



NEWS RELEASE: For Immediate Release, June 2, 2020

SHADY ISLAND RIVER PARK PROJECT RECEIVES \$45,000 AWARD FROM THE GUNNISON COUNTY METROPOLITAN RECREATION DISTRICT
Construction of the Park Slated to Begin Summer 2020

Gunnison County, Colo – The Gunnison County Metropolitan Recreation District recently awarded \$45,000 to Gunnison County for construction of the Shady Island Park. Total secured grant awards are close to \$450,000, and construction is slated to begin summer 2020 after flows on the Gunnison River peak. Hedda Peterson, District Manager for the Gunnison County Metropolitan Recreation District stated, “In 2018, Met Rec recognized the project’s ability to address several outdoor recreation needs, from camping to safe river access and bathroom infrastructure. Since then, the County has successfully secured additional funding from several local and state funding sources. Given the project’s strong alignment with Met Rec’s nascent Recreation Strategic Plan, we were thrilled to provide an additional \$45,000 in funding this year.” Gunnison County Community Development Director, Cathie Pagano added, “We are so pleased to receive additional funding the Gunnison Met Rec District for the development of Shady Island River Park. The River Park will be a great community amenity and we appreciate all of the community support.”

Shady Island, a parcel of land just north of Garlic Mike’s at 2714 Hwy 135 that Gunnison County purchased in the fall of 2017, has been coined the Shady Island River Park project. Gunnison County is proposing to replace the CDOT North Bridge boat launch area on the west side of the highway and develop a boat launch and other amenities at the Shady Island site. This parcel is 10.5 acres of heavily treed land with just over 700 feet of riverfront access that includes a trailered boat ramp, a non-trailered boat ramp (kayaks, duckies, etc.), bathrooms and picnic tables as priorities. Connectivity to the pedestrian path across Highway 135, revitalizing the fishery in this area of the Gunnison River and a nature path and play area for children are also crucial components to this project. Work planned for this fall includes clearing and prepping the site, building a new vehicular bridge to the island and a boat ramp, and installing sewer, water and electrical infrastructure.

During the 2018 summer, extensive outreach and public engagement commenced to collect feedback to begin exploring the idea of what the Shady Island River parcel could be. Over several public events in 2018, Gunnison County Community Development Senior Planner, Rachel Sabbato, met with rafters, outfitters, anglers, youth groups, adjacent landowners, Immigrantes Unidos and several other stakeholders to really engage this feedback stage and determine what people would like to see take shape on this parcel. “Funding from the Met Rec District was crucial then as they really saw the potential for the Shady Island River Park project and realized the importance of the initial public outreach and, the 2020 Met Rec grant award will now assist in implementation of that outreach work,” stated Sabbato. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the final recommended design from the public outreach was presented by Margaret Loperfido of Sprout Studio to the Board of County Commissioners on Oct 2, 2018. It was approved by the Gunnison County Planning Commission in February 2020.

This exciting project would not have been possible without all the public feedback received, and the stakeholders and partners that have generously given time and consideration to this process. Special recognition goes to the funding partners including GOCO, the Gunnison County Metropolitan Recreation District, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District, Trout Unlimited, Gunnison Angling Society, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, National Forest Foundation, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board.

If you have questions about the Shady Island River Park or are interested in another specific project, please contact Gunnison County Senior Planner Rachel Sabbato at 970-641-0360.

###