



SHOSHONE
WATER RIGHT PRESERVATION

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Pitkin County, New Castle, Parachute and De Beque Join Effort to Secure Shoshone Water Rights

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. — The effort to permanently protect the Shoshone Hydroelectric Power Plant’s water rights gained additional momentum this week as Pitkin County committed \$1 million toward the Colorado River District’s \$99 million purchase agreement with Xcel Energy. This contribution is bolstered by additional funding from middle Colorado River communities, including the Town of New Castle (\$100,000), Town of Parachute (\$25,000), Town of De Beque (\$5,000), and the De Beque Plateau Valley Soil Conservation District (\$5,000), which are committed to safeguarding flows vital to the region’s economy and way of life. Reliable flows in the Colorado River are essential to the health and future of these interconnected communities. By supporting Shoshone, they join a broader coalition of Western Slope entities committed to long-term water security for the region.

“The Shoshone water rights are essential to the health of our rivers, ecosystems, and communities across the Western Slope,” said **Francie Jacober, Pitkin County Commissioner and Colorado River District Board Member**. “This isn’t just a smart investment, it’s a legacy decision. Pitkin County proudly stands with our neighbors to protect this lifeline for future generations.”

“The Town of New Castle recognizes the critical importance of protecting Colorado River water rights on the Western Slope and proudly supports the long-term preservation of non-consumptive flows,” said **New Castle Town Administrator David Reynolds**. “These rights are vital to a strong recreational economy, improved water quality, sustainable agriculture, and consistent stream flows in the upper Colorado River Wild and Scenic Management areas. New Castle fully supports the work of the Colorado River District and the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Coalition to safeguard the river’s health and sustainability.”

The Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Project, led by the Colorado River District, now includes 30 local governments, water entities, and regional partners across the Western Slope. Together, they have committed over \$17 million toward the \$99 million purchase price. Along with the \$20 million pledged by the State of Colorado through the CWCB Projects Bill (HB24-1435) and \$20 million from the River District’s Community Funding Partnership, more than \$57 million has been committed to date.

“From headwaters counties like Pitkin to towns along the Colorado River, the West Slope is demonstrating what true collaboration looks like,” said **Andy Mueller, General Manager of the Colorado River District**. “The momentum behind Shoshone Permanency reflects a powerful and unified vision where agricultural producers, recreation economies, and rural communities stand shoulder to shoulder to protect the water resource that sustains us all. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity, and our region is rising to meet it.”

The Shoshone hydroelectric plant, located in Glenwood Canyon, holds nonconsumptive senior water rights that date back to 1902. These rights are essential for supporting flows in the Colorado River, benefiting agriculture, recreation, rural economies, and water users across the West Slope.

In December 2023, the Colorado River District entered a purchase and sale agreement with Xcel Energy to acquire and permanently protect the water rights, with plans to negotiate an instream flow agreement with the Colorado Water Conservation Board. This agreement would safeguard the flows into the future, regardless of the operational status of the Shoshone plant itself.

In January 2025, the Bureau of Reclamation awarded \$40 million in federal funding through a program authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act. The River District continues to work with the Bureau of Reclamation and remains optimistic that the project’s broad support and clear public benefit will secure the federal dollars needed to complete this once-in-a-generation investment.

Learn more about the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Project & Coalition at KeepShoshoneFlowing.org.

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