



COLORADO RIVER DISTRICT

PROTECTING WESTERN COLORADO WATER SINCE 1937

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 4, 2024

CONTACT:

Lindsay DeFrates (CRD) - 970.456.8973

Sara Spaulding (GJ City) - 970.985.8180

City of Grand Junction Commits \$1 Million Towards Shoshone Water Right Preservation

Funding commitments now total \$44 million.

Glenwood Springs, Colorado — On Wednesday, April 3, the Grand Junction City Council unanimously approved a resolution to commit \$1 million towards the purchase and permanent protection of the Shoshone water rights by the Colorado River District on behalf of a broad-based coalition. The City joins a growing list of West Slope water entities and governments who, along with the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the Colorado River District, have now formally committed a total of \$44 million towards the \$99 million purchase price.

“I am proud City Council has approved the dedication of \$1 million dollars in support of the Shoshone Water Right Preservation effort to secure the future of the Colorado River – and by extension, our very way of life in Western Colorado,” stated Grand Junction Mayor Anna Stout. “This once-in-many-generations opportunity to protect Colorado River flows in perpetuity is vital to our community and everyone who depends on the river. Water is not only a vital natural resource, but it is a major contributor to the quality of life for everyone who lives, does business, and recreates in western Colorado.”

The City of Grand Junction, home to over 68,000 residents, currently holds conditional water rights on the Colorado River. Permanently protecting the Shoshone water rights will sustain critical flows and water levels in the Colorado River on a year-round basis throughout the Grand Valley, especially in dry years, thereby maintaining water quality through the dilution of pollutants and sediment. Across the West, redundant drinking water sources are becoming critical for municipalities like Grand Junction which continue to experience increased pressures from the impacts of a warming climate including wildfires, drought, and diminished water quality from lower flows.

Additionally, the Shoshone flows support recreation on the Colorado River, an important driver for the City’s economy. The recently constructed, recreationally oriented side channels and

amenities at Las Colonias Park benefit from sustained flows and offer high-quality recreation experiences for residents and visitors.

“Preserving the flows commanded by the Shoshone water rights has priceless benefits for drinking water, agriculture, the environment, and recreation along the entire length of our state’s namesake river,” said Andy Mueller, Colorado River District General Manager. “We are grateful to the City of Grand Junction and all of our coalition partners for their enthusiastic support for this durable, long-term investment in the health of the Colorado River.”

Currently tied to hydropower production in Glenwood Canyon, the Shoshone water rights are one of the oldest and largest non-consumptive rights on the Colorado River and help to ensure consistent flows from the headwaters to the state line.

The permanent protection of the historic Shoshone water rights has been a goal of a broad-based coalition of West Slope water entities and municipalities for over two decades. On December 19, a purchase and sale agreement was signed between the Colorado River District and the Public Service Company of Colorado (a subsidiary of Xcel Energy) to transfer ownership of those rights for \$99 million. Over the next few years, the Colorado River District will work closely with the State of Colorado to attach an instream flow beneficial use to the water rights to maintain the flows regardless of the status of power production at the Shoshone Hydroelectric plant. More information can be found at www.keepshoshoneflowing.org/

###