

Over The River / project for Arkansas River, State of Colorado

FAQs

1. What is *Over The River*?

Over The River is a two-week temporary work of art by world-renowned artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude. The artists plan to suspend horizontally a total of 5.9 miles of silvery, luminous fabric panels high above the Arkansas River along a 42-mile stretch of the river between Salida and Cañon City in south-central Colorado. Fabric panels will be suspended at eight distinct areas of the river that have been selected by the artists for their aesthetic merits and technical viability.

Over The River involves two different viewing experiences: one from the highway where the fabric will reflect the colors of the sky, from the golden morning sunlight to the various hues of the sunset; the other from the water level, where rafters, kayakers and canoeists will be able to view the clouds, sky and mountain contours through the translucent fabric. Christo plans to exhibit the temporary work of art for two consecutive weeks in August of 2015, if all remaining permits are granted as planned.

2. How many visitors will *Over The River* bring to Colorado?

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's previous temporary works of art have drawn visitors from around the world, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in tourist spending for hosting communities. For example, their most recent project, *The Gates* in New York City's Central Park in 2005, attracted an estimated 4 million visitors, generating more than \$250 million in economic activity.

In the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) projected that *Over The River* will bring a total of 416,000 visitors to the Arkansas River Valley, including 344,000 visitors during the two week exhibition period and 72,000 visitors during installation and removal combined. The BLM also estimates that *Over The River* will generate more than \$121 million in total economic output throughout Colorado.

3. Who will pay for *Over The River*?

Through the sale of Christo's original works of art, the artists fund 100-percent of costs associated with *Over The River*, including the permitting process, manufacturing, installation and removal of the project. The temporary work of art will be created without public subsidy or taxpayer support, and the artists do not accept viewing fees, sponsorships or outside investments of any kind. Christo will also pay for additional visitor services during *Over The River's* exhibition, such as traffic control, trash removal, communications and emergency response.

4. Why use this location for *Over The River*?

Over the course of three years in the early 1990s, the artists traveled 14,000 miles visiting 89 rivers in seven Rocky Mountain states in search of the location for *Over The River*. They ultimately identified the Arkansas River between Salida and Cañon City as the ideal location because it provides the following: an east/west orientation so the fabric panels capture the variety of contrasting sunlight from morning to evening; high river banks that allow for steel cables to be suspended; a road running continuously along the river to provide viewing; a nearby railroad that provides essential access as well as transportation for supplies, equipment and workers; and rafting conditions that create opportunities to view the work of art from the river.

5. Can US-50 handle the traffic that will be generated by *Over The River*?

Christo understands that traffic is one of the most important concerns of the region. Throughout the EIS process, the BLM has worked closely with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to minimize traffic impacts caused by the temporary work of art. With the implementation of several mitigation measures, the Final EIS determined that traffic delays during the project's construction and removal periods would be negligible. During the two-week exhibition period, travelers can expect a maximum travel time increase of 17 minutes in the westbound direction and 11 minutes in the eastbound direction for the project's full 42-mile drive. However, this would only be the case during two Saturdays and two Sundays, and delays would be far less during the non-peak days of the exhibition.

6. How will *Over The River* affect wildlife and the environment?

Christo and Jeanne-Claude have always believed that the natural environment, including all wildlife, is one of the Arkansas River Valley's greatest treasures. The artists bring to *Over The River* a strong commitment to conservation and are dedicated to avoiding or minimizing all potential impacts related to noise, vegetation, air quality and water quality during the construction and removal phases, as well as during the two-week viewing period.

In fact, the artists altered their artistic design, installation schedule and the viewing period to address wildlife and environmental concerns. For example, the construction and viewing periods have been carefully scheduled around breeding and nesting seasons. Construction buffer zones will be created near potentially active eagle nests and around designated sheep areas. Christo will entirely fund a new wildlife corridor that the Colorado Division of Wildlife has long sought, thus providing an improvement for bighorn sheep that will last long after *Over The River* is removed. Because of these and more than 100 other mitigation measures, the BLM determined in the Final EIS that there will be no "Significant Impacts" to any terrestrial, avian or aquatic wildlife as a result of *Over The River*.

7. How will *Over The River* affect the fishing and rafting industries?

Christo understands the importance of the fishing and rafting industries to the Arkansas River Valley and is committed to working with these groups in planning and executing the temporary work of art. The artists have already adjusted the proposed placement of some panels and other design characteristics in response to feedback from the fishing and rafting industries.

Because *Over The River* is designed to be experienced from both US-50 and the river below, the temporary work of art presents great opportunities for the Valley's rafting industry. The viewing period is scheduled to occur in late summer, which minimizes impacts to the rafting industry while also extending their traditional busy season. In fact, the BLM estimated an additional \$3.4 million in rafting industry revenue as a result of *Over The River*.

8. What type of impacts can we expect during the two-year installation?

Christo and Jeanne-Claude have committed to installing *Over The River* with as little interruption as possible to the daily lives of local residents. In the Final EIS, the BLM explains: "Overall, the quality of life for most residents would be unaffected by installation and removal activities. The influx of additional visitor spending and temporary increase in the incomes of local residents would be a benefit to the area." The vast majority of impacts during installation will be limited to the direct areas where anchors will be drilled and installed. This entails only 15-percent of the Arkansas River Valley between Salida and Cañon City. Additionally, because the construction is done in phases, the duration of disturbance is relatively brief at any one location.

At times, the installation process will require temporary one-lane closures on US-50. However, these short-term one-lane closures would involve no more than a 400-foot stretch of the highway in any 10-mile section, causing an average delay of just 3 minutes per vehicle.

Additionally, the artists have committed to using drill mufflers, acoustical shrouds and quieter back-up alarms on vehicles to minimize noise disruption during construction. The installation team will also develop and strictly adhere to a construction routing/scheduling plan to minimize the impacts to the environment.

9. What happens after the two-week exhibition?

Crews will begin removing the fabric panels immediately following the exhibition of *Over The River*. The fabric panel removal process is expected to be complete within two weeks. Weather permitting, all visible elements of the project will be completely removed within a few months and surface-level holes filled with BLM-approved top soil. As with the artists' past projects, the materials will be industrially recycled. There will be no lasting signs of the brief existence of this temporary work of art.