

Dillon Reservoir

Program Description:

Dillon Reservoir, Colorado:

The nation's first trading program was established for the Dillon Reservoir in Colorado (Kashmaniam, Jaksch, Niedzialkowski and Podar, 1986). The reservoir's pristine quality is a key recreational attraction. During the early 1980's, the area experienced tremendous growth. Water quality was declining and the reservoir was being utilized more as a drinking water supply for the Denver metropolitan area (Zander, 1991). This situation caused a coalition of concerned stakeholders to form the Phosphorus Club. The Phosphorus Club came up with an innovative strategy called the Dillon Bubble. This program allowed municipal facilities to obtain phosphorous reduction credits by funding controls to reduce phosphorous loadings from existing urban nonpoint sources (Apogee Research, Inc., 1992). The Apogee study pointed out that a 2:1 point/nonpoint source trading ratio was set to provide a margin of environmental safety rather than compensate for growth and increased point and nonpoint loadings. Point sources could obtain one pound of phosphorous credit for every two pounds of phosphorous controlled by nonpoint sources under the program. The operating efficiencies of existing municipal tertiary treatment facilities was upgraded and achieved the highest phosphorous removal capabilities in the nation so that by 1990 they only contributed 2% of the total reservoir phosphorous loading (Apogee Research, Inc., 1992). For these reasons point/nonpoint source trading did not occur. However, two trades occurred among nonpoint sources to offset new discharges to the reservoir.

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