



S H O S H O N E
WATER RIGHT PRESERVATION

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Clifton Water District and Grand Valley Water Users Association Pledge Support for Shoshone Acquisition

Further financial commitments highlight the importance of Shoshone for drinking water and agriculture.

Grand Junction, Colorado — During their Board meetings in February, Clifton Water District and Grand Valley Water Users Association committed \$250,000 and \$100,000, respectively, towards the permanent acquisition of the Shoshone water rights by the Colorado River District from the Colorado Public Service Company, a subsidiary of Xcel Energy. Orchard Mesa Irrigation District and Grand Valley Irrigation Company have also informally agreed to financially support the effort and are waiting on scheduled Board meetings to finalize their commitment.

“Clifton Water District is proud to contribute a quarter of a million dollars towards the Shoshone permanency effort because the health of the Colorado River ensures the health of our families and neighbors for generations to come,” said Ty Jones, Manager for Clifton Water District. “In Clifton, our future is tied to the flows of the Colorado River because the drinking water we depend on comes directly from that river. Sustained, year-round river levels, supported by the Shoshone call, allow for higher water quality and reduce consumer costs by diluting difficult-to-remove pollutants and sediment.”

Clifton Water District provides drinking water for nearly 13,000 domestic taps. The District relies on two different points of diversion from the Colorado River itself. The winter diversion is within the endangered and threatened fish habitat known as the 15-Mile Reach, while the summer diversion coordinates with the Grand Valley Irrigation Canal system which diverts in Palisade.

Clifton is one of the six West Slope communities which draw and treat water directly from the Colorado River for their primary drinking water source. The others are DeBeque, Silt, Parachute, Battlement Mesa and Rifle.

Grand Valley Water Users Association (GVWUA), who recently formalized their \$100,000 financial commitment, delivers irrigation water to over 22,000 acres within their boundaries and over 42,000 acres in the Grand Valley. The Association manages the historic Roller Dam on the Colorado River in DeBeque Canyon, the 55-mile-long Government Highline Canal, and 150 miles of laterals.

“GVWUA prides itself on over a century of strong and steadfast dedication to agriculture in the Grand Valley,” said Tina Bergonzini, General Manager for GVWUA. “The permanent acquisition of the Shoshone water rights is of utmost importance to us as it provides the peace of mind our growers need to keep our fertile valley producing the crops that make agriculture our number one industry. The vitality of our economy and way of life relies on the health and sustainability of the Colorado River. Not only for crops, but for human enrichment, recreation, and the natural environment. We are proud to offer support in any way we can, including a financial commitment to this monumental endeavor.”

“We deeply appreciate the significance of the contributions from organizations like Clifton Water District and GVWUA. These are organizations which are essential to the future of the communities they support,” said Andy Mueller, Colorado River District General Manager. “And they have a very real understanding that protecting the flows of the Colorado River is one of the best investments they can make in that future.”

Additional financial support towards the \$98.5 million price tag includes [\\$2 million from Ute Water](#), [\\$20 million from the Colorado River District’s Community Funding Partnership program](#), and a commitment from the [Colorado Water Conservation Board to appropriate \\$20 million from the 2024 Projects Bill](#).

The Shoshone Water Right Preservation Coalition is made up of 20 local government and water management agencies across the Western Slope. These organizations have been working for over twenty years to permanently protect the very senior Shoshone water rights currently attached to hydropower production at the Shoshone Hydroelectric Plant in Glenwood Canyon. The full Shoshone call can command up to 1,408 cubic per second or up to 1-million-acre feet of Colorado River water a year. On December 19, 2023, the Colorado River District and Xcel Energy signed a Purchase and Sale Agreement for the water rights.

The agreement depends on securing funding as well as successfully negotiating an instream flow agreement between the seller, the Colorado River District, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Xcel Energy must also receive approval from the Public Utilities Commission for the dispersal of profits from the sale. More information about the Shoshone Water Right Preservation Campaign & Coalition can be found at: www.KeepShoshoneFlowing.org.

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