Wolford Mountain Reservoir to fill this month; high water levels to be maintained through summer

Operations to be discussed at May 17 Grand County State of the River meeting

KREMMLING, Colo. -- Wolford Mountain Reservoir is expected to fill this month with spring snowmelt and remain full through July 15, which is good news for the boating, camping and fishing enthusiasts attracted to this popular recreational amenity eight miles north of Kremmling in Grand County, Colorado, according to officials from the Colorado River District, owner and operator of the facility.

While recreation is an important component of the reservoir, as in the years since the reservoir opened in 1996, water will be released throughout the later part of summer for water contracts, endangered fish flows in the Colorado River and, this year, minor construction on the dam.

Drawdowns will be similar to how recreational users have seen the reservoir operate in the past several summers, said John Currier, the River District’s chief engineer. He said he expects that reservoir levels will be down 10 feet from full by August 15 and 20 feet down on September 1. Weather conditions such as rain or drought, as in every summer, could cause changes to this schedule.

Complete details of reservoir operations and construction plans will be discussed at the Colorado River District’s annual Grand County State of the River meeting, 5:30-8 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2017 at the Inn at Silver Creek, near Granby. This is a public meeting and is free. The keynote speaker is Anne Castle of the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment. Her topic is: “As Goes Grand County, So Goes the Colorado River.” Other speakers will address operations of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project and Moffat Tunnel, among other topics.

Construction work this year at Ritschard Dam will consist of topdressing the dam to restore the dam height, which has settled over time, and removal of added fill on the upstream side of the dam that had been placed for installation of temporary instrumentation.

For the past seven years, the River District has been intensely studying the dam because settlement of the earthen structure had exceeded normal expectations. In 2016, River District officials and consulted experts determined that the dam is safe and does not require extensive rehabilitation. This year’s work will return the dam height to its original elevation. Meanwhile, sophisticated measuring devices in the dam will continue to be closely monitored.

For more information, email edinfo@crwcd.org or call Community Affairs Director Jim Pokrandt at 970-945-8522. For more background information of Wolford Mountain Reservoir, visit http://www.coloradoriverdistrict.org/wolford-mountain-reservoir/.