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Local agencies planning together for anticipated spring flooding - residents urged to take preparedness steps now.

Delta, CO (April 7, 2023) - After a long winter with record-breaking snowfall, local, county, and state officials are meeting to prepare to mitigate the effects of what will be a record spring runoff and local flooding. According to hydrologists with the National Weather Service, this week is the historical peak of snowfall in the surrounding mountains. The start of spring runoff with high water is anticipated by the first of May, with peaks during mid-May into June.

In partnership with local municipalities, emergency management, public works, and first responders, Delta County encourages residents who live near creeks, rivers, and significant ditches to begin preparations for anticipated spring flooding. The National Weather Service, CO Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and US Geological Service report record amounts of snow in the Delta County river basins. The Delta County Board of County Commissioners and staff are especially concerned about the record-breaking snow on the Uncompahgre Plateau, which as of April 5th, equals 46" of snow water equivalent at Columbine Pass. This amount far exceeds the previous record set in 1993, which resulted in flooding on Roubideau Creek. It exceeds 2008 and 2019, which DNR advises resulted in significant flooding along the Uncompahgre River in both Delta and Montrose Counties.

Delta County leadership met at the end of March with emergency management, first responders, the CO Department of Corrections, public works, Union Pacific Railroad, and other partners to gather information and begin crafting flood response and mitigation actions. Throughout April, local and county officials will continue planning meetings with local, state, and federal partners on how jurisdictions can mitigate anticipated spring runoff and flooding impacts.

The CO Department of Corrections and leadership at the Delta Correctional Center have stepped up to help communities by having inmate crews fill sandbags that can be staged and deployed across the county in the event of rising flood waters and to help mitigate flood risks to the State Correctional Facility near Roubideau Creek. Additionally, local and county road and bridge/public works staff are working together



to assess bridges and culverts across the county, taking action now to reinforce and make needed repairs to prevent debris from building up and affecting roadways.

Delta County Commissioner Don Suppes advised, "Protecting our bridges, culverts, and public roads is a top priority for Delta County this spring." In response to anticipated flooding, the county is building a plan for access to temporary bridges, working with the railroad to keep the railroad bridges and tracks clear, and preparing contingency plans if flood waters impact roads and bridges. Plans also include developing monitoring teams to perform regular inspections of critical bridges across the county and establishing a coordinated incident management response team and staff for the County Emergency Operations Center if a more significant response is needed.

How can residents prepare for spring flooding?

Local officials remind property owners to mitigate flood damages to personal property by clearing debris from rivers and streams that flow through their property and culverts they own that cross waterways. Municipalities and the County will focus on protecting roads, bridges, and infrastructure that maintain essential lifelines. The local government cannot work on private property except in extreme circumstances. Residents across Delta County are urged to take action now to mitigate flood risk:

1. Check the FEMA Flood Plain Maps available at DeltaCountyCO.gov/13/GIS to see if your property is in the floodplain. If you live in or near the 100-year (1% annual risk) floodplain, you are encouraged to take action now to protect your property.
2. Consider purchasing flood insurance. Homeowner's insurance does not cover flood damage; you must buy separate flood insurance. It takes 30 days to take effect! Learn more about flood insurance and minimize your risk by visiting FloodSmart.gov.
3. Develop a safety plan for your family and animals. Some questions to ask include: do your kids know how to get to high ground if flooding occurs? Are there roads near your home that could flood and trap you? Do you have extra medicine, food, water, and supplies if you have to stay at home? If you must evacuate, how will you protect your pets and livestock? Learn more about emergency preparedness at Ready.gov/Floods.
4. Sign up for Emergency Notifications through Delta County Alerts. When natural disasters such as flooding occur, Delta County Dispatch and Emergency Management will send emergency alerts and updates on potential flooding and impacts to residents through Delta County Alerts. Remember - when signing up, include your name, home address, cell phone and landline phone numbers, and email addresses. If you don't enter your address, you may miss out on critical



alerts near your home, as alerts are targeted to geographic areas of the county. Learn more and sign up at DeltaCountyCO.gov/Alerts.

5. Harden your home and property against flood waters, especially if you live near a major river, stream, or irrigation ditch likely to flood this spring. The County and local municipalities will offer FREE sand and sandbags to residents. To learn more about sandbag availability and other flood mitigation resources, please visit DeltaCountyCO.gov/Flooding and follow Delta County on Facebook.
6. Lastly, sign up for public flood safety alerts. There are various ways to stay informed during a potential flood event. Subscribe to news updates and social media alerts from the National Weather Service and USGS streamflow gauges by visiting <https://accounts.waterdata.usgs.gov/wateralert/>.