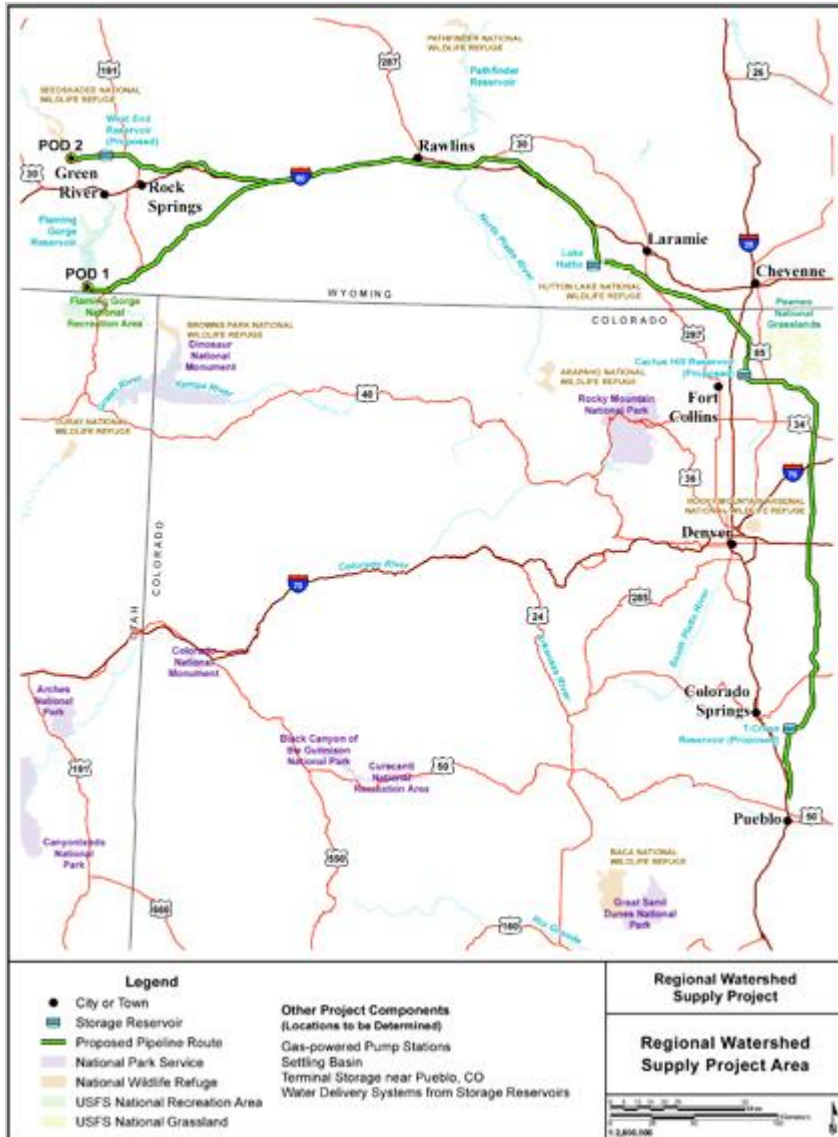


Meetings scheduled for proposed pipeline



Local meeting set for April 14 at GRHS

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Two years after Aaron Million presented a proposal for a pipeline to carry water from the Flaming Gorge Reservoir to the north front range of Colorado, several public meetings have been scheduled, including one in Green River.

The meeting is scheduled at Green River High School on April 14 from 6:30-9 p.m.

According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, this project is designed to provide approximately 250,000 acre-feet of water per year to meet supply needs of southeastern Wyoming and the Front Range in Colorado.

The water would be delivered through a large pipeline between 72 to 120 inches in diameter, which will extend from two division points in Wyoming to a storage facility at the end of the pipeline near Pueblo, Colo.

The project would involve water withdrawal from the Green River and the Flaming Gorge Reservoir, using intake facilities at the two division points.

About 25,000 acre-feet would be moved annually to water users in the Platte River Basin in southeastern Wyoming.

The remaining 225,000 acre-feet would be delivered annually to the South Platte and Arkansas River basins in Colorado.

Ben Bracken, general manager of the Joint Powers Water Board Water Treatment Plant, explained the upcoming meeting is "part of the process."

"It doesn't mean he's any closer than he was two years ago," Bracken said.

Million has applied for a permit from the Corps of Engineers for the transbasin water transfer.

He must also get authorization from the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Forest Service, as well as have an Environmental Impact Statement completed by a third party.

Bracken said those may be the least of Million's problems.

"I think his biggest hurdle is going to be the State of Colorado because I think part of the water allocation belongs to the state under the Colorado River Compact," he explained.

Bracken also said he doesn't think Million's group, the Million Conservation Resource Group, has justified the use for the water.

"They say the potential water users would be agriculture, municipalities and industries, but I'm not sure they've justified those uses to the satisfaction of the corps," Bracken said.

The Sweetwater County Commissioners sent a letter to Gov. Dave Freudenthal last year, protesting the plan.

According to Million, the project would be funded privately and then turned over to a public entity to manage.

The proposed pipeline from Flaming Gorge would cut across the southern half of Wyoming, following Interstate-80 where the natural gas pipelines are already located.

The line would then turn south to Colorado.