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Press Release

## Cooperative approach keeps Colorado River flowing Reservoir owners and water users work together when Shoshone Hydropower Plant is offline

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colo. -- Rafters, endangered fish and municipalities are benefiting from an agreement among reservoir owners and water users that maintains flows in the Colorado River even when the Shoshone Hydropower Plant is not calling for its senior water right.

In addition to producing green power for owner Xcel Energy, the Shoshone Plant's nonconsumptive water right creates an unofficial minimum streamflow in the Colorado River. The rafting industry, individual recreationists, endangered fish and agricultural producers in the Grand Valley depend on the benefits of the Shoshone call. The water also helps communities that draw drinking water from the river.

From time to time, the Shoshone Plant, located on the Colorado River in Glenwood Canyon, must reduce diversions for necessary maintenance and cannot place its call for water. To maintain streamflows, however, water leaders in the river's upper basin have worked out an agreement that makes Shoshone issues invisible to the public and keeps water in the river.

Currently, the century-old plant is expected to be partially shut down or completely down through the fall for maintenance and repairs. At this time of year, with declining natural river flows, many would notice the impacts of not having Shoshone's 1,250 cubic feet per second (cfs) call on the river.

To compensate, reservoir owners, including the Bureau of Reclamation, Denver Water and the Colorado River District are operating to maintain a "target flow" of 1,250 cfs at the Dotsero gage, just upstream from the plant. The Colorado Division of Water Resources' Division 5 office in Glenwood Springs is coordinating the plan.

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The target flow is maintained through normal reservoir operations that include power plant releases and water held in storage to help protect endangered fish habitat in the Grand Valley. Some of the water would otherwise be released in the winter to make room for next year's snowmelt. By releasing it now, the benefits accrue to rafters, agricultural producers and drinking water treatment plants.

Additional support for the program is coming from the Grand County Commissioners who have asked the Bureau of Reclamation to start releasing the water they store in Granby Reservoir to the Colorado River. Grand County paid the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District to pump the water into Granby through its Windy Gap Project this spring for late summer when flows through the county ordinarily are thin.

To learn more about this collaborative program, contact Jim Pokrandt with the Colorado River District via phone at 970.945.8522 x 236 or e-mail [jpokrandt@crwcd.org](mailto:jpokrandt@crwcd.org).