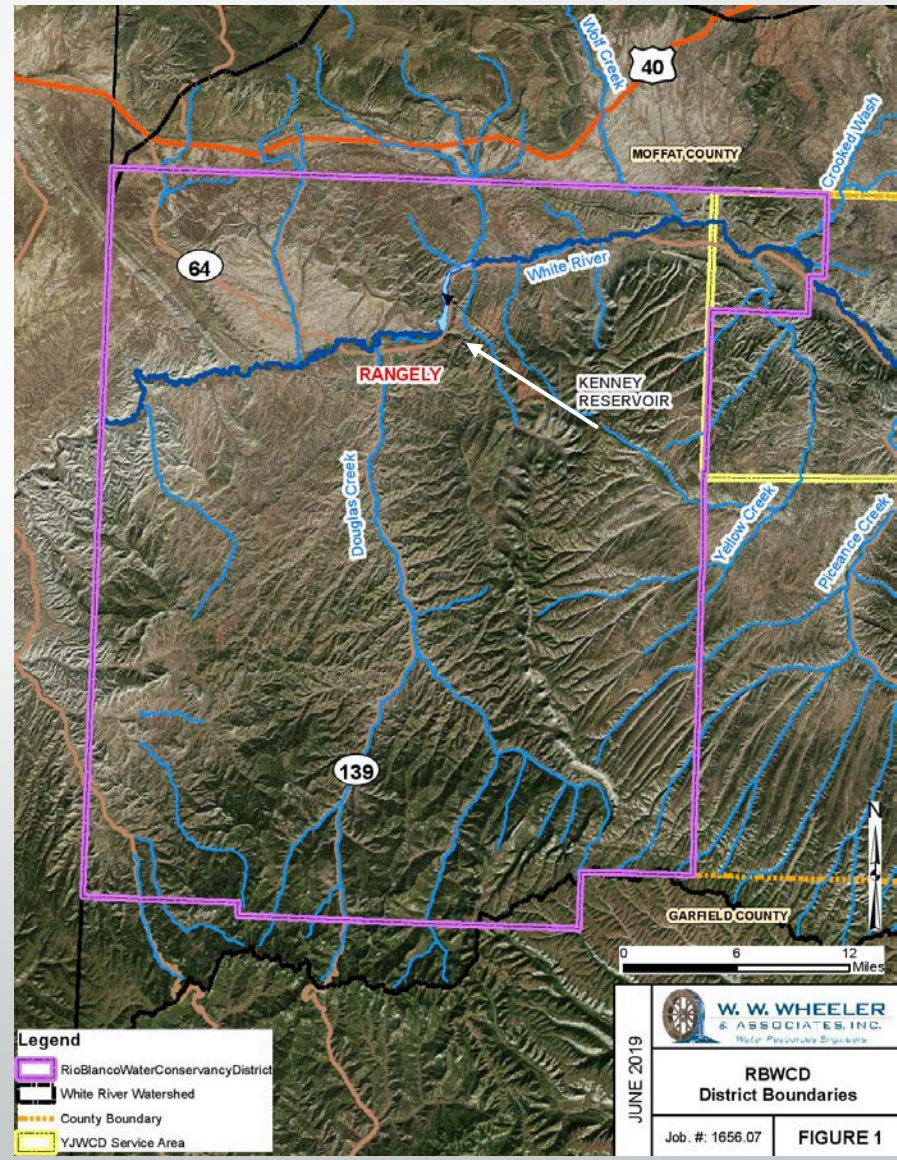
# Who is the Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District?

- Formed in 1978 as part of the Water Users Association #1 (WUA#1); became RBWCD in 1990.
- Taylor Draw Dam (Kenney Reservoir) constructed in 1983, included project permitting & financing.
- "The RBWCD was organized for the purposes of conserving and developing land and water resources for the greatest beneficial use of water within the District's boundaries."
- Taylor Draw Hydroelectric Project has been FERC-licensed since 1993 as a 2MW Run of the River Project



*Taylor Draw Dam, Kenney Reservoir, and Taylor Draw Hydroelectric has:*

- ✓ *Been locally funded.*
- ✓ *Eliminated ice jams*
- ✓ *Provided recreation for > 40 years.*
- ✓ *Provided renewable energy.*
- ✓ *Provided emergency water storage for Rangely.*

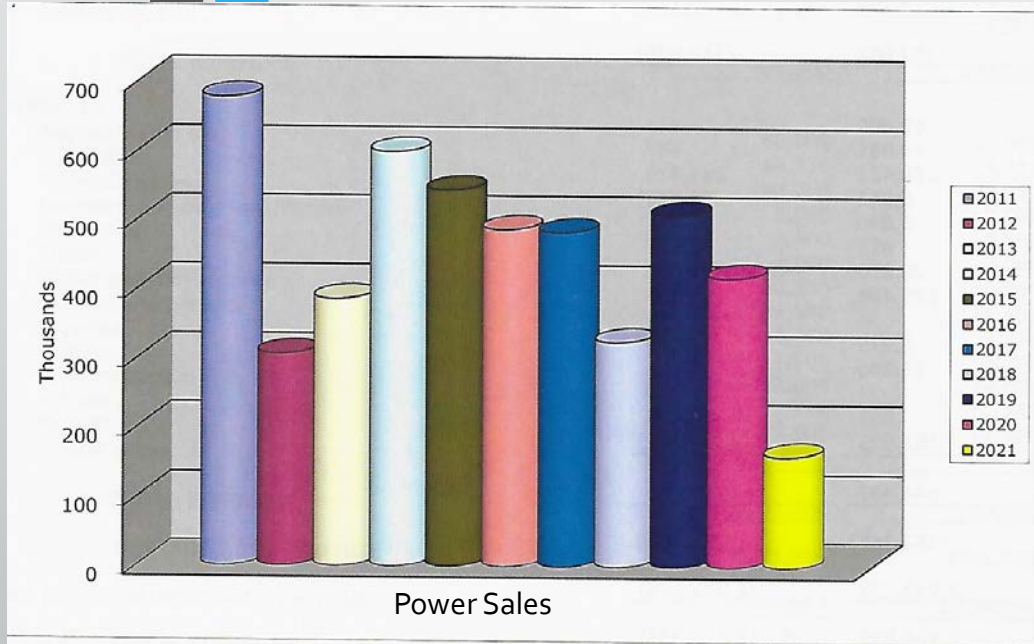


# Taylor Draw Dam & Taylor Draw Hydroelectric

- April 2022 approximately 110 ft of the 96-inch steel liner was identified to have collapsed. Has since been remediated.
- Concrete Penstock is in Excellent Condition
- Penstock Out-of-Service April to August
- 10-days after going back into service the hydroelectric generator was shut down due to low flows for the next 16 days.



# District Request for Administration

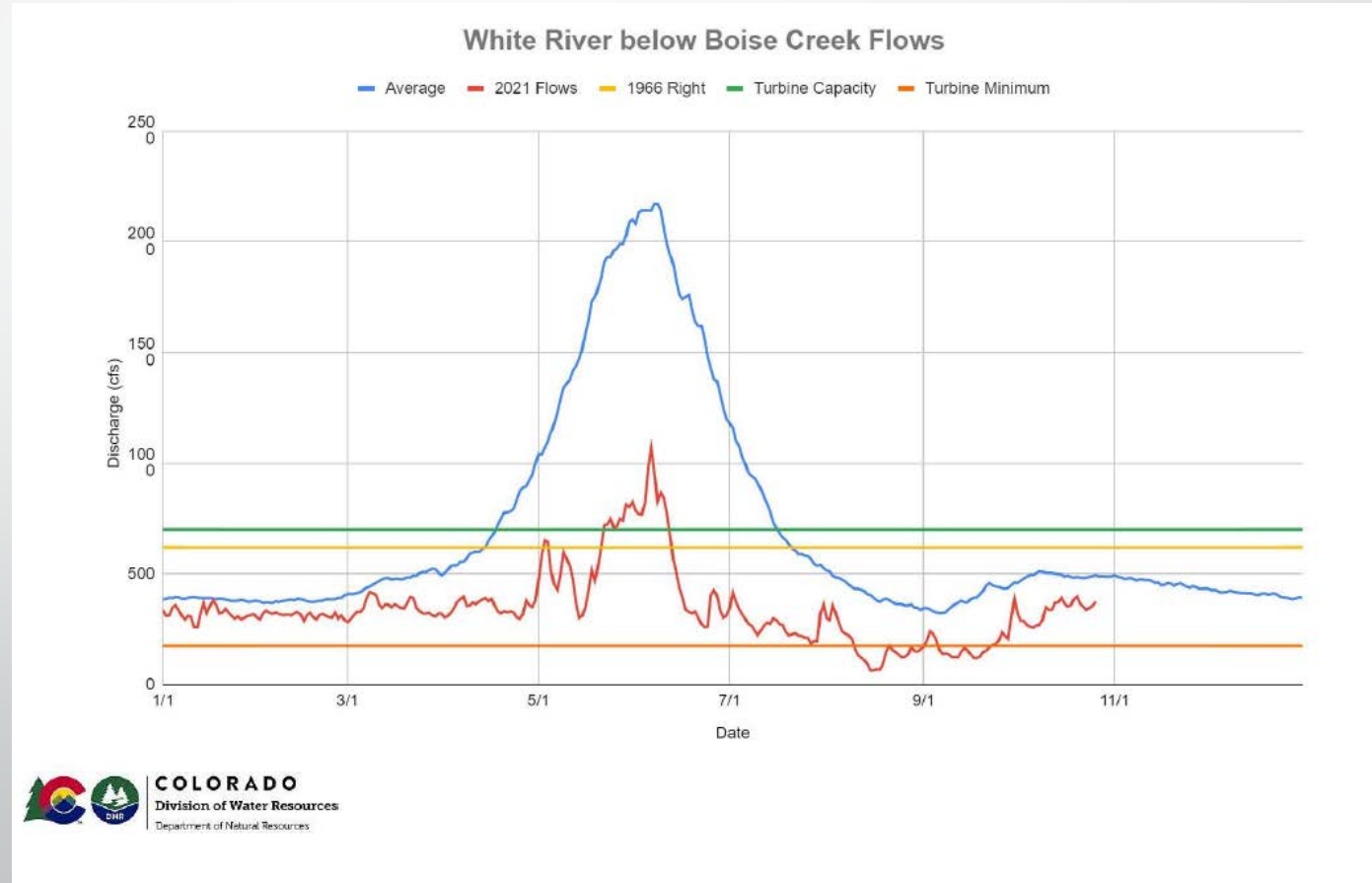


## Why?

- Fiduciary Responsibility
- Taylor Draw Dam Project O&M

### Water Rights

- Senior Right = 620 CFS, 1966 decree
- Junior Right = 900 CFS, 1982 decree
  - 125 CFS, absolute
  - 775 CFS, conditional

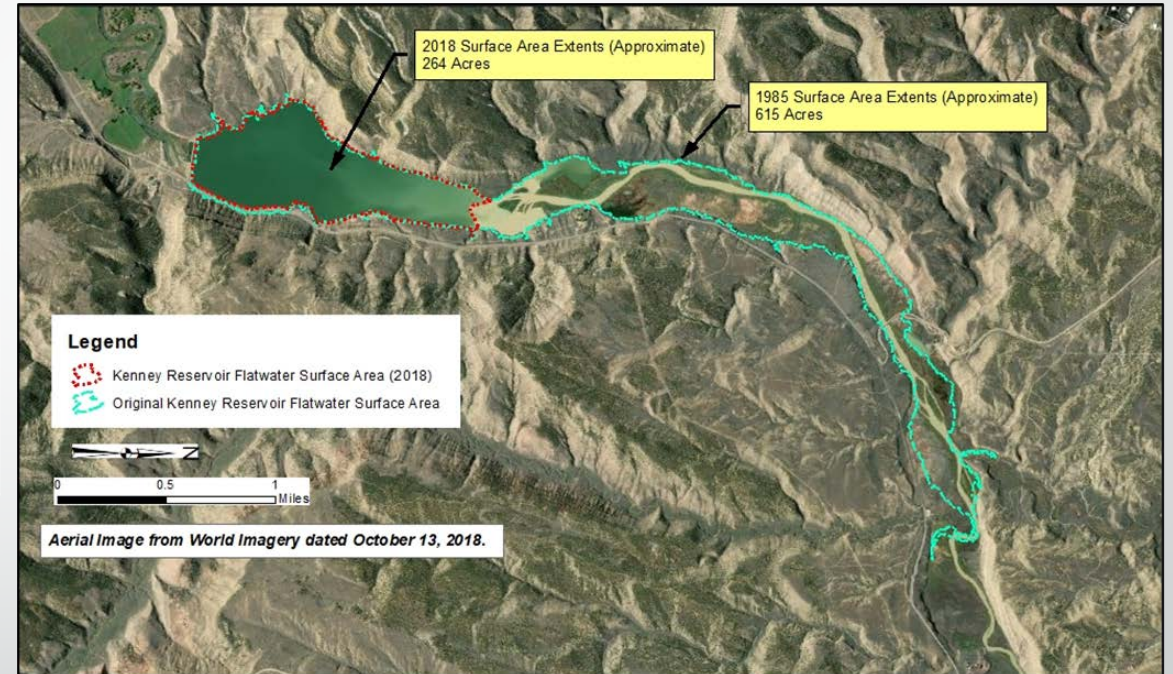


# White River Regional Water Supply Project – Wolf Creek Reservoir

➤ Why did this investigation start? Loss of storage at Kenney Reservoir.

- Original project has 2,100 AF dedicated dead pool for recreation (USACE, 1982).
- Kenney Reservoir beneficial uses: hydropower generation, manufacturing, irrigation, domestic, municipal, stock watering, piscatorial, and other.

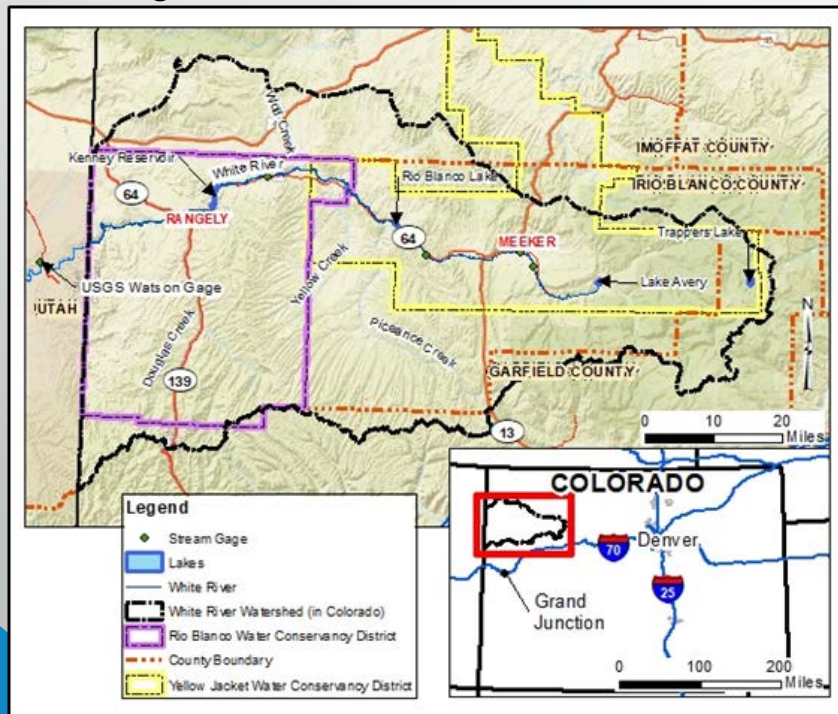
	1985	2022
Storage	13,800 acre-feet	< 2,145 acre-feet
Surface Area	615 acres	194 acres



According to the EIS completed for Taylor Draw Dam: *"The basic purpose of the Taylor Draw Reservoir is to provide a dependable municipal and industrial water supply to water users within the boundaries of Water Users' Association No. 1, including the Town of Rangely, to provide needed flood control, recreation, and a source of hydroelectric power in the future."*

# RBWCD's Response to the White River Water Crisis?

- The RBWCD realized the severity of this water crisis and initiated water supply planning in 2013.
- The White River is in a water crisis due to aridification and Colorado River Compact issues, compounded by our current lack of water storage.
- The White River Regional Water Supply Project (WRRWSP) is needed to:
  - Replace the storage and uses being lost at Kenney Reservoir.
  - Provide for existing and future water needs in the White River basin.
  - Augmentation for in-basin administration



# Continuous Public Engagement Process

- The initial planning work focused on the evaluation of regional water needs and alternatives for meeting these needs.
- The RBWCD has had hundreds of key stakeholder and public meetings.
- RBWCD initiated a pre-permitting process to engage key federal, state, and local agencies to develop a comprehensive workplan to streamline processes required for permitting evaluations (early 2019). Applicable Task(s):
  - ✓ Task 1 – Project Management and Outreach (*on going*)
  - ✓ Task 2 – PBO Coordination – Endanger Fish Plan (*on going w/schedule*)
  - ✓ Task 3 – Streamlined Permitting Plan (*DRAFT complete + Implementing*)
  - ✓ Task 4 – Preliminary Recreation Plan (*DRAFT complete*)
  - ✓ Task 5 – Purpose and Need Refinement (*DRAFT complete*)
  - ✓ Task 6 – Financing Plan (*DRAFT Complete*)
  - ✓ Task 7 – Pre-Permitting Report (*Finalize in 2023*)

Numerous regional governments agreed and provided financial assistance for the investigation:

- ✓ *Town of Rangely*
- ✓ *Town of Meeker*
- ✓ *Rio Blanco County*
- ✓ *Colorado Water Conservation Board*
- ✓ *Yampa-White-Green Basin Round Table*
- ✓ *Colorado River Water Conservation District.*

**WHITE RIVER STORAGE PROJECT**



**RIO BLANCO WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT**

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## The identified needs led to partnerships





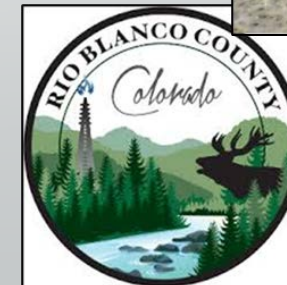
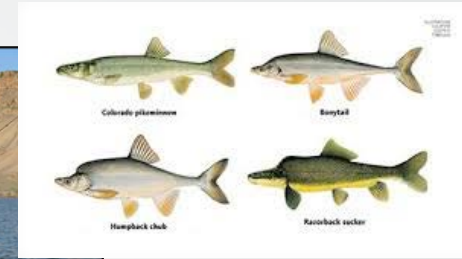
# Summary of Water Rights Decree

- 2014: RBWCD filed for a water right either at the Wolf Creek off-channel or White River on-channel location.
- January 7, 2021: RBWCD awarded a conditional water right decree.
  - Storage of **66,720 AF**
  - Uses:
    - ❖ **Municipal** uses (including domestic, irrigation, commercial, industrial) for the Town of Rangely,
    - ❖ **Augmentation** (through a future blanket augmentation plan for water users within the District boundaries and within the Yellow Jacket Water Conservancy District boundaries pursuant to leases or exchanges of water under C.R.S. § 37-83-106)
    - ❖ **Mitigation** of environmental impacts of the Wolf Creek Reservoir project
    - ❖ **Hydroelectric power generation** exercised only in conjunction with releases for other decreed beneficial uses, and in-reservoir uses for recreation, piscatorial, and wildlife habitat
- Annual releases limited to 7,000 AF for municipal and augmentation uses and 20,720 AF for Mitigation.
- These annual release limits are not intended to prevent releases in excess of those amounts to the extent any such additional releases are required or authorized by statute or rule.



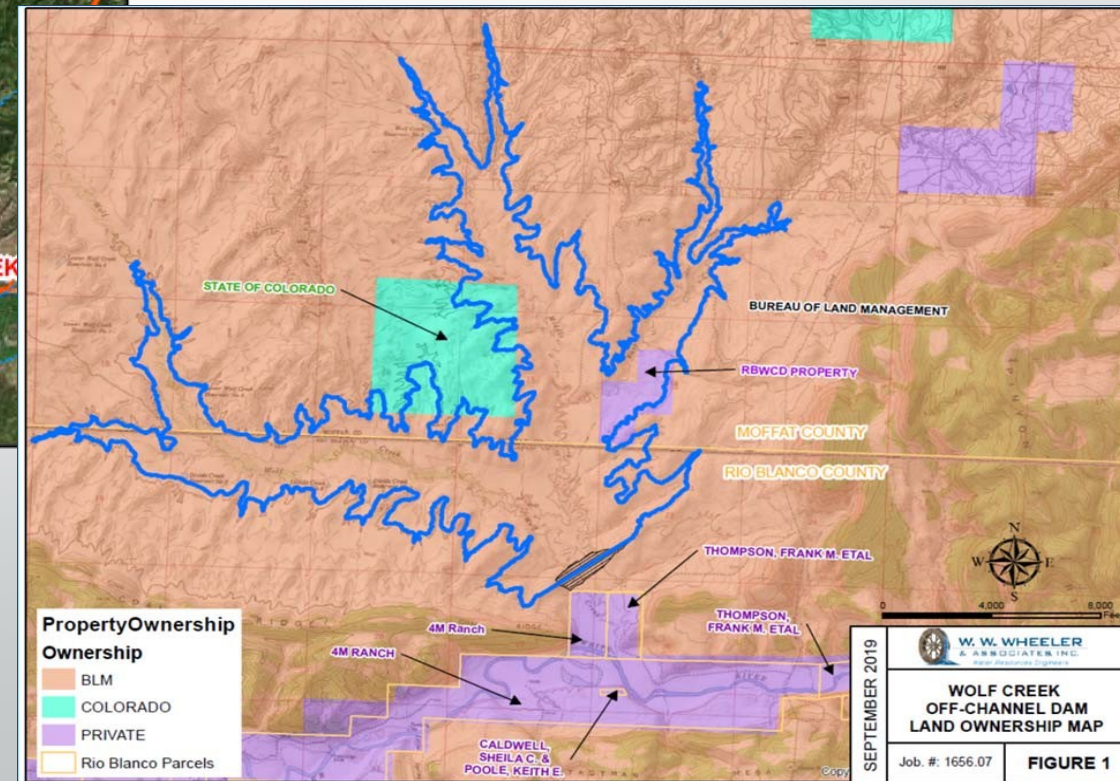
# Wolf Creek Reservoir Purpose & Need

- **Municipal** water supply for the Town of Rangely;
- Water supply to satisfy existing and future **agricultural** needs;
- Water supply to satisfy the RBWCD's decreed water rights for generating **hydropower**;
- Replacement of regional **flatwater recreational** opportunities that are lost due to the ongoing sedimentation at Kenney Reservoir;
- Water supply to protect the majority of water users in Rio Blanco County who would be junior to a **Colorado River Compact curtailment**; and
- **Water supply to meet streamflow targets** to aid in the protection and recovery of endangered fish species in the White River.



# Preferred Alternative – Wolf Creek Reservoir

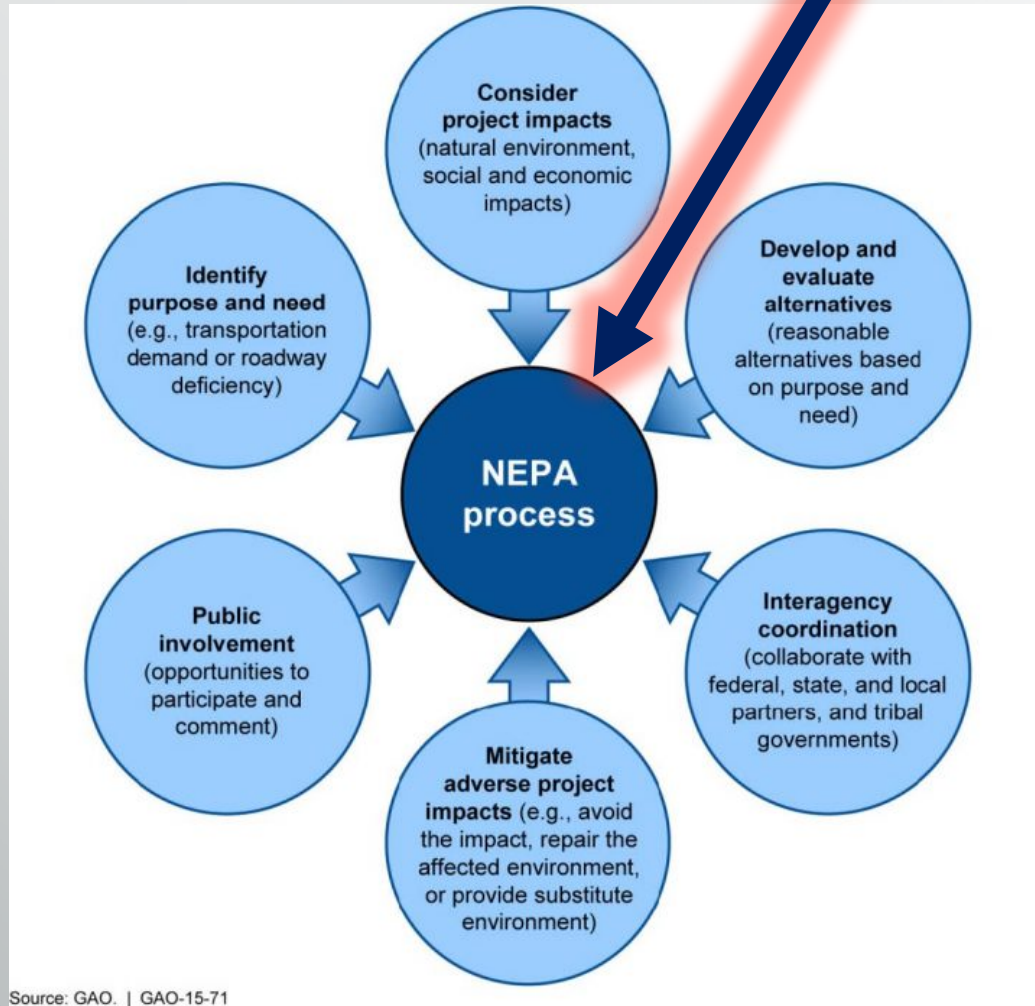
- Off-channel site minimizes environmental impacts
- No impacts to jurisdictional wetlands
- No identified fatal flaws
- Good recreation access (Rio Blanco & Moffat County)
- Economical water storage



The Districts goal is to construct the project that has been thoroughly evaluated and to have the least impact.



# What's Next?



Source: GAO. | GAO-15-71

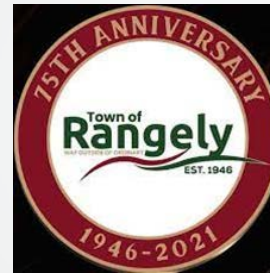
## Permit Funding Partners

- ❖ Rio Blanco County
- ❖ Colorado River District
- ❖ Town of Rangely
- ❖ Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District



# The Rio Blanco Water Conservancy District Has Substantial Project Support

~ Thank you ~



## Letters of Support, Financial Support, Technical, Plan Inclusions, Agreements, or other types of support

- Associated Governments of NW Colorado
- Yampa-White-Green BRT
- City of Craig
- Moffat County
- Rio Blanco County
- Rangely Chamber
- Meeker Chamber
- Town of Rangely
- Colorado First Conservation District
- White River Conservation District
- Douglas Creek Conservation District
- Colorado River District
- Club 20
- CWCB - Financial and Planning support
- Colorado Water Plan
- Lower White River Weed and Pest District
- Yellow Jacket Water Conservancy District
- Craig Chamber of Commerce



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