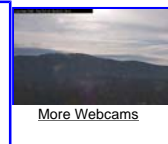


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Peabody plans Trout Creek Reservoir in Routt County

Energy company applying for a federal hydropower license

By [Tom Ross](#) Wednesday, April 4, 2012

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Peabody Energy is in the process of applying for a federal hydropower license, leading to the possible construction of a new water storage reservoir in the Trout and Middle creek drainages about 15 miles southwest of Steamboat Springs.

According to an engineering consultant working for Peabody, the company is preparing to file with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission a pre-application document along with a notice of intent, which in turn would trigger the process leading to issuance of the hydropower license.

Peabody owns Twentymile Mine and has begun construction on the new Sage Creek Mine, which would replace Twentymile. Trout Creek is a tributary of the Yampa River, which flows out of the northern edge of the Flat Tops mountain range.

Details of the proposed reservoir, which would be built on private land, became available when David Merritt, principal water resources engineer with URS Corp., sent a letter to Steamboat Springs attorney Tom Sharp in his capacity as chairman of the Yampa-White River Basin Roundtable, which is part of Colorado's Statewide Water Supply Initiative.

Merritt is consulting with Peabody on the Sage Creek project. He supervised construction of Wolford Mountain Reservoir near Kremmling in his previous role with the Colorado River Water Conservation District.

Merritt described the proposed Trout Creek Reservoir as being able to capture almost one-third as much water as Stagecoach Reservoir and cover roughly half the surface area of Stagecoach Reservoir.

"As currently planned, the reservoir would have a surface area of approximately 385 acres and a reservoir volume of approximately 11,720 acre-feet," Merritt wrote.

Since its recent expansion, Stagecoach can hold about 36,460 acre-feet and has a surface area of more than 780 acres.

"Water stored in the reservoir would be used to generate hydropower expected to average approximately 1 million kilowatt-hours per year. Additionally, the reservoir would support residential development, recreation and fish habitat as well as provide a source of water to support Peabody's mining operations in Northwest Colorado," Merritt added.

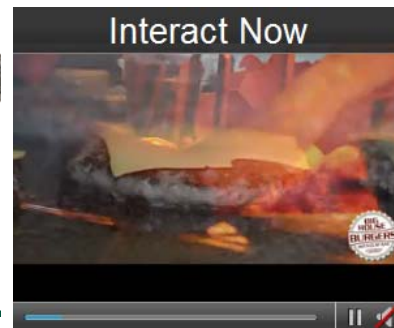
A Peabody spokesperson was unable to supply additional details late Wednesday afternoon.

Routt County Planning Director Chad Phillips said Wednesday that as an industrial facility supporting the operations of an existing coal mine, the proposed reservoir would need to seek a special-use permit through the county planning process.

Based on maps attached to Merritt's letter to Sharp, the length of the reservoir would be bonded on the east by Routt County Road 33 and on the south and west by C.R. 179.



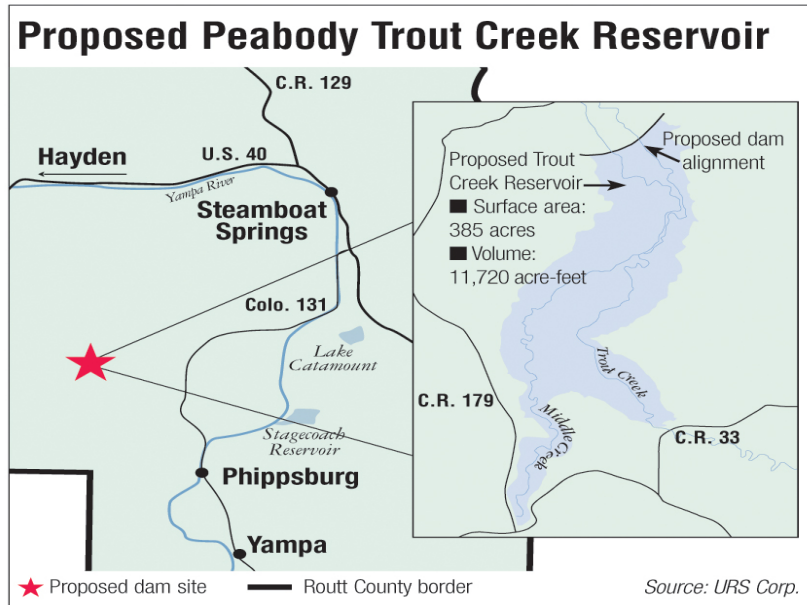
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Proposed Peabody Trout Creek Reservoir



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