

CORTEZ CITY COUNCIL
RESOLUTION NO. 17
SERIES 2021

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF MONTEZUMA COUNTY DROUGHT EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the inadequate snowpack has caused a significant decrease in the water available to the residents of Montezuma County; and,

WHEREAS, Montezuma County has declared a drought emergency,

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Cortez, Colorado, that the City of Cortez supports the Declaration of Drought Emergency enacted by Montezuma County.

MOVED, SECONDED AND ADOPTED THIS 8th day of June, 2021.

CITY OF CORTEZ



MICHAEL J. LAVEY, MAYOR

ATTEST:



LINDA L. SMITH, CITY CLERK

ORDER DECLARING A DISASTER
IN AND FOR MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO

WHEREAS, the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, provides procedures for statewide and local prevention of, preparation for, response to, and recovery from disasters; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3), a "disaster" is defined to mean "the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural cause or cause of human origin, including but not limited to fire, flood, earthquake, wind, storm, wave action, hazardous substance incident, oil spill or other water contamination requiring emergency action to avert danger or damage, volcanic activity, epidemic, air pollution, blight, drought, infestation, explosion, civil disturbance, or hostile military or paramilitary action, or a condition of riot, insurrection, or invasion"; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709, a local disaster may be declared, "only by the principal executive officer of a political subdivision;" and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to §§ 30-10-307 and 308, C.R.S., as amended, the chairman of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is the principal executive officer of ~~Montezuma~~ Montezuma County and, in the absence of the chairman, the vice-chairman is statutorily authorized to act as the principal executive officer; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709(1), the declaration of a local disaster "shall not be continued or renewed for a period in excess of seven days except by or with the consent of the governing board of the political subdivision;" and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709(1), any order declaring, continuing, or terminating a local disaster "shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the county clerk and recorder;" and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-709(2), the effect of declaring a local disaster "is to activate the response and recovery aspects of any and all applicable local and interjurisdictional disaster emergency plans and to authorize the furnishing of aid and assistance under such plans"; and,

WHEREAS, by declaring a local disaster, the Montezuma County Disaster Policies are in effect; and,

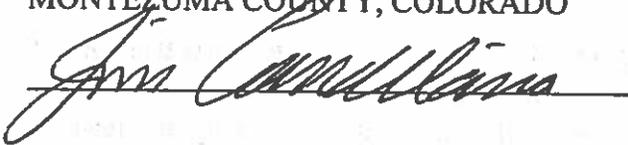
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WHEREAS, because of the drought, which occurred or began to occur on June 1, 2021 Montezuma County and/or jurisdictions within its boundaries, is suffering or has suffered a disaster as defined under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3); and,

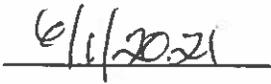
WHEREAS, the cost and magnitude of responding to and recovering from the impact of this disaster exceeds Montezuma County's available resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, by the chair or vice-chair of the Board of County Commissioners, County of Montezuma, State of Colorado, that a disaster emergency is declared in and for the County of Montezuma, Colorado, beginning on June 1, 2021 and ending on October 1, 2021 unless further extended by consent of the BOCC.

CHAIR JAMES CANDEARIA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MONTEZUMA COUNTY, COLORADO



ATTEST:
KIM PERCELL
CLERK AND RECORDER



Date



Press Release: updated May 24, 2021 (original May 21, 2021)

Joint Statement of the
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe (UMUT)
and
Dolores Water Conservancy District (DWCD)

The Dolores River is ***once again*** headed toward record low runoff, on the heels of an abysmal 2020 water year.

The Dolores Water Conservancy District and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, primary users of Dolores water flow, said this circumstance places the burden of two horrible years on the Dolores Project users, who will only see a 5 – 10% supply.

The shorted water deliveries will fall on the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Farm and Ranch Enterprise, DWCD full-service irrigators in Montezuma and Dolores Counties, and the downstream fishery, according to Ken Curtis, general manager of DWCD.

Given the natural precipitation cycle for Colorado, these conditions began forming last fall when the monsoon rains failed to deliver fall moisture to replenish river flows and soil moisture for the 3rd year in a row. "These water deficits dried up smaller tributaries in the upper watershed and sent us into the winter with an enormous hole to fill from the first spring snowmelt before starting the runoff. Locally we were lucky to avoid major wild fires last fall in the San Juan Mountains, Curtis explained.

The winter likewise failed to deliver at ***historical average***, peaking out with only 83% of normal snowpack on April 1st. Another dry windy warm spring further depleted the snowpack to where current forecasts project 25% of the historical average, only 74,000 AF for McPhee that normally runs 250,000 through ***its delivery system*** to all users. Conditions may continue to degrade given recent weather and current forecasts. That places 2021 dropping towards the 4th worst runoff after 1977, 2018 and 2002.

With 2020 ***providing the seventh*** worst recorded runoff, McPhee Reservoir carryover was only 4% of the active capacity.

Curtis said the result will be no supplemental irrigation supplies available to the senior water rights. The Project irrigators are cutting back irrigated acres by 90% to most efficiently use the extremely low water supplies and will run partial season irrigation at best on those limited acres. Curtis is also working closely with Dove Creek Mayor Brett Martin to keep their water supply reservoir full from DWCD irrigation canals that won't run all summer.

The downstream fishery will see flows of 10 CFS for a few months that *will then* drop back to a trickle of 5 CFS for the remaining 8 months until next spring. The lower river faces significant trout and native fish populations loses.

"Financial impacts will be hard on all agriculture producers. *The Tribe's Farm* and Ranch Enterprise *will* limit employment and cut back buying farm supplies drastically, with longer term impacts, "DWCD Board President Bruce Smart said. "The recovery for producers, the UMUT, and the District *will take years*. The fishery impacts may not be known until 2022, but the river will *likely* experience flows similar to pre-McPhee."

Long time farmers have seen this before, after 2002 it took seven years to financially recover and this year looks worse. Farmers expect a significant hit to their pocket books that will trickle through the local economy. It's too early to tell what crops will make it through the season, but without some rain many farmers expect significant loss to their perennial stands. If next year's supply doesn't improve Curtis worries "that multigenerational farm families may face bankruptcy."

"At stake is the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's highly productive and efficient 7,600 acre farm. With a 10% water supply from the Dolores Project this year we are limited to growing corn for our Bow and Arrow Brand, and protecting our highest value alfalfa fields," according to Manuel Heart, Chairman of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. "We have spent 25 years developing productive crops on 109 center pivot fields and a trained workforce of Tribal members. With most of our fields fallowed and very little crop income, everything that we have developed is at risk. We intend to work closely with DWCD and the Bureau of Reclamation to protect the continued viability of our farm. Our participation in the Dolores Project is a result of the Colorado Ute Indian Water Rights Settlement and we will exercise these Settlement Rights in the fullest to protect our Farm and Ranch Enterprise and keep the Dolores Project viable", concluded Chalmers Heart.

DWCD and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribal leadership have discussed the drought impacts with the Bureau of Reclamation, and potential drought impact assistance is being explored.

Both Montezuma and Dolores Counties will be asked to consider emergency drought declarations next to raise these concerns to the State level where the District and the Tribe will also work with the State of Colorado in coordinating any drought response.