



SHOSHONE

WATER RIGHT PRESERVATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, April 23, 2024

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Three West Slope Counties Pledge \$4 Million Towards Shoshone Water Right Preservation

Grand, Eagle, and Mesa County's commitments bring total funding for the Shoshone permanency effort to \$48.05 million.

Glenwood Springs, Colorado — On Tuesday, April 23, the counties of Grand, Eagle, and Mesa pledged \$4 million collectively towards the purchase and permanent protection of the Shoshone water rights. During their respective public board meetings on Tuesday morning, Grand County committed \$1 million through their Open Lands, Rivers and Trails grant fund; Eagle County expressed its intent to commit \$2 million; and Mesa County, \$1 million. As longtime partners in the Shoshone Water Right Preservation Coalition, these diverse counties represent some of the most populous West Slope communities from the headwaters to the state line, all of which depend on the sustained flows of the Colorado River provided by Shoshone's very senior, non-consumptive water rights.

Along with previous commitments from 11 other West Slope partner organizations, the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and the Colorado River District's own Community Funding Partnership, the Coalition has raised \$48.05 million towards the \$99 million purchase price.

"The Colorado River District's acquisition of this water right provides a significant level of protection for agriculture, ranching, and outdoor recreation, safeguarding these activities for Grand County residents for generations to come," said **Grand County Commissioner Chair Merrit Linke**. "There is no other water right that has a greater impact and benefit to our rivers in Grand County than Shoshone."

"This partnership to keep the water flowing through Colorado's namesake river is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said **Eagle County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry**. "Protecting Shoshone's senior water rights benefits both the Roaring Fork and Eagle River Valley portions of Eagle County, as well as the entire state of Colorado. Our agricultural and outdoor recreation economies depend on water, and our quality of life is tied to the benefits of this great flowing river. If the Shoshone Hydro Plant were to cease operation without permanent protection of the water rights, the negative economic and environmental impacts to Western Colorado and the state would be immediate and profound. Eagle County is proud to stand with the Colorado River Water

Conservation District and our many partners in securing this legacy for future generations in the west."

"Mesa County's \$1 million investment in the Shoshone water rights is not just a financial commitment, but a pledge to our community's future," said **Bobbie Daniel, Chair of the Board of Mesa County Commissioners**. "By safeguarding these rights, Mesa County ensures that the West Slope's lifeblood — our beloved Colorado River — continues to sustain our families, farms, and natural habitats. We stand united with our fellow counties and stakeholders in protecting and preserving our most precious resource for future generations."

"We're proud to be a part of the Colorado River District's efforts to preserve the rights allowing water to flow through our Shoshone Hydro Plant turbines on the Colorado River," said **Robert Kenney, president of Xcel Energy – Colorado**. "This is an important agreement for the 1.6 million electric customers and communities we serve statewide by allowing us to continue generating clean electricity as part of our commitment to be good stewards of the Colorado River and all who rely on it."

On December 19, 2023, the Colorado River District signed a Purchase and Sale Agreement with Xcel Energy for the Shoshone water rights on behalf of a diverse and growing group of local governments and water entities. Many organizations that make up the Shoshone Water Right Preservation Coalition were original signatories to the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement and have worked for over twenty years to permanently protect the 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 feet per second, or up to 1 million acre-feet, of Colorado River water a year.

The finalization of the agreement depends on securing funding and successfully negotiating an instream flow agreement between the Colorado River District and the Colorado Water Conservation Board. The River District will continue to lease the water back to Xcel for clean power generation at no cost, the water rights reverting to instream flow only when the turbines are not active. 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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