



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ARCHULETA COUNTY, COLORADO**

P.O. Box 1507 / 398 Lewis Street / Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147
Tel (970) 264-8300

April 20, 2021

Chairman Melvin Baker, Southern Ute Tribal Council
c/o Ms. Sunshine Whyte, Council Affairs Manager - swhyte@southernute-nsn.gov
P.O. Box 737
Ignacio, CO 81137

Ms. Monte - mmonte@southernute-nsn.gov
(To be forwarded to BIA)

Mr. Ed Warner, Area Manager – lwarn@usbr.gov
Bureau of Reclamation - WCAO
445 West Gunnison Ave., Suite 221
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Jim E. Fornea, Realty Specialist – jfornea@usbr.gov
Bureau of Reclamation - WCAO
185 Suttle Street, Suite 2
Durango, CO 81303

RE: Archuleta County Road 500 Emergency Erosion Project

To All Concerned,

We, the Board of County Commissioners of Archuleta County, Colorado request your attention to this issue as soon possible so that the required repairs can be commenced in an expedited manner. All of the above addressed entities are aware of this problem and know the work that needs to be accomplished, but funding of a project this size requires the attention of people at your level in an organization.

In 2019, an 80' section of Bureau of Reclamation land eroded into the San Juan River at about MP33 on CR-500. This erosion resulted in the river bank being a vertical bank 40 to 50 ft. high and within about six feet of the shoulder of CR-500. On November 4, 2019, soon after the erosion was reported, a meeting of various agencies was held onsite where it was determined that a plan was needed showing the existing topography and a recommended basic remedy of the situation before anything could move forward.

As a response to the emergency meeting, Archuleta County road crews moved the road alignment away from the bank about twelve feet and placed concrete jersey barriers along the previous edge of road. Archuleta County also hired Davis Engineering to produce a topographical survey of the area and develop a basic plan for preventing further erosion and stabilizing the vertical bank along the road created by the rapid erosion.

As further discussions of the situation continued, it was determined that permits were required before formal discussions of funding could go forward, so Archuleta County hired an engineering firm to obtain the necessary permits. Those permits have been approved.

What is required at this time is funding to do the work necessary to prevent further erosion and to stabilize the road embankment. Even without further erosion, the vertical wall is unstable and will eventually seek its natural angle of repose (about 1 ½ to 1) which means the road will slide off into the river bed. Some time has passed since the rapid erosion event in 2019, but the emergency nature of the situation has not changed.

All impediments to the consideration of funding have been resolved and now the issue of funding the **2.5 to 3 million dollars** required to complete this project must be addressed. The main stake holders on this project are the SUIT/BIA, because the road is the main road across the SUIT reservation and the Bureau of Reclamation because the road is on Bureau land (Archuleta County has no Right of Way in this section of road). The county has been up front and leading the efforts to get the road stabilized, has already spent in excess of \$100,000 just to move the project along, and is working to secure state DOLA emergency funds if any are still available. However, significant additional funding is required to resolve this emergency before the road reaches an unsafe stage that could result in the closure of the road.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Archuleta County
Board of County Commissioners

Alvin Schaaf, Chairman _____

Ronnie Maez, Commissioner _____

Warren Brown, Commissioner _____