

FIRST DRAFT

Irrigation project 'rolled' on, even in face of obstacles

"Newspapers produce the first rough draft of history." — Philip Graham

People pushing for construction of a dam in De Beque Canyon and the accompanying Government Highline Canal had overcome a variety of obstacles — opposition in Denver, foot-dragging in Washington, D.C., disputes with Orchard Mesa irrigators and a slowdown created by private entrepreneurs who claimed they could build the project without government help.



BOB SILBERNAGEL

So they weren't going to let a world war halt their plans. Engineers working on the Grand River Diversion Dam had settled on a unique design. The "roller crest" dam would employ huge steel rollers that could be raised and lowered to maintain a constant level in the river behind the dam, and thus avoid flooding the railroad tracks beside the river.

A German company held patents on the design. However, work on the Grand Valley Project began in 1913, and by August of 1914, Germany was embroiled in World War I. The German company's factory was not available to build the rollers. So a firm in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ritter-Conley Manufacturing, built the steel rollers using the German design. They were delivered in the spring of

1915 and installed in the new dam, which became known as the "roller dam," in time for the official dedication ceremony on June 29, 1915.

The Palisade Historical Society will host a celebration from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. this Saturday at the Veterans' Memorial Community Center in Palisade to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the opening of the dam and canal.

The historical society has also produced a booklet, "The History of Irrigation in Palisade and East Orchard Mesa, Colorado," as part of the centennial celebration.

Work on the project went relatively smoothly, but some clauses in the contract look unusual today.

"Among the conditions of the standardized contract was the requirement ... that there be no Mongolian labor used on the project," said Priscilla Walker, with the historical society. "That was apparently standard for federal contracts at the time. I've looked but can't find any information on why that was required." The contract also prohibited importation of foreigners for labor or the use of convict labor.

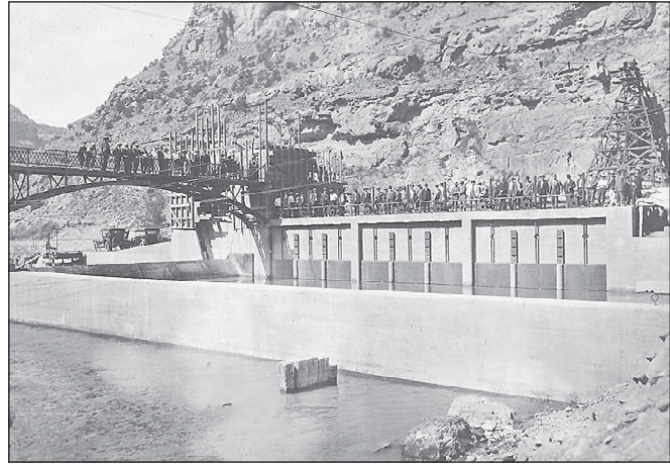
There were other irrigation projects in this valley that predated the Grand Valley Project. But the project, with its roller dam and lengthy Highline Canal, would take water farther

west than any of the other projects, would be more dependable than most existing projects and would bring thousands of acres of new agricultural lands into production.

The project was authorized — with \$31.5 million in funding — as part of the Reclamation Act of 1902, which created the U.S. Reclamation Service. But it was one of a multitude of projects in 16 states authorized by the act, so work on it didn't begin immediately. Newspaper accounts from the time show the ongoing struggles by local leaders to ensure the project stayed on track.

D.W. Aupperle, then secretary of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, was among the most important. He made several trips to Washington to meet with representatives of the Department of Interior and the Reclamation Service.

In a 1908 meeting of the chamber, Aupperle talked of the recently resolved conflict between backers of the Government Highline Canal project and interests on Orchard Mesa. "We



Photos SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL/U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Palisade Historical Society

Local and federal officials line up on the catwalk at the Grand River Diversion Dam, also known as the Roller Dam, for the official dedication on June 29, 1915. Below, construction of the Government Highline Canal progresses just east of Palisade. Interstate 70 now crosses the river just upstream from where the state bridge in the photo was located.

take the stand that we will protect the government ditch if at the expense of the Orchard Mesa ditch, but this has not been necessary," he said, according to the Grand Junction Daily News.

Eventually, key features of the Orchard Mesa system, including a pumping station outside of Palisade, would be incorporated into the Grand Valley Project. The Price and Stubb ditches would also obtain their water from the project.

Also in 1908, the chamber passed a resolution deploring newspaper articles in Denver that attacked the Reclamation Service in general and the Grand Valley Project in particular. "We are capable of attending to our own affairs and do not need the dictation of the papers of that city," one chamber official said.

The project was finally given the federal go-ahead in 1912 and work began on July 1, 1913. Work on some of the lateral canals that were part of the system

continued into 1917. Although the Reclamation Service — now the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation — built and owns the Grand Valley Project, the Grand Valley Water Users Association operates and maintains it.

A century later, the massive rollers manufactured in Pittsburgh continue to operate on the same gear system with the same Westinghouse electric motors to raise and lower the

rollers, officials with Grand Valley Water Users Association said last week. There have been minor repairs, but it's essentially the same system.

Thanks to the Palisade Historical Society, Grand Valley Water Users Association and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for their assistance.

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Members of the Palisade Historical Society re-create the dedication photo of 100 years ago in this picture snapped last week. This photo was taken from just downstream of the roller dam, while the original one was taken from upstream.



SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL/ Bob Silbernagel

Southern Ute tribe challenges federal fracking law

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DURANGO — The Southern Ute Indian Tribe filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of the Interior, challenging the Bureau of Land Management's new hydraulic fracturing rule because tribe members say they have the right to decide their own land-use policies.

The rule, which is set to go into effect Wednesday, also is the subject of lawsuits filed earlier this month, including a joint suit by the states of Colorado, Wyoming and North Dakota, as well as another filed by the Western Energy Alliance and Independent Petroleum Producers on behalf of 46 trade associations

"Tribal lands should be treated differently than federal lands. Some of the provisions in this new rule are just burdensome regulations that are not tied to an environmental benefit."

CLEMENT FROST
Southern Ute chairman

and royalty-owners groups. Hydraulic fracturing is a technique used by the energy industry to extract oil and gas from rock by injecting high-pressure mixtures of water, sand or gravel and chemicals. Fracking has been a contentious subject. Con-

cerns include groundwater contamination, leakage from wells and an increase in earthquakes in areas where the technique is used extensively.

The rule requires a federal permit on public and tribal lands, in addition to the state

permits already required. It applies to about 750 million acres of public and tribal lands, as well as private lands where the minerals are federally managed.

The Southern Ute lawsuit, filed in federal court in Denver, says the rule conflicts with the Indian Mineral Leasing Act, the Durango Herald reported.

The rules will have a real effect on the tribe's ability to provide services to its members, Southern Ute Chairman Clement Frost said. "Tribal lands should be treated differently than federal lands. Some of the provisions in this new rule are just burdensome regulations that are not tied to an environmental benefit," he said.

BLOTTER

COMPILED BY SENTINEL STAFF



Suspects sought in theft

The Grand Junction Police Department is seeking the public's help to identify two suspects who allegedly used a stolen debit card to purchase items valued at more than \$1,200 at Grand Junction stores. On Dec. 8,

2014, images of the suspects were caught on videotape leaving Walmart, 2545 Rimrock Ave. They spent about \$500 at that store.

The suspects also purchased items at Home Depot, City Market and Ross Dress for Less stores, according to the Police Department. The suspects are a black male with dark hair wearing a light blue long-sleeved, button-up shirt and tan-colored dress slacks. The other suspect is a white female with blonde hair wearing a yellow long-sleeved, button-up shirt with dark pants. They are shown on video leaving in a white sport utility vehicle.

Anyone with information about the suspects or the incident is encouraged to contact Mesa County Crime Stoppers at 241-7867.

According to the Grand Junction Police Department:

• Officers are investigating a report that a 92-year-old woman was assaulted by another person on June 13.

• A juvenile female was sexually assaulted in the western part of the city during an incident in Dec. 2014.

• Racheal Coble, 28, was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of possession of a schedule II controlled substance, distribution, paraphernalia and child abuse after allegedly being in possession of a controlled substance while caring for a minor in the 2900 block of Patterson Road on Wednesday.

• Someone broke into a storage trailer and stole items valued at less than \$5,000 from a property in the area of 29 1/2 Road and Galloway Court.

• Someone broke into a building in the 1500 block of Sunset Lane on Thursday and stole items valued at less than \$50.

• Erica Burgon, 27, received a summons Saturday on suspicion of disturbing the peace and unnecessary noise after being contacted at 2285 River Road.

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ATTENTION ADVERTISERS
The Daily Sentinel's advertising deadlines will be moving up to accommodate the 4th of July Holiday!
This early deadline schedule is designed to help you plan your advertising around the holiday.
The Daily Sentinel will be closed Friday, July 3 to commemorate the holiday.

Publication Date	Display Advertising	Deadline
7/4, Saturday	6/30, Tuesday	4 PM
7/5, Sunday	6/30, Tuesday	4 PM
7/5, Real Estate Weekly	6/29, Monday	4 PM
7/6, Monday	6/30, Tuesday	4 PM
7/7, Tuesday	7/1, Wednesday	2 PM
7/8, Sentinel Weekly	7/1, Wednesday	2 PM

Classified Liner Ads (Private Party & Commercial)

7/3, Friday	7/2, Thursday	1 PM
7/4, Saturday	7/2, Thursday	2 PM
7/5, Sunday	7/2, Thursday	2 PM
7/6, Monday	7/2, Thursday	2 PM

Legals

7/3, Friday	6/29, Monday	4 PM
7/4, Saturday	6/29, Monday	4 PM
7/5, Sunday	6/29, Monday	4 PM
7/6, Monday	6/29, Monday	4 PM

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