

# Planning group split on power project

Conflicting opinions surfaced as members of the Routt County Planning Commission studied plans for a massive power generating system proposed to be located in Routt County.

The proposal of the Oak Creek Power Company for construction of five reservoirs and two power plants met with divergent opinions from Commission members at their regular meeting last Thursday night.

John Yurich saw the project as an economic gain for the county and employment opportunity for county residents. Doug Boggs, on the other hand, expressed grave concerns for the impacts of a project on Oak Creek Power's proportions. He cited the added pollution of air and water, the impact on all public facilities, and the change in the environment due to the large influx of people into the county resulting from the proposal.

Oak Creek Power has submitted an application for a preliminary permit to the Federal Power Commission. If granted, the permit would then give the company 36 months, during which time Oak Creek Power would have priority for application for a license to construct the facilities.

The permit period would be used for engineering and economic studies required for the license application. The initial permit, if granted, would not enable the company to begin construction of any of the proposed facilities.

Routt County had until Jan. 10 to submit comments and until Jan. 31 to file a protest or a petition to intervene, with the FPC, on the application.

The County Commissioners have directed their attorney, Dan Maus, to draft a petition of intervention. Last Thursday the Planning Commission voted its support of the County Commissioners' action.

Petitions for intervention or protest are not limited to the county. Any person desiring to be heard or to make any protest with reference to Oak Creek Power's application can be filed with the Federal Power Commission, 825 N. Capitol St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426. The petition to intervene or protest must be filed with the FPC on or before Jan. 31.

The intervention petition would then involve the county in all actions pertaining to the proposal at federal and state levels.

The proposal of the Oak Creek Power Company is to build five reservoirs with a total storage capacity of 465,000 acre-feet and a hydroelectric generating

generating capacity of Public Service of Colorado. For comparison, the four units of the Craig Power Plant will have a generating capability of 1,520 MW. The total peak generating capacity of Oak Creek Power Company's proposal, 10,000 MW, is 6.5 times the eventual capacity of the Craig Power Plant.

## RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT (formulas from BLM study):

A. Land Required  
1. Power Plant  
6,400 MW x 2 acres - 12,800 acres (A portion of this area includes the Lower Middle Creek Reservoir)

2. Transmission Lines (to reach existing lines)  
230 KV Line - 100 acres per mile of line

Power Plant to Colo.-Ute line 2.5 miles - 250 acres  
Blacktail Dam to Colo-Ute line 14 miles - 1,400 acres

3. Reservoirs and Conduit  
1. Yampa River  
Annual Water yield - 339,800 acre-feet  
Capacity of Blacktail Dam - 229,000 acre-feet

Oak Creek Power Conditional Water Right - 151,300 acre-feet  
Priority Date - 6-25-64. *Very late*

2. Oak Creek Power Conditional Water Rights

Name	Priority	Amount
Service Creek Pipeline, 6-25-64,	320 cfs	
Morrison Creek Pipeline, 6-25-64,	500 cfs	
Yampa Reservoir (Blacktail), 6-25-64,		151,300 acre-feet
Oak Creek Pipeline, 6-25-64,	70 cfs	
Oak Creek Pipeline (Enlargement), 3-15-66,	140 cfs	
Childress Reservoir, 6-25-64,		24,159 acre-feet
Oak Creek Power Plant, _____,		2,000 cfs
Middle Creek Reservoir, _____,		17,000 acre-feet
Trout Creek Pump Conduit, _____,		200 cfs

*check capacities*

## COAL REQUIREMENTS (BLM formula and constants)

Oak Creek Power Plant  
1 kilowatt hour = 8,530 BTU at 40 percent efficiency  
6,400 Kilowatts = 6,400,000 watts

Average BTU value of northwest Colorado coal - 10,000 BTU per pound of coal  
10,000 BTU / lb

= 1.17 kilowatt  
8,530 BTU / KWh hour per pound of coal

6,400,000 W = 25,470,085 lbs / hour  
1.17 KWh / lb. = 2,735 tons / hour  
= 23,958,600 tons of coal  
per year required to operate a 6,400 MW power plant

To mine 1,000,000 tons of coal requires disturbance of 100 surface acres.

23,958,600 tons / year  
1,000,000 tons / 100 acres = 2,395 acres of land required to produce coal

Conflicting opinions on the project within the Planning Commission were not resolved during last Thursday's meeting. Aaron Huffstetler and Jim Funk stated their concerns over critical impacts on the county if the proposed project would be approved and built. They questioned the need of giant power plants located in the county and transmitting power either outside the county and/or outside the state. The question was raised as to air pollution created by the coal-fired power plant and its negative effect on the quality of life within the county.

Although presently proposed as a private company, and therefore taxable, several Commission members were sceptical as to continuation of the project as a private enterprise.

"There are absolutely no guarantees that this will not become a public utility and a non-taxable entity within Routt County," was Joe deGanahl's comment. "We also have no guarantee that one or more of the proposed reservoirs will not eventually be used for water diversion to the east slope...something this Commission has gone on record as opposing."

Although there is no proposal for water diversion under Oak Creek Power's plan, staff planner Diane Blake pointed out that there was also no proposal not to direct water out of the county.

Commission members brought discussion to a close with a vote to support the action of the County Commission. Planning Commission members also agreed to hold further discussion about the proposed project as it would affect planning matter.

## Oak Creek Power Company Proposal

### Estimated Impacts



protest must be filed with the FPC on or before Jan. 31.

The intervention petition would then involve the county in all actions pertaining to the proposal at federal and state levels.

The proposal of the Oak Creek Power Company is to build five reservoirs with a total storage capacity of 465,000 acre-feet and a hydroelectric generating capacity of 3,600 megawatts of power. Also included in the proposal is a coal-fired power plant with an ultimate capacity of 6,400 megawatts of power.

Surface Area of Proposed Reservoirs - approximately 22,000 acres

Conduit - 10 miles length x 50 acres/mile - 500 acres

**WATER REQUIREMENTS**

Proposed Total Storage Capacity - 480,109 acre-feet

The Blacktail reservoir would back water up 60 feet above the proposed lake at Stagecoach. The Blacktail Dam (335 feet) and the Lower Green Creek Dam (387 feet) and the Lower Green Creek Dam (387 feet) are much larger than any existing dams in the county.

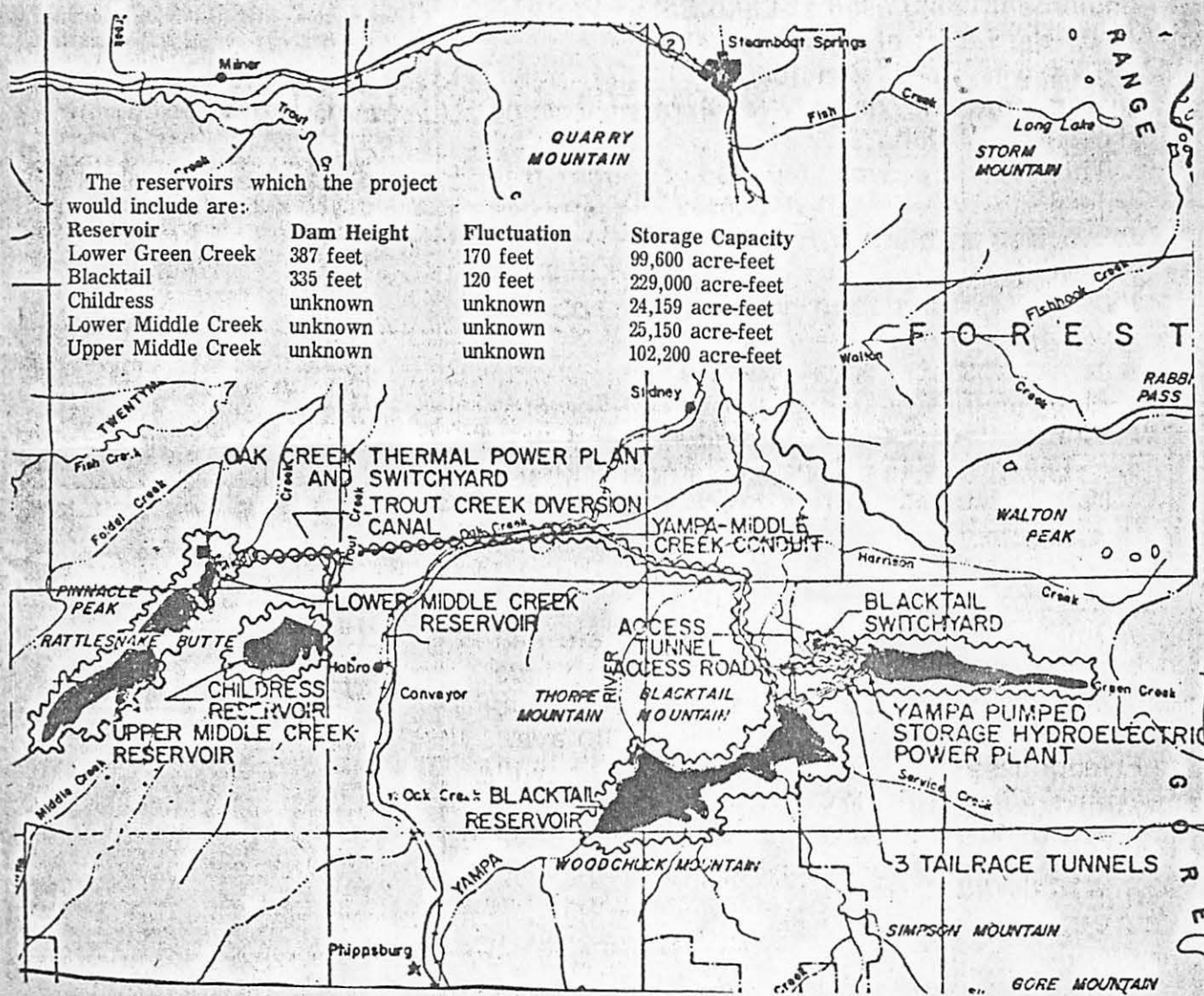
The thermal (coal fired) power plant proposed on Middle Creek (6,400 MW) would have more than double the

6,400 Kilowatts = 6,400,000 watts  
 Average BTU value of northwest Colorado coal - 10,000 BTU per pound of coal  
 10,000 BTU / 1lb = 1.17 kilowatt  
 8,530 BTU / KWh hour per pound of coal

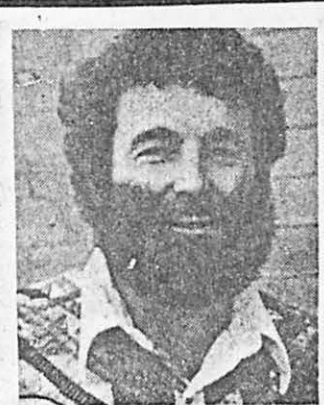
as it would affect planning matter.

**Oak Creek Power Company Proposal Estimated Impacts**

	CONSTRUCTION (1-10 YEARS) NOT PHASED		CONSTRUCTION (1-20 YEARS) PHASED		OPERATION (LONG TERM)	
	Employment	Total Added Population (1.2)	Employment	Total Added Population (1.7)	Employment	Total Added Population (2.3)
HYDROELECTRIC RESERVOIRS	500	600	300	510	150	345
STORAGE RESERVOIRS	300	360	150	255	20	46
POWER PLANT	2,925	3,510	630	1,071	550	1,265
CONDUIT AND SWITCHYARDS	300	360	100	170	50	115
TRANSMISSION FACILITIES	200	240	100	170	15	34
RELATED GROWTH (3:1)		1,690		725		1,203
<b>TOTAL ADDED POPULATION</b>	<b>4,225</b>	<b>6,760</b>	<b>1,280</b>	<b>2,901</b>	<b>785</b>	<b>3,008</b>
DWELLING UNITS REQUIRED		5,500		2,000		2,000
LAND AREA REQUIRED 10A/100 DU		550A		200A		200A



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