



Thornton's Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

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The Poudre Runs Through It – Study / Action Work Group

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Thornton Northern Project - Components



TNP Water Court Decree

- Legally binding – addresses water rights injury and revegetation

Thornton Water Project

- Regulatory – pipeline routing and construction

Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

- Voluntary – community informed property management and divestiture

Thornton Northern Project



1985 to 1987
Acquisition

- Acquired 110 farms, ~21,000 acres
- 284 shares of Water Supply and Storage Company (WSSC)
- Farmhouses, wells, and other assets

1986 to 1998
Water Court

- Change of use from agricultural to municipal
- Junior direct and exchange rights

2014 to present
Thornton Water Project

- Pipeline/conveyance infrastructure
- Phased water delivery beginning in 2025

2018 to present
Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

- Visioning
- Data gathering
- Planning and engagement

Thornton Northern Project

History

- Thornton incorporated in 1956
- Acquired Northwest Utilities in 1963 – Clear Creek and well supplies
- Thornton develops Clear Creek & South Platte Supplies (including South Park water rights)
- 1982 Thornton invests in the Two Forks Reservoir Project; 13,000 acre-feet of supply for Thornton

Thornton Northern Project

History

- Two Forks begins faltering
- Thornton divests its interest & looks for alternative supply
- WSSC System
 - Consists of senior water rights stored in a series of high-mountain and plains reservoirs
 - Main ditch is the Larimer County Canal
 - Imports transmountain water from the Colorado, Laramie, and Michigan Rivers
 - Native water originates within the Cache la Poudre basin on the eastern slope



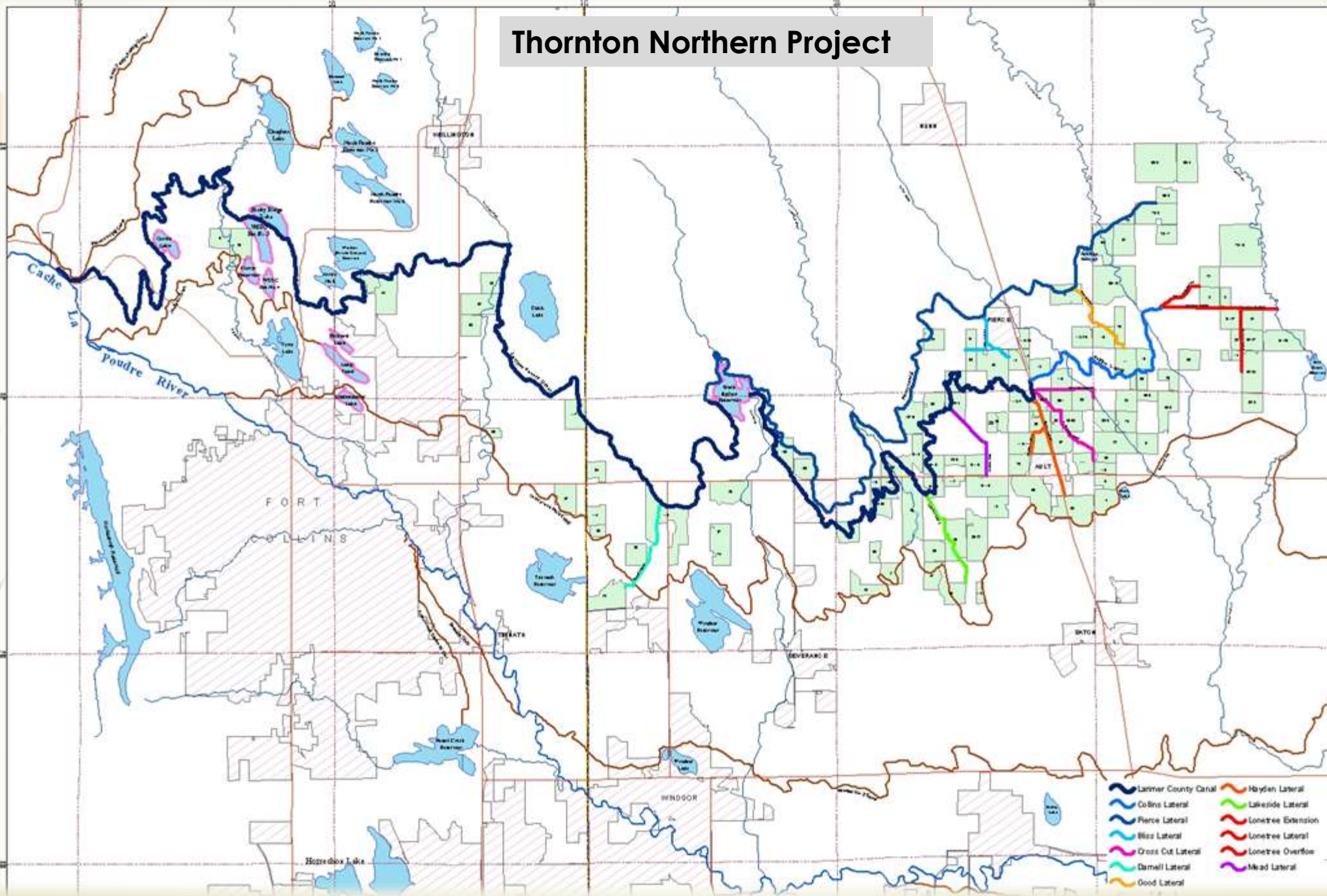
Thornton Northern Project

Acquisition

1985 to 1987 – Thornton purchased ~21,000 acres of irrigated farm land and associated water rights

- 110 farms
- 284 shares of WSSC
- Farmhouses, wells, and other assets

Thornton Northern Project



Thornton Northern Project
WSSC Facilities

1 inch equals 2 miles



Thornton Northern Project

Water Court

1986 to 1998 – Water Court

- 57 days of trial from 1991 – 1992; Decree 1994
- Supreme Court Appeal (Thornton v. Bijuou), ruling in 1996; remanded back to Water Court
- Final Decree on Remand in 1998

Agricultural Stewardship & Decree Compliance

Ongoing

The Water Court decree imposed requirements that prior to municipal conversion of the water rights.

- Revegetate the formerly irrigated land with native grasses or other suitable self-sustaining ground cover, dryland farming, or suitable non-agricultural uses.
- Construct facilities, return flow structures, and other ancillary facilities.

Agricultural Stewardship & Decree Compliance



Thornton Northern Project - Components

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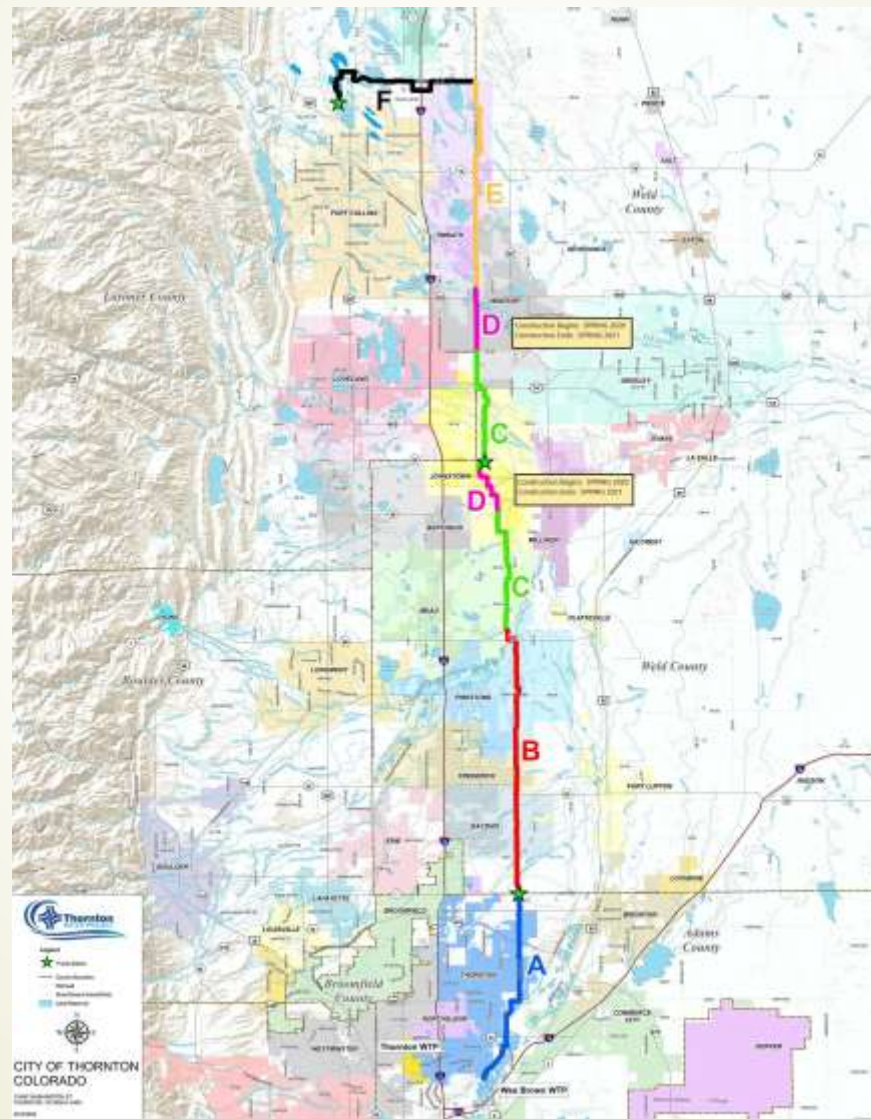
Thornton Water Project

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Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

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Thornton Water Project



Thornton Water Project



TIMELINE

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Project Operational
Permitting and Land Acquisition	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active
Design			Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active
Construction				Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active
Restoration and Stewardship					Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active

www.ThorntonWaterProject.com

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Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

Objective:

The Northern Properties Stewardship Plan is a **complementary process** to Thornton's agriculture-to-municipal water transfer. While Thornton's **water will be used in accordance with Thornton's water rights decree**, the Stewardship Plan is a **vision for the management and future land** use of Thornton's 18,000 acres.

Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

Vision:

Thornton aims to be an **engaged landowner**, respecting the needs and interests of the Northern Communities as it works to **secure its decreed water** rights. Through a **community-informed** land use planning effort and a future-oriented lens, Thornton will seek the **highest and best land uses** for its properties and will work to **ensure a positive impact** for the Northern Communities.

Northern Properties Stewardship Plan


Tasks	Status
Development an internal visioning document to establish project parameters and objectives	Complete
Interviews of subject matter experts (SMEs) in Larimer and Weld counties to inform possible NPSP approaches and undertakings	Complete / ongoing
Preliminary GIS data analyses to gather information that can guide decision-making.	Complete / ongoing
Community-informed, grant-funded study: Land-Use Assessment and Water Optimization Study	Underway

Northern Properties Stewardship Plan

Stakeholders Engaged

(Non-exhaustive, Ongoing)

- William Burnidge, **The Nature Conservancy**
- Nick Colglazier, **Colorado Corn Growers Association**
- Carmen Farmer, Sarah Parmar, **Colorado Open Lands**
- Michael Menefee, **Colorado Natural Heritage Program**
- Mayor Robert Piotrowski, Sharon Sullivan, **Town of Ault**
- Justin Scharton, **City of Greeley**
- Zack Thode, **Roberts Cattle Co, Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Board**
- George Wallace, **Larimer County Agricultural Advisory Board**
- Reagan Waskom, **Colorado Water Center**
- Alex Funk, Ben Wade, **Colorado Water Conservation Board**
- Cindy Lair, **Dept. of Agriculture**
- Brad Wind, Eric Wilkinson (ret.), **Northern Water**
- Angela Boag, **Dept. of Natural Resources**
- **Weld County Commissioners**



Northern Properties Stewardship Plan Interviews and Data Gathering ... what we've learned

Calls to action:

1. Maintain key components of the region's agricultural heritage.
2. Help agricultural economies transition.
3. Promote economic diversification.
4. Address a future with 1 million residents in 2040.
5. Advance regional approaches to land and water protection.

Land Use Assessment & Water Optimization Study

- **Regional Land Use Assessment.** Thornton will engage Larimer and Weld county communities and stakeholders to identify and document regional land use objectives.
- **Optimal Property Use Determinations.** Thornton will utilize the Land Use Assessment—in combination with local stakeholder input—to inform prospective future uses of its properties.
- **Property Management and Divestiture Strategies.** Thornton will explore land management and divestiture strategies that enable it to be effective stewards of city assets while meeting the present and future needs of local communities. It will explore five thematic opportunities raised by subject SMEs, in addition to other opportunities that evolve through the planning process:
 - sustaining irrigation on key properties using alternative, non-Thornton, water sources;
 - building partnerships to support innovative property transitions;
 - advancing land conservation planning and financing efforts;
 - strategically siting development and industry; and
 - implementing crop and cover transition BMPs.

Land Use Assessment & Water Optimization Study

Proposed Budget

Land Use and Water Optimization Study cost - \$500,000

City of Thornton:	\$75,000 ✓
Metro Basin Roundtable WSRF Grant:	\$25,000 ✓
South Platte Basin Roundtable WSRF Grant:	\$25,000 ✓
Statewide WSRF Grant:	\$50,000
Colorado's Water Plan Grant:	\$100,000
Department of Local Affairs/other/Thornton :	\$225,000

The City of Thornton has invested \$200,000 to the NPSP to date.

How can PRTI Engage?

- **Participate as a stakeholder in the community-informed studies**
- Letter of Support for our CWCB and other grant applications
- Funding participation



Thank you!



Questions?