



Grand County
Colorado



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2024

Contact: Christine Travis, Communications Director, Grand County, Colorado
Phone: 970-531-0554
ctravis@co.grand.co.us

Contact: Jeff Stahla, Public Information Officer, Northern Water
Phone: 970-622-2331; 970-646-5815
jstahla@northernwater.org

New Agreement to Improve River Flows in Grand County

Grand County and Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District (Northern Water) have agreed to a unique and first-of-its-kind Operational Framework that provides Grand County with the ability to have as much as 7,000 acre-feet of additional controllable water to release from the Colorado-Big Thompson (C-BT) Project for stream enhancement and other purposes that will benefit Grand County's recreation and agriculture industries. The volume available for streamflow improvement will be dependent on annual river conditions and C-BT Project storage levels.

Approved Tuesday by the Grand County Commissioners, the agreement outlines a methodology to determine the water that will be available to the County each year. Water made available under this agreement to the County will be released to Willow Creek, or to the Colorado River, will supplement existing flows, and could accumulate to nearly 40,000 acre-feet over the course of a decade. Prior to 2005, this water was used for irrigation of hay fields near the Town of Granby. Since that time, the underlying lands have been removed from agricultural production and converted to residential and commercial development. Without this agreement, the water will continue to be captured by the C-BT Project and available to Northern Water for uses in Northeastern Colorado.

“The Operational Framework Agreement will provide the County with an additional water management tool to improve and enhance flows on the Colorado River,” said Grand County Commissioner Chair Merrit Linke. “The Colorado River is the life blood to sustaining our agriculture and recreation industries that are critically important to our local economy as well as all of the West Slope.”

Grand County and Northern Water will, in coming months, consult and coordinate with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation regarding the implementation of the agreement.

About Grand County

Established in 1874, Grand County lies in the north-central Rocky Mountains. It is named after the Grand River, an early name for the Colorado River. Encompassing 1,868 square miles, The County’s major geographic feature is Middle Park, a large mountain basin that includes the headwaters of the Colorado River. Grand County is home to world-class skiing, the west entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado’s largest natural lake, many large reservoirs, and boundless adventure in thousands of acres of public lands.

About Northern Water

Northern Water and its Municipal Subdistrict are public agencies that provide water for food production and municipal, domestic, and industrial uses for more than 1 million people in Northeastern Colorado via the Colorado-Big Thompson Project and Windy Gap Project. Learn more at northernwater.org