



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Public Groundbreaking Celebration for the Fire Mountain Canal Improvement Project

HOTCHKISS, CO – To mark the start of a large two-year irrigation canal construction project, a group of partners in the North Fork of Gunnison River Basin is hosting a public celebration on January 8 on Rogers Mesa to be followed by a free lunch and project presentation at Memorial Hall in Hotchkiss.

The coalition of partners will break ground on the Fire Mountain Canal Improvement Project with a short ceremony on-site at 10 a.m. (parking at the intersection of L and 3100 Roads) followed by lunch beginning at 12:30 p.m. at Memorial Hall to share details of the cooperatively funded initiative.

The public is invited to attend both events to learn about the \$4.6 million project that will convert more than four miles of open, unlined, earthen canal to a buried, large-diameter pipeline. When completed, the project will pipe the Fire Mountain Canal from east of Leroux Creek and will extend all the way to its end near Stingley Gulch.

The Fire Mountain Canal Improvement Project is part of the regional Lower Gunnison Project (LGP) that is being managed by the [Colorado River District](#), a water conservation district based in Glenwood Springs.

Together with a series of local, state and federal entities, the LGP is systematically improving irrigation infrastructure in the Lower [Gunnison River Basin](#) from Colona and Cimarron to Delta. The LGP combines over \$50 million of funding from the US Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, local water conservancy and conservation districts and local irrigation companies like the Fire Mountain Canal and Reservoir Company.

In all, the LGP is working to improve agricultural water use efficiencies in four primary “focus areas” in the Lower Gunnison Basin. In addition to the North Fork Water Conservancy District service area, these focus areas include the Bostwick Park Water Conservancy District, the Crawford Water Conservancy District and the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users Association project area.

The LGP is formally entitled: “Modernizing Agricultural Water Management in the Lower Gunnison River Basin: A Cooperative Approach to Increased Water Efficiency and Water Quality Improvement.” It was founded on the ‘grand vision’ of local agricultural producers and irrigation water providers, to not only increase water use efficiency but to improve agricultural productivity and sustainability by integrating and coordinating modernized conveyance systems with upgraded, on-farm, high efficiency irrigation systems.

For more information on the LGP and the Fire Mountain Canal Improvement Project visit <http://gunnisonriverbasin.org/projects/lower-gunnison-project>. To participate in ground breaking ceremony events and to RSVP, please email info@GunnisonRiverBasin.org or call Martha Moore, Colorado River District’s Public Relations Specialist at 970-945-8522.

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