

Federal climate and infrastructure dollars hitting the ground in the Colorado River Basin media briefing

June 17, 2024

Panel:

- [Fay Hartman](#), Southwest Conservation Director, American Rivers (moderator)
- [David Palumbo](#), Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Bureau of Reclamation
- **Mike Camblin**, President, Maybell Irrigation District
- [Lenise Peterman](#), Mayor of Helper City, UT
- **Jennifer Wellman**, Freshwater Project Director, The Nature Conservancy in Colorado
- [Jordan Nielson](#), Utah State Director, Trout Unlimited

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Fay Hartman: Hello, everybody! Thank you so much for joining us this afternoon for a briefing hosted by the Water Hub on federal climate and infrastructure dollars, and how they're hitting the ground in the Colorado River Basin.

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Fay Hartman: My name is Fay Hartman. I'm the conservation director for the Southwest region with American Rivers, and I'm pleased to be moderating our conversation this afternoon.

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Fay Hartman: I'd like to take a moment to thank our panelists. Who are on screen with me here right now for taking the time to chat with us this afternoon, and I'd also like to give an extra big thank you to the team at Water Hub for coordinating and organizing the briefing

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Fay Hartman: As a reminder, the briefing is being recorded, and the recording, as well as a transcript of the conversation will be shared with participants in the next couple of days. So watch out for that email from Water Hub.

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Fay Hartman: A little bit about where we're going to go today. The briefing will be broken up into 2 different parts. The 1st part we'll hear from our panelists about the work that they're doing on the ground as it relates to building resilience in the Colorado River Basin, and then we'll hear from all of you, and we'll have a moderated question and answer session.

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Fay Hartman: While we are going to wait to answer any questions until after all of our panelists have gone, I'd encourage you to ask questions that you have in real time at the bottom of your zoom screen. There is a question and answer box. So please feel free to ask any questions that you have of the panelists. At that time, if it's a specific question for a person feel free to just

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Fay Hartman: type in. You know, I'd like to ask this question of

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Fay Hartman: Jordan Nielsen. Or if or if it's just a broader question to anyone. We'll direct it that way.

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Fay Hartman: Finally, if you have any issues with connection or other challenges, please use the chat feature to connect with our behind the scenes folks and someone will reach out and provide support.

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Fay Hartman: So I'm incredibly fortunate to be at this virtual table with some excellent panelists to unpack how federal funding is hitting the ground in the Colorado River Basin, and to share 2 examples of local projects that are building resilience in the Colorado River Basin. Today our panelists are going to highlight how federal funding is moving across the basin,

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Fay Hartman: impacts that these federal funds have on developing, planning, and implementing projects, and then the benefits of local projects, including how these projects are improving community livability and building resilience for those local communities, but also for the Colorado River system as a whole.

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Fay Hartman: So I wanna take a minute to just briefly introduce our panelists. They will provide a little bit more of an introduction during their remarks, but quickly, I'm excited to introduce the following folks, so we have the Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation, David Palumbo joining us.

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Fay Hartman: We have Jennifer Wellman, who is the Freshwater Project director for the Nature Conservancy.

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Fay Hartman: We have Mike Camblin with the Maybell Irrigation District, who was the project manager for the Maybell Ditch project.

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Fay Hartman: Lenise Peterman, who is the Mayor of Helper, Utah, and a key participant in the River Revitalization project, and then we have Jordan Nielsen, the State director for Trout Unlimited. So those are our excellent panelists that will be joining us and providing some remarks on the work that they're doing here in the next 20 min or so

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Fay Hartman: before we hear from our panelists. I want to set the stage a bit. If you want to go to the next slide.

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Fay Hartman: The Colorado River Basin is a lifeline for the West

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Fay Hartman: From its headwaters in the Rocky Mountains, the river flows through 7 States and 2 countries to its natural terminus in the Gulf of California. The river supports food, drinking, water, recreation, energy production. It's an economic engine for local economies and it provides irreplaceable habitat

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Fay Hartman: for native birds, fish and wildlife. The Colorado River is also an essential part of the cultural fabric for 30 recognized tribal nations and nearly 40 million people that call the Basin home.

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Fay Hartman: However, as we've seen from the headlines, which many of you have written, the Colorado River Basin is in crisis. Increasing demands, exacerbated by climate change, has led the river to experience significant challenges that threaten the many benefits the river provides the southwest.

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Fay Hartman: The challenges facing the Colorado River are often front and center in the media for a good reason. But there's incredible work happening across the basin from the headwaters through canyon country in a low into the lower basin to build resilience for local communities that benefits those communities themselves, but also the environment, agriculture, and the Colorado River Basin as a whole.

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Fay Hartman: When I say build resilience, I can talk a little bit about what that term means. I mean that these are projects that communities are leading and taking on and implementing to help their community better adjust to and absorb the impacts of drought, fire, and flood, while creating local jobs, improving water security, preserving cultural and traditional significance for tribal nations.

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Fay Hartman: protecting agriculture and food supply chains and restoring and reducing pressure on rivers and ecosystems.

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Fay Hartman: These include strategies like restoring watershed health and wetlands, riparian areas and river systems. It includes improving the health of our forests, adapting agriculture by

upgrading infrastructure and practices, and looking at water saving props and boosting water efficiency and conservation for communities, industry and agriculture.

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Fay Hartman: with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, we've seen unprecedented federal funding that's being matched and leveraged at the local and state level to support building resilience in the Colorado River Basin and across the country,

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Fay Hartman: over \$2 billion dollars have been infused in the Colorado River Basin over the last several years. From the Bureau of Reclamation alone these funds are supporting many projects, including multi benefit and nature based projects that can help address the region's water and climate challenges

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Fay Hartman: and go to the next slide

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Fay Hartman: to illustrate how this funding is hitting the ground in the Colorado River Basin and the types of projects it supports, a group of NGOs launched the Colorado River Resilience [website](#), which highlights resilient solutions for the Basin, and describes the importance of these types of practices for maintaining the health and livelihood of local communities, agriculture, the environment, and the overall Colorado River system as a whole.

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Fay Hartman: There's a number of resources available on the website about climate, resilience, solutions, examples of projects as well as information about federal funding opportunities. Go to the next slide.

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Fay Hartman: As a part of this website, we launched a projects map that highlights examples of projects in the basin that exemplify the types of solutions, again, including these multi-benefit projects that build resilience in the basin. These are reliable strategies that will avoid or mitigate climate related risk to the basin.

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Fay Hartman: and in addition provide important community

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Fay Hartman: and ecosystem benefits.

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Fay Hartman: Additionally. We developed a report describing the need for investing in resilience for the Colorado river. The report describes the importance of ecosystem and river health for the

overall durability of the Colorado River system. We provide recommendations on projects that are ready for funding as well as highlight the significant investments that have been made to date

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Fay Hartman: while the challenges that are facing the river are significant. Progress is happening across the basin that's bringing communities together to collaboratively address the issues facing them, and all of us here in the Colorado River.

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Fay Hartman: So we're going to get to the more exciting part now. Not listening to me talk, and instead hearing from our panelists. So again, please feel free to ask questions that you have in the question box during the panelists remarks that we have moving forward.

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Fay Hartman: So I'm excited today to have our panelists here share their knowledge about how federal funding is hitting the ground in the Colorado River Basin and the impacts and the benefits that it's having for local communities.

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Fay Hartman: So we'll start today with some remarks from the Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation, David Palumbo, so I'll go ahead and turn it over to you.

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David Palumbo: Thanks a lot, Fay. I really appreciate it. Thank you all for the opportunity to speak with you. I'm grateful to Climate Nexus, the Water Hub and our NGO partners for this invitation.

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David Palumbo: The work you all do is vitally important, which I'll be highlighting.

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David Palumbo: Today I'll highlight reclamation investment from the President's

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David Palumbo: Investing in America agenda.

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David Palumbo: and particularly in the Colorado River Basin, one of the most important basins in the Western United States. I'd also like to highlight our unprecedented level of engagement with tribal nations and the country of Mexico, as we look to ensure a sustainable river for generations to come for a wide range of equities.

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David Palumbo: With respect to the critically important equities, I will address Reclamation's environmental investments, including for aquatic ecosystem restoration, endangered species and habitat restoration projects to protect and enhance our valued natural environments and the critical functions they provide

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David Palumbo: Reclamation's foundation is built upon water. It's our mission. We're the largest wholesaler of water in the nation, and water is essential to everything we do.

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David Palumbo: Directly providing sustenance, growing crops, powering economies, nourishing ecosystems, sustaining native American cultures.

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David Palumbo: Our work touches the lives of more than 76 million Westerners and more than 40 million in the Colorado River Basin itself.

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David Palumbo: We're also the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States. The 40 million megawatt hours of clean and renewable energy we produce annually displaces approximately 17 million tons of carbon dioxide every year.

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David Palumbo: Reclamation success is rooted in our people, partnerships, and investment.

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David Palumbo: This past year has shown the success of the Administration's all-of-government approach in every basin we work in across the American West.

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David Palumbo: Our work across the West is underpinned by the largest investment in climate resilience in the nation's history, and we've been able to achieve this historic water conservation as part of President Biden's investing in America agenda.

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David Palumbo: This is bringing much-needed resources to enhance resilience to drought and climate change in the Colorado River Basin.

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David Palumbo: The Colorado River, as you heard, provides a measurable value to over 40 million people in 2 countries. 7 US states, 2 Mexican States, 30 Native American tribes

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David Palumbo: supplies drinking water to millions of people, irrigates millions of acres of crops, and produces billions of kilowatt hours of hydroelectric power annually.

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David Palumbo: It provides habitat for a wide range of species, including several that are federally endangered or listed. It flows through 7 national wildlife refuges, 11 National Park units and provides a full range of recreational opportunity and adds significant benefit to regional economies.

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David Palumbo: The Colorado River Basin is currently experiencing historic drought - aridification brought on by climate change.

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David Palumbo: The period from 2000 to 2022 is provisionally the driest 23 year period on the record.

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David Palumbo: In addition, the period from 2012 through 2021 is provisionally the driest ten year period ever recorded.

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David Palumbo: surpassing the previous driest 10 year period, from 2000 to 2009.

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David Palumbo: Not good records to be achieving.

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David Palumbo: The 2024 April through July runoff forecast is approximately 80% of average

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David Palumbo: for this water year.

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David Palumbo: In the last 24 years only 6 years of above average inflow have occurred.

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David Palumbo: and it's not unusual to have a few dry years of above average inflow during long-term droughts.

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David Palumbo: This current 23 year period is among the driest in the 1,800 year, paleo record.

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David Palumbo: Lake Powell and Lake Mead are at historically low reservoir elevations. Currently, Lake Powell is 34% full and currently Lake Mead is 36% full. Our system at large is about 42% of capacity

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David Palumbo: in the Colorado River Basin, with historic water conservation commitments of 3 million acre feet through 2026, and the May 6th signing of the record of decision of the supplemental environmental impact statement to the 2007 interim guidelines by Secretary Haaland, we stave off the short-term threat to the basin and stabilized the system to protect water deliveries, the ecosystem and power production

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David Palumbo: for the immediate future.

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David Palumbo: Our work to stabilize the Colorado system in the near term has allowed us now to focus on the future.

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David Palumbo: For 2027, and beyond we initiated a collaborative, transparent, and inclusive process to develop the next iteration of guidelines and strategies, and guide the next period of river operations into the future.

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David Palumbo: We are currently developing and evaluating alternatives. This process includes evaluating the alternatives

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David Palumbo: and elements of the alternatives as well as concepts received from Basin states, tribes, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders and partners.

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David Palumbo: Our goal is for the development of innovative and flexible operating guidelines that provide improved predictability of water availability and enhanced opportunities for conservation.

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David Palumbo: We're committed to working with all parties to achieve as much consensus as possible.

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David Palumbo: Protecting the infrastructure and the system on which we all rely is incumbent on all of us

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David Palumbo: to succeed. Any action that we move forward with is one we work through together.

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David Palumbo: As I said, Reclamation works closely with tribal sovereign nations, and our international partners, both to the North and the South to mitigate climate change and protect critical basins across the West.

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David Palumbo: Focusing now on the Colorado River Basin, a new agreement with Mexico Minute 3:30 went into effect in April of this year.

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David Palumbo: This new agreement, under the 1944 Water Treaty,

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David Palumbo: Mexico will conserve 400,000 acre feet of water, which adds roughly 5 feet in Lake Mead elevation.

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David Palumbo: This will occur over a 30 month period between now and the end of 2026

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David Palumbo: Mexico continues to work as a true partner on the Colorado River, taking prompt action to help protect the system and reduce the likelihood of crisis conditions in the future as we focus on the long-term sustainable operations of the Colorado River.

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David Palumbo: Our success has been possible in great part, thanks to tribal leadership and our historic coordination with the Colorado River Basin tribes.

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David Palumbo: We established the historic 1st Federal Tribal States group to ensure all cyber nations are meaningful, engaged, and involved in the critical decisions regarding long-term operations of the Colorado River, and that the decisions are responsive to the tribe's present and future needs.

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David Palumbo: Our reclamation team has participated in over 30 Government consultations since 2022, a majority of these in person, hosted by the tribal nation.

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David Palumbo: Our investments in Indian country match our commitment,

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David Palumbo: including a funding opportunity for \$16.5 million dollars to address drought impacts to tribal nations funded by the Inflation Reduction Act,

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David Palumbo: as well as Reclamation's annual funding for technical assistance to tribes. Selections for this funding opportunity are expected this fiscal year.

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David Palumbo: Together with the Indian Health Service, we announced a new memorandum of understanding to further develop safe drinking, water and community sanitation, infrastructure projects across Indian country.

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David Palumbo: Through the MOU, the agencies will collaborate to complete planning and design to be used in constructing domestic water infrastructure projects.

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David Palumbo: Finally, we launched another Inflation Reduction Act funding opportunity for \$320 million dollars for tribal domestic water supply projects in support of tribal households and communities that currently do not have reliable access to drinking water supplies. This funding opportunity is receiving proposals through August 4th of this year

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David Palumbo: Since the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was signed in November of 2021,

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David Palumbo: Reclamation has announced more than \$4.1 billion dollars for 537 projects,

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David Palumbo: over \$2.7 billion for 332 projects across the Colorado River Basin.

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David Palumbo: And since the enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act, we have announced over \$2 billion dollars for investments, the majority of which are for the Colorado River, given the critical needs in the basin.

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David Palumbo: In the Lower Basin, 24 lower Colorado system Conservation and Efficiency Agreements have been announced in Arizona and California through 2026, with over 1.58 million acre feet of conservation made possible through an investment of over \$670 million dollars.

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David Palumbo: In the Upper Basin, in coordination with the Upper Colorado River Commission, we've been able to secure over a 100,000 acre feet of conservation in 2023, and 2024 through an investment of over \$45 million dollars.

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David Palumbo: These investments and our actions are having impacts on the ground. They're supporting our Colorado River operations and helping build resiliency across the basin for the sustainability of our system.

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David Palumbo: Today, I'm excited to share that reclamation is currently negotiating proposals in Bucket 2 of the lower Colorado Conservation and Efficiency program.

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David Palumbo: We're making an initial investment of \$700 million dollars in projects identified with a combined potential to save more than 700,000 acre feet of water in Lake Mead.

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David Palumbo: This is the long-term portion of the program, a priority for Reclamation where the majority of the funding from the Inflation Reduction Act will be spent.

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David Palumbo: Just as with the Bucket One system conservation agreements,

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David Palumbo: the work to support and stabilize the system through 2026 Bucket 2 efficiency projects will aid the long term resilience of the basin in support of post-2026 Colorado River operations.

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David Palumbo: Submittals came from all 3 States, all sectors and tribes,

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David Palumbo: state entities, and individual water entitlement holders.

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David Palumbo: We expect final agreements to be announced on a rolling basis in the coming months.

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David Palumbo: In the Upper Basin, we have Inflation Reduction Act funding we are eager to use towards long-term investments on water conservation system efficiency and ecosystem restoration projects.

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David Palumbo: We're currently developing the funding opportunities, and those will become available very soon.

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David Palumbo: More on that in just a moment.

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David Palumbo: Reclamation can only achieve its mission while supporting ecosystems and the species that depend upon them.

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David Palumbo: At reclamation, that means our mission includes support for collaboratively developed ecosystem restoration projects that provide regional benefits and improve the health of watershed fisheries, wildlife, and aquatic habitats. The work we do with our partners to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat also helps improve water quality and mitigate impacts of drought and potential flood events.

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David Palumbo: It is a vital part of our mission

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David Palumbo: Together, ecosystem restoration projects like these are also advancing the Justice 40 Initiative, part of the Biden-Harris administration's historic commitment to environmental justice.

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David Palumbo: This initiative aims to ensure 40% of the overall benefits of climate, clean energy and other federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that have been marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

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David Palumbo: In the Colorado River Basin, the Investing in America agenda is also supporting ecosystem efforts.

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David Palumbo: In Arizona \$25 million dollars in funding to protect wetlands. The Yuma East Wetlands receive \$5 million dollars, and the 4,000 acre Topock Marsh in the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge will receive \$20 million dollars.

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David Palumbo: Reclamations Water smart program, or area

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David Palumbo: includes projects focused on ecosystem restoration and watershed management.

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David Palumbo: Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure. Law, Reclamation has funded 15 projects in the Colorado river endangered species recovery programs for \$73.5 million dollars.

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David Palumbo: In Albuquerque, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is providing \$3 million dollars for the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority to reconnect approximately 11 acres of floodplain habitat along nearly 2,000 linear feet of the Rio Grande, connecting the Rio Grande to its flood plain.

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David Palumbo: Also in New Mexico, the pueblo of Isleta is receiving \$2.5 million dollars for repairing restoration and revisitation.

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David Palumbo: The Pueblo will build resilience in the watershed by implementing nature-based restoration techniques to restore natural watershed function on approximately 30,000 acres of the Comanche ranch and neighboring lands.

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David Palumbo: Regarding our Inflation Reduction Act environmental Investments, we're committing up to \$250 million dollars in an agreement with the State of California, the Imperial Irrigation District and the Coachella Valley Water District to support the Salton Sea.

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David Palumbo: And I'm excited to announce that in the Upper Basin our Bucket 2 funding opportunity for ecosystem restoration, and environmental projects is scheduled to be released by midsummer.

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David Palumbo: We look forward to our collaboration in that program for the benefit of our natural environment.

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David Palumbo: Thank you again for the opportunity to share the good stories that we've been able to build and will continue to build together.

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David Palumbo: I look forward to addressing your questions today and our continued collaboration for the benefit of the Colorado River and all the communities that rely on it.

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David Palumbo: Thank you very much.

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David Palumbo: I'll turn it back to you, Fay.

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Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much, Deputy Commissioner, really appreciate you making the time to chat with us today.

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Fay Hartman: I'm excited to introduce our next panelist we have. And up next we're going to hear from Mike Camblin, who is President of the Maybell Irrigation District, who's going to talk more about the Maybell Ditch Improvement Project that he worked on. And, Mike, I wanna apologize for having your title wrong when I introduced you at the beginning. That you're the President of the

00:23:48.530 --> 00:23:52.509

Fay Hartman: irrigation district, so I'll turn it over to you. Thanks so much for joining us.

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Mike Camblin: Yeah, that's no worries on that. I

00:23:57.360 --> 00:24:01.959

Mike Camblin: do a little bit of all of it. So

00:24:02.409 --> 00:24:09.060

Mike Camblin: the title is not all that important to me. At any rate. Yeah. So hello, everybody

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Mike Camblin: as Fay said, I'm President of the Maybell Irrigation District. And I think, what I wanna do is maybe show a little

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Mike Camblin: of where that money is going. You know that David was talking about earlier. And and so the Maybell diversion project

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Mike Camblin: is one of those projects. And

00:24:29.080 --> 00:24:36.130

Mike Camblin: to kind of give you just a little bit of a background of what we had going on. So the Maybell Irrigation District

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Mike Camblin: supplies water to about 18 separate ranches or shareholders.

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Mike Camblin: It is the largest agricultural pole in the Yampa river.

00:24:48.930 --> 00:24:49.685

Mike Camblin: and

00:24:50.660 --> 00:24:54.419

Mike Camblin: It was built in the late 1800s, and

00:24:55.530 --> 00:24:58.849

Mike Camblin: as you can see from the picture that's on the

00:24:59.270 --> 00:25:03.740

Mike Camblin: on the screen. There, you know, on the left is what we started with.

00:25:03.850 --> 00:25:08.140

Mike Camblin: and on the right is what we've kind of finished up with.

00:25:08.170 --> 00:25:16.130

Mike Camblin: Big difference there, as you can tell, we're pretty excited about that. This head gate is really remote, you know. It's

00:25:16.635 --> 00:25:22.500

Mike Camblin: a mile walk, too. You can't drive to, you got to walk to it, and then it's a mile away, and

00:25:22.510 --> 00:25:25.159

Mike Camblin: so it's

00:25:25.200 --> 00:25:29.329

Mike Camblin: It was very hard for us to manage our water and get things

00:25:29.982 --> 00:25:31.760

Mike Camblin: dialed in. And

00:25:32.130 --> 00:25:38.390

Mike Camblin: we knew we had a problem. And one of our biggest problems was money to fix it.

00:25:38.450 --> 00:25:39.516

Mike Camblin: And so

00:25:40.350 --> 00:25:44.149

Mike Camblin: you know, we needed help, and you know, so we we joined hands with

00:25:44.220 --> 00:25:47.429

Mike Camblin: the Nature Conservancy and a couple other groups

00:25:47.730 --> 00:25:50.849

Mike Camblin: to see if we could solve this problem.

00:25:50.980 --> 00:26:00.119

Mike Camblin: And so, you know, in the past we do quite a bit with the fish recovery program. And you know, then we've got boaters.

00:26:00.300 --> 00:26:01.280

Mike Camblin: And

00:26:01.380 --> 00:26:02.310

Mike Camblin: so

00:26:02.500 --> 00:26:05.970

Mike Camblin: there was a lot of people that were looking at our project

00:26:06.270 --> 00:26:09.940

Mike Camblin: before, knowing that we needed to fix it.

00:26:10.230 --> 00:26:13.729

Mike Camblin: and a lot of people that stepped up and helped us fix it.

00:26:13.930 --> 00:26:17.200

Mike Camblin: And so we're we're pretty proud to prove

00:26:17.310 --> 00:26:19.320

Mike Camblin: prevent or to, you know.

00:26:19.500 --> 00:26:21.690

Mike Camblin: Show it off a little bit to you today.

00:26:22.200 --> 00:26:24.809

Mike Camblin: So if you want to go to the next slide.

00:26:26.950 --> 00:26:31.930

Mike Camblin: This kind of shows, maybe the remoteness of this a little bit. So

00:26:31.940 --> 00:26:39.210

Mike Camblin: we actually had to build a special road to get down into this. And of course, you know,

00:26:39.490 --> 00:26:41.581

Mike Camblin: this is on BLM ground

00:26:42.130 --> 00:26:46.030

Mike Camblin: We built a special road to get down to it, but

00:26:46.140 --> 00:26:51.800

Mike Camblin: it doesn't show. You know the picture doesn't do us justice that that's actually very steep.

00:26:51.880 --> 00:26:55.840

Mike Camblin: We ended up flying concrete in there, because

00:26:56.430 --> 00:27:03.139

Mike Camblin: the concrete trucks were slipping and sliding down off the hill, and so we flew concrete in

00:27:03.780 --> 00:27:07.739

Mike Camblin: and then just pack rocks down, you know, with loaders.

00:27:08.215 --> 00:27:12.064

Mike Camblin: So this this wasn't an easy project to get done

175

00:27:13.090 --> 00:27:14.510

Mike Camblin: and so

00:27:15.410 --> 00:27:17.339

Mike Camblin: if you want to go to the next slide.

00:27:23.389 --> 00:27:26.589

Mike Camblin: So this kind of wraps up. So if you look,

00:27:26.850 --> 00:27:34.920

Mike Camblin: you know that we're in a canyon here, and on the right hand side is the diversion structure and the new head gates.

00:27:34.940 --> 00:27:38.789

Mike Camblin: and on the left-hand side is our fish ladders

00:27:38.820 --> 00:27:40.286

Mike Camblin: and our

00:27:41.910 --> 00:27:47.490

Mike Camblin: passageways for the recreational people, for boaters and

00:27:47.550 --> 00:27:50.270

Mike Camblin: rafters, and whoever else wants to float this down.

00:27:50.480 --> 00:27:54.449

Mike Camblin: and then we also have fish ladders in there to

00:27:54.750 --> 00:27:57.830

Mike Camblin: accompany the fish. So

00:27:58.020 --> 00:28:02.850

Mike Camblin: this project was not only for agriculture, it was for

00:28:04.100 --> 00:28:06.469

Mike Camblin: the fish, and the boaters

00:28:06.730 --> 00:28:13.880

Mike Camblin: and everybody else. So it was, it's a really good project, and we're really proud to have it

00:28:13.930 --> 00:28:15.009

Mike Camblin: done.

00:28:17.610 --> 00:28:22.519

Mike Camblin: I think they kind of wanted me to touch on, maybe the economy of some of this stuff. Like I said

00:28:23.397 --> 00:28:26.732

Mike Camblin: with with 18 different shareholders

00:28:28.140 --> 00:28:30.210

Mike Camblin: the main

00:28:30.240 --> 00:28:31.860

Mike Camblin: agricultural

00:28:32.520 --> 00:28:33.430

Mike Camblin: crop

00:28:33.650 --> 00:28:35.380

Mike Camblin: is hey

00:28:35.530 --> 00:28:36.970

Mike Camblin: for cattle.

00:28:37.791 --> 00:28:40.559

Mike Camblin: So you know, there's a huge,

00:28:40.930 --> 00:28:44.820

Mike Camblin: huge economic benefit to have the water when we need it,

00:28:45.375 --> 00:28:45.890

Mike Camblin: but

00:28:46.320 --> 00:28:54.570

Mike Camblin: in this day and age we dang sure got to manage it. And I think that was our problem and one of the reasons that we started this project

00:28:54.810 --> 00:28:57.449

Mike Camblin: was to be able to manage the water

00:28:57.460 --> 00:28:58.810

Mike Camblin: as we needed to.

00:28:59.070 --> 00:29:00.959

Mike Camblin: You know in the past,

00:29:01.510 --> 00:29:09.569

Mike Camblin: as you can tell from the from the previous slide, those head gates were, you know, took 2 people to open them and close them. It took, you know,

00:29:09.830 --> 00:29:12.989

Mike Camblin: a mile walk to go up there and and open them

00:29:13.110 --> 00:29:15.089

Mike Camblin: and adjust them.

00:29:15.330 --> 00:29:25.809

Mike Camblin: And so this project here was kind of the last of our management decisions that we'd made. And to be honest with you, we thought it was out of our reach

00:29:27.045 --> 00:29:27.960

Mike Camblin: financially.

00:29:28.326 --> 00:29:36.520

Mike Camblin: Until you know, we started getting some help from from the Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Reclamation and some of those other people from the

00:29:36.530 --> 00:29:38.100

Mike Camblin: fish recovery program

00:29:38.310 --> 00:29:39.660

Mike Camblin: to help us

00:29:39.820 --> 00:29:44.770

Mike Camblin: do this. So what it's allowed us to do is we can actually get on a computer now

00:29:44.910 --> 00:29:47.799

Mike Camblin: and open those head gates remotely.

00:29:48.030 --> 00:29:51.140

Mike Camblin: We know exactly how much water we're taking

00:29:52.123 --> 00:29:52.816

Mike Camblin: and

00:29:53.900 --> 00:29:57.985

Mike Camblin: So it's been key in our water management.

00:29:58.610 --> 00:30:16.199

Mike Camblin: If we have a shareholder that needs a little more water, we can open it when we need to. If we see several shareholders that are shutting down for hand season, it's easy for us to adjust that water now without having to send somebody up there to adjust it.

00:30:16.460 --> 00:30:20.469

Mike Camblin: And so I think water management was our

00:30:20.670 --> 00:30:24.149

Mike Camblin: number one reason for doing this.

00:30:24.190 --> 00:30:27.130

Mike Camblin: And then, of course, the fish and

00:30:27.410 --> 00:30:31.820

Mike Camblin: the recreational boaters, and so forth, benefited from it. So

00:30:34.540 --> 00:30:40.449

Mike Camblin: I believe I think that's just about got it wrapped up. I'll wait for questions and answers.

00:30:40.730 --> 00:30:45.820

Mike Camblin: You know, at the end of the thing. If anybody's got questions and answers, I'll wait for that.

00:30:45.950 --> 00:30:49.309

Mike Camblin: I don't know if Jennifer wanted to say anything while we were

00:30:49.540 --> 00:30:52.670

Mike Camblin: in our slot or not, but I think I'm done.

00:30:58.220 --> 00:31:04.870

Fay Hartman: Excellent thanks so much, Mike. That was a great overview of the

00:31:05.334 --> 00:31:19.660

Fay Hartman: the great work that you've done on the Maybell Diversion project on the Yampa River in Northwest Colorado. So thank you so much for sharing more about your project and the impacts and the benefits that it had that it's had on your shareholders on the

00:31:19.680 --> 00:31:35.541

Fay Hartman: on the ditch as well as the other multiple benefits that it's providing in and around the Yampa basin and beyond so our final presenter panelists for today is going to be Lenise Peterman, who is the Mayor of

00:31:35.910 --> 00:31:50.989

Fay Hartman: Helper in Utah. She is going to speak with us about the Helper River River Revitalization project, who's going to talk a bit more about the project on the Price River in Utah. So Lenise, I'll go ahead and turn it over to you.

00:31:51.760 --> 00:32:12.549

Lenise Peterman: Thanks, Fay. Good afternoon, everyone. We're super excited to share this project with all of you. So if you'd like to advance to the next slide, the project that we worked on was the Gigliotti Diversion. As you can see, this is what it looked like previously. This was a 12 foot dam. It was obsolete

00:32:12.570 --> 00:32:37.139

Lenise Peterman: and was impacting fish passage as well as recreational opportunities within our river. And I would point out, this is actually the 6th phase of a broader project. So we did actually 5 previous phases prior to this one to rehabilitate the river and restore it to a more natural state.

00:32:37.140 --> 00:32:52.080

Lenise Peterman: So in this case we removed 6 dams and piling structures that were just completely obsolete and just blocking the water, and consolidated some of our secondary water groups into a single group.

00:32:52.120 --> 00:32:59.220

Lenise Peterman: The total cost of this effort was roughly \$2 million dollars. So if you'd like to advance to the next slide.

00:33:01.690 --> 00:33:11.020

Lenise Peterman: and this was actually funded by the National Fish Passage program. So we were recovering an endangered species fish in the process of this

00:33:11.040 --> 00:33:37.939

Lenise Peterman: project. So they were very supportive, providing \$1.5 million dollars. And I would point out we had been looking for funding for this particular phase for 2 years. So this was really sort of the icing on the cake, so to speak, to push us over the top, where we received another \$500,000 from the Utah Outdoor Recreation Division to really get the project

00:33:37.940 --> 00:33:46.280

Lenise Peterman: unhinged. The project was actually conceptually run by River Restoration

00:33:46.330 --> 00:34:15.040

Lenise Peterman: and that's who we've worked with over the last 8 years on all of our previous projects. And the total cost of all of the river restoration work has been roughly \$3.5 million is what we have put into recovering this natural asset that we have running through Helper City. So we're super excited to see a push over the finish line. If you'd like to advance to the next slide.

00:34:16.389 --> 00:34:24.470

Lenise Peterman: so you can see the work was intense. We had to get into the river in a place that was very steep.

00:34:25.027 --> 00:34:38.602

Lenise Peterman: We actually trucked in about 1,800 tons of rock from a nearby canyon to perform this work. And if you'll advance to the next slide you'll see how beautiful it turned out.

00:34:42.810 --> 00:34:56.189

Lenise Peterman: So now what we've done is we've created a space where fish can transverse up the river, and that humans can actually go down the river. And that has resulted in an economic

00:34:56.199 --> 00:35:06.849

Lenise Peterman: tool that we're using in Helper City to diversify our economic position. We are a traditional coal mining, small rural community.

00:35:07.272 --> 00:35:32.240

Lenise Peterman: And we've had to change gears with that single economic driver, and really look at ourselves and identify assets that we have existing assets that we have in order to fire up some economic diversification, which is what we were doing with all of the River Restoration work, and we couldn't be more excited. You know, at the number of guests that we're seeing

00:35:32.240 --> 00:35:45.109

Lenise Peterman: the number of people engaging the river. They're fishing, they're tubing. If the water is up, they can even kayak. So it's been just an amazing asset that we've really recovered

00:35:45.556 --> 00:36:00.280

Lenise Peterman: in our city to drive some of those changes that we need to see. And without this federal funding we would have been really hard pressed to successfully conclude these

00:36:00.940 --> 00:36:02.830

Lenise Peterman: projects. So

00:36:03.380 --> 00:36:07.979

Lenise Peterman: and I'm done. Jordan, do you want to weigh in with anything?

00:36:14.490 --> 00:36:16.668

Jordan Nielson: I think that sounds really good, Lenise.

00:36:17.110 --> 00:36:20.339

Jordan Nielson: I'm happy to answer any of the technical questions on the project.

00:36:21.200 --> 00:36:21.910

Jordan Nielson: But

00:36:22.240 --> 00:36:35.102

Jordan Nielson: I just want to note that we had been looking for the money to complete this project for a couple of years, and this part of a tent, you mentioned the multi-phase,

00:36:35.620 --> 00:36:40.450

Jordan Nielson: we'd been working on this for 10 years by the time we got to this. So

00:36:40.990 --> 00:36:48.959

Jordan Nielson: the timing was right with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to get some money on the ground to get some of the bigger work done that we needed to do.

00:36:54.430 --> 00:36:57.130

Fay Hartman: Thanks so much, Jordan and Lenise, really appreciate it.

00:36:57.977 --> 00:37:22.350

Fay Hartman: So we have gotten to the second part of our briefing today, a moderated discussion, question and answer session. So, as I mentioned earlier, if you haven't yet put your questions in the question and answer box please feel free to and to put in any questions that you have for

00:37:22.350 --> 00:37:34.959

Fay Hartman: any or all of the panelists. And I'll go ahead and get started with a couple of the questions that have been rolling in Shawn, can you take down the slides and awesome, and then put everybody back up on the screen.

00:37:36.210 --> 00:37:37.029

Fay Hartman: So

00:37:38.150 --> 00:37:44.512

Fay Hartman: The 1st question that I'm going to ask is, is really I think, for everybody.

00:37:44.980 --> 00:38:09.840

Fay Hartman: So what would, what could you do with additional investments in terms of scaling the type of work that you're doing now? And maybe we'll start Jennifer and Mike, if you guys want to start from the perspective of the work that's being done on the Yampa and the Maybell project in terms of scaling that type of work, and then we can transition over to Lenise and Jordan.

00:38:15.120 --> 00:38:25.419

Jennifer Wellman: Sure I will take the 1st crack at that. It's it's a great question, I think, projects that are multi-benefit

00:38:25.460 --> 00:38:46.419

Jennifer Wellman: that serve agricultural water users and environmental purposes as well as recreational water needs and potentially industrial water needs bring together people from diverse backgrounds so they can work on proactive solutions to protect the river and the water that everyone depends on.

00:38:46.550 --> 00:38:47.710

Jennifer Wellman: and

00:38:47.950 --> 00:38:57.549

Jennifer Wellman: our project, at least the Maybell diversion, took a lot of people working together on the ground to make that change happen.

00:38:57.830 --> 00:39:15.090

Jennifer Wellman: and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was critical at a time when we were fundraising and cobbling together resources from a bunch of different organizations. And suddenly there was an infusion of Federal funds into

00:39:15.150 --> 00:39:27.929

Jennifer Wellman: this network, so we were able to apply and receive funding, which then advanced the project to construction. So that's the cumulative impact of

00:39:28.590 --> 00:39:35.580

Jennifer Wellman: working together at scale and really working together to reduce wasted water

00:39:35.590 --> 00:39:43.330

Jennifer Wellman: and assist with other regional efforts to support native and endangered fish, habitat and recreational water needs.

00:39:46.910 --> 00:39:50.010

Fay Hartman: Thanks, Jennifer. Mike, did you have anything else you wanted to add there?

00:39:52.734 --> 00:40:03.029

Mike Camblin: Yeah, no, I think, Jennifer answered, that really, really well. It really was difficult. I mean, it took us, you know 6 or 7 years to gather the money up for this.

00:40:03.050 --> 00:40:07.250

Mike Camblin: and it seemed like every time we get close, you know, Covid came along, and

00:40:07.360 --> 00:40:14.350

Mike Camblin: you know it just kept stretching out. But it was something definitely that, you know, the

00:40:14.840 --> 00:40:18.845

Mike Camblin: shareholders knew was out of their reach, and

00:40:19.480 --> 00:40:23.270

Mike Camblin: then there was so many other benefits to it. You know that,

00:40:23.360 --> 00:40:27.799

Mike Camblin: you know, with the fish and and and the boaters, and everything else, too, that

00:40:28.458 --> 00:40:35.359

Mike Camblin: you know, if it wasn't a collaborative effort we couldn't have got it done. So it worked really well for everybody.

00:40:36.850 --> 00:40:48.010

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you both so much. Jordan and Lenise I'll the same question to you guys. What do you think you could accomplish with additional investments. And how would you scale the type of work that you're doing now?

00:40:50.460 --> 00:40:53.170

Jordan Nielson: That's a great question. So

00:40:53.620 --> 00:41:01.409

Jordan Nielson: let me talk 1st about the context of just Helper itself. Like we, we've just scratched the surface.

00:41:01.440 --> 00:41:13.529

Jordan Nielson: Right, we removed a few of the barriers that are through this, the city of Helper. There are a few other barriers on the river that need to be removed for fish and human passage.

00:41:15.370 --> 00:41:36.149

Jordan Nielson: But really, the bigger picture here is restoring the health of the river and not just getting old infrastructure out. It's making sure that the river functions in a way that builds resilience. We're removing invasive species and replanting natives where we're

00:41:36.260 --> 00:41:43.670

Jordan Nielson: expanding floodplains, so that river has somewhere to go rather than flood and and cause erosion and other damage.

00:41:43.820 --> 00:41:45.930

Jordan Nielson: And so there,

00:41:46.030 --> 00:41:47.190

Jordan Nielson: there's

00:41:47.450 --> 00:42:04.609

Jordan Nielson: decades worth of work that we could do right there and help with building resilience. Now in the bigger picture in the Colorado River Basin, we've seen things get drier over this millennial drought. With the projections are that as it continues to get drier and hotter.

00:42:04.850 --> 00:42:14.640

Jordan Nielson: and especially in a community that resides in the high plains desert of Utah. Water is key to everything that we do.

00:42:15.470 --> 00:42:19.090

Jordan Nielson: So. If we can build a watershed that is resilient

00:42:19.150 --> 00:42:28.590

Jordan Nielson: to that change in precipitation, the change in temperature, then we can continue to live life and and thrive where we've

00:42:28.610 --> 00:42:30.799

Jordan Nielson: been thriving for a long time.

00:42:31.463 --> 00:42:33.979

Jordan Nielson: So to to kind of

00:42:34.400 --> 00:42:36.951

Jordan Nielson: get a little bit more discreet with that

00:42:37.570 --> 00:43:03.640

Jordan Nielson: With that answer we could accelerate the work, right? We have so many projects lined up that we could just start rather than do a project. And then, a couple of years later, where we've raised the money to do the project again, we could start stacking projects up to build that resilience quicker in our watersheds. There's no shortage of work to be done as we're just slowed down by capacity to do the work and funding to do the work.

00:43:06.820 --> 00:43:10.179

Jordan Nielson: Lenise, would you like to add anything from the perspective of Helper.

00:43:10.370 --> 00:43:14.338

Lenise Peterman: Well, I would echo that really the work has

00:43:14.850 --> 00:43:16.770

Lenise Peterman: helped us in mitigating

00:43:17.620 --> 00:43:33.079

Lenise Peterman: potential flooding. You know, we've had 2 record years of water down here and there was a deep concern that we could possibly flood, and given the fact that all of this river restoration work had been performed,

00:43:33.521 --> 00:43:56.910

Lenise Peterman: we came through just amazingly well. So it let me know that the work we're doing is absolutely working. And the impact of this type of funding for a small rural community is the difference between a declining economy, disappearing town and a vibrant community. So

00:43:57.379 --> 00:44:23.149

Lenise Peterman: I can't emphasize that enough. That it breeds hope. It breeds engagement, you know, with the outdoors. It's a way where we can take care of the water. So you know, it just

really is so impactful in a community such as Helper and working with all of the different groups that we've been able to engage has been phenomenal and educational.

00:44:25.570 --> 00:44:39.824

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much, Jordan and Lanise. So, David, I do have a question for you. Has the Bureau of Reclamation seen an increase in demand for funds, as you know, as as projects

00:44:40.505 --> 00:44:54.400

Fay Hartman: have kind of come in and as the money from the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law have kind of started to roll out. And is that, do you feel like there is a greater demand than supply of funding?

00:44:55.640 --> 00:45:22.409

David Palumbo: That's a great question. So we tried to think about that as we started to stand up these programs, so under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that was fairly prescriptive of where the \$8.3 billion dollars was going. It was infused into 12 programs. And so we either stood up a few new programs or advanced a few programs under those 12 areas.

00:45:22.440 --> 00:45:37.670

David Palumbo: And so some of them, we can see that additional funding could be put to beneficial use over time. There's a lot of interest in the programs, which is a great testament to communities like

00:45:37.670 --> 00:45:53.310

David Palumbo: Helper, like Mabell, that they're able to get that money to work on the ground and realize these benefits and queue up additional opportunities. So we see that under the Inflation Reduction Act,

00:45:53.310 --> 00:46:03.660

David Palumbo: we had a little less specificity on how we structure the program from the legislation. So we tried to divide up that funding.

00:46:04.120 --> 00:46:25.630

David Palumbo: We got 4 major buckets, and then under that, we created these sub buckets of how we were going to implement the money, both in short, term investments and longer term investments, and we see, especially in those longer term investments, just that Bucket 1, or excuse me, Bucket 2 announcement that I mentioned

00:46:25.630 --> 00:46:39.599

David Palumbo: of \$700 million dollars. When we put out our request for proposals under that Bucket 2 program in the Lower Basin, we received \$5 billion dollars in investments. We have

00:46:39.600 --> 00:47:00.700

David Palumbo: 4 billion dollars under the Inflation Reduction Act at-large for drought in the West. So just by virtue of the demand that came in with those requests for proposals, we see that there could be, you know, opportunities for further expenditures. If Congress so chooses to provide that funding.

00:47:02.270 --> 00:47:04.520

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much, David.

00:47:04.979 --> 00:47:13.770

Fay Hartman: So another question. And this might be again a bit for kind of all the panelists. But I would say specifically,

00:47:14.300 --> 00:47:15.250

Fay Hartman: at

00:47:15.400 --> 00:47:31.140

Fay Hartman: Jennifer, Jordan and David. When you think about, you know, the end of funding through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, what does success look like? From your perspectives?

00:47:31.390 --> 00:47:34.010

Fay Hartman: And, David, if you want to go ahead first

00:47:35.250 --> 00:47:57.320

David Palumbo: Oh, sure! I noticed one of the the questions in the chat was kind of a distinction between Bucket 1 and Bucket 2. So maybe I'll fold in an answer to that as well, because, you know, with respect to that portion of the Inflation Reduction Act drought in the West, and in particular this case, we're talking about the Colorado River Basin.

00:47:57.760 --> 00:48:01.570

David Palumbo: We stood up the Bucket 1 program

00:48:01.720 --> 00:48:05.820

David Palumbo: for those we call short term, real wet water,

00:48:05.880 --> 00:48:09.599

David Palumbo: new wet water, accruing to the benefit of the system.

00:48:09.650 --> 00:48:32.590

David Palumbo: And so I think success means that we achieved our near term goals, and those are through 2026, kind of aligned with the SEIS that we implemented to the O7 guidelines, how do we get to 2026. So if we're able to stabilize the system, and it looks like we've been able to do that with communities coming forward and

00:48:32.590 --> 00:48:47.499

David Palumbo: wanting to be partners here in saving that water for the benefit of the system. That's success. With respect to the longer term, the post-2026. How we're aligning Bucket 2,

00:48:47.500 --> 00:49:09.279

David Palumbo: These we'll call them longer-term durable projects. They're more shovel in the ground, whether nature based or other infrastructure that we would implement if we're able to achieve that, that wet water savings, or, in the case of the ecosystem projects, those ecosystem benefits for the long term,

00:49:10.130 --> 00:49:35.869

David Palumbo: then that means success for us. And we've got a lot of interest in the Upper Basin on both ecosystem and water projects. And then in the Lower Basin. We had that robust response to our request for proposal. So I'm confident we'll realize those benefits. And and that's generally what you know, success looks like from from Reclamation's perspective with

00:49:36.080 --> 00:49:37.750

David Palumbo: those programs.

00:49:39.410 --> 00:49:41.480

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much.

00:49:41.590 --> 00:49:43.280

Fay Hartman: Jennifer, Jordan,

00:49:43.380 --> 00:49:46.129

Fay Hartman: one of you want to chime in about what success looks like?

00:49:46.780 --> 00:49:49.049

Jennifer Wellman: Sure, I'm happy to. From the

00:49:49.220 --> 00:50:03.010

Jennifer Wellman: Yampa standpoint, there are a number of additional irrigation infrastructure, modernization and rehabilitation projects that are underway that we're supporting. Other

00:50:03.060 --> 00:50:30.220

Jennifer Wellman: nonprofits and private entities that are taking those projects on, but they were inspired by the complexity and the kind of can-do attitude of the Maybell diversion in order to go after additional funds and seek funds through Reclamation and other entities. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has also been a great supporter of

00:50:30.220 --> 00:50:40.270

Jennifer Wellman: small and large irrigation system improvements that also focus on ecosystem restoration and river connectivity and river health.

00:50:40.370 --> 00:50:41.860

Jennifer Wellman: So I think

00:50:42.430 --> 00:50:44.109

Jennifer Wellman: in our basin,

00:50:44.860 --> 00:51:11.220

Jennifer Wellman: the overall health is definitely a consideration, and that cumulative impact that we mentioned before of having multiple projects happening throughout the headwaters to the lower parts of the basin is what's really going to drive impact and raise the level of awareness of communities so that people are working together to really advance projects that have a significant

00:51:12.240 --> 00:51:13.740

Jennifer Wellman: dent in the

00:51:13.750 --> 00:51:15.309

Jennifer Wellman: climate fight.

00:51:19.560 --> 00:51:22.920

Jordan Nielson: So I think I would define success,

00:51:23.410 --> 00:51:38.450

Jordan Nielson: kind of similar to David, but with like a little bit different spin on it, because I come from a different angle. Right? So so many different communities draw from the river and and need to continue to draw from the river: ag industrial, municipal,

00:51:38.470 --> 00:51:51.339

Jordan Nielson: We have the environmental needs of having water in the river. And you know, as as we roll into the future, and we see a changing dynamic in our climate and

00:51:51.728 --> 00:51:56.050

Jordan Nielson: how we interact with the river, that we find some sort of balance.

00:51:56.540 --> 00:51:59.800

Jordan Nielson: that we take what we've done to

00:52:00.660 --> 00:52:13.480

Jordan Nielson: degrade our river system over the last, you know, century, and we reverse some of it. We continue to learn, and that we accelerate that work to the point where

00:52:13.620 --> 00:52:28.440

Jordan Nielson: we're not worrying as much about, you know, where is all the water demand? Can it be met? But we're worrying more about like, our demands are met. How do we make sure that it continues to be met for a long time.

00:52:31.810 --> 00:52:33.992

Fay Hartman: Excellent thanks, Jordan.

00:52:34.810 --> 00:52:57.039

Fay Hartman: So another question came in for you, David. Can you speak a little bit more about the environmental investments that are being made through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. And can you specifically speak to the work that reclamation is supporting in the Salton Sea, as well as other river and wetland restoration projects.

00:53:00.910 --> 00:53:29.491

David Palumbo: Yeah, absolutely. There's a wide range of type of ecosystem benefit, environmental benefit projects that we're looking at. When we stood up these programs, we truly, really tried to stand them up in a way that was broad in nature. That focused on environmental benefits to a particular community or system that's been impacted by drought,

00:53:30.418 --> 00:53:49.659

David Palumbo: ecosystem restoration activities for communities that have been impacted by drought, for example, with the Salton Sea is a good example. The funding that we provided, the \$250 million dollars we know due to climate change, aridification,

00:53:49.660 --> 00:54:06.569

David Palumbo: reduction in runoff efficiency water, making it to the river, and then ultimately making it to irrigation purposes, and then ultimately through runoff, making it to the Salton Sea that that will have a deleterious effect on the Salton Sea.

00:54:06.710 --> 00:54:33.590

David Palumbo: And so through conservation activities with the Imperial Irrigation District, we're looking at, you know, significantly reducing the amount of diversions that the Imperial Irrigation District takes for irrigation purposes. That's a separate program that we're working on with the district. But we know as a result of that

00:54:34.000 --> 00:54:37.850

David Palumbo: a reduced runoff will go to the Salton Sea.

00:54:38.780 --> 00:55:00.680

David Palumbo: As a result of the increasing temperatures this reduced runoff, the sea will recede and expose the playa that was underneath the water in the Salton Sea. So the mitigation type projects, the restoration type projects that we're looking at

00:55:00.710 --> 00:55:29.690

David Palumbo: provide tools to connect either portions of the sea that have receded to shallow ponds, for example, or other palliative methods, to stabilize the exposed playa, provide habitat for migratory birds, provide habitat for aquatic species. So those those type of projects

00:55:29.870 --> 00:55:36.260

David Palumbo: are an example. Again, shallow ponds for that could be

00:55:36.290 --> 00:56:01.899

David Palumbo: invested in to help offset that reduction that we're seeing as a result of climate change, as a result of conservation efforts to address climate change to stabilize the sea.

There's other types of programs that we're investing into. I had mentioned, for example, in the Rio Grande, just going outside of the basin, but receives water as

00:56:01.900 --> 00:56:10.419

David Palumbo: through a transdiversion into the Rio Grande, that in the Middle Valley we're looking at ways in which to connect

00:56:10.420 --> 00:56:32.060

David Palumbo: the floodplain to the river that's been channelized. So how do we get that benefit to the floodplain through some engineering on the ground, shovel in the ground activities, to connect those systems back together again in a more natural environment, rather than through the channelized system.

00:56:36.770 --> 00:56:40.165

Fay Hartman: Excellent thanks so much, David. Really appreciate it.

00:56:40.890 --> 00:56:59.070

Fay Hartman: And sorry. Another question for you. Lots of questions coming in. Can you speak a little bit about the ways that the Bureau of Reclamation and other federal agencies are able to monitor how the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Acts funding is being spent?

00:57:00.280 --> 00:57:10.889

David Palumbo: Sure. Thanks, thanks for that question. It's a great question. We get it a lot. It's a lot of money that Reclamation has received, a lot of money that federal entities have received that

00:57:11.060 --> 00:57:27.320

David Palumbo: taxpayers have entrusted us with, and so we need to reciprocate with that trust, and that this water, this money is being put to good use and verified use. So we have in Reclamation is a variety of techniques,

00:57:27.320 --> 00:57:38.479

David Palumbo: if you will, to ground truth, the activities on the ground. So through monitoring either remote sensing or on the ground

00:57:38.480 --> 00:58:01.929

David Palumbo: auditing of the projects to ensure that they're in place from an accounting and verification perspective. We have a a very robust water accounting program, both in the Lower Basin and the Upper Basin, and so we've had to staff up in those areas to make sure that when these projects are implemented, we're able to

00:58:01.960 --> 00:58:13.350

David Palumbo: one monitor, that they're completed as designed or as modified and approved. But then 2, they are realizing the benefits that they've been projected to yield. So

00:58:13.950 --> 00:58:38.559

David Palumbo: this monitoring, whether again remote sensing, or on the ground truthing, we call it that, that it is in fact happening. And we report that internally, and make that available, whether to Congress or other interested parties, to again verify that that money went to good use, and that it's yielding the benefits that we projected.

00:58:40.760 --> 00:58:42.829

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much.

00:58:42.870 --> 00:59:02.660

Fay Hartman: So this next question that came in is for Lenise and Mike. Did it take any convincing to work with some of the 2 environmental nonprofits that we have on the screen with us? The Nature Conservancy and Trout Unlimited by members of your community? And if so, how was that accomplished?

00:59:07.965 --> 00:59:10.472

Mike Camblin: Yeah, I can answer that question.

00:59:11.669 --> 00:59:16.309

Mike Camblin: So you know, when we first got started, I think there was some concern.

00:59:16.400 --> 00:59:19.269

Mike Camblin: You know that we were, you know.

00:59:19.310 --> 00:59:26.760

Mike Camblin: so to speak, stepping across the aisle working with TNC and

00:59:27.730 --> 00:59:29.130

Mike Camblin: once we

00:59:29.170 --> 00:59:39.690

Mike Camblin: once we got started, it was great. Everybody kind of flowed together really, really well. I think it was a concern that you know we started to have,

00:59:39.720 --> 00:59:42.810

Mike Camblin: and and it just didn't really ever

00:59:43.290 --> 00:59:45.531

Mike Camblin: become a huge problem.

00:59:46.160 --> 01:00:00.240

Mike Camblin: I think once we sat down at some of the initial meetings, and they realized that they were there to help, and some of the concerns they had were the same concerns, which was water management, you know, I think that

01:00:01.410 --> 01:00:02.729

Mike Camblin: it was just a

01:00:02.950 --> 01:00:09.650

Mike Camblin: matter of sitting down and having that conversation with our shareholders, and TNC was great

01:00:09.760 --> 01:00:12.960

Mike Camblin: as far as making sure that

01:00:13.410 --> 01:00:15.229

Mike Camblin: all questions were answered.

01:00:15.330 --> 01:00:19.699

Mike Camblin: I mean that we left everything on the table there, you know. Nothing was,

01:00:20.516 --> 01:00:25.106

Mike Camblin: you know, behind anybody's background, and we just put it all on the table. And

01:00:25.870 --> 01:00:29.499

Mike Camblin: so, you know, it went really well to be honest with you.

01:00:32.830 --> 01:00:49.820

Lenise Peterman: So I think Trout Unlimited is such a respected organization, and they have boots on the ground in our area, which is just one notch up right? So it's not like, "Oh, who are these people from outside of our community filtering in to

01:00:49.820 --> 01:01:07.739

Lenise Peterman: tell us what to do with the river?" But they're actually here. They've worked in our educational system with students. So they're a known entity. And we've been in this game like Jordan said for 10 years. So you know the the trust, the respect

01:01:08.278 --> 01:01:21.441

Lenise Peterman: is there, and I have, you know, the utmost respect for the jobs they do, and I believe the community does as well. So I've never received any any pushback, any negative feedback

01:01:22.356 --> 01:01:38.879

Lenise Peterman: about these relationships, because it really does take a cohort of partnerships to bring huge projects to completion. And you know you, you work with everyone at the table so kudos to Trout Unlimited.

01:01:43.580 --> 01:02:00.311

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much, Lenise and Mike. Really appreciate that. We've got time for one, maybe 2 more questions. The next question I have, and again, I think you know, David, it'd be great to get your thoughts on this, and I would also welcome thoughts from other panelists, but

01:02:00.680 --> 01:02:12.070

Fay Hartman: how do we build on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act funding in terms of kind of

01:02:12.220 --> 01:02:15.150

Fay Hartman: how the money is spent and where it's going?

01:02:17.240 --> 01:02:26.239

David Palumbo: Thanks for that. That question. So another great question that we get quite a bit is, how do we make this not a one-and-done.

01:02:26.320 --> 01:02:37.649

David Palumbo: How do we leverage it for the future? How do we learn from the programs whether they're funded at the same levels in the future or some other level.

01:02:38.038 --> 01:03:00.569

David Palumbo: So one thing that we did early on for both the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and then the Inflation Reduction Act coming a little less than a year later is we stood up project management implementation teams that put together project plans for each of the projects. And then a key element is is a lessons learned section

01:03:01.317 --> 01:03:02.812

David Palumbo: specific to

01:03:03.580 --> 01:03:14.099

David Palumbo: those particular projects. But then, also our program managers, what are the lessons learned of how we set up the

01:03:14.440 --> 01:03:40.259

David Palumbo: program? More broadly so in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, for example, we received the \$.3 million dollars in \$1.6 million dollar increments, and we needed to put together spend plans for each of those increments as they come about. So we tried to

01:03:40.510 --> 01:03:54.889

David Palumbo: one, use the money initially in the 1st spend plan, the first \$1.6 in programs that we had good experience with, and then save the next year, if you will,

01:03:54.890 --> 01:04:14.729

David Palumbo: for programs where we needed to stand up, we needed to get a little bit smarter. We needed to do some research. And so as we increment through these \$1.6 billion dollars spend plans each for 5 years, again, how do we do that in a strategic way that leverages lessons learned over time.

01:04:14.760 --> 01:04:23.980

David Palumbo: with the Inflation Reduction Act, we're doing the same thing. We learned a lot by the Bucket 2 proposals in the Lower Basin.

01:04:24.438 --> 01:04:42.320

David Palumbo: What projects competed? Well, what projects maybe fell through the cracks. And so, as we're putting together, and I've got a copy of it right here our Bucket 2, we're calling it a Bucket 2, E bucket 2, Environment

01:04:42.320 --> 01:04:59.359

David Palumbo: for the Upper Basin. How have we learned from Bucket 2 and the Lower Basin and put together a program that is going to be strong. So it's maybe a long, negative way of saying it's iterative and just being open to

01:04:59.886 --> 01:05:07.249

David Palumbo: scrutiny, and learning from mistakes and learning from successes.

01:05:08.580 --> 01:05:16.439

Fay Hartman: Excellent. Thank you so much. I don't know if anybody else has any other thoughts on how we can learn from the implementation of

01:05:16.730 --> 01:05:18.310

Fay Hartman: federal funds thus far.

01:05:21.190 --> 01:05:22.520

Fay Hartman: Jordan, you're on mute.

01:05:23.300 --> 01:05:24.669

Fay Hartman: Had to happen once.

01:05:25.540 --> 01:05:42.740

Jordan Nielson: And it had to happen to me. I can just add just a little bit here. Whenever we start with something new like this, it moves really slow. So I think that's been frustrating for both us and our and our federal partners in trying to figure out like,

01:05:42.840 --> 01:06:00.830

Jordan Nielson: you know we have this opportunity available. How do we get it to the ground? And you know it took a long time. Some of these contracts took 6 or 8 months to put together. But I think we just naturally build on that, and we naturally learn from those kinds of things so we can move quicker. Just like,

01:06:01.140 --> 01:06:05.320

Jordan Nielson: you know David and the Bureau of Reclamation team.

01:06:05.350 --> 01:06:13.979

Jordan Nielson: You know, they're putting together all of their plans for this next bucket, and I'm positive it will go a lot smoother than what we've seen so far, so.

01:06:17.510 --> 01:06:26.280

Fay Hartman: Excellent thanks so much, Jordan. And I think the last question that I've got that Kate, that just popped in the chat. And David, you might

01:06:26.350 --> 01:06:47.120

Fay Hartman: know this answer, you might not, but do you have a sense of the total amount of federal funding that has been available or directed towards the Colorado River Basin, like across the federal family? And you might just be familiar with what the funding that you talked about earlier from Reclamation.

01:06:50.000 --> 01:07:04.970

David Palumbo: Yeah, no, that. That's also a really good question. It's somewhat difficult to answer from this perspective. The Inflation Reduction Act, for example, had the \$4 billion dollar section

01:07:05.030 --> 01:07:09.929

David Palumbo: for drought in Western states, in Reclamation states.

01:07:10.620 --> 01:07:19.040

David Palumbo: and specifically targeted for the Colorado River Basin and other basins, experiencing comparable levels of long-term drought.

01:07:19.160 --> 01:07:35.369

David Palumbo: So early on, we were able to roughly come up with how much we're going to spend in the Colorado River Basin and how much we're going to spend in other basins, experiencing comparable levels of long term drought. And so we roughly

01:07:35.380 --> 01:07:40.080

David Palumbo: came up with about \$3.5 billion dollars for the Colorado River Basin.

01:07:41.560 --> 01:08:07.315

David Palumbo: In the other programs, they're less specific to a particular basin in the Inflation Reduction Act. There was \$250 million dollars for the drought contingency plans. So that's more of an anomaly than the rule, in that that's specifically targeted for the Colorado River Basin.

01:08:08.300 --> 01:08:09.380

David Palumbo: so

01:08:11.690 --> 01:08:23.100

David Palumbo: the other programs are federal sibling agencies, whether it be in the Department of Interior or other programs, such as EPA and USDA

01:08:23.109 --> 01:08:43.960

David Palumbo: are again less specific towards a particular basin. So I don't have a good answer right now upfront how much will go towards the Colorado River Basin because of that lack of specificity, or those those dollars for those particular programs, you know, aside from

01:08:43.970 --> 01:08:50.300

David Palumbo: the IRA, the \$3.5 billion I mentioned, and then the drought contingency plans,

01:08:50.979 --> 01:08:53.621

David Palumbo: there's less specificity to which

01:08:54.210 --> 01:09:10.619

David Palumbo: basin or which state, or even what type of project that will receive the money. So that was a long-winded way of saying, I don't have that answer but a few of the reasons why I don't.

01:09:11.240 --> 01:09:33.070

Fay Hartman: No, that's really helpful. Thank you, David. And I will say, too. Just on that question, the website that I mentioned earlier Colorado River resilience that some of the NGOs have pulled together, we are working on looking at kind of some federal funding and and doing a an additional dive into how money has been spent across

01:09:33.069 --> 01:09:43.679

Fay Hartman: federal agencies, not just the funding that Reclamation has spent in the basin. So stay tuned, and we hope to have some more specific numbers that we can share in the next couple of months.

01:09:44.629 --> 01:10:09.719

David Palumbo: Yeah, can I just mention? I failed to mention we also have 2 GIS platforms, both one for the BIL and one for the Inflation Reduction Act. So it's kind of a lagging indicator, but you can go to see where those awards have been made by state, by sector, by irrigation district. So that's again, a

01:10:10.009 --> 01:10:12.609

David Palumbo: retroactive look at where the money went.

01:10:13.410 --> 01:10:19.569

David Palumbo: As very similar to, I think, Fay, what what you all are putting together, targeting

01:10:20.369 --> 01:10:21.369

David Palumbo: the basin.

01:10:22.300 --> 01:10:31.570

Fay Hartman: Awesome. Thank you so much, David, for sharing that. I have seen those tools, and they're really interesting and helpful in terms of showing where money has gone.

01:10:31.710 --> 01:11:00.879

Fay Hartman: The last question that I have, and this is for both folks working on the Maybell and the Helper projects and then we are almost at our 75 min mark. Have either the Maybell or the Helper projects been able to demonstrate water savings. Number one, was that a goal of your individual projects? And 2, if it was, have you seen any water savings thus far?

01:11:05.800 --> 01:11:09.789

Mike Camblin: Yes, so we just actually fired up, you know.

01:11:10.466 --> 01:11:16.983

Mike Camblin: the end of April. And so we haven't got to run it a whole lot longer. But yeah, you know, we

01:11:17.910 --> 01:11:19.579

Mike Camblin: currently are running

01:11:19.670 --> 01:11:24.059

Mike Camblin: on an average about 10 CFS less than we were before.

01:11:24.090 --> 01:11:27.859

Mike Camblin: just because we can respond quicker. And so

01:11:28.282 --> 01:11:31.419

Mike Camblin: we have told our shareholders to communicate with,

01:11:32.008 --> 01:11:37.260

Mike Camblin: You know our ditch writer every day. If you're going to kick water on, let him know,

01:11:38.006 --> 01:11:44.939

Mike Camblin: otherwise we're going to keep it at a minimum. Where before, since it was so hard to adjust that headgate.

01:11:44.980 --> 01:11:51.720

Mike Camblin: You know, we always put a little extra water in there, because it takes so long to get that adjustment.

01:11:51.760 --> 01:12:01.159

Mike Camblin: We had shareholders mad at us. You know we need water. Can you get us water? And now, you know, within

01:12:01.910 --> 01:12:19.709

Mike Camblin: usually 6 to 12 hours, depending on where in the district they're at, we can get them water. And so, yeah, we are. We're saving water. We're actually running less this spring than I think we ever have since I've been on the district, and that's been 21 years. So yes.

01:12:22.687 --> 01:12:31.302

Jordan Nielson: I can speak briefly to the Helper project. That it was not in the design of the Helper project to save water. We were removing structures that had been

01:12:32.410 --> 01:12:37.699

Jordan Nielson: designed to divert water for old irrigation ditches that had

01:12:37.710 --> 01:12:43.669

Jordan Nielson: that had already consolidated and piped all of their irrigation systems for water savings.

01:12:43.740 --> 01:12:47.420

Jordan Nielson: So the design of the Helper was more for

01:12:47.740 --> 01:12:56.779

Jordan Nielson: renewing or restoring habitat and restoring fish passage, as well as designing recreation for the

01:12:56.840 --> 01:12:58.410

Jordan Nielson: the community of Helper.

01:13:00.061 --> 01:13:07.300

Jordan Nielson: We could presume some water savings by removing invasive plant species. But that's not very trackable. So.

01:13:09.670 --> 01:13:32.381

Fay Hartman: Thank you so much. Mike and Jordan really appreciate those answers. Well, it is exactly 3:45 mountain time on the dot, so I again want to thank my excellent panelists on our webinar or media briefing. Thank you all so much for your really thoughtful answers. Presentations, time, commitment to the projects that you all are doing

01:13:32.760 --> 01:13:45.959

Fay Hartman: on the ground and funding that you're providing to really excellent projects across the basin. I really appreciate all of your remarks, and the time, and and a big thank you to all of you that are listening, and all the great questions that were asked.

01:13:46.232 --> 01:14:09.899

Fay Hartman: As I mentioned earlier, this webinar was recorded. We'll be sharing both the webinar recording and a transcript of the webinar in the next day or so. So stay on the lookout for that. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you all have any other questions but we greatly appreciate your time and again, big thank you to our panelists and to our friends at Water Hub, for organizing such a great event. I hope everyone has a wonderful rest of your day.

01:14:10.230 --> 01:14:11.170

Fay Hartman: Thanks, all.