**Pathfinder Environmental Account**

Source: Appropriated water Score: 70,000 AF (combined with the Lake McConaughy EA) Operations started: 2012 Mechanism: Storage

History

Pathfinder Reservoir is one of the major reservoirs in the North Platte Basin. Construction was completed in 1909 for purposes of irrigation and domestic use. As part of the Pathfinder Modification Project, the elevation of the existing spillway was raised by about 2.4 feet to recapture nearly 54,000 AF of storage capacity lost to sedimentation over a century of reservoir operations. The recaptured storage space is stored under an existing 1904 storage right. The Pathfinder Environmental Account (EA) holds 34,000 AF of the allotted storage while the remaining 20,000 AF compromises the “Wyoming Account” (or Municipal Account). The Program started to receive Pathfinder EA water upon completion of the Modification Project in 2012.

Operations

The volume of the Pathfinder EA represents about 3.18% of the 1,070,000 AF total volume of Pathfinder Reservoir. As specified in the Program Document, the Pathfinder EA is credited with 3.18% of inflows to the reservoir during the water year that are storable under the 1904 water right, up to a maximum of 34,000 AF. In late September of each year, the Pathfinder EA water is released and routed to Lake McConaughy via the North Platte River, where it is stored in the Lake McConaughy EA. Carryover storage in the Pathfinder EA is allowed but counts towards the next year’s accruals to the



**Pathfinder Reservoir**

account. Once released, transit losses are applied to the Pathfinder EA water, and the volume reaching Lewellen, NE is credited to the Lake McConaughy EA. Stored water is subsequently released from Lake McConaughy to reduce shortages to USFWS target flows or for other Program purposes.

Yield and Score

From 2012 to 2017, the Program received an average of 27,100 AFY of released Pathfinder EA water measured at the Pathfinder Dam. After deducting transit losses, an average of 24,500 AFY was credited to the Lake McConaughy EA. The annual yields along with the Pathfinder EA releases measured at Pathfinder Dam are summarized in Table 1. The Pathfinder EA and the Lake McConaughy EA are credited with a combined score of 70,000 AF.

Financials

The Pathfinder EA was established as one of the original three state projects, where the 33,493 AF of storage is Wyoming’s contribution of water to the Program. The Program incurs annual expenses associated with operation of the Pathfinder EA.

**Table 1: Pathfinder Environmental Account Yields**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Releases Measured at Pathfinder Dam**  **(AF)** | **Deliveries to Lake McConaughy1  (AF)** |
| 2012 | 21,600 | 19,700 |
| 2013 | 14,400 | 13,100 |
| 2014 | 32,600 | 28,800 |
| 2015 | 30,300 | 29,100 |
| 2016 | 33,100 | 28,500 |
| 2017 | 30,300 | 28,000 |
| **Total** | **162,300** | **147,200** |
| **Average** | **27,100** | **24,500** |

1 Deliveries are credited to the Lake McConaughy EA.

Note: Values are preliminary and subject to change.



**Pathfinder Reservoir**

**Pathfinder Reservoir as seen from the Modified Spillway**



**Pathfinder Reservoir Dam**