



TO: Fruita City Council and Mayor

FROM: Kimberly Bullen, Public Works Director
Carrie Gudorf, Mesa County Regulatory Programs Manager

DATE: May 7, 2024

AGENDA TEXT: Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Presentation

BACKGROUND

The City of Fruita is a partner in the Grand Valley TMDL Stakeholders Group working on the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Assessment for the Colorado River tributaries in the Grand Valley developed under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act to address selenium, iron, and E.coli impairments in eleven tributaries to the Colorado River. A TMDL is an allocation of allowable pollutant loading among different pollutant sources so that targets can be established resulting in water quality standards being achieved in the applicable receiving water.

On February 12, 2024, the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission entered a “Final Agency Order” denying a Mesa County administrative appeal and upholding the Division’s TMDL for the Grand Valley tributaries. The decision was made to not file a judicial appeal in Mesa County District Court under Colorado’s Administrative Appeal Procedure Act which would have been time consuming, expensive, and without any guarantee of success.

Adobe Creek and Leach Creek are two tributaries to the Colorado River and are listed on the State’s 303(d) list as impaired for recreational use because of high concentrations of E. coli. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment is implementing TMDLs for Adobe and Leach Creeks with regards to E. coli, total recoverable iron, and dissolved selenium. Multiple potential sources are present in these basins because land use in the area is urban, residential, and agricultural. Understanding the sources of fecal indicator bacteria (FIB) can help stakeholders and resource managers to implement best management practices for reducing bacteria and exposure risks.

In 2022 and 2023, the United States Geological Survey collected water-quality samples to characterize E. coli concentrations and loads, as well as sources of fecal bacteria, in Adobe Creek and Leach Creek. Sample collection is scheduled to continue in March and April 2024 to provide data on early spring and the beginning of irrigation season. Additional sampling in May through December 2024 would provide data for comparison with 2023 results to understand potential interannual variability in conditions and sources of fecal bacteria. This information is needed by stakeholders to potentially reduce loads and comply with E coli TMDL. The cost to do the additional sampling is \$105,000 with the Grand Valley TMDL Stakeholders contribution totaling \$85,000 with \$20,000 USGS cooperative matching funds. Mesa County is requesting the City of Fruita contribute 10% or \$8,500 of the GV Stakeholder’s share.

Carrie Gudorf, the Regulatory Programs Manager for Mesa County, will be presenting this to the City Council along with taking any questions from the Council. This is part of annual updates to the City Council on the TMDL decision and the recent appeal work of the stakeholders group.