RECLAMATION REPORTS ON RUEDI DAM AND RESERVOIR, COLORADO

The Bureau of Reclamation report on the proposed Ruedi Dam and Reservoir on the Fryingpan River near Basalt, Colorado, has been forwarded to the interested States and Federal agencies for comment in accordance with the Flood Control Act of 1944, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Ruedi Dam is a potential feature of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, Colorado, offered as a substitute for the controversial Aspen Dam and Reservoir, originally proposed for construction on the Roaring Fork River. Both streams are tributaries of the Colorado River.

Commissioner of Reclamation Floyd E. Dominy said the proposed dam would be a 270-foot earthfill structure which would create a 100,000 acre-foot reservoir covering an area of only 1,000 acres. The damsite is about 14 miles east of Basalt, and about a quarter of a mile below the confluence of Ruedi Creek with the Fryingpan River.

The preliminary cost estimate, based upon January 1959 prices, is $12,831,000. Completion of the dam and reservoir would require about six years, and would include acquisition of about 1,500 acres of land, clearing of 600 acres of medium timber, and relocation of about 71/2 miles of gravel-surfaced Colorado State Highway 104, which now traverses the reservoir area.

The cost of the originally proposed 28,000-acre-foot Aspen Dam and Reservoir was estimated at $7,600,000. Inasmuch as the Ruedi Dam and Reservoir will perform the same replacement storage function, that amount is assigned as a Fryingpan-Arkansas Project cost, leaving $5,231,000 to be allocated among multiple-purpose uses on the western slope of the Colorado Rockies.

The Bureau report proposes the following tentative allocation of costs assignable to western slope uses: Reimbursable--municipal and industrial water, $3,300,700; nonreimbursable--flood control, $117,500; fish and wildlife, $1,757,800; and recreation, $55,000.
Annual benefits over a 100-year period were estimated at $678,500 and annual costs at $164,300, resulting in an extremely favorable ratio of benefits to costs of 3.57 to 1.

Major economic benefit to west slope interests would be derived from a regulated supply of 70,000 acre-feet of water in excess of requirements for downstream vested rights, fish propagation, flood control and Fryingpan-Arkansas Project diversions. The report estimated that this supply from Ruedi Reservoir, supplemented with water from other potential storage sites in the basin, would be sufficient to meet future requirements for municipal and industrial water expected to arise from commercial oil shale development in Western Colorado.

A Colorado Water Conservation Board study on water requirements for oil shale for the period 1960-1975 was made a part of the report. This study, by the Denver engineering firm of Cameron and Jones, Inc., recommended planning for a water supply of 250,000 acre-feet per year by 1975 to meet municipal and industrial development associated with expected commercial shale oil production in the Rifle-Debeque area.

The State of Colorado would be expected to furnish reasonable assurance as to the future repayment of costs allocated to this deferred municipal and industrial water supply from the Ruedi Reservoir which would have to be repaid with interest under provisions of the Water Supply Act of 1958.

Although the reach of Fryingpan River, which would be inundated by the reservoir now supports an important trout fishery, the net effect of project operation will be beneficial to fish, the report indicated. The stabilized releases from the dam will improve fish habitat downstream, and the reservoir will provide greater fishing opportunities than the reach of the natural stream involved. The Fish and Wildlife Service estimates an annual project benefit of $172,000 because of the enhancement of the fishery.

Annual benefits of $80,000 also will accrue from recreational use of Ruedi Reservoir, which is expected to attract annually some 50,000 visitor-days of use by campers, picnickers, hikers, fishermen and boating enthusiasts. Development of the reservoir for public use would be accomplished in cooperation with the Forest Service.

Operation of the reservoir for flood control, in conjunction with snow-melt runoff forecasts, would afford virtually complete control of snow-melt floods in the watershed and return annual benefits of about $11,500.

A report summarizing investigations made by the Colorado River Water Conservation District for serving the Cattle Creek and Mt. Sopris lands from Ruedi Reservoir was appended to the report, but the Bureau has not made sufficient investigations to recommend any specific irrigation plans.

The Commissioner found the proposed Ruedi project feasible and recommended that it be authorized as an integral feature of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project.
The Fryingpan-Arkansas Project was first reported to the Congress in 1953. The project involves collection of surplus waters on the two-mile-high watershed of the Fryingpan River and transporting it by a six-mile-long tunnel through the mountains at the 10,000-foot level to augment the water supply in the Arkansas River Valley in Colorado. The project would supply supplemental water to about 322,000 acres of irrigated land east of Pueblo, municipal water supplies for such cities as Pueblo, Colorado Springs, La Junta, and Lamar, Colorado, and would generate over 500,000,000 kilowatt-hours of energy annually in its long trip down the Arkansas Valley to Pueblo. Several bills to authorize the project have been before the Congress, the latest based on the Ruedi Report and the new operating principles, being introduced just before adjournment of the past session.