



**MEMORANDUM**  
**DECEMBER 28, 2018**

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**TO:** BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
**CC:** ANDY MUELLER, GENERAL MANAGER DK & SC  
**FROM:** DAVE “DK” KANZER, P.E. AND SONJA CHAVEZ  
**SUBJECT:** LOWER GUNNISON PROJECT ACTIVITIES YEAR END BRIEFING

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***ACTION:** No Board action requested; this is an informational memo*

**APPLICABLE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE(S):**

3. C. The River District will engage in and support water supply planning efforts, local and regional, which include adapting to climate change impacts.
7. C. The River District will look for opportunities where its efforts are needed as a catalyst to help in-District interests plan for and meet their water needs in a manner that is consistent with the District’s compact contingency planning goals and objectives.
- 7.D. The River District will actively pursue funding sources and provide financial assistance to be used for the refurbishment and modernization of the aging water supply infrastructure within the District in order to help preserve and improve existing supplies and operations.

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**Background Information**

This memo briefly describes the recent activities and accomplishments of the Lower Gunnison Project, a cooperatively-funded initiative to increase agricultural water use efficiency, consistent with the Board’s adopted Strategic Initiative(s).

The River District directly manages a portion of this multi-year effort using \$8MM of USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of directed funding (not a grant). This funding leverages other monies, including approximately \$45MM of Colorado River Storage Project Act (CRSPA) power revenues and Colorado River Salinity Control funding (estimated to be approximately \$10-20MM from 2015 and 2017 grant cycles). Together this funding enables construction activities to reduce water loss through the conversion of open canals to pipe and from inefficient flood irrigation to pressurized sprinklers. This limits non-beneficial water losses for agricultural water users and cuts off deep percolation to reduce return flows that mobilize contaminants, like salt and selenium, to the Lower Gunnison River. The LGP will ultimately decrease headgate demands and administrative spills as efficiencies increase, resulting in conserved water in upstream reservoirs, where available.

**LGP Activities Update – Off-farm 2018**

We are very happy to report that several LGP projects have been contracted and are now under construction. These include:

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(970) 945-8522 • (970) 945-8799 Fax  
[www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org](http://www.ColoradoRiverDistrict.org)

**LOWER GUNNISON PROJECT ACTIVITIES BRIEFING - 2018**

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*The Fire Mountain Canal Improvement Project* (“Segment 47”; 22,400 feet or 4.2 miles, large diameter pipe; including new Leroux Creek siphon; Total Cost Estimated at \$4.6MM) This large 2-year construction project is now under way and a formal groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for January 8<sup>th</sup> on Rogers Mesa with a public celebration in Hotchkiss to follow. The project is cooperatively funded by the Fire Mountain Canal and Reservoir Company (approximately \$200K), RCPP Watershed Authority (\$1.15M – managed by the River District), Reclamation Salinity Control (\$2.95M), and Colorado Water Conservation Board (\$191K). The RCPP portion, with fiscal management by the River District, involves piping approximately 10,570 feet or 2 miles of the lower Fire Mountain Canal ‘extension’.

*Uncompahgre Valley WUA Phase 9 East Side Laterals Piping Project* (includes piping of GB, GBA, GK, EU, and EO Laterals; 113,860 feet or 21.5 miles; Total Cost Estimated at \$6.9M) This multi-year project is under construction, with joint funding by UVWUA (\$50k); RCPP Watershed Authority (\$1.3M – managed by the River District), Reclamation Salinity Control (\$5.3M), and State of Colorado Non-Point Source Program (\$230k). The RCPP funded portion, with fiscal management by the River District, involves piping the GB and GBA Laterals (17,846 feet or 3.4 miles) off of the East Canal system near Olathe.

*Bostwick Park WCD West Lateral Phase 1 Piping Project* (includes approximately 2,650 feet or 0.5 miles of new pipeline, with a total cost of \$536,400). This construction project is nearing completion. The project is entirely funded by RCPP Watershed Authority (\$499k - managed by the River District) with technical assistance funding from the Colorado Water Conservation Board (\$37.4k).

*The Needle Rock Headgate Improvement Project* (includes new headgate structure and 875 feet of pipeline; total estimated cost of \$380,000). Delays due to landowner concerns has delayed this project and construction is still pending additional information, the design has been approved and a contractor has been selected. Construction is to be wholly funded by the RCPP Watershed Authority with technical assistance monies provided by the CWCB; fiscal and contract management is to be directly provided by River District staff on behalf of the private mutual ditch company with anticipated construction completed by spring of 2019.

*Crawford WCD Projects* (includes C4 Regulating Reservoir, Aspen Canal Pipeline and reservoir automation, Crawford Clipper Center Lateral Pipeline). These large projects are in various stages of design and environmental permitting with various sources of funding (\$5MM CRSP MOA, \$2MM Salinity and \$200K CWCB technical assistance) being brought together; final design and budgeting information to enable late 2019 construction are anticipated soon.

**LGP Activities Update – On- and near-farm improvements 2018**

A great deal of work has been accomplished with regard to RCPP EQIP on-farm activities that are being managed by River District staff. Of the 22 Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) developed, 18 were submitted by landowners for consideration for construction implementation funding award. Subsequently, 15 irrigation improvement projects were selected for construction implementation funding. Following notice of award, and prior to construction, River District staff

is working to complete the required cultural resources surveys and related NEPA compliance in conjunction with local NRCS offices (Delta and Shavano).

Before final engineering and design contracts can be executed with landowners for on-farm irrigation improvement projects, there are some outstanding contract provisions issues to resolve that require approval from the NRCS National Headquarters (NHQ) to ensure consistency with the Lower Gunnison Project Alternative Funding Arrangement. It is hoped that these obstacles and delays can be resolved in time to be able to construct some of the smaller and simpler projects in the spring of 2019 with the remaining larger and more complex projects taking place fall of 2019.