



SHOSHONE
WATER RIGHT PRESERVATION

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Bureau of Reclamation Announces \$40 Million Funding Award for Shoshone Water Rights Preservation Project

Recently announced awards from the Inflation Reduction Act include multi-million-dollar investments in drought mitigation for rural communities in Western Colorado.

Glenwood Springs, Colorado — Today, the [Bureau of Reclamation announced](#) \$388.3 million in funding awards including \$40 million for the Shoshone Water Rights Preservation project. This investment supports efforts of the Colorado River District, the state of Colorado and a coalition of West Slope governments and water users to secure Western Colorado’s top water priority: the permanent protection of the water rights associated with the Shoshone Power Plant in Glenwood Canyon.

These funds, awarded through the Inflation Reduction Act’s Upper Colorado River Basin Environmental Program, known as B2E, are dedicated to projects which will mitigate the impacts of drought and support ecosystems throughout the Colorado River Basin. They were made available to the Department of the Interior thanks to the hard work of Colorado’s federal delegation led by the efforts of Colorado’s senior senator Michael Bennet and build on the more than \$56 million raised by state and local organizations.

“Securing the Shoshone water rights has been a priority of West Slope water entities and local governments for over eighty years,” said **Colorado River District Board President, Kathy Chandler-Henry**. “This funding award is a huge step forward in what is a continuing effort, and we are thankful for the leadership shown by the Bureau of Reclamation in bringing these critical funds to West Slope communities.”

“The Colorado River is a lifeline for the Western Slope and the thousands of Coloradans who call it home. This support for the Shoshone water rights is a huge step towards ensuring that the river will continue flowing to Western Colorado farmers, ranchers, communities, and businesses,” said **Governor Polis**.

“Permanent protection of the Shoshone water rights is a multi-generational investment in our farms and ranches, and our thriving rural economies,” said **Senator Marc Catlin (SD-5)**. “Today’s announcement builds upon decades of work by our predecessors to protect the river as we have known it for more than a century.”

“The importance of securing this water right cannot be overstated. Shoshone’s flows provide crucial water flow that supports agriculture, outdoor recreation and the environment,” said **Senator Dylan Roberts (SD-8)**. “This investment will pay enormous dividends for today’s water users and future generations of Coloradans.”

“When the Colorado River thrives, we all thrive,” said **Perry Will, Garfield County Commissioner and former State Representative and Senator representing Western Colorado**. “Today’s announcement is welcomed news for not only our rural communities on the Western Slope, but the entire state as well.”

“Water is the lifeblood of the Grand Valley and the Western Slope, and we are encouraged to see federal funds supporting the future water security of our communities,” said **Bobbie Daniel, Mesa County Commissioner**. “Mesa County is proud to have invested \$1 million in the Shoshone permanency effort. By safeguarding these water rights, we are sustaining our families, farms, natural habitats, and way of life for generations to come.”

“Securing the Shoshone water rights is a vital, multi-generational solution to protect the Colorado River’s communities and ecosystems in a hotter, drier future,” said **Matt Rice, Southwest Regional Director for American Rivers**. “Investments like this are how we keep water in the river and life thriving along its banks.”

“Water has always been essential to our way of life here on the Western Slope,” said **Curtis Englehart, Executive Director for the Grand Junction Economic Partnership**. “Protecting Shoshone’s flows in perpetuity is a critical investment that paves the way to long-term economic vitality for our communities.”

The Bureau’s announcement also included significant awards for 15 other Western Slope water projects totaling almost \$95 million which will have long-term, durable benefits to our communities and the Colorado River. The full list of projects is available [here on the Bureau's website](#). These projects, along with Shoshone, are selected to move on to the next phase to execute a funding agreement and complete necessary reviews.

The Shoshone water rights, some of the largest and most senior non-consumptive water rights on the Colorado River, are vital to maintaining flows that support a wide range of interests across Western Colorado. In December 2023, the Colorado River District reached a landmark \$99 million purchase and sale agreement with Public Service Company of Colorado, a subsidiary of Xcel Energy, to transfer ownership of those water rights. Representing a broad-based coalition, the Colorado River District is working to permanently secure these flows in partnership with the State of Colorado to ensure they remain in the Colorado River. The newly announced federal funds, combined with over \$56 million already committed by local and regional partners, including \$20 million from the State of Colorado, bring the total amount raised to over \$96 million. With strong bipartisan backing and local support, the River District will continue to move forward toward fulfilling the financial obligations of this transformative agreement.

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