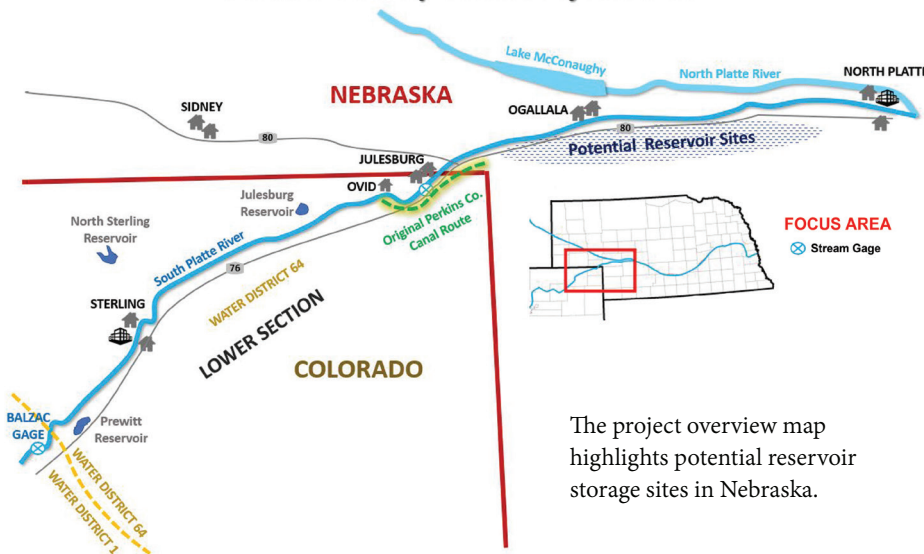


SECURING NEBRASKA'S WATER FUTURE

The Benefits of the Perkins County Canal

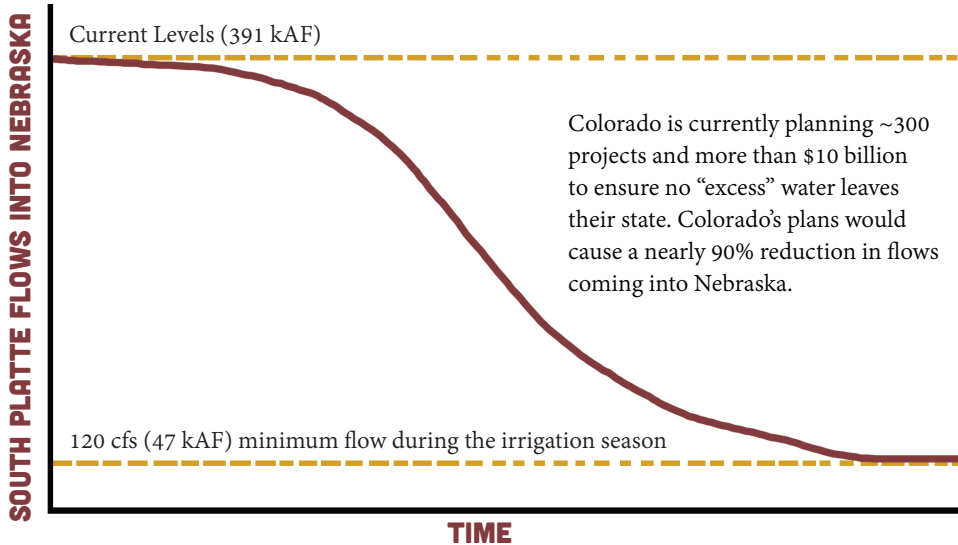
November 2022

PERKINS COUNTY CANAL PROJECT OVERVIEW



WHAT'S AT STAKE IN THE SOUTH PLATTE BASIN?

Nebraska is missing out on 500 cfs of water during the non-irrigation season, which negatively impacts drinking water, power generation, economic development, agriculture and wildlife throughout the Platte River Basin. Colorado continues to ramp up its own diversions and related water uses without restriction to prevent South Platte River water from leaving their state and entering Nebraska.



IRRIGATION SEASON APRIL 1–OCT. 15

120 cfs minimum flow
Currently in effect

NON-IRRIGATION SEASON OCT. 15 TO APRIL 1

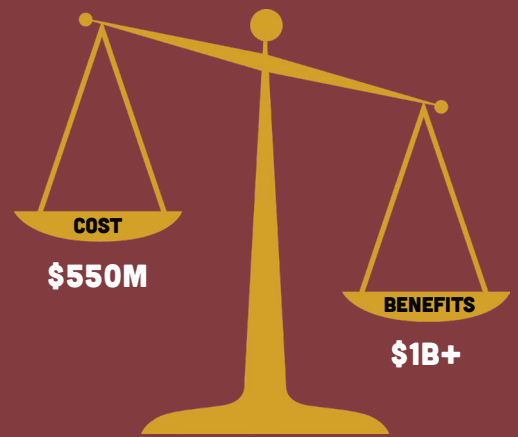
500 cfs minimum flow
Colorado not yet enforcing without completion of Perkins County Canal

MISSION TO SECURE WATER

Securing our water is essential to the economic prosperity, health, and welfare of Nebraskans. We must protect the environmental health of Nebraska's Platte River Basin and our full entitlement to the flows of the South Platte River as provided for in the South Platte Compact.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Perkins County Canal and associated storage facilities is expected to cost approx. \$550 million. The estimated benefits are more than \$1 billion and will help secure Nebraska's water future.



SOUTH PLATTE COMPACT

- Signed in 1923 and passed by Congress in 1926. It is a contract and embodied in state and federal law.
- Establishes a 120 cfs (47 kAF) minimum flow during the irrigation season (Western Canal).
- Establishes a 500 cfs minimum flow during the non-irrigation season with the Perkins County Canal, which is not yet developed.
- kAF = Thousand Acre Feet
- cfs = Cubic Feet/Second

SOUTH PLATTE RIVER BASIN

Protecting our Resources Across Borders

Nebraska and Colorado signed the South Platte River Compact in 1923, to settle a case brought by Nebraska's Western Irrigation District, which provides for an equitable distribution of the waters of the South Platte River between Nebraska and Colorado. The compact was approved by Colorado and Nebraska Legislatures and U.S. Congress.

There are two key provisions of the Compact:

- Article IV limits irrigation season uses in Colorado to benefit the Western Irrigation District near Brule, NE. Under this provision, Colorado is required to limit its users when a flow of less than 120 cfs is available at Julesburg, CO.
- **Article VI authorizes Nebraska to build a Perkins County Canal to divert 500 cfs of water during the non-irrigation season.** However, since the Perkins County project remains unfinished, Nebraska cannot divert the 500 cfs of water. Colorado continues to ramp up its own diversions and related water uses during the non-irrigation season, which will result in a dry South Platte River in Nebraska if the canal is not built.

In pursuing its Article VI rights, Nebraska may acquire land and divert the water in Colorado for subsequent uses in Nebraska. Specific lands and routes are not specified in the Compact and will be determined based on a variety of factors that will be evaluated through a design process approved and funded by the Nebraska Legislature in 2022.

PERKINS CANAL: NEXT STEPS

- The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources will engage interested Nebraskans and complete the design.
- The Nebraska Legislature must approve funding for land purchases and construction.
- Once funding is approved, advanced design concepts can move forward with land acquisition and construction.

“As part of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program and to meet the goals established by the legislature, Central Platte NRD has spent \$20M to return a required 18,500 acre-feet to the river. Nebraska could receive this same amount of water every 18 days with the proposed canal.”

–Lyndon Vogt, Central Platte NRD General Manager

SOUTH PLATTE FAST FACTS



The Perkins County Canal Project is critical to Nebraska's South Platte Compact enforcement.



The 500 cfs of water Nebraska is currently missing out on could fill Lake McConaughy in 5-6 years.



The City of Lincoln wellfield receives 7% of its recharge for drinking water from the South Platte River.



An investment of ~\$550 million will yield more than \$1 billion in benefits.



The project ensures Nebraska has water for drinking, power generation, economic development, agriculture and wildlife.



Development, construction, management, and operation of the canal and storage facilities will be the responsibility of NeDNR.

2022 LEGISLATURE: LB 1015

Senators gave final approval to LB 1015 April 12, 2022, and the bill was approved by Gov. Pete Ricketts April 18, 2022. The bill proposes to build a canal that would divert South Platte River water from Colorado to Nebraska under a 1923 interstate compact.

The Legislature allocated \$53.5 million from the cash reserve to begin design and engineering studies and a buy option on land where the canal would be built. The project is managed by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

SOUTH PLATTE STAKEHOLDERS GROUP

Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts
www.nrdnet.org

Nebraska Public Power District
www.nppd.com

Central NE Public Power & Irrigation District
www.cnppid.com

Western Irrigation District

For more information go to: <https://dnr.nebraska.gov/perkins-county-canal>