



AURORA WATER

History Timeline



1879 - Construction begins on the High Line Canal, a gravity-flow system designed to bring water from the South Platte River in Waterton Canyon to the plains south and east of Denver, a total of 71 miles. In as many years, however, before the canal lives up to its promises and potential.

1891 - The Town of Fletcher (Aurora) is incorporated. The Town purchases the East Denver Water Company, incurring a bond debt of \$150,000. The gravity feed water system was to be a reliable source of water, but it never produced a significant supply.

1892 - Aurora Lake is built by John Slattery at 16th Ave. and Kingston St. to irrigate alfalfa fields. It was also used for boating and fishing. Today, the First Presbyterian Church stands at the center of the old lake bed.

1896 - A severe drought begins, lasting several years, starting Fletcher's first lawn watering restrictions. The High Line Canal is also dry. The Town Marshall doubles as the town's Water Marshall to control water usage.

1902 - Fletcher's water system is deeded over to the Denver Union Water Company to provide a reliable source of water for town residents.

1907 - The town's name is changed from Fletcher to Aurora, which had been the town's largest subdivision. A lien is placed on all property in Aurora to refinance the water bond debt.

1909 - The High Line Canal is sold by the Northern Colorado Irrigation Company to the Antero and Lost Park Reservoir Company. Antero Reservoir in Park County is completed (having been started in 1893) and the High Line Canal finally provides a reliable source of water for farmers and ranchers south and east of Denver, and in the area of Aurora.

1916 - The City of Denver purchases the Denver Union Water Company, restructuring it as the Denver Water Board.

1924 - The Denver Water Board acquires the High Line Canal.

1949 - The City of Aurora creates its own Water Department to operate the system within the city limits. Water is still provided by the Denver Water Board.

1952 - The Denver Water Board imposes lawn watering restrictions as the supply of water cannot keep up with the huge growth of population in the metropolitan area.

1954 - The Denver Water Board imposes a "Blue Line" in the suburbs beyond which it will no longer grant permits for new water taps. Parts of Aurora fall out of the Denver Water Board service area.

1956 - The original \$150,000 Fletcher water bonds are finally paid off, costing a total of \$400,000 in payments.

1957 - The water rights of the Last Chance Ditch are purchased by Aurora. Water from Wellington Lake in Jefferson County passes through the Last Chance Ditch to be stored in tanks near Cherry Creek Dam.

1958 - Aurora enters into an agreement with the City of Colorado Springs to construct the "Homestake Project," designed to use water rights purchased on the Western Slope and bring that water to the two cities. Legal challenges by the Denver Water Board and Western Slope interests are finally decided in favor of Aurora and Colorado Springs by the Colorado Supreme Court in 1961.

1959 - A well field is placed in Cherry Creek, providing water to 1700 new homes outside the Blue Line. The cities incurred significant financial burden undertaking this project.

1963 - Homestake Project construction begins.

1967 - Phase I of the Homestake Project is completed at a cost of \$38,000,000. Aurora frees itself from reliance upon the Denver Water Board. During the following two decades the Aurora water system is expanded to include water rights from the South Platte, Colorado and Arkansas Rivers, and nine reservoirs.

1968 - Griswold Water Treatment Plant is completed to address stringent water quality goals.

1970 - Aurora develops an innovative system to provide reusable water for non-potable uses such as irrigation of golf courses and parks.

1973 - Quincy Reservoir is added to Aurora's water system and also provides a recreational facility.

1974 - Parts of the Homestake Tunnel collapse requiring massive repairs.

1978 - Aurora begins outside water rationing, using "circle-diamond-square" symbols based on street addresses to limit lawn watering to every third day.

1980 - Office of Water Conservancy is established.

1981 - The Rampart Pipeline is completed, increasing Aurora's raw water transmission capacity from 31 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) to 72 MGD at a cost of \$20.5 million. An ordinance and permit system limits the use of cool weather turf on new lawns.

1983 - Quincy Treatment Plant is completed, adding 60 MGD to Aurora's water system. Renames Wemlinger Water Treatment Plant in 1985.

1989 - Aurora Reservoir is completed at a cost of \$41,000,000, adding more than 31,000 acre-feet of storage and another recreational venue.

2003 - In March, reservoirs are at 26% of capacity, the lowest level in Aurora Water's history.

2004 - Modifications to Wemlinger Water Treatment Plant completed on a fast-track schedule to address water quality conditions related to drought.

2004 - Aurora conceives a major new water supply project called Prairie Waters Project in response to several previous years of severe drought, which seriously depleted Aurora's reservoir storage.

2006 - Aurora Utilities Department changes its name to Aurora Water.

2007 - Prairie Waters Project breaks ground, a significant milestone toward completion of this project. PWP is estimated to cost \$754 million.

Oct. 8, 2010 - The Prairie Waters system is completed at a final cost of \$653 million. Prairie Waters increased Aurora's water supply by 20%.

For more information, contact:
Aurora Water Public Relations
303-739-7081

www.aurorawater.org



www.auroragov.org