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West Slope Local Governments Join Forces to Boost River Flows

Garfield County Commissioners Join West Slope Municipalities to Provide Needed Water from Ruedi Reservoir for Environmental and Agricultural Needs Downstream

Glenwood Springs, CO — Garfield County has joined the Towns of Carbondale and Palisade, the Snowmass Water and Sanitation District and the City of Aspen in a collective effort to contribute more than 1,500 total acre feet of unscheduled “contract water” held in Ruedi Reservoir for agricultural and environmental needs along the lower Roaring Fork River and farther downstream on the Colorado River.

The Colorado River District was first approached by the Town of Carbondale with an offer to provide some of the Town’s unused, uncommitted water in Ruedi for downstream needs. The River District then approached other local governments with unused reserves in Ruedi to join in the effort. The table below outlines the total contributions by individual governments taking part in the most recent contributions.

“When it comes to drought, we’re all in this together,” said Jay Harrington, Carbondale’s Town Manager. **“We recognized there were multiple needs downstream that weren’t being met and we wanted to do what we could to help.”**

The unusual and generous move by local governments in the Roaring Fork and Colorado River Basins follows previous efforts this dry summer that utilized reserves in Ruedi Reservoir to satisfy downstream irrigation needs known as the “Cameo Call,” a suite of historic agricultural water rights near Palisade in the Grand Valley.

The Colorado River District and Ute Water Conservancy District previously contributed a combined total of 8,000 acre feet from late July into September. Those contributions were used to substitute water that would have typically come from Green Mountain Reservoir’s “Historic Users Pool” (HUP) to satisfy the Cameo Call. But the HUP was depleted far earlier than usual due to extremely dry conditions in western Colorado this year.

XTO, a subsidiary of ExxonMobil, followed suit in September with 5,000 acre feet of Ruedi releases to provide water for endangered fish species in what is known as the Critical 15-Mile Reach between Palisade and the Colorado River’s confluence with the Gunnison River.

“2018 was a horrible water year for all of us on the West Slope,” said John Currier, Chief Engineer for the Glenwood Springs-based Colorado River District. **“This is a good example of folks from both ends of the basin coming together to assist their neighbors and the environment.”**

Governmental Entity	Water Contribution from Ruedi
Town of Carbondale	250 Acre Feet
Town of Palisade	162 Acre Feet
Snowmass Water and Sanitation	400 Acre Feet
City of Aspen	400 Acre Feet
Garfield County	350 Acre Feet

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