



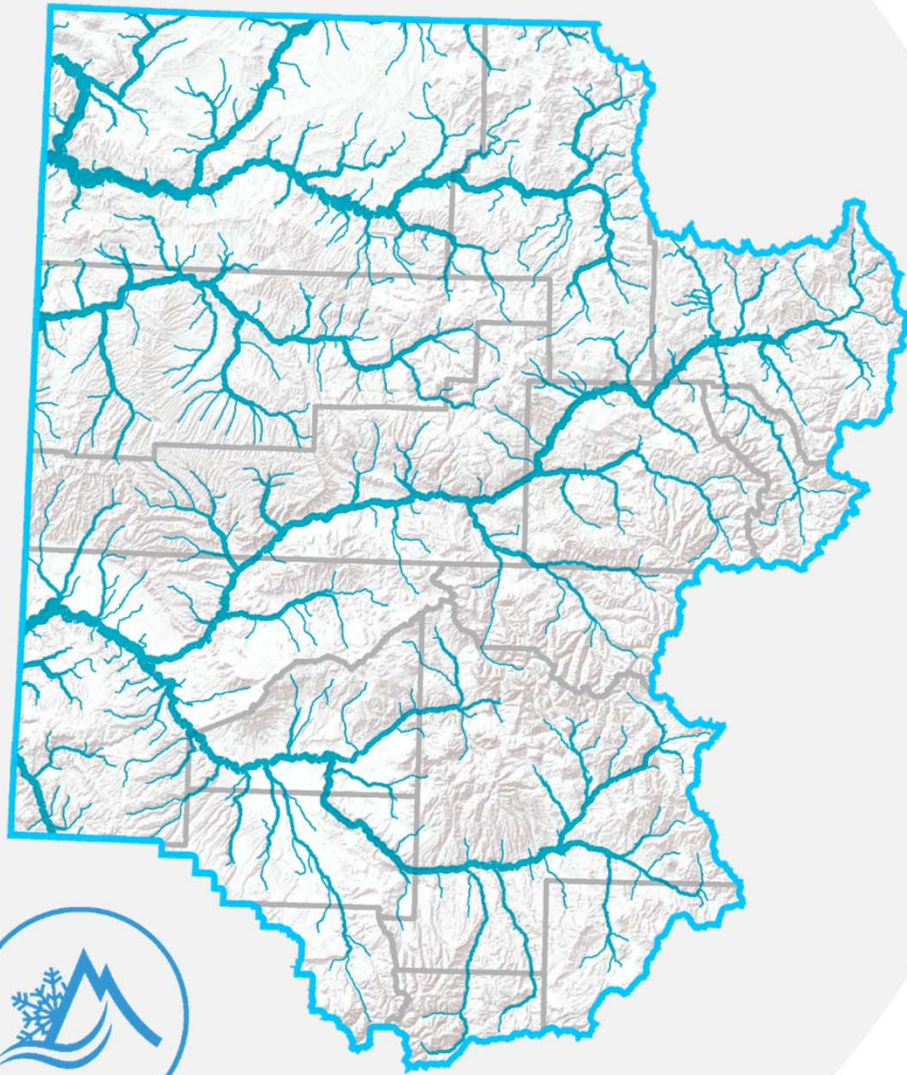
# Protecting West Slope Water Supplies: Colorado River State of the River

---

Andy Mueller  
General Manager  
Colorado River District  
August 19, 2020

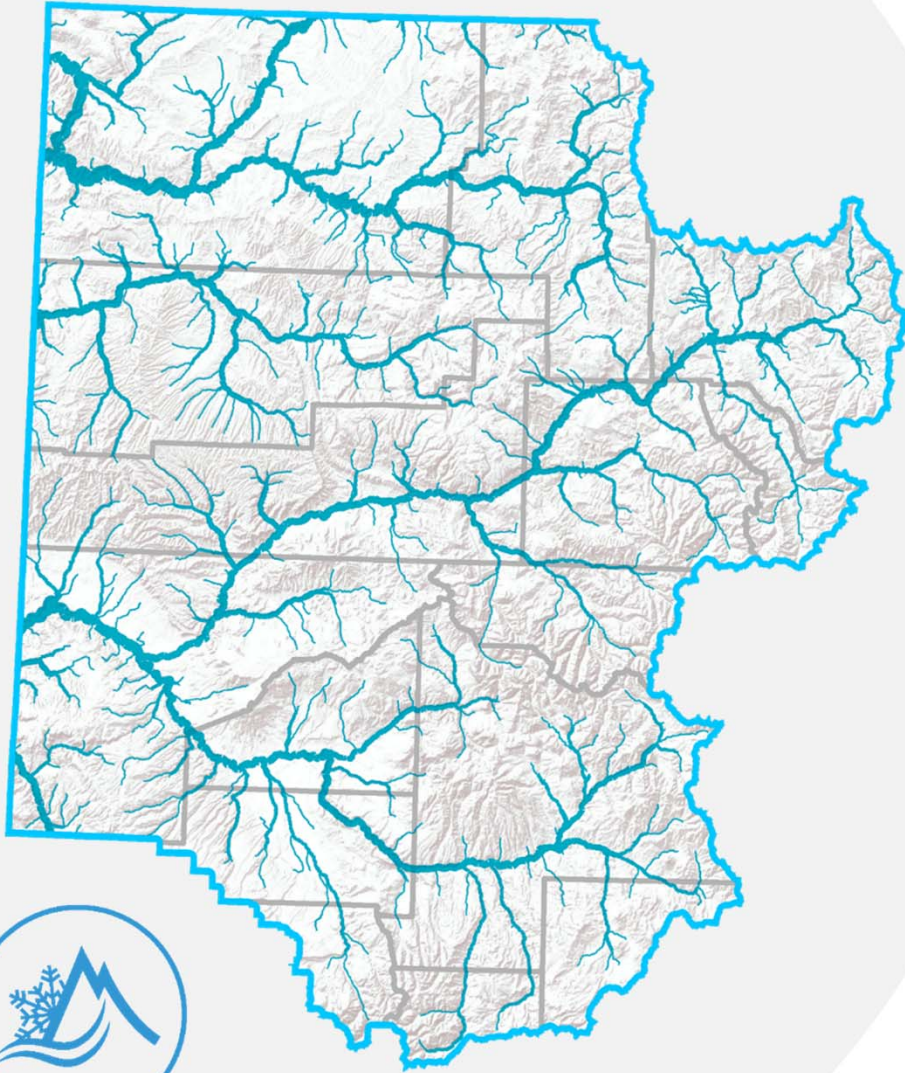


**COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT**  
PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937

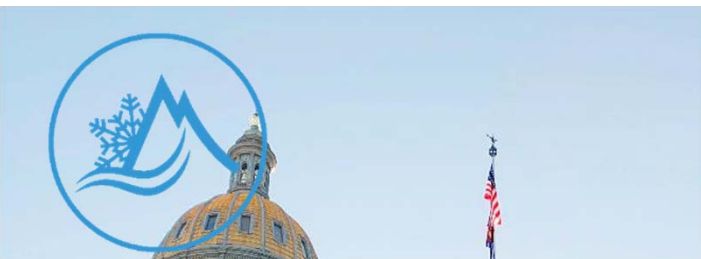


To lead in the  
**protection,  
conservation,  
use, and  
development**  
of the water resources of  
the Colorado River basin.





- The Colorado River District covers 28% of the area of Colorado
- The District contains 80% of the state's water but only 10% of the population
- Each county has representation on the District's Board of Director's
- Funded exclusively through mill levy & water activity enterprise



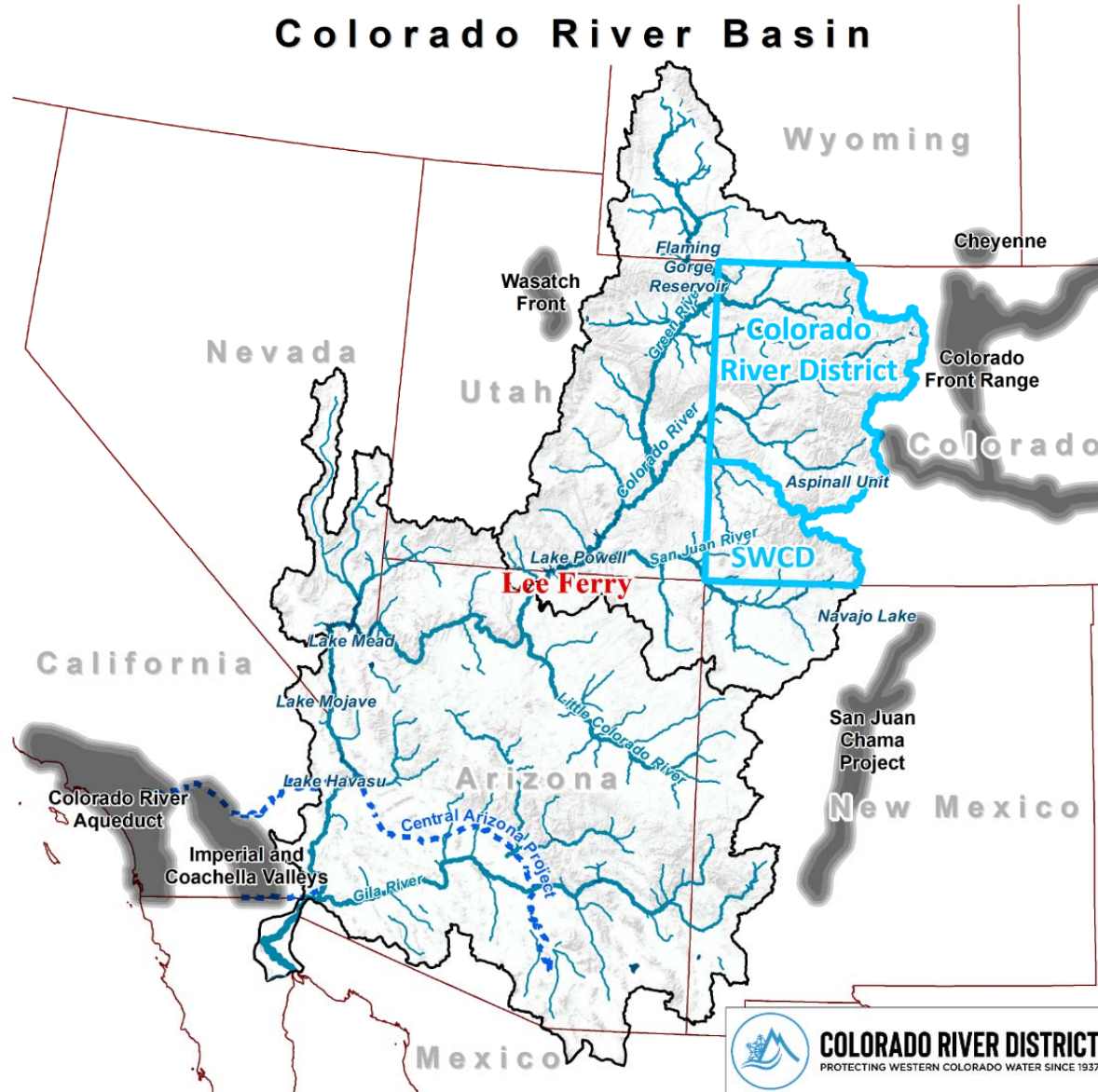
**Legislative**

**Technical**

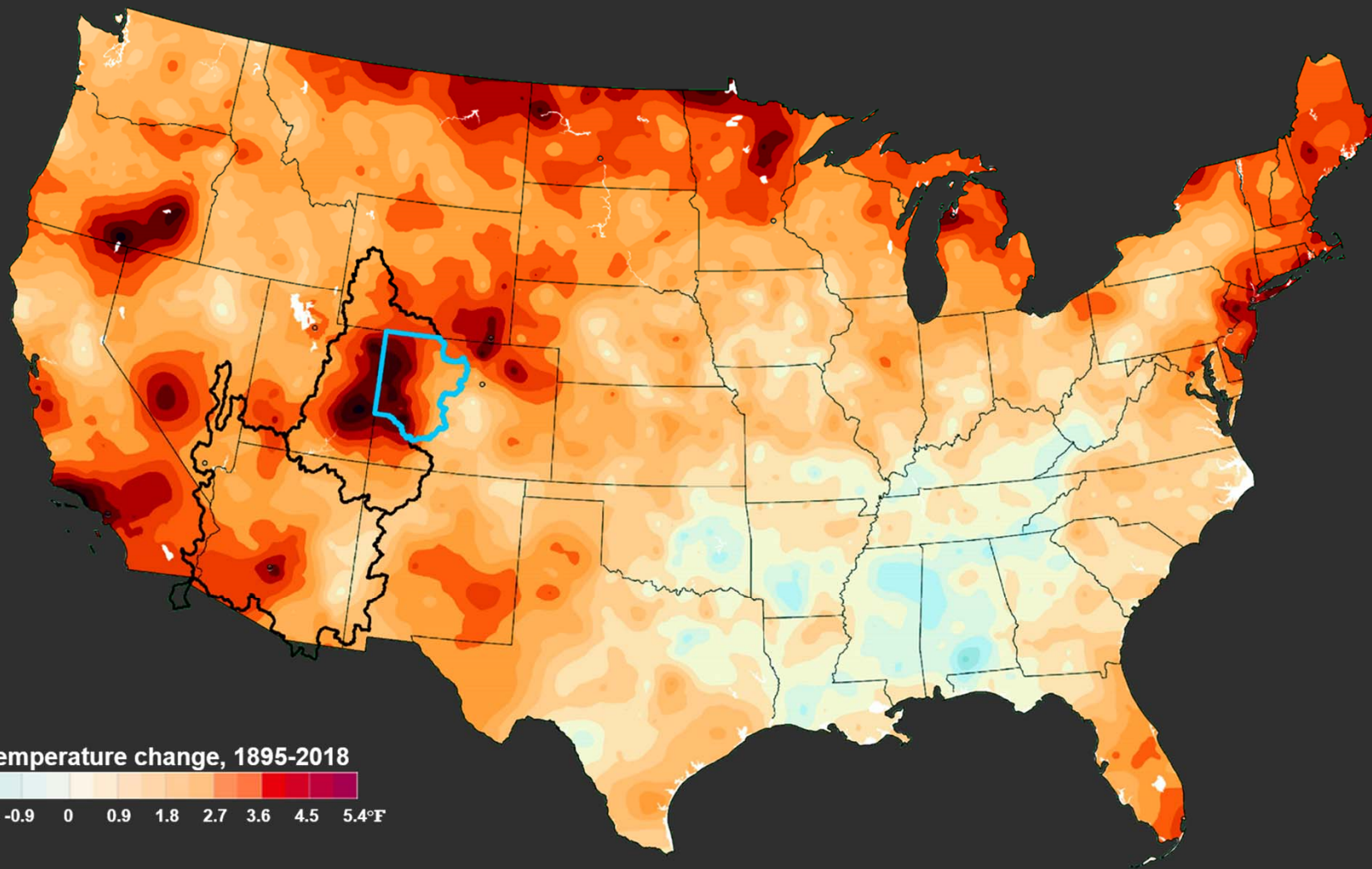
**Legal**



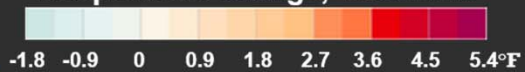
# Colorado River Basin



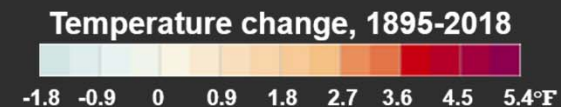
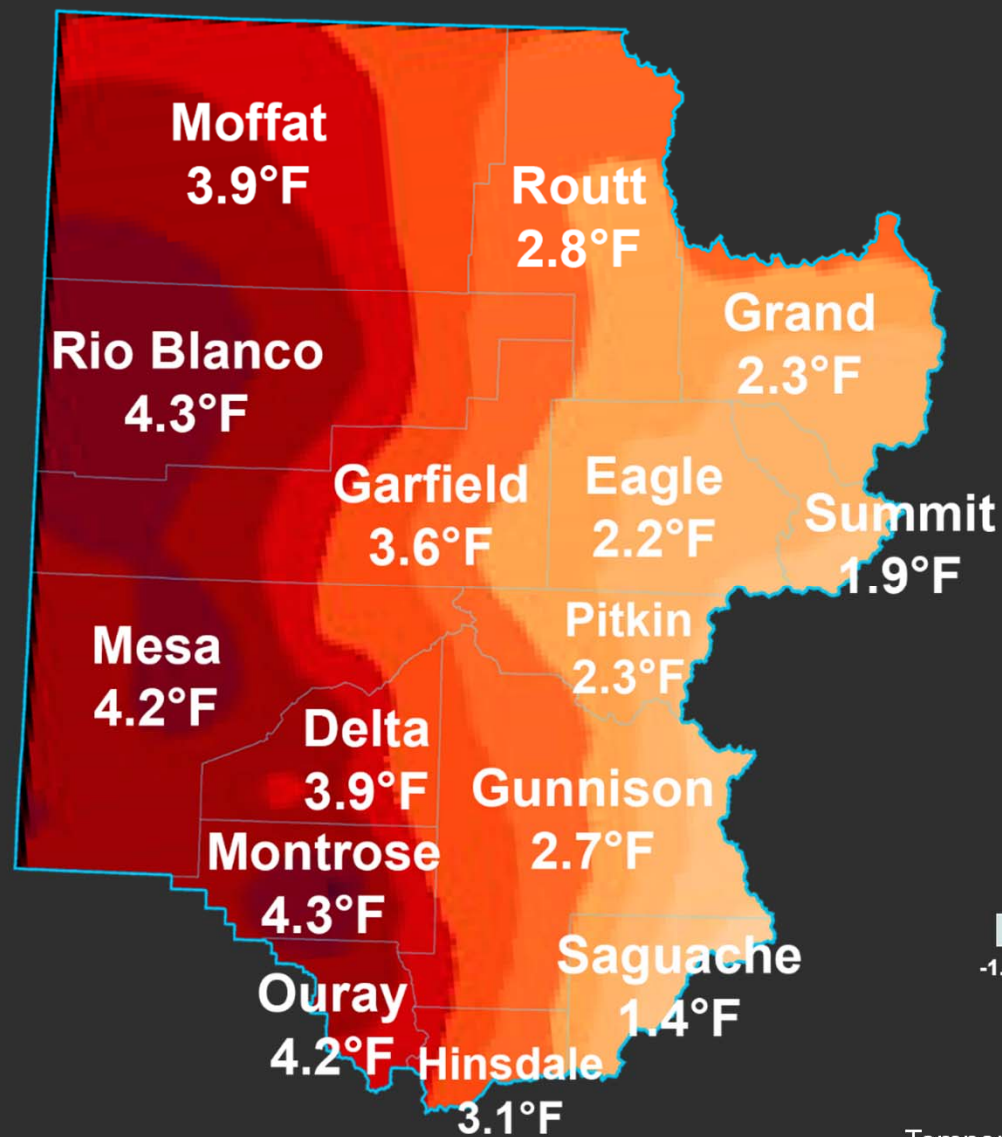
**COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT**  
PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937



Temperature change, 1895-2018



Temperature data generated by NOAA  
Temperature graphic courtesy the Washington Post



Temperature data generated by NOAA  
Temperature graphic courtesy the Washington Post



An aerial photograph of a river valley. The river flows through the center, flanked by green vineyards and some small settlements. In the background, there are rugged, brown mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on the upper half of the image.

For every 1 degree Fahrenheit rise in temperature, streamflow is reduced between 3% to 5.2%.



Data:

How Warming Drives Reductions in Streamflow Berghuijs et al. (2014), Barnhart et al. (2016), Deems et al. (2013)  
Colorado River flow dwindles as warming-driven loss of reflective snow energizes evaporation ( P. C. D. Milly, K. A. Dunne, Science 2020)



- **More fall and spring precipitation falling as rain instead of snow**
- **More snowpack lost to sublimation**
- **Earlier snowmelt**
- **A longer growing season**



We work to protect  
West Slope water  
and keep your water  
on the West Slope.







Keeping water  
flowing to farms  
and ranches



Securing legal  
protections to  
keep water on  
the West Slope



Maintaining  
healthy rivers



Protecting  
adequate  
drinking water  
supplies



# Financial challenges



## **Three key issues:**

- **Declining tax revenue from the energy industry**
- **Revenue ratcheting down due to the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights**
- **The Gallagher Amendment's reduction in assessment rates**



Shall Colorado River Water Conservation District, also known as the Colorado River District, taxes be increased by an amount up to \$4,969,041 in 2021 (which increase amounts to approximately \$1.90 in 2021 for every \$100,000 in residential home value), and by such amounts as are generated annually thereafter from an additional property tax levy of 0.248 mills (for a total mill levy of 0.5 mills) to enable the Colorado River District to protect and safeguard Western Colorado water by:

- Fighting to keep water on the West Slope;
  - Protecting adequate water supplies for West Slope farmers and ranchers;
  - Protecting sustainable drinking water supplies for West Slope communities;
- and
- Protecting fish, wildlife, and recreation by maintaining river levels and water quality;

provided that the District will not utilize these additional funds for the purpose of paying to fallow irrigated agriculture; with such expenditures reported to the public in an annually published independent financial audit; and shall all revenues received by the District in 2021 and each subsequent year be collected, retained and spent notwithstanding any limits provided by law?





**The resolution included adoption of a Fiscal Implementation Plan that spells out how the added money would be invested across every county within the district. The District will not utilize the new revenue to create additional staff positions.**



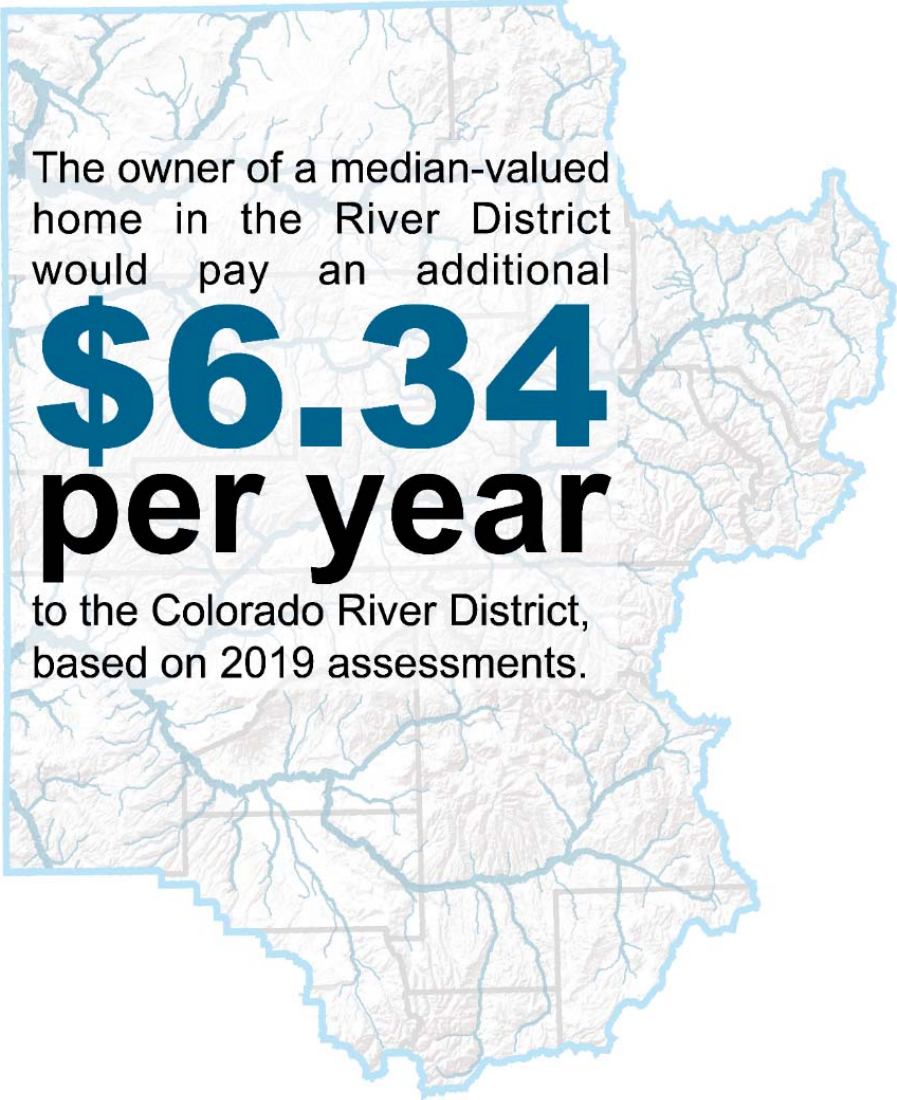


How much money  
would this raise?



- The question will ask voters if they want to raise the Colorado River District's mill levy by .248 mills, increasing the total mill levy from .252 to .5 mills.
- This would raise \$4.9 million in additional annual tax revenue for the District.
- If approved by the voters, payments would commence in 2021.



A map of the Colorado River District, showing its irregular boundary in blue. The interior of the map is a light tan color with a network of blue lines representing rivers and streams. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the map.


The owner of a median-valued  
home in the River District  
would pay an additional

**\$6.34**  
**per year**

to the Colorado River District,  
based on 2019 assessments.







# Where and how will the money be spent?



From the Fiscal Implementation Plan:

“The Board and staff of the Colorado River District will prioritize multi-purpose projects that meet needs in one or more of the following five categories: **productive agriculture, infrastructure, healthy rivers, watershed health and water quality, conservation and efficiency.**

The District is committed to expending funds in an equitable manner which, over time, disperses the benefits of the program geographically within the District boundaries and between the identified categories.





What kind of projects would this fund on the mainstem of the Colorado River?

**According to the Fiscal Implementation Plan approved with the resolution, these are projects representative of the types of projects this additional revenue would fund:**

- Maintaining flows secured by the Shoshone call
- Grand Valley Roller Dam Rehabilitation
- Windy Gap Reservoir Connectivity Channel





# Questions?



**COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT**

PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937

[coloradoriverdistrict.org](https://coloradoriverdistrict.org)



Colorado River District



@ColoradoWater



ColoradoRiverDistrict






Productive agriculture projects which could include multiple-use storage that addresses regional priorities; developing innovative and functional water leasing; suitable agriculture efficiency and conservation approaches; technical assistance and technological innovation; and dedicated resources for increasing community literacy about irrigated agriculture and supporting agricultural market growth. The District will not utilize these funds for the purpose of permanently or temporarily fallowing irrigated agriculture.





An aerial photograph of a large concrete dam with multiple spillways, situated in a deep, rocky canyon. A river flows through the dam, creating white water rapids. To the left of the dam, there is a small building with a red roof and a paved area. A road with some vehicles is visible on the right side of the image. The canyon walls are steep and rocky, with some sparse vegetation.

Infrastructure projects which could include upgrading aging infrastructure while incentivizing new storage and delivery projects that collaboratively address multiple needs, such as improved flows to meet demands, stream and watershed health, and habitat quality; multi-purpose projects and storage methods that are supported in the Water Plan and the Basin Implementation Plans.





**Healthy rivers projects** which could include those identified in stream management plans or similar projects, projects that support and sustain fish and wildlife, healthy aquifer conditions as they connect to healthy streams, economically important water-based recreation, wetland habitat, fish passage construction for new or revised water diversion structures, stream restoration projects, and environmental and recreational enhancements for new or revised water supply projects.






**Watershed health and water quality projects** which could include projects identified in collaborative and science-based watershed management plans that reduce the risk from and increase resilience to fires and/or floods, rehabilitate streams, or make landscapes resilient to climate change, including, but not limited to science-based mechanical forest treatments and prescribed fire, projects that address drinking water quality for under-resourced communities, and projects that address pollutants such as selenium, salts, and others, as well as mine remediation activities.





A scenic landscape featuring a river flowing through a valley. In the foreground, a wooden walkway with a metal railing leads to a concrete structure in the water. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Conservation and efficiency projects** which could include supporting agricultural water infrastructure that increases reliability and efficiency; municipal and industrial projects that promote efficiency, water conservation, green infrastructure, and outdoor landscaping to reduce consumptive use; increase leak detection for infrastructure repair and replacement; assisting communities with water-smart community development and water conservation programs; and targeting smaller, fast-growing, and communities with older infrastructure with strategic, incentive-based investments.

