

Agenda Item

DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2023
TO: DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
THROUGH: DOUGLAS J. DEBORD, COUNTY MANAGER
FROM: TERENCE T. QUINN, AICP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TQ
CC: STEVE SHOULTZ, CPRE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PARKS, TRAILS & BUILDING GROUNDS
AMY KNOPP, MSOL, MANAGER OF RUETER-HESS RESERVOIR
SUBJECT: REUTER-HESS RESERVOIR PARTNERSHIP IGA

SUMMARY

In 2022, partners of the Rueter-Hess Recreation Authority (RHRA), Castle Pines, Castle Rock, Lone Tree, Parker, Parker Water and Sanitation, and Douglas County staff began working on an IGA to transition operations, maintenance, and recreation to Douglas County as the Managing Jurisdiction. The IGA sets the groundwork for expanding access and opportunities through partnership in funding, planning recreation, capital improvement, and operations at Rueter-Hess Reservoir (Reservoir). Douglas County's annual contribution to recreation at Rueter-Hess is \$250,000. Combined with partner contributions, the project will have a yearly operating budget of \$870,000.

BACKGROUND

Rueter-Hess Reservoir dam and reservoir construction were completed in 2012. In 2015 Parker Water and Sanitation (the District), the Cities of Castle Pines and Lone Tree, the Towns Castle Rock and Parker (the Municipal Members), and Douglas County formed the Rueter-Hess Recreation Authority (RHRA). The RHRA contributes to recreation planning and funding of recreation at the Reservoir. Annually the partners contribute \$870,000 toward recreation capital improvements such as the incline and 6.5 miles of natural surface trails.

In 2016, with public input, the RHRA created a Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan) in 2016. Nearly 4,000 people participated in two online surveys and four public open houses. The public stated that the Reservoir is a unique feature, that should provided access to fishing and paddle sports and trails.

In 2017 public access began with guided hikes and paddle days on the reservoir. The Incline and Newlin Gulch Trail opened in 2020. The trail system expanded in 2022 with

the Coyote Loop Trail. There are 6.5 miles of natural surface trails. In 2022, 64,000 people hiked the incline and trails, and about 1,500 people participated in paddle days on the Reservoir.

Looking forward, the County intends to advance recreation opportunities that are compatible with the Master Plan and to continue partnering with the District and the Municipal Members.

DISCUSSION

The IGA will dissolve the RHRA and establish the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners as the managing jurisdiction for recreation and management at Rueter-Hess Reservoir. The purpose of the IGA and establishing the County as the managing jurisdiction is to centralize ongoing implementation and update the Master Plan, operation and maintenance of recreational, improvements, and at the Reservoir.

With this IGA, PWSD and the partners agree that the Board of County Commissioners has the authority to:

- Approve the recommended annual budget
- Make budgetary decisions to operate, maintain, and offer programming as described in the Master Plan
- Contract and purchase all necessary supplies, equipment, materials, and services
- Employ agents and employees deemed necessary to operate
- Plan, manage, and conduct maintenance and recreational programming
- Fix, maintain, and revise fees, rents, security deposits, and charges for functions, services, or facilities
- Adopt rules and regulations

Douglas County will work with the partners to update the Master Plan as a guiding document for capital improvements at the Reservoir. Project prioritization is based on the Master Plan. All projects will be vetted through the Parker Water and Sanitation District Board of Directors to ensure cohesion with the Reservoirs' primary purpose as a water delivery system.

The dissolved RHRA authority will be replaced with the Rueter-Hess Recreation Advisory Board (RHRAB). The RHRAB will consist of staff members representing each partner jurisdiction and will meet monthly, will be involved in updating the Master Plan, and making budget recommendations to the BCC. Annual contributions and fees will be held by the County in a special revenue account and allocated by the BCC for capital improvements, maintenance, and operations.

NEXT STEPS

Legal counsels have reviewed this IGA for all partner jurisdictions and the County. Each partner agency is presenting this project to their boards and councils for approval with an

anticipated completion date by all parties at the end of March. Staff will bring this to the business meeting on March 28th for approval of IGA by the Board of County Commissioners.