

STATE OF COLORADO

Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Kirk Russell, PE, Chief
Finance Section

DATE: January 13, 2012

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item 29, January 23-24, 2012 Board Meeting**
Finance Section – Denver Museum of Nature and Science
Ziegler Reservoir Mammoth Bone Find

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Mike King
DNR Executive Director

Jennifer L. Gimbel
CWCB Director

Board Action Not Required - Information Only Item

Introduction

Extracted from Denver Museum of Nature & Science website www.dmns.org

On October 14, 2010, bulldozer operator Jesse Steele was excavating a reservoir near Snowmass Village when he saw bones coming over the top of his bulldozer blade. Within two days, scientists from the Denver Museum of Nature & Science were on site, and within two weeks a Museum team was excavating what has become one of the most significant scientific discoveries in Colorado history.

The find is an exceptionally preserved Ice Age ecosystem. As of December 2010, the site had produced the remains of eight to 10 American mastodons, four Columbian mammoths, a Jefferson's ground sloth, four gigantic bison, two Ice Age deer, snails, iridescent insects, and plant matter that is still green after more than 45,000 years.

News of the once-in-a-lifetime discovery spread like wildfire throughout Colorado, generating enormous public interest. In the Roaring Fork Valley, 8,500 school children lined up to see the bones and learn about the discovery from Museum educators. During two days in November, more than 3,500 people in Snowmass Village and 2,500 people in Denver attended Mammoth and Mastodon Madness Days to see the fossils and learn more about the Ice Age in Colorado.

For the next six months, the Museum is focusing on preserving the bones from this Ice Age treasure trove and planning next steps. Museum scientists have assembled a team of more than two dozen scientific experts who returned to Snowmass Village in May 2011 to continue the amazing excavation.

In January 2011, the CWCB approved a loan to the Snowmass Water & Sanitation District for the construction of the "reservoir near Snowmass Village" called Ziegler Reservoir. The District has successfully completed construction of the Ziegler Dam and system improvements. This presentation will be insight into the Mammoth and Mastodon discovery that overshadowed the construction of the Reservoir.