

Doing our part: Protecting the water we share



Colorado Springs Utilities has the largest wastewater treatment and collection system in the state under a single permit – which includes about 1,500 miles of pipe.

Our wastewater treatment plants routinely surpass in-stream state and federal water quality standards – ensuring that we treat the water we use to a high standard before returning it to the environment.

We're doing everything possible to improve our operations, prevent wastewater spills, and protect our waterways for the benefit of our customers, neighbors and the environment. This is demonstrated by the actions we've taken to improve our system, including the millions of dollars we've invested since the 1990s and the millions of dollars we'll invest this year and beyond.

Examples of the actions we've taken include:

- We're the only utility in the state, and most likely in the country, with a spill-recovery project in place to protect the environment and keep accidental spills from reaching our neighbors downstream – an investment of \$10 million.
- We started significant work on our system in the mid-1990s with a \$40 million upgrade to our Las Vegas wastewater treatment plant.
- The J.D. Phillips Water Reclamation facility, a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant costing nearly \$80 million, is now operational.
- From 2000 to 2006, we invested approximately \$65 million for the inspection and rehabilitation of our wastewater collection system.

- We'll invest an additional \$25 million this year on the collection system to further reduce the risk of spills.
- Today, more than 2,500 manholes in the wastewater collection system are equipped with a locking mechanism to reduce the risk of vandalism.

By 2025, we will have invested \$250 million on our wastewater system over 20 years.

These are substantial investments that are unrivaled around the state, and each step we are taking is dramatically reducing the risk for spills. In fact, our spills per 100 miles of pipe are among the lowest in the nation.



▲ *Our wastewater is treated to a high standard – meeting and often exceeding in-stream state and federal water quality standards – before it is discharged clean and clear into Fountain Creek.*

Spill recovery project

The Fountain Creek Recovery Project is an effort to protect the environment and our customers, and to keep potential wastewater overflows from reaching downstream landowners and communities.

Any wastewater system carries a risk for spills. The Fountain Creek Recovery Project can capture flows in Fountain Creek approximately 300 days out of the year – during normal flows – making it possible to capture spills caused by vandalism, grease blockages and failed bypass operations before they can travel downstream.

Key project components and operations include:

- The use of the existing Stubbs-Miller Ditch, a former irrigation ditch located in south Colorado Springs, to divert contaminated water from Fountain Creek to a recovery pond.
- The ditch's intake and intake channel are lined with concrete.
- An 18.5 million gallon capacity, lined spill pond.
- During a spill, water in Fountain Creek is diverted to this pond.
- Water is then transferred to Las Vegas Street Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment.
- A 20 million gallon capacity pond for storing clean water for water rights exchanges.
- All components of the recovery project are located on Springs Utilities land.



Intake structure



Stubbs & Miller structure and spill channel



Recovery pond

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