42nd Annual Colorado Law Conference on Natural Resources

2026 May Be Too Late: Hard Conversations About Really Complicated Issues

Thursday, June 16 and Friday, June 17, 2022
Wolf Law Building, Wittemyer Courtroom
University of Colorado School of Law
Conference Sponsors
42nd Annual Colorado Law Conference on Natural Resources

The Natural Resources Law Center (NRLC) was founded in 1982 and in 2013, underwent a reorganization and name change to the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment. The Getches-Wilkinson Center has expanded upon the legacy of the NRLC with a broader agenda, expanded convening of stakeholders, and aspirations for deeper influence in law, policy and practice.

This year marks the 42nd Annual Conference on Natural Resources at Colorado Law. Over its rich history, the conference has addressed many different natural resource issues. In more recent years, the Center’s summer conference has largely focused on water law and policy. The Center is proud to convene thought leaders, practitioners, and diverse stakeholders to address the most pressing issues of the day—and we want to thank our conference co-sponsors whose generous support allows us to ensure our events our accessible to all.

Conference Introduction

There is no debate – demands for water across the Colorado River Basin exceed the shrinking supply. Chronic drought, record heat, increasing winds and aridity, as well as rampant wildfires are diminishing the Basin’s overall health and resilience. The historically low levels in Lake Mead and Lake Powell have invited unprecedented federal action and raise the specter of a looming energy crisis. To ensure a sustainable future, these harsh realities will require inclusive collaborations and innovative actions. We look forward to bringing together a broad array of expertise and diverse perspectives from across the region to candidly discuss these complex challenges. Please add your voice as we examine potential options to advance sustainable water management, expand basin-wide conservation in every sector, and strengthen watershed resilience.
Day One: Thursday, June 16th

Where We Currently Stand in the Colorado River Basin

To forge thoughtful solutions, we must know where we currently stand, what we don’t know, and understand projections for the future. Our first day will focus on examining the CRB climate science projections as well as the current status of the guideline negotiations. Panelists will then discuss unanswered questions about operations under the Compact, and where the Law of the River may come up short under variety of possible water flows.

Welcome and Introduction: 8:45-9:00

Lolita Buckner Inniss  
Dean  
University of Colorado School of Law

Shaun LaBarre  
Deputy Director, Getches-Wilkinson Center  
University of Colorado School of Law

Session One: 9:00-10:10

The Science: What Does the Climate Science Suggest for Short and Long-term?

Likely Behavior in the System in the Near-term.  
A review of the relationship between recent river yields, deliveries, reservoir levels, and the types of “operational” problems/thresholds that are vulnerable now and in the near future (24-month projection with a “stress test” orientation).

James Prairie  
Upper Colorado Basin Research and Modeling Group Chief  
Bureau of Reclamation

What Does the Climate Science Suggest for the Long-term Outlook?  
A summary of the latest multi-decadal climate projections for the basin, what the downscaling suggests are the likely range of river yields (MAF/year) in future decades, and the level of uncertainty surrounding those projections.

Jeff Lukas  
Principal  
Lukas Climate Research and Consulting

10:10-10:30  Morning Networking Break  
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Two: 10:30-11:15
The Status, Scope, and Timeline of Ongoing Negotiations for the 2026 Guidelines

Tanya Trujillo
Assistant Secretary for Water and Science
U.S. Department of the Interior
(Remote presentation)

Session Three, Part One: 11:15-12:00
Institutional Uncertainty:
100 Years Later, What We Still Don’t Know About the Compact
Moderated discussion about unanswered legal issues.

John Fleck (Moderator)
Writer in Residence, Utton Center
University of New Mexico School of Law
Professor of Practice in Water Policy and Governance

Amy Haas
Executive Director
Colorado River Authority of Utah

Eric Kuhn
General Manager (Retired)
Colorado River District

Sarah Porter
Director of the Kyl Center for Water Policy
Arizona State University

Daryl Vigil
Water and Tribes Initiative Co-Director
Water Administrator for Jicarilla Apache Nation

12:00-1:15   Lunch
(Lunch provided in Schaden Commons, 2nd floor-west end)
Session Three, Part Two: 1:15-2:15

Institutional Uncertainty:
100 Years Later, What We Still Don't Know About the Compact
Moderated discussion about unanswered legal issues.

John Fleck (Moderator)
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Arizona State University

Daryl Vigil
Water and Tribes Initiative Co-Director
Water Administrator for Jicarilla Apache Nation

2:15-2:45 Afternoon Networking Break
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Four: 2:45-4:30

The Good (13 MAF/year), the Bad (11 MAF/year), and the Ugly (9 MAF/year): How does the Law of the River work (or not) along this continuum?

In this session, Brad Udall will discuss characteristics in the Basin across a range of flow scenarios. He will then be joined by Ted Kowalski (Moderator), Kathryn Sorenson, Anne Castle, Jennifer Pitt, and John Entsminger to discuss needed actions throughout that continuum.

Ted Kowalski (Moderator)
Senior Program Officer
Walton Family Foundation

Anne Castle
Senior Fellow
Getches-Wilkinson Center

John Entsminger
General Manager
Las Vegas Valley Water District and Southern Nevada Water Authority

Jennifer Pitt
Colorado River Program Director
Audubon

Kathryn Sorensen
Director of Research and Professor of Practice, Kyl Center for Water Policy
Arizona State University

Brad Udall
Senior Water and Climate Research Scientist/Scholar
Colorado State University

Conference Reception
Wolf Law Building, Schaden Commons (2nd floor-west end)

Networking reception for all speakers and attendees.
Day Two: Friday, June 17th

Building Pathways to a Sustainable Future for All

Having established a foundation about where we are, where we’re heading, and what we still don’t know – Day Two speakers will share ideas, best practices, and lessons learned from a number of perspectives throughout the Basin. We will then hear from some “next generation” voices, and the audience and all the panelists will have a chance to weigh in on potential actions and solutions.

Welcome and Introduction: 8:45

Shaun LaBarre
Deputy Director, Getches-Wilkinson Center
University of Colorado School of Law

Session Five, Part One: 9:00-10:10

Crafting a Rural-Tribal-Urban Social Compact in a Warming World

Beyond the Numbers:
An Unscientific Foray into Living within the Colorado River Basin
Opening Remarks by Daniel Cordalis

Ag Voices
Colorado State Senator Cleave Simpson will lead off with a summary of the anti-speculation measures that were proposed during the 2022 Colorado Legislative session, he will be joined by Les Owen and Joe Wheeling for a moderated discussion about conservation in agriculture.

Jaime Garcia (Moderator)
Getches-Wilkinson Water Law Fellow
Getches-Wilkinson Center

Les Owen
Conservation Services Division Director
Colorado Department of Agriculture

Cleave Simpson
Senator, State of Colorado
District 35

Joe Wheeling
Partner
James Ranch Beef
Session Five, Part Two: 10:30-12:15

Crafting a Rural-Tribal-Urban Social Compact in a Warming World

Lessons Learned from Around the Basin

**Doug Kenney (Moderator)**
Western Water Policy Program Director (Retired)
Getches-Wilkinson Center

**Lorelei Cloud**
Leadership Team, Colorado River Water and Tribes Initiative Indigenous Women's Leadership Network
Councilwoman, Southern Ute Tribal Council

**James Eklund**
Member
Sherman and Howard

**Bill Hasencamp**
Manager, Colorado River Resources
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

**Hannah Holm**
Associate Director for Policy, Southwest Region
American Rivers

**Sharon Megdal**
Director
University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center

**Peter Nichols**
Partner
Berg, Hill, Greenleaf, and Ruscitti LLP

12:15-1:15  Lunch
(Lunch provided in Schaden Commons, 2nd floor-west end)
Session Five, Part Three: 1:15-1:45
Crafting a Rural-Tribal-Urban Social Compact in a Warming World

Urban Conservation
Two large Colorado Front Range water utility representatives will highlight their conservation measures.

Greg Fisher
Manager of Demand Planning
Denver Water

Julia Gallucci
Water Conservation Supervisor
Colorado Springs Utilities

Session Six: 1:45-2:50

Water Resiliency across the System
Natural solutions; Tribal methods, sustainable grazing; environmental flows.

Chelsea Colwyn (Moderator)
Getches-Wilkinson Water Law Fellow
Getches-Wilkinson Center

Michael Kotutwa Johnson
Assistant Specialist-Indigenous Resiliency
University of Arizona, School of Natural Resources and the Environment

Karen Kwon
Assistant Program Director
Colorado River Sustainability Campaign

Andrew Strike
General Manager
Strike Consulting Group

Cory Toye
Wyoming Water and Habitat Program Director
Trout Unlimited

2:50-3:10  Afternoon Networking Break
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Seven: 3:10-4:15

Next Generation Voices

Luke Runyon will lead a discussion about next generation reactions and hopes for the future. Followed by audience-wide discussion moderated by Doug Kenney for all to weigh in on potential actions and solutions.

Luke Runyon (Moderator)
Water Journalist
KUNC

John Berggren
Water Policy Analyst
Western Resource Advocates

Daniel Cordalis
Attorney and Tribal Natural Resource Law Junkie

Sara Porterfield
Water Policy Associate, Western Water and Habitat Program
Trout Unlimited

Amy McCoy
Founding Partner
AMP Insights

Session Eight: 4:15-5:00

Moderated Audience Discussion

Audience-wide discussion with all previous panelists moderated by Doug Kenney and John Fleck.

John Fleck (Moderator)
Writer in Residence, Utton Center
University of New Mexico School of Law
Professor of Practice in Water Policy and Governance

Doug Kenney (Moderator)
Western Water Policy Program Director (Retired)
Getches-Wilkinson Center
Speaker Biographies (Alphabetical by last name)

John Berggren
John Berggren is a Water Policy Analyst for Western Resource Advocates, where he works to advance water conservation and efficiency policies at the regional, state, and local levels by engaging with municipalities, water managers, state officials, and other stakeholders throughout the region. Much of this work is at the intersection of water and land use planning with the hopes of helping communities become as water efficient as possible. John serves on the City of Boulder’s Water Resources Advisory Board, is a member of the Colorado Water and Land Use Planning Alliance, and is certified as a Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL). He has a PhD in Environmental Studies and Water Policy from the University of Colorado at Boulder, a MHS degree in Environmental Health Sciences from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a BA in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University.

Anne Castle
Anne Castle is a senior fellow at the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy, and the Environment at the University of Colorado, focusing on western water policy issues. From 2009 to 2014, she was Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the U.S. Department of the Interior where she oversaw water and science policy for the Department and had responsibility for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey. While at Interior, Castle spearheaded the Department’s WaterSMART program, which provides federal leadership on the path toward sustainable water supplies, and was the driving force behind the 2010 federal MOU addressing sustainable hydropower. Castle also provided hands-on leadership on Colorado River issues and was the Chair of the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group and a champion of Minute 319 between the US and Mexico. Castle is a recovering lawyer, having practiced water law for 28 years with the Rocky Mountain law firm of Holland & Hart.
Lorelei Cloud

Lorelei Cloud is a member of the Southern Ute Tribe. She has been a council member for the Southern Ute Tribal Council for five years. In that time, she has served as the Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. Lorelei also served a two-year term as Chairman of the Ten Tribes Partnership and is currently a member of The Water and Tribes Initiative and The Indigenous Women’s Leadership Network.

Chelsea Colwyn

Chelsea Colwyn serves as an inaugural Getches-Wilkinson Water Law Fellow at the University of Colorado School of Law. Chelsea fell in love with rivers the first time she went rafting on the Arkansas River in Colorado. Since then, she has turned her love for rivers into an academic and career focus. Chelsea has worked as a Fulbright Scholar in Adelaide, South Australia, studying environmental water buybacks, a Research Fellow with Vermont Law School’s Water and Justice Program, studying the history of the US Forest Service and California water law, a Hansard Society Research Fellow at the London School of Economics, studying England’s privatized water sector, and for American Rivers. She previously worked as a tribal staff attorney, and teaches a public land management summer law course. Chelsea graduated from Dartmouth College in 2004, earned a master's in environmental law and policy from Vermont Law School in 2011, and a J.D. from Yale Law School in 2018, where she was selected as a Wyss Scholar for western conservation. In her free time, she loves being outdoors with her husband and two young daughters.
Daniel Cordalis
Daniel Cordalis is a member of the Navajo Nation, a natural resources and Indian law attorney, and a native of the Colorado River Basin. Daniel has worked in private and nonprofit practice to protect Tribes’ water, natural, and cultural resources through litigation, resource negotiations, land acquisition, and tribal governance and land management initiatives. He recently left his position as Deputy Solicitor of Water Resources at the Department of the Interior and plans to reengage in his work on behalf of Tribal nations. Daniel is married to a Yurok woman, Amy Cordalis, and has three wonderful young boys.

James Eklund
James Eklund is a leader in water and natural resources law, a strong advocate for smart water infrastructure, and a recognized authority on water management in the American West. James works with sovereign governments, multi-state authorities, state agencies, and private interests to deliver critical water infrastructure projects and to design policy regarding water law, natural resources, infrastructure, and environmental protection. He uses his depth of policy-making experience and notable connections with federal, state, and local decision makers to assist clients on a wide variety of matters including environmental, regulatory and legislative issues, and matters involving the use of public-private partnerships.

James served as Colorado’s lead negotiator and signatory on the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan and as Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board where he built a reputation as a leader in negotiation and diplomacy. He is recognized for bringing together numerous stakeholders with opposing goals to collaboratively craft binding solutions to common problems.
**John Entsminger**

John Entsminger is the general manager of the Las Vegas Valley Water District, which serves over 410,000 customer accounts, and the Southern Nevada Water Authority, which is responsible for providing water to local agencies that collectively serve 2 million residents and 40 million annual visitors. Prior to taking the helm of these agencies in early 2014, Entsminger was instrumental in the development of several groundbreaking regional and international water agreements. He has been appointed by Governor Sandoval to serve as Nevada’s lead negotiator on Colorado River matters. Active in several national water associations, Entsminger is Vice President of the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies and is a trustee of the Water Research Foundation and the Desert Research Institute Foundation.

John is a graduate of the University of Northern Colorado and of the University of Colorado School of Law, where he was awarded the Charles N. Woodruff Natural Resources Law Fellowship. He and his family have been in Las Vegas for 20 years.

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**Greg Fisher**

Greg Fisher is the Manager of Demand Planning and Efficiency for Denver Water. He is responsible for long-term water use and water resource planning, conservation programs, and prioritizing the utility’s long-term capital plan. In his 20 years at Denver Water, he has also served as budget manager and rate analyst in the Finance Division.

Fisher is past Chair of the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority, the entity that manages the state revolving fund for water and wastewater projects. He has a degree in economics from Middlebury College.
John Fleck
A former science journalist, John Fleck is focused on the problems of the Colorado River, an imperiled water source on which 40 million people in the United States and Mexico depend. As a Professor of Practice in Water Policy and Governance in the University of New Mexico Department of Economics and director of the University’s Water Resources Program, he co-teaches classes in contemporary water policy issues, modeling, and technical communication for water managers. He first wrote about water in the 1980s as a beat reporter covering the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. He is the author of the books *Water is for Fighting Over and Other Myths About Water in the West*, an exploration of solutions to the Colorado River Basin’s water problems, and co-author of *Science Be Dammed: How Ignoring Inconvenient Science Drained the Colorado River*.

Julia Gallucci
Julia Gallucci currently serves as the Water Conservation Supervisor for Colorado Springs Utilities. In this capacity she’s responsible for supporting implementation of the 2022 Water Efficiency Plan in order to reach our long-term goal of gaining 11,000 - 13,000 acre-feet of savings through conservation measures by 2070. She also is responsible for improving water efficiency and landscape sustainability through statewide collaboration and partnerships. Julia holds a B.A. from the University of Michigan.
Jaime Garcia
Jaime Garcia is excited to join the Getches-Wilkinson Center as one of its newest fellows. Prior to accepting the position of Getches-Wilkinson Water Law Fellow, Mr. Garcia was working as a litigation attorney for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in Austin, Texas. He received his Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Texas at Austin and received his law degree from the Wake Forest University School of Law. Mr. Garcia is also an adjunct faculty member for Wake Forest’s Masters in the Studies of Law program. He is excited to bring his experience and passion for preserving our natural resources to this fellowship. His love of outdoor pursuits drives his support and passion for increasing access and conservation of public lands and waters. When not practicing law, Mr. Garcia enjoys hiking and kayaking with his wife and their three dogs. In addition to their own dogs, he and his wife foster for local animal rescues.

Amy Haas
Amy I. Haas has been named the Colorado River Authority of Utah’s (CRAU) first Executive Director. A longtime Colorado River veteran with 20 years of water management experience, Haas has held multiple positions specific to the Colorado River Basin.

Most recently serving as Executive Director and Secretary of the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC), Haas became the first woman to do so in the organization’s 73-year history. In this capacity, she saw that the Commission fulfilled its statutory responsibilities under the 1948 Upper Colorado River Basin Compact, while supporting the water entitlements and obligations of the four Upper Division States (Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming) under the 1922 Colorado River Compact. Haas also participated in negotiating and drafting the Upper Basin Drought Contingency Plan and related federal authorizing legislation. She represented the Upper Colorado River Basin on the U.S. delegation that drafted and is currently implementing a 2017 binational agreement (Minute 323) between the United States and Mexico for use of Colorado River water under the 1944 Mexican Water Treaty.

Named the 2017 Lawyer of the Year by the natural resources, energy and environment section of the New Mexico State Bar, Haas began her law career in New Mexico as an attorney in private practice, concentrating on water and land use law. A native of Northern California, Haas received a bachelor’s degree from the University of California, Davis and a Juris Doctor from the University of New Mexico.
Bill Hasencamp
Bill Hasencamp is the manager of Colorado River resources for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, where he develops and manages water supply programs to augment Metropolitan's Colorado River supplies. He has been with Metropolitan since 2001, and during that time has negotiated transfer agreements with irrigations districts, exchange agreements with municipal agencies, and funded new water supply projects which have more than doubled Metropolitan's Colorado River water supplies since 2003.

In 2007, Hasencamp negotiated and worked with other states to develop the Intentionally Created Surplus Program, which allows Metropolitan to store up to 1.5 million acre-feet of conserved water in Lake Mead at no cost. He is one of California's representatives to the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum, which implements projects to reduce the salinity concentration of Colorado River water at Metropolitan's intake.

Prior to joining Metropolitan, Hasencamp was the Operations Planning Manager for Contra Costa Water District in Northern California. In that position, he oversaw the operations for CCWD’s new intake and reservoir to provide better water quality for his agency. Prior to that, he was an environmental programs manager at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, where he oversaw the development of environmental restoration programs in the Mono Lake Basin.

Hannah Holm
Hannah joined American Rivers as the Southwest Region Associate Director for Policy in April of 2022. Prior to joining American Rivers, she co-founded and directed the Hutchins Water Center at Colorado Mesa University from 2011-2022. The Center promotes research, education and dialogue to address the water challenges facing the Upper Colorado River Basin. Hannah previously facilitated the Grand Valley and Lower Gunnison Wise Water Use Council, advocated for stronger drinking water protections with Western Colorado Congress, and served on her local watershed group board in Pennsylvania.

Earlier in her career, she worked for the North Carolina General Assembly, where she co-staffed committees on the Environment, Natural Resources, Sustainable Agriculture and Smart Growth. Hannah has a joint master's degree in Community & Regional Planning and Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin and a bachelor's degree in Anthropology from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN.
Doug Kenney
Doug Kenney is the former Director of the Western Water Policy Program within the University of Colorado Law School in the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment. He is also founder and former chair of the Colorado River Research Group. Doug has written extensively on several water-related issues, including law and policy reform, river basin and watershed-level planning, climate change adaptation, and water resource economics. Dr. Kenney has served as a consultant to a variety of local, state, multi-state, and federal agencies, including several Interior Department agencies, EPA, and the US Forest Service; and national governments and NGOs in Asia and Africa. Additionally, he has made presentations in 21 states (and the District of Columbia), 8 nations, and 5 continents. He has a B.A. in biology from the University of Colorado, a M.S. in Natural Resources Policy and Administration from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in Renewable Natural Resource Studies from the University of Arizona.

Michael Kotutwa Johnson
Dr. Michael Kotutwa Johnson is a member of the Hopi Tribe in Northern Arizona. Dr. Johnson is an Assistant Specialist-Indigenous Resiliency from the University of Arizona within the School of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Indigenous Resiliency Center. Dr. Johnson holds a Ph.D. in Natural Resources from the University of Arizona, a Master of Public Policy from Pepperdine University, and a B.S. in Agriculture from Cornell University. Dr. Johnson is also a co-author on the Indigenous Chapter in the National Climate Assessment Five. His newest initiative is the call for the Restoration of the American Indian Food System based on the stewardship principles of Indigenous conservation. Dr. Johnson continues to practice Hopi dry farming a practice of his people for millennia and has published in academic journals on topics including Indigenous conservation and land stewardship.
Ted Kowalski
Ted is a senior program officer, leading the Walton Family Foundation’s Colorado River initiative. In this role, Ted supports work that promotes sustainable management of the Colorado River in order to benefit rivers and communities.

Prior to joining the foundation, Ted was the Chief of the Interstate, Federal and Water Information Section, for the Colorado Water Conservation Board. In this role, Ted represented the State of Colorado in State, Federal, inter-State, and international negotiations.

Ted is recognized for his deep expertise in Colorado River water management issues. He has testified before the U.S. Congress and before the Colorado General Assembly, and he has spoken at dozens of conferences. He started his career in the Colorado Attorney General’s office working on water law issues.

Ted has a law degree from the University of Colorado and an undergraduate degree from Cornell University.

Eric Kuhn
Eric Kuhn is the retired General Manager of the Colorado River Water Conservation District and co-author with John Fleck of Science Be Damned: How Ignoring Inconvenient Science Drained the Colorado River, University of Arizona Press, 2019.

Eric started employment with the Colorado River District in 1981 as Assistant Secretary-Engineer. In 1996 he was appointed General Manager, a position he held until his retirement in 2018.

Eric and John's book, Science Be Damned, is about Colorado River hydrology, what we knew, when we knew it, and how we used it to shape the over-allocation of the river under the 1922 compact, the other major provisions of the law-of-the-river, and the projects we have in place today.
Karen Kwon

Karen Kwon is an attorney with more than 20 years experience in problem solving natural resource challenges and an expertise in water law and policy related to the Colorado River Basin. Karen currently serves as the Assistant Program Director for the Colorado River Sustainability Campaign where she works with conservation groups focused on advancing collaborative solutions to the water supply and ecosystem challenges existing throughout the Colorado River Basin. Karen’s experience and familiarity with the Colorado River stems from her roots as a native Coloradan and her tenure at the Colorado Attorney General’s office where she spearheaded the legal team charged with protecting and advocating for Colorado’s interests in federal and interstate water matters. Through her engagement in matters related to the Colorado River compacts, Interim Guidelines, Drought Contingency Plans, Long-Term Environmental Management Plan, and Minutes 319 and 323 to the US/Mexico Water Treaty, Karen has built a reputation for finding workable solutions to water supply questions among federal and state agencies, water users, conservation districts, Tribal Nations, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations.
Jeff Lukas

Jeff Lukas has worked for over 20 years with water resource managers and other decision-makers across the interior West to help them evaluate and prepare for climate risks. For much of that time, he was a scientist with the Western Water Assessment, a program at CU-Boulder tasked by NOAA to make climate science more usable for regional decision-making and climate adaptation. Currently, he pursues that same goal as an independent researcher and consultant.

Jeff was lead author of the 2014 *Climate Change in Colorado* report for the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and co-lead of the 2020 report, *Colorado River Basin Climate and Hydrology: State of the Science*. Jeff has a BA in Geography from CU-Boulder, and an MS in Forestry from the University of Montana.
Amy McCoy
Growing up in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains, Amy has always been fascinated by the intersection of water, land, human cultures, and language. After earning a BS in Environmental Biology at Yale University, she received a PhD from the University of Arizona in 2010 and seeded her career as a consultant. Amy is a founding partner of AMP Insights, where she applies strategic research and creative communications to the confounding social, legal, and practical challenges of water scarcity and climate change. She also serves as an Adjunct Research Scientist with the University of Arizona Southwest Center and participates in a wide range of ecological, climate, and water-focused research collaborations. Amy lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado, along the creeks and mountain trails of her childhood.

Sharon Megdal
Sharon B. Megdal, Ph.D. is Director of The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), a Cooperative Extension center and a research unit in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Other primary titles are Professor and Specialist in the Department of Environmental Science, C.W. & Modene Neely Endowed Professor, and Distinguished Outreach Professor.

Sharon Megdal aims to bridge the academic, practitioner, and civil society communities through water policy and management research, education, and engagement programs. The geographic scope of Dr. Megdal’s work ranges from local to international. Applied research projects include analysis of water management, policy, and governance in water-scarce regions, groundwater recharge, and transboundary aquifer assessment. Key engagement initiatives are Indigenous Water Dialogues and Diversifying Voices in Water Resources.

She is the lead editor of the book, Shared Borders, Shared Waters: Israeli-Palestinian and Colorado River Basin Water Challenges and she has guest edited several special journal issues. Dr. Megdal teaches the multi-disciplinary graduate course “Water Policy in Arizona and Semi-arid Regions”. In 2020, she was awarded the Warren A. Hall Medal for lifetime achievement in water resources research and education by the Universities Council on Water Resources.
Peter Nichols

Peter Nichols practices water law, water quality law, environmental law, and land and water conservation law. In addition to water law and water quality issues, Peter has particular expertise in the federal Clean Water Act and water rights, conservation easements involving water rights, and the temporary use of agricultural irrigation water rights to meet municipal needs.

Peter serves as special counsel to the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District on water and agricultural conservation, and as special counsel to the Lower Arkansas Valley Super Ditch Co., Inc., on water leasing for municipal use. He formerly served as general counsel to the Upper Black Squirrel Creek Ground Water Management District. He has also handled water rights and environmental matters for numerous municipalities, including Woodland Park, Monte Vista, Saguache, Crestone, and Ouray, energy companies, such as Puckett Land Company and Thermo Power, industrial entities, such as Emerson Electric/Micro Motion, mining companies Gold Links Mining and the Revenue Virginius Mine, as well individual farmers and ranchers, among others.

Recent and present conservation clients of Peter’s include Mesa Land Trust, Yampa Valley Land Trust, Colorado Open Lands, Aspen Valley Land Trust, Pitkin County, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), and the Colorado Water Trust.

Les Owen

Les Owen has been the Conservation Services Division Director with the Colorado Department of Agriculture since August of 2016. He provides oversight and coordination of the Department’s efforts to protect and enhance the state’s agricultural resources as they relate to conservation, land use, range management, soil and vegetation management, grazing on public lands, water quality and quantity, wildlife habitat, endangered species, and other natural resources related issues. He was raised near the small town of Corona, New Mexico where most of his time was spent working on the family ranch.
Jennifer Pitt

Jennifer Pitt joined Audubon in December 2015 to advise the organization’s strategies to protect and restore rivers throughout the Colorado River Basin. At Audubon she continues to lead the United States–Mexico collaboration to restore the long-desiccated Colorado River Delta. She serves as the U.S. co-chair of the bi-national work group whose partners will, through 2026, implement existing treaty commitments providing environmental flows and habitat creation.

Prior to joining Audubon, Jennifer spent 17 years working to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems in the Colorado River Basin at the Environmental Defense Fund. With partners, she led the conservation community’s efforts to prioritize and implement restoration of the Colorado River Delta, and she worked with Colorado River stakeholders to produce the unprecedented Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand Study, the first federal assessment of climate change impacts in the basin and the first basin-wide evaluation of the impacts of river system operation on water supply reliability and river health. Jennifer has also worked at the National Park Service headquarters and in Mesa Verde and Sequoia National Parks, as a legislative assistant to U.S. Congressman Mike Kopetski, and in the headquarters office of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.

Jennifer graduated from Harvard University and received a master’s in Environmental Science and Policy from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.
Sarah Porter
Sarah Porter is director of the Kyl Center for Water Policy at Arizona State University’s Morrison Institute for Public Policy. Established in 2014, the Kyl Center promotes research, analysis, collaboration and open dialogue to build consensus in support of sound water stewardship solutions for Arizona and the West.

Sarah came to the Kyl Center from the National Audubon Society, where she served as the Arizona state director and led Audubon’s Western Rivers Project, a multistate initiative to protect and restore important river habitats in the Intermountain West. Before joining Audubon in 2006, Sarah spent fourteen years as an attorney in private practice, specializing in complex commercial litigation.

Sarah serves on the Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council, University of Arizona’s Water Resources Research Center’s External Advisory Council and the City of Phoenix’s Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission. A native of Phoenix, Sarah received her bachelor’s degree with honors from Harvard College and her J.D. from Arizona State University College of Law, where she received the John S. Armstrong Award. She clerked for Hon. William C. Canby, United States Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sara Porterfield
Sara Porterfield is Trout Unlimited’s Water Policy Associate for the Western Water & Habitat Program where her work connects TU’s on-the-ground projects with federal policies and programs to create multiple benefits for people and the environment. She focuses largely on the Colorado River Basin and finding an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable future for the lands, waters, and communities that are connected to this river. She received her BA in History from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, OR and her PhD in History from CU Boulder where her dissertation research focused on the transnational history of the Colorado River Basin. In her spare time, you’ll find her trail running, working with rescue horses, and hanging out with her dogs.
James Prairie
James Prairie, Ph.D. is a Hydrologic Engineer working for the Bureau of Reclamation since 2000. He is stationed at the University of Colorado’s Center for Advanced Decision Support for Water and Environmental Systems (CADSWES). Dr. Prairie has extensive experience directing and coordinating research, development, and modeling projects. He leads applied research in mid-term operations and long-term water resource planning, climate variability, and decision support under uncertainty. He directs river basin modeling technical teams; and oversees the consumptive use, natural flow and natural salinity development programs for the upper Colorado River basin.

Dr. Prairie received his Ph.D in Civil Engineering for the University of Colorado, Boulder and a B.S in Environmental Resource Engineering from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

Luke Runyon
Luke Runyon reports on water and climate change in the Western U.S., and is currently a Ted Scripps Environmental Journalism fellow at the University of Colorado Boulder. Previously, he reported on the Colorado River basin for a collaborative network of public media stations throughout the watershed, and was based at NPR member station KUNC in northern Colorado. Luke has also reported for Harvest Public Media, Aspen Public Radio and Illinois Public Radio.

He frequently files stories for NPR’s Morning Edition, All Things Considered, Weekend Edition and APM’s Marketplace. He has a master’s degree in Public Affairs Reporting from the University of Illinois Springfield and his work has been recognized by the Society of Environmental Journalists, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Radio Television Digital News Association, the Colorado Broadcasters Association and the Public Media Journalists Association.
Cleave Simpson

Senator Cleave Simpson, from Alamosa, represents Senate District 35 for the State of Colorado. Senator Simpson serves as the general manager of the Rio Grande Water Conservation District and past chairman of the on the Adams State University Board of Trustees. Simpson’s primary focus in the senate is rural Colorado relevance, resilience and prosperity.

A fourth-generation San Luis Valley farmer and rancher, Simpson has a deep understanding of the water issues facing Colorado’s agriculture and rural communities. He believes leadership through a thoughtful, collaborative approach is necessary to provide solutions to the pressing needs across Senate District 35 and the state of Colorado.

Simpson serves as a representative on the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable and is a Roundtable representative to the statewide Interbasin Compact Committee. He is active in the Colorado Water Congress, and has served on the Farm Service Agency County Committee, Alamosa County Planning Commission, Alamosa Mosquito Control District and Alamosa School District Accountability Committee. He is a member of Action 22, the Colorado Farm Bureau, and is a lifelong Republican.

Kathryn Sorensen

Kathryn Sorensen oversees one of the largest potable water utilities in the United States, which treats and reliably delivers high quality tap water to 1.6 million customers throughout approximately 540 square miles. Phoenix Water Services also reclaims wastewater for 2.5 million residents in the Valley of the Sun. Kathryn has a PhD in Resource Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics. She serves as a member of the Arizona Water Banking Authority Commission, an Advisory Committee member of Arizona State University’s Decision Center for a Desert City, as a member of the State of Arizona’s Colorado River Advisory Committee, on the Board of Advisors of the Kyl Center for Water Policy at Morrison Institute, as an Advisory Committee member of the Water Resources Research Center, on the Board of Directors of the Water Research Foundation, on the Board of Directors of the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, and as a member of the Rates and Charges Subcommittee of the American Water Works Association.
Andrew Strike
Andrew Strike is the GM/Owner of Strike Consulting Group, a field-based water resources firm based in Lander, WY. Strike and his team have partnered with the University of Wyoming to implement a 4-year study of hydrological water balances, in-field, and meteorological conditions to develop CCU in Trout Unlimited’s DMDPs in the Upper Green River Basin.

Strike Consulting performs a wide range of investigations for Federal, State and Private clients in projects that range from Federal medical facility evaluations across Wyoming/Montana to heavy municipal infrastructure work to bank/channel stabilization, State-funded reclamation, irrigation efficiency projects, and site planning. Strike and his Team of engineers and environmental consultants pride themselves on their ability to solve problems using a diverse skillset developed through applied life lessons in a resource-deprived environment, rural Wyoming in the late 80s and 90s.

Cory Toye
Cory Toye is the Wyoming Water and Habitat Program Director for Trout Unlimited where he and his team identify and implement restoration projects across the state. Cory also handles TU’s water legislation and policy in Wyoming. Since 2016, Cory has helped to facilitate ongoing feasibility studies regarding Demand Management in the Colorado River, specifically through projects in the Upper Green River.

Cory and his family live in Lander, WY and try to enjoy everything big, wonderful Wyoming offers, especially Wind River country and the Absaroka Mountain Range. Cory has a Juris Doctorate from the University of Wyoming College of Law and a B.S. in Economics with a minor in Environment and Natural Resources, also from UW. Cory has worked for TU since 2006.
**Tanya Trujillo**

Tanya Trujillo serves as Assistant Secretary for Water and Science with the U.S. Department of the Interior. Trujillo is a water lawyer with more than 20 years of experience working on complex natural resources management issues and interstate and transboundary water agreements. She most recently worked as a project director with the Colorado River Sustainability Campaign. Before then, she served as the Executive Director of the Colorado River Board of California. She has served as Senior Counsel to the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and as Counselor to the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at Interior. A native New Mexican, Tanya attended Stanford University and the University of Iowa College of Law.

**Brad Udall**

Brad Udall is a Senior Water and Climate Research Scientist/Scholar at Colorado State University’s Colorado Water Institute. Brad’s expertise includes climate change, hydrology and related policy issues of the American West. He is a contributing author to the 4th National Climate Assessment due released in 2018, a contributing author to the 2014 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change assessment report, and the lead author of the water sector chapter of the 2009 Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States. He has provided congressional testimony, input to several National Academy of Science panels, and has given hundreds of talks on climate change impacts to water resources, water law, and water policy. He is a co-investigator with the Department of Interior Southwest Climate Science Center and a collaborator with the new USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub. Brad was formerly the Director of the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and Environment at the University of Colorado Law School and Director of the University of Colorado - NOAA Western Water Assessment.
Darryl Vigil
T. Darryl Vigil, Jicarilla Apache, Jemez Pueblo, Zia Pueblo, currently, the Water Administrator for the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Chairman of Water is Life a Tribal Partnership, official spokesperson for the Colorado River Ten Tribes Partnership, the past Chairman of the Colorado River Ten Tribes Partnership, member of the Coordination Committee of the Next Steps of the Colorado River Basin Supply Demand Study, member of the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project Planning, Construction and Operation Committees, member of the Coordination Committee of the San Juan River Recovery and Restoration Project, past Secretary/Treasurer and Board of Trustees of the Colorado River Water Users Association, and the past Chairman of the Board of the Jicarilla Apache Utility Authority.

Joe Wheeling
Joe was raised in the Badlands of western North Dakota on his family’s cattle ranch. Life was unpredictable and he had to learn to adapt to radical weather conditions, understanding livestock, making veterinary diagnosis and spending days on horseback. He went to CSU and graduated with a degree in Animal Science. While at CSU he was on the CSU Meats Judging Team when they won the American Royal and was High Individual at the Houston Livestock Show. Joe got his MBA from the Wharton School of Business and was successful executive in corporate hospitality for 15 years. Now Joe is active in James Ranch Beef as well as other local businesses using his corporate experience and education.
University of Colorado Law School

Established in 1892, the University of Colorado Law School is one of the top public law schools in the United States. Colorado Law School's diverse student body is selected from among the statistically best applicants from every corner of the nation representing over 100 undergraduate institutions, and its highly published faculty is dedicated to interacting with students both inside and outside the classroom. The school's state-of-the-art green building is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. With about 500 students and a low student to faculty ratio, Colorado Law School is a thriving academic community where the study of law is embraced to create leaders who recognize the civic responsibilities essential to the legal profession.

Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy, and the Environment

The Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment endeavors to serve the people of the American West, the nation, and the world through creative, interdisciplinary research, bold, inclusive teaching and innovative problem solving in order to further true sustainability for our use of the lands, waters, and environment. Major programs and initiatives focus on natural resources, water and public lands issues in Colorado and the West; energy and environmental security in the developing world; electricity regulation and energy policy; climate change law and policy; and native communities and environmental justice. The name comes from the contributions of two iconic figures in the law school’s environmental law history, David Getches and Charles Wilkinson.

https://www.getches-wilkinsoncenter.cu.law/