News Release
May 8, 2017

Business and Ag voices on Economics of the Rivers of the Grand Valley at annual State of the River meeting

Event includes basics of water law and hydrology, a local business panel and highlights of new water banking pilot program

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo. – West Slope residents and businesses are invited to a free day of information and engagement about the Colorado River at the annual Mesa County State of the River public meeting on Monday, May 15, from 3:30-8:00 pm at the Avalon Theatre at Seventh and Main streets in downtown Grand Junction.

The event is organized by the Colorado River District, Business for Water Stewardship and the Ruth Powell Hutchins Water Center at Colorado Mesa University.

The program is designed for anyone interested in learning more about our area’s rivers. This year’s theme is Economics of the Rivers of the Grand Valley. Sessions are designed to engage the business, agricultural and economic development communities as well as anyone interested in the economic vitality of this region. The Colorado River is a major economic driver for the West Slope, playing a part in all sectors of our economy.

“The Colorado River, upon which we all depend for our economic and recreational livelihood, is operating at a long-term deficit. We take more water out of the Colorado each year than is put in by annual snow and rain fall resulting in critically low water levels in Lake Powell and Lake Mead,” said David Miller, senior vice president and Green Team chairperson at Alpine Bank.

“Smart local action can help reverse this trend. And local businesses that are oftentimes left out of the conversation can make a difference,” Miller added.
Program Highlights Include:

- 3:30 pm – CMU Hutchins Water Center Director and professor Gigi Richard will give an overview of watershed and hydrology basics followed by a quick presentation on the basics of Colorado Water Law by attorney Aaron Clay of Delta.
- 5:00 pm - Business panel “Why Should the Business Community Care About Water on the West Slope?” with the following panelists:

  **Moderator: Tom Kleinschnitz**, director, Moffat County Tourism Association and owner of Adventure Bound Rafting
  **Bruce Talbott**, longtime fruit farmer in the Grand Valley
  **Sarah Shrader**, Co-Owner, Bonsai Design & Founder, Outdoor Rec Coalition
  **David Miller**, Senior Vice President & Green Team Chairperson, Alpine Bank
  **Sam Williams**, General Manager, Powderhorn Mountain Resort
  **Kristi Pollard**, Executive Director, Grand Junction Economic Partnership

- 6:00-6:45 pm - **Networking and Appetizers**
- 6:45-8:00 pm - **State of the River Panelists**
  **Ryan Christianson**, Hydrologist, Bureau of Reclamation will cover about stream flows forecasts and reservoir operations
  **Eric Kuhn**, Colorado River District, General Manager will talk about Colorado River challenges
  **Luke Gingerich**, Engineer, Grand Valley Water Users Association will talk about the important water banking experiment involving irrigated lands on the Government-Highline Canal.

In addition to the sponsors, the event is supported by Alpine Bank, Club 20 and the Tamarisk Coalition.

For more information, contact Jim Pokrandt at the Colorado River District at 970-945-8522 x 236 or edinfo@crwcd.org; or Molly Mugglestone of the Business for Water Stewardship, molly@businessforwater.org.

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