

ANNUAL CONVENTION AND MEMBERSHIP MEETING 2024



January 31 - February 2, 2024

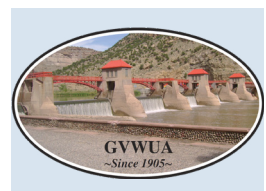
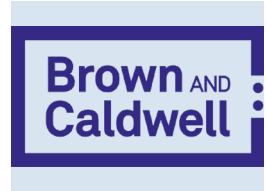
Hyatt Regency Aurora Denver Conference Center

Risk, Resilience, and Vision



Our Sponsors

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to each of our sponsors for the support and commitment they have given to the Water Congress. The impact of your generosity reverberates through the halls of knowledge exchanged, innovations explored, and meaningful connections forged during this convention. Thank you for your unwavering support!

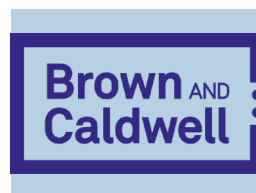


Our Sponsors

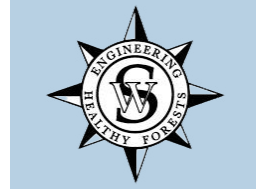
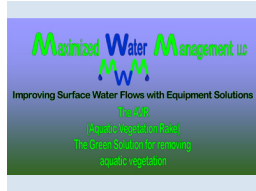
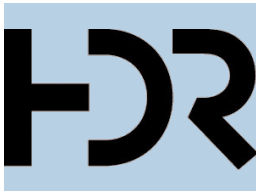


Our Exhibitors

Thank you to our exhibitors. We want to express our deepest appreciation for your pivotal role in making this Annual Convention a resounding success every year. Your participation as exhibitors adds immense value to the convention. Thank you for being an integral part of the Colorado Water Congress Annual Convention.



Our Exhibitors



Our Speakers



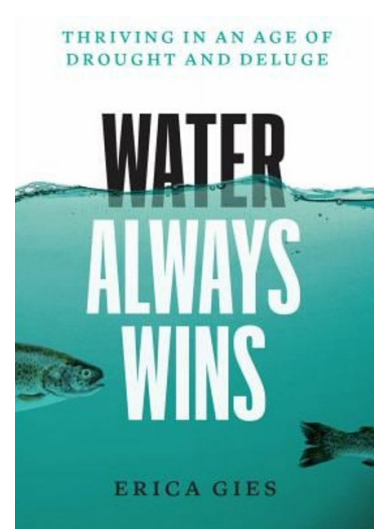
Convention Keynote

Erica Gies

Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge

Floods and droughts are growing more frequent and intense not just from climate change but also due to our development patterns. But today, across the world, people are asking a revolutionary question: What does water want? We've erased many of water's slow phases in wetlands, floodplains and forests. What water wants is to reclaim that space. Practitioners of what Gies is calling the "Slow Water movement" -- inspired by ancient geology, microbes, beavers, older cultures, and cutting-edge science -- are now making space for water within our human habitats. Delve into the profound narratives and insightful research as Gies navigates the complex relationship between humanity and the formidable forces of water. This keynote promises an inspiring exploration of our dynamic coexistence with water and unveils pathways toward a more sustainable future amidst nature's relentless ebbs and flows.

Meet the author after the session in the Café Lounge.



Jenna Battson

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Jenna Battson is the Outdoor Water Conservation Coordinator in the Water Supply Planning Section of the Colorado Water Conservation Board. She manages the State's Turf Replacement Program and worked with the Urban Landscape Conservation Task Force as they identified practical ways to advance outdoor water conservation and transformative landscape change.



Laura Belanger

Western Resource Advocates

Laura is a senior policy advisor with WRA. In this role she pursues policies and other solutions that help communities reuse water and use water more efficiently to increase their water security and do more with less. One such avenue is landscape transformation; from influencing state-level legislation to launching tailored pilot programs, she supports municipalities and others seeking to advance waterwise landscapes and irrigation in Colorado.



Nathan Boyer-Rechlin

Graduate Studies, University of Colorado

Nathan has called Colorado home since 2018, and is studying Environmental and Natural Resources Policy in the University of Colorado Boulder's Masters of the Environment Program. Prior to pursuing his graduate studies, Nathan's early career focused on freshwater ecology and water quality. Nathan has published research on the impacts of land use on stream habitat and benthic macroinvertebrate communities. He also spent two years working for Utah State University's National Aquatic Monitoring Center and the Bureau of Land Management on the Aquatic Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring program. As a Master's student, Nathan is specializing in water policy and management in the Colorado River basin, and he is currently researching the nexus of environmental flows and community resilience for CU Boulder's Western Water Assessment.



Chris Brown

Colorado Division of Water Resources

Chris Brown is the GIS Program Manager for the Colorado Division of Water Resources and has been with the agency for over 17 years. He supports GIS applications and guides GIS data development for DWR. Chris is also the National Hydrography Dataset Steward for Colorado and has supported the application of GIS to water resource issues for nearly 24 years.



Kathy Chandler-Henry

Eagle County

Kathy Chandler-Henry is an Eagle County Commissioner, serving since 2013. She's a 4th generation Coloradan, with a special interest in water and public lands issues. Ms. Chandler-Henry serves as the President of the Colorado River Water Conservation District, President of the Ruedi Water and Power Authority, and Chair of the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments Water Quality/Quantity Committee. Nationally, she is a Vice President of the National Association of Counties Public Lands Steering Committee. Kathy is especially excited now about the purchase of senior west slope water rights at the Shoshone Power Plant, the progress in Eagle County on affordable housing and connecting land planning to water supplies, and the completion of the Eagle Valley Trail by the end of this year.



Daniel Dominguez

Colorado Water Center

Daniel served six years in the US Marine Corps, concluding his service in the Presidential Flight Detachment. Following his undergraduate studies at CSU, he was honored with the Marshall Scholarship and the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. As a Marshall Scholar, he obtained two master's degrees: one in Sustainable Water Environments from the University of Glasgow and another in Computer Science from Cardiff University. Presently, Daniel is pursuing a Ph.D. in Watershed Science at Colorado State University as an NSF Graduate Research Fellow under the mentorship of Dr. Matt Ross. His research focuses on employing Deep Learning and Remote Sensing for Water Quality predictions. Furthermore, Daniel holds the role of Project Coordinator for the Colorado Water Center, with a primary focus on the Water Fellows program, in which he previously participated during his undergraduate years.



Greg Felt

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Greg Felt has been a fly-fishing and whitewater guide/outfitter on the Arkansas River since 1985. Wishing to better understand and protect the resource, he has engaged in the water conversation for the last twenty-five years, becoming a director of both the Upper Arkansas and Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy Districts. In 2016 he was elected Chaffee County Commissioner, now serving his second four-year term, and in 2020 Governor Polis appointed him Arkansas River Basin Director to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (he was recently reappointed to a second term and is currently serving as Board Chair). He is a long-time member of the Trust for Public Land Colorado Advisory Board and has received awards from both Colorado Trout Unlimited and Colorado Parks and Wildlife for his advocacy on behalf of our natural resources. He has two adult children and lives with his wife, Susan, in Salida.



Brian Ferebee

U.S. Forest Service

Brian Ferebee has worked for the Forest Service for more than 30 years and has a wealth of experience building coalitions internally and externally that further the agency's mission and strategic vision. Brian has served in a number of line officer positions, including Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region, Associate Deputy Chief for National Forest System, Deputy Regional Forester for the Rocky Mountain Region, Forest Supervisor on the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache, Forest Supervisor on the Uinta, and Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Pike San Isabel National Forest. In 2020, Brian was named Senior Executive for Intergovernmental Relations out of the Washington Office. He currently leads the Wildfire Risk Reduction Infrastructure Team, which is tasked with developing and implementing the Agency's 10-year strategy to build resilient landscapes and reduce wildfire risk.

Brian received his degree in Natural Resource Management at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.



Nora Flynn

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Nora is the Senior Agriculture Water Specialist at the Colorado Water Conservation Board, where she works on a variety of projects and strategies for increasing the drought resilience of agriculture and Colorado. She holds a Ph.D. in Soil and Crop Science from Colorado State University, with a specialization in deficit irrigation of row crops and soil health.



Gretel Follingstad National Integrated Drought Information System

Gretel is a Senior level Climate Resilience Planner for NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS). Gretel is the national drought planning program manager for the Climate Adaptive Drought Planning and Risk Assessment platform and the Intermountain West Drought Early Warning System Coordinator. Before joining the NIDIS team Gretel was an Assistant Professor in Climate Action Planning at Western Colorado University and continues as an Instructor for University of Colorado, Boulder. Gretel has a long tenure as a Senior Climate Resilience Planning consultant with her business, Terra Planning LLC. As an early adopter of resilience thinking, Gretel's professional praxis, scholarly research, and publications focus on the necessity and urgency of an equitable approach to climate action and resilience planning. She has broad experience examining land use strategies for growth management and hazard mitigation; drought planning, mitigation, and response; watershed restoration; water demand forecast modeling; collaborative policy solutions; and geospatial analysis/modeling (GIS). Gretel has a PhD in Geography Planning and Design from the University of Colorado, Denver, where her doctoral research focused on building water resilience for drought prone, rapidly growing communities under the pressures of climate change. In addition to her PhD, Gretel holds a Master's in Community and Regional Planning from the University of New Mexico, Bachelor of Business Administration in International Management and Latin American Studies, and a Certificate in Science and Technology Policy from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Gretel is a native New Mexican, fluent in Spanish and loves spending time outdoors with her family at their cabin in Northern New Mexico, back country skiing, mountain biking, kayaking and practicing yoga.



Brandon Francis

NMSu Agricultural Science Center

Brandon Francis was born and raised on Black Mesa, Arizona. Since 2014, Brandon has been working for the NMSU Agricultural Science Center in Farmington, New Mexico. He is also farms and gardens with his family in the San Juan River Valley and works with many partnerships on soil testing and teaching dryland farming practices, as well as, sharing Indigenous Agricultural Knowledge (IAK).

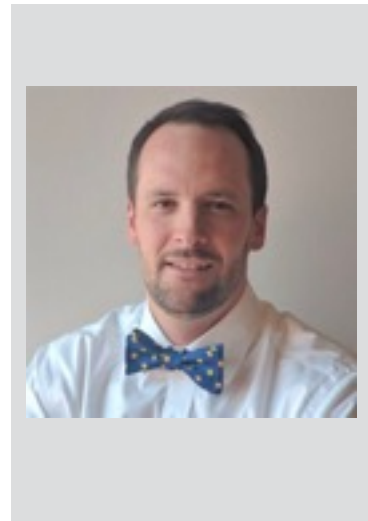


John Frank

Axios Denver

John Frank the lead writer at Axios Denver, a free daily newsletter named the best in Colorado by the state press association. He previously helped launch The Colorado Sun and worked as a political reporter at The Denver Post.

In prior posts, he covered statehouses in North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida, where he was part of the PolitiFact team that won the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting. A two-time UNC-Chapel Hill journalism graduate.



Jack Goble

Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy
District

Jack is the general manager of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District, whose mission includes conserving, protecting, and enhancing the water resources of the Lower Arkansas River Valley. Prior to this he spent eight years as the District's lead engineer and before that nearly a decade as a civil/water resources consultant engineer. He graduated from Colorado State University in 2005 with a degree in civil engineering.

Jack was appointed by Governor Hickenlooper in 2017 to serve as the Arkansas River Basin Representative on the Colorado Water Conservation Board. He currently serves on a number of other volunteer boards, including the Arkansas Basin Roundtable, the McClave School Board of Education, and several others.

Jack grew up on the Jack Sniff Ranch in Bent County that his family homesteaded in 1910. He and his wife, Melissa, are grateful to be able to raise their two seventh-generation sons and run cattle on this same land. Jack has a passion to ensure that future generations have the same opportunity to raise their families in Southeastern Colorado, which won't be possible without the Lower Arkansas Valley's most valuable natural resource, its water.



Jason Gray

Town of Castle Rock

Mayor Jason Gray grew up in the state of Washington but has called Castle Rock home for more than 20 years. He owns Crowfoot Valley Coffee and Crow Bar Downtown and a second location in the Arapahoe Community College Sturm Collaboration Campus.

Mayor Gray actively contributes to the vibrancy and strategic planning for Castle Rock. In addition to being the Mayor, his service includes five years on the Castle Rock Chamber of Commerce board; seven years on the Downtown Alliance board; five years as president of the Downtown Merchants Association; and five years on the Castle Rock Economic Partnership board.

Mayor Gray enjoys writing, as half of the duo Harris Gray, with multiple published works. He also enjoys fishing, kayaking and finishing behind his wife Kathryn in 5 and 10K races. His passions include spending time with family and organizing fundraising to support research into multiple sclerosis, ALS, Parkinson's and dementia.



FIRST ELECTED

2018

TERM EXPIRES

2026

COUNCIL LIAISON TO

- Audit Committee
- Castle Rock Economic Development Council
- Castle Rock Economic Partnership
- Castle Rock Fire Volunteer Pension Board
- Castle Rock Water Commission
- Douglas County Homeless Initiative Executive Committee
- Metro Mayors Caucus
- Partnership of Douglas County Governments
- Planning Commission

Lindsay Griffith

Brown and Caldwell

Graduate Researcher (he/him)

T.R. is a Ph.D student studying Forest Sciences at CSU. T.R. is currently working on a project supported by the Transformation Network (NSF-funded) to identify the impacts of laws and policies created under settler-colonialism and the contemporary implications for Indigenous water rights and management. TR has formed an Indigenous advisory council to help guide his project and to gain a more in depth understanding of Indigenous worldview and ontology in terms of water and natural resources.



T.R. Heydman

Ph.D Student/Colorado State University

Graduate Researcher (he/him)

T.R. is a Ph.D student studying Forest Sciences at CSU. T.R. is currently working on a project supported by the Transformation Network (NSF-funded) to identify the impacts of laws and policies created under settler-colonialism and the contemporary implications for Indigenous water rights and management. TR has formed an Indigenous advisory council to help guide his project and to gain a more in depth understanding of Indigenous worldview and ontology in terms of water and natural resources.



Kevin Houck

Colorado Water Conservation Board

Kevin Houck, PE, CFM, serves as Section Chief for the Watershed and Flood Protection Section of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, where he has worked since 2003. His duties include assistance with flood mapping studies, engineering project management, grants management, general technical assistance, and public outreach regarding the flood hazards in the state. Recent programs have included the Emergency Watershed Protection program in partnership with the NRCS and the Colorado Hazard Mapping Program, both in response to the 2013 floods. Kevin has also been involved in rulemaking for statewide floodplain rules and an update to the statewide floodplain and stormwater criteria manual.

Prior to his role at the Colorado Water Conservation Board, Kevin served as a consulting engineer for eight years in the Denver area.

Kevin has a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Washington State University and a master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado – Denver. He is registered as a professional engineer in the states of Colorado, California, and Louisiana. He is a Past Chair for the Colorado Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Managers (CASFM) and has served as Treasurer for the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM).



Doug Jeavons

BBC Research and Consulting

Doug joined BBC in 1992 after finishing his Masters degree in Economics from the University of Colorado. He has spent much of the past 32 years analyzing economic aspects of water use on behalf of municipal providers and agricultural water users in Colorado, Arizona and Texas and state water management agencies including CWCB, the Wyoming Water Development Commission and the Texas Water Development Board. Doug led BBC's work for CWCB for the latest update to the Colorado Water Plan and directed a statewide survey for CWCB regarding public water awareness and perceptions in late 2021. He has been working with CWCB to examine the benefits and costs of turf replacement for the past two years.



Sarah Jones

Jones Farms Organics

Sarah Jones co-owns Jones Farms Organics, a 4th and 5th generation family farm in the San Luis Valley, and the 1st Regenerative Organic Certified (ROC) Farm in the state of Colorado. JFO grows multiple varieties of heirloom wheat and rye (Rouge de Bordeaux, Yecora Rojo, Sonora, Durum, Wrens Abruzzi, and Ryman Rye) and over 20 varieties of specialty potatoes. As the director of sales, marketing, and logistics, she has cultivated relationships with over 30 direct customers.

Passionate about her home & community in the San Luis Valley, in 2023 Sarah found a way to purchase the abandoned Hooper Junction & Gas Station to preserve it as a hub for locally sourced and prepared foods. Sarah was the vision behind the recently launched Rye Resurgence Project, which was awarded grant funding from the SLV Water Conservancy District to help farmers in the SLV reduce reliance on groundwater, improve soil health and maintain profitability through cultivating a market for local terroir driven rye. Sarah also serves on the boards of The Alamosa Farmers Market and The Sangre de Cristo School District Accountability Committee, where her three young daughters attend.

#hugafarmer #communityovercommodity #purplepotatopower
#ryeresurgence #ryenot



David Kennedy

Corona Insights

David Kennedy has been a member of the Corona Insights team for nearly 20 years. A mastermind of organization and planning, David works to simplify messy questions and then systematically answer them through clear thinking and attention to detail. David has worked in many areas of research, from qualitative to quantitative, using methods from the traditional to the latest in digital research tools. His passion for market research lies not only in identifying answers to his customers' questions, but also in providing answers that can lead to action. His firm, Corona Insights, works with governments, nonprofits, and membership groups to collect data and distill them into insights that lead to greater impact for their communities.



Zane Kessler

Colorado River District

Zane Kessler is the Director of Government Relations for the Colorado River District. In this role, he manages the River District's policy efforts at the state and federal levels, and oversees the organization's work with counties, municipalities, and partner organizations on the Western Slope. Zane brings nearly 20 years of natural resource policy experience to the District's team, including 6 years as a staffer in the United States Senate, where he managed a variety of policy and outreach initiatives in the agriculture, infrastructure and natural resource arenas. Zane serves on the boards of the Colorado Water Trust and the National Water Resources Association.



Robert Lamm

Colorado State University

As a first-generation and nontraditional student, Robert spent eight years working at one of the largest nurseries and garden centers in the Denver Metro area between high school and his enrollment at CSU. His time and interdisciplinary experience at the nursery exposed him not only to many of the evolving issues we are facing with water in the West and relaying them to the public but also the CSU extension as the go-to local and up-to-date source. Having lost most of his vision in 2019 at 24 years old, his identification as a student with a disability allows him to bring his unique perspective to the table; furthermore, his experience with self-advocacy will benefit him as a leader in the water sector. Currently pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering with a minor in Sustainable Water Management, he is hopeful to enter the Accelerated Master's Program with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at CSU and graduate with his master's by the Spring of 2027. Beyond his current studies, Robert is also a recipient of multiple national scholarships with blindness advocacy groups and a Wolves to Rams Research trainee mentor with the National Institute of Health Research Traineeship. Additionally, he works on campus at the Engineering Success Center front desk while serving as a CSU Presidential Ambassador and welcomes any and every opportunity to engage in the Colorado Water scene.



Gregor MacGregor

University of Colorado

Gregor MacGregor is a Teaching Assistant Professor and the Environmental and Natural Resources Policy Specialization Lead in the University of Colorado's Masters of the Environment professional graduate program. He is also a Faculty Fellow at the University of Colorado Law School. He teaches courses on natural resources, with an emphasis on field seminars that connect students with the people and places facing our biggest natural resources challenges. He also directs the Acequia Assistance Project, a pro bono effort to provide Hispano irrigators in southern Colorado with legal services related to their land, water rights, and businesses.

Prior to joining academia, Gregor worked as a water attorney in private practice and for the United States Army, where he also served as a cavalry officer prior to retiring. Outside of the University he owns and operates a cottage-food business where he bakes and provides free consultations for rural redevelopment initiatives.

Gregor received his BA degree in International Affairs from the University of Colorado and his J.D. with a certificate in Natural Resources, Energy, and Environmental Law from the University of Colorado Law School.



Kelsea Macllroy

The Langdon Group

Kelsea Macllroy is an experienced social science researcher, facilitator, and project manager with The Langdon Group. She has extensive research experience in agricultural water, particularly in Colorado and the Colorado River Basin, where she has developed a deep knowledge and understanding of legal, social, economic, and ecological considerations. Kelsea specializes in comprehensive situation assessments and collaborative facilitation around natural resource use, planning, and conservation. In her work, she aims to develop a deeper understanding of issues, barriers, and opportunities for collaboration in challenging, multi-party situations. Her publications include “Demand Management” and Injustice in Rural Agriculture on Colorado’s Western Slope: An Anatomy of Ambivalence (2022) and Lessons Learned from Colorado Experiences with Interstate Compact Administration (2021) with Hannah Holm.



Kate Mack

City and County of Broomfield

Senior Landscape Architect, City and County of Broomfield

Kate took part in developing the innovative water-wise landscape ordinance for Broomfield that went into effect January 1, 2024. With support from WaterNow Alliance and Western Resource Advocates and the Project Accelerator, it is one of the strongest water-wise landscaping codes in Colorado created, reflecting Broomfield’s goal to focus efforts on water efficient programs and policies that will make the largest and most long-lasting impact. She is also part of Broomfield’s Turf Replacement Program. Kate has a Master’s in Landscape Architecture and a Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning. A licensed landscape architect, Kate started with Broomfield in April 2023.



Kaitlin Mattos

Four Corners Water Center at Fort Lewis College

Dr. Kaitlin Mattos is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Environment and Sustainability and the Interim Director of the Four Corners Water Center at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. Dr. Mattos is an environmental scientist, engineer, and community engagement specialist with over fifteen years of experience working on the intersecting goals of environmental protection, human wellbeing, and community resilience.



Amy Moyer

Colorado River District

Amy serves as the Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Colorado River District who oversees the District's Community Funding Partnership following the passage of Ballot Question 7A. In addition, Amy facilitates additional partnerships and policy discussions to support West Slope water users from all sectors. She has been with the District since March 2021.

Amy previously worked at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as the Assistant Director for Water, where she developed and implemented water policy for the State of Colorado. Prior to that Amy served as the Department of Natural Resources as a Policy Advisor covering federal lands issues and as a budget analyst. Before joining DNR, Amy worked at the City and County of Denver to develop the city's first Climate Adaptation Plan.

Amy holds masters' degrees in public policy and economics from the University of Denver and a bachelor's degree in communications from the College of Charleston.



Amy Nash

Student, Metropolitan State University

My passion for water-related initiatives finds expression in diverse roles, from facilitating wetland protection policies to hands-on care for aquatic systems at the Downtown Aquarium. This multifaceted journey reflects my commitment to environmental stewardship and a deep-seated dedication to making a positive impact in the field of water and environmental science.

I hold an Associate of Science in Environmental Science from the Community College of Denver and am currently pursuing further studies at Metropolitan State University. As a Policy Writing Fellow at the Colorado Science and Engineering Policy Fellowship, I conducted legislative research for CO State Senators Chris Hansen and Cleave Simpson and played a key role in proposing wetland protection policies. In my current position as a Waste Diversion Student Associate at the Auraria Sustainable Campus Program, I play a key role in Campus recycling programs and advocate for student sustainability concerns.

I'm passionate about combining my scientific background, policy acumen, and community engagement to drive positive change in environmental sustainability.



Todd Olander

Root Shoot Malting

Todd Olander is a fifth-generation farmer and a first-generation maltster. Raised on his family's farm, Todd has combined traditional legacy with cutting-edge regenerative farming practices, making him a trailblazer in the movement for a resilient agricultural future. Beyond the field, he opened Root Shoot Malting in 2016, a craft malthouse which processes the grain grown on his family farm. Additionally, Todd has entered the spirits arena, creating unique libations that embody the terroir of his family's land. Through these ventures, Todd links farmers to the craft beverage industry and promotes the importance of traceability and environmental responsibility in agricultural products.



Jorge Santiago Ramírez Núñez

PhD Student, University of Colorado

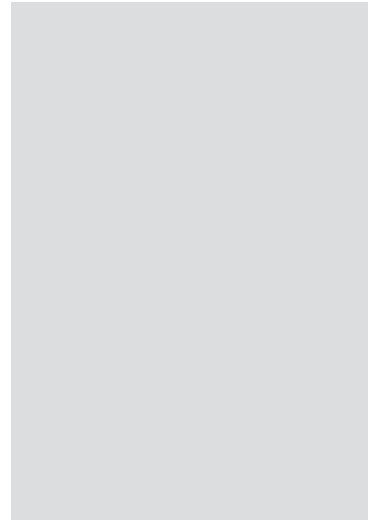
Jorge Santiago Ramírez Núñez is a second-year PhD student in Civil Engineering with a focus on Hydrology, Water Management & Environmental Fluid Mechanics at the University of Colorado Boulder. He is a member of Dr. Aditi Bhaskar's research group, which investigates changes to water resources resulting from urban development. His research includes, studying changes in streamflow regime due to urbanization in the Denver Metro Area, and assessing the potential of rainwater harvesting to meet the residential irrigation needs across urban areas in Colorado.



John Rodgers

Colorado Division of Water Resources

John works at the Division of Water Resources, State Engineer's Office in Denver. He is the Hydrobase Coordinator, which is the name of DWR's repository of Colorado water data. He has been at DWR about 7 years, and worked in Colorado water engineering another 7 years before that. His prior career was in environmental engineering. John once said "I enjoy supporting the Colorado water community". Outside of work, John enjoys his family and Colorado.



Lindsay Rogers

Western Resource Advocates

Lindsay Rogers is the Policy Manager for Municipal Conservation at Western Resource Advocates. Lindsay advances water conservation at the municipal level to bolster communities' water security and reduce pressure on Western rivers and streams. By facilitating local and state-level policy development and providing direct project support, she helps communities and utilities pursue innovative and tailored water-saving strategies such as graywater ordinances, waterwise landscaping programs, and better integrated water and land-use planning. Previously, she spent five years as the Colorado Basin Program Manager at WaterNow Alliance, focused on advancing sustainable water policies and programs in the West by working directly with municipal water decision makers. Lindsay is a part of the project team that has helped bring the Growing Water Smart workshops to Utah. She received a B.S. in Environmental Studies from Tufts University.



Michael Sakas

Colorado Department of Natural Resources

For more than 10 years, Michael has worked as a journalist in Colorado where she was born and raised. Michael's deep connection to the region has fueled her passion for environmental storytelling in the West. She most recently worked for Colorado Public Radio as a climate and environmental journalist where she hosted the podcast "Parched." The show explores the critical issues surrounding the Colorado River through stories of visionary individuals striving to preserve a vital resource for millions of people. As DNR's Colorado River Communications Specialist, Michael uses her Colorado River expertise, media contacts and relationships to ensure the state is well positioned to provide communications and outreach as river negotiations progress in the coming years. Michael has a Master of Science in Journalism and Media Communication from Colorado State University.



Robert Sakata

Colorado Department of Agriculture
Sakata Farms



Robert Sakata is the Colorado Department of Agriculture's Ag Water Policy Advisor, a new position approved by the 2023 legislative session. He began his new position in January 2024. He will serve as a dedicated liaison between CDA and other state agencies who work with agricultural stakeholders and will focus on building relationships with water organizations around the state while still acting as president of Sakata Farms in Brighton, Colorado.

Robert was born and raised in Colorado and grew up on his family farm. In addition to his lifelong farming experience, Robert has served in a wide range of agricultural and water focused positions beyond his farm. He currently serves on three mutual ditch company boards of directors. He was appointed to serve on the Agriculture Groundwater Advisory Board, the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission, the InterBasin Compact Committee, and the Colorado Water Conservation Board (where he will remain active as the Agricultural Commissioner's proxy when needed). He has also served on the Metro Basin Roundtable, Colorado Foundation for Water Education Board of Directors (now known as Water Education Colorado), and Colorado Water Congress Board of Directors. He has been active and served in leadership positions in numerous farm organizations, and he helped form both the Colorado Ag Water Alliance and the Colorado Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, where he served as the founding president. Having grown up on the family farm, Robert attributes his hard work ethic and desire to serve the community from the inspirational example that his parents set as well as motivation to become involved in other areas. Robert is thrilled to be able to apply his farming experience in this new role with the Department of Agriculture, especially since food and water connect us all.

Meghan Scott

Noble Law Office

Meghan C. Scott is an attorney with the Noble Law Office, licensed to practice in Arizona and California. With the Noble Law Office, she represents a number of irrigation districts in the Yuma area and the Bard Water District in California. She also handles legislative affairs for the Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association. She focuses her practice on water and agricultural law, and also practices business and corporate law, contracts and contract negotiation, estate planning and administration, real estate law and civil litigation. Ms. Scott is the Assistant Coordinator for the Yuma County Agriculture Water Coalition and sits on the Board of Directors for the Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona and the National Water Resources Association. With the Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona, Ms. Scott recently helped form the Arizona Association of Women in Water and Agriculture. Ms. Scott was born and raised in Yuma, Arizona, and is the daughter of a third generation Yuma farmer.



Jody Shadduck-McNally

Larimer County Commissioner, District 3

Commissioner Jody Shadduck-McNally is the first woman to serve in the District 3 seat for Larimer County; elected in 2020. Commissioner Shadduck-McNally was elected county wide and she works hard to travel the entire county monthly to listen to all voices in the county. Jody was appointed to the National Association of Counties (NACo) Environment, Energy and Land Use Steering Committee and the Rural Action Caucus. Governor Polis appointed Commissioner Shadduck-McNally to the Colorado Forest Health Council in 2022 and she was elected to chair the Legislative Committee of the Forest Health Council.



Nona Shipman

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Nona has worked at the One World One Water Center at MSU Denver since 2013. Beginning as the Outreach & Recruitment Manager, she worked her way through various positions until January 2022 when she became Co-Director. Originally from Northern Virginia, Nona moved to Denver in 2011 as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer and loved the experience so much she decided to stay in Colorado and pursue further water education opportunities. She has a BA in Communications from Lynchburg College, an MA in Biological Sciences from Miami University, Ohio, and welcomes the opportunity to incorporate her degrees with her passion for raising the awareness of precious environmental resources through interdisciplinary and creative opportunities.



Vanessa A. Silke

Baird Holm LLP

Vanessa A. Silke is an attorney at Baird Holm LLP, in Omaha. She has represented public and private entities in a number of multi-faceted property rights transactions, often involving access to ground and surface water sources. She has represented governmental and private interests in administrative and judicial proceedings involving natural resource allocation at the state and federal level, and ensuring compliance with state and federal environmental laws. Ms. Silke serves on the Nebraska Water Resources Association Board, and on the National Water Resources Association Federal Policy Committee.



Rebecca Tejada

Parker Water & Sanitation District

Rebecca Tejada serves as the Director of Engineering at Parker Water & Sanitation District. She is excited to be part of an organization with a vision to “Sustain Life for our Community” and a mission to “effectively manage our vital water resources to ensure quality and value to those we serve”. Rebecca oversees the District’s planning efforts, capital projects, GIS, development and construction activities, IT, and SCADA. With a passion for this industry and an appreciation for the relationship between supply and demand, Rebecca hopes to be an advocate for effective water resource management.



Jessica Thrasher

Colorado Water Center

Jessica Thrasher is the Water Equity Programs Leader at the Colorado Water Center. She has a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Southern Methodist University and a master's degree in Anthropology from Colorado State University. She creates and directs programs that promote a diverse water workforce representative of the communities served, equitable access to water resources and information, and develops resources supporting the advancement of equity in the water field. She is dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusion of diverse perspectives to build a sustainable water future for all.



Chris Udall

Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona

Chris Udall joined the Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona (ABWC) as Executive Director in the fall of 2004. He is the 5th Executive Director to serve since the establishment of the association in 1978. ABWC was established to represent irrigated agriculture and agribusiness and later as the state affiliate to the National Water Resources Association (NWRA).

Chris has seen the organization's influence and leadership role expand since 2004 to include the "Water Management Certificate Program," a program to assist in training the next generation of water managers. The "Vetting Forum 4 Water," which facilitates the vetting of water legislation with legislators and stakeholders ahead of each state legislative session to promote sound water policy; two programs among other efforts to lead on water issues in Arizona.

Previous to his current position, Chris served as a Field Director and Congressional Liaison to two Arizona Congressmen for ten years focusing on water, forest health, endangered species, local government outreach, transportation and Tribal relations.

Chris is a 4th generation Arizona native with a long family history of involvement in public service, ranching and business.

Chris is an Agricultural Economics/Agribusiness graduate of Brigham Young University.



Esther Vincent

Northern Water

Esther Vincent holds a master's degree in civil engineering from the Grenoble Institute of Technology in France, is a registered professional engineer in Colorado and an alumna of the WEco Water Leaders program. She has been with Northern Water since 1999 and has experience with water quality, watershed management, water supply planning, environmental permitting and regulations, and water conservation. She has been leading Northern Water's post-fire watershed restoration efforts in the wake of the 2020 East Troublesome Fire. She oversees Northern Water's water quality, water efficiency and flow monitoring programs, environmental planning and compliance, and environmental data management systems.



Kat Weismiller

Colorado Water Conservation Board

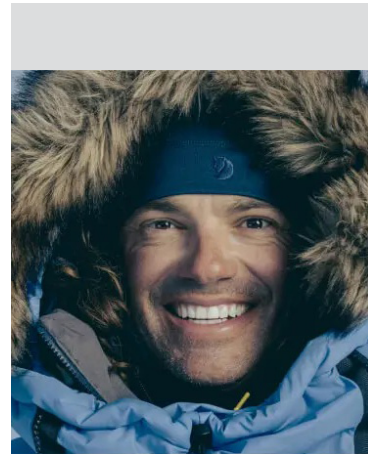
Kat Weismiller (she/her) is the Deputy Section Chief for Water Supply Planning at the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB). She leads the CWCB's work on climate, conservation, and drought and helped lead the development of the 2023 Colorado Water Plan. She is a multidisciplinary environmental and water resources planner with over a decade of both local and international experience across environmental planning, strategic communications, stakeholder engagement, regulatory compliance, and government relations. Kat holds bachelors degrees in Geography and Environmental Studies, from Macalester College, and a Masters Degree in Natural Resource Law from the University of Denver's Sturm College of Law, where she specialized in Water Law and Land Use Law. Prior to working for the Colorado Water Conservation Board, she was a senior planner at Denver Water, and an environmental planner with HDR Engineering and URS working out of Brisbane, Australia.



Christopher Wolff

Quantified Ventures

Christopher Wolff is Associate Director of the Colorado River Basin at Quantified Ventures. With deep experience in the Colorado River Basin, Chris specializes in water resources, sustainability, and climate finance, and community resiliency. Chris leverages over 15 years' experience to support public, private, and non-profit partners looking to catalyze nature-based solution projects through innovative funding and financing approaches.



Nels Wroe

Dry Land Distillers

Nels is the founder and CEO of Dry Land Distillers. He grew up in the American west and has deep connections in Wyoming, Montana and Colorado. He is proud of his work in developing spirits that are intentional and appropriate for Colorado. Dry Land is now one of the most sustainable and environmentally balanced distilleries in the country, Nels has lived in Longmont, Colorado for more than 25 years with his spouse, Teresa, and his two kids who are now experts on cleaning fermentation tanks.



Tim York

Aurora Water

Tim York joined Aurora Water's conservation team in 2012. He earned a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and is a Colorado licensed Landscape Architect. Prior to joining Aurora Water, Tim worked in the private sector in design and construction management roles across multiple states. He also taught for UNLV's Landscape Architecture program. As the Manager of Water Conservation Tim supports a large team of passionate water conservation professionals in program development, implementation, and analysis.



Workshop

New Challenges and the (surprising) Work of DWR

Moderator and Speaker: Tracy Kosloff, Acting State Engineer

Speakers: Jason Ullmann - Deputy State Engineer

Sarah Brucker - Deputy State Engineer

Division 1 Engineer - Corey DeAngelis

Division 2 Engineer - Rachel Zancanella

Division 3 Engineer - Craig Cotten

Division 4 Engineer - Bob Hurford

Division 5 Lead Assistant Engineer - Caleb Foy

Division 6 Engineer - Erin Light

Division 7 Engineer - Rob Genualdi

Aurora Ballroom

8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Will be broadcast to virtual participants

Our popular session with our Colorado Division Engineers will be back again this year. Get an update about State Engineer leadership and then panel discussions about how shepherding water really works, water administration drivers on the Colorado River mainstem, and the surprising work of DWR.

Wildfire Crisis Strategy in Action!

Conference Room I

8:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Moderator: Patt Dorsey, National Wild Turkey Federation, Director of Conservation Operations, West

Catastrophic wildfires present the greatest threat to watershed health and water supplies. The USDA, Forest Service, National Wild Turkey Federation and the 50+ Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative (RMRI) partners recognize the strong connection between healthy forests and healthy watersheds, the work of our partners, and the importance of cross-boundary coordination (federal, state, private and tribal). Join us to learn more about creating healthy watersheds for clean water supplies through active forest restoration.

Workshop

Wildfire Crisis Strategy in Action!

Conference Room I
8:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Section 1: Leading Through Crisis

Doug Vilsack, BLM, State Director
Dan Gibbs, DNR, Executive Director
Frank Beum, USFS, Regional Forester
Clint Evans, NRCS, Colorado State Conservationist
Matt McCombs, CSFS, Colorado State Forester

Section 2: Success stories along CO Front Range: The From Forests to Faucets Partnership

Esther Vincent, Northern Water, Director of Environmental Services
Chris Sturm, CWCB, Watershed Program Director
Madelene McDonald, Denver Water, Watershed Scientist
Molly Pitts, NWTF, Wildfire Crisis Manager

Section 3: Getting it done at landscape scale

Danny Margoles, Executive Director, Mancos Conservation District
Dave Neely, USFS, San Juan NF Forest Supervisor
Alison Layman, La Plata County Wildfire & Watershed Mitigation/Protection Fund Coordinator

Section 4: Forest Health Council

Dan Gibbs, DNR
Christina Burri, Denver Water
Commissioner Jody Shaddock-McNally, Larimer County

Wrap-up

Dan Gibbs, DNR, Executive Director
Patt Dorsey, NWTF, Director of Conservation Operations, West
Frank Beum, USFS, Regional Forester

Workshop

Thriving in the Deluge - Managing High Flows in Colorado

Conference Room V
9:00 – 11:45 a.m.

Moderators: Alan Searcy, City of Lakewood and Kevin Houck, CWCB

In Colorado's water community, we spend a lot of time working on how to acquire and manage water resources. In this first ever workshop (for the Water Congress) we will look at the other side of the coin with a comprehensive overview of dealing with too much water. Here are the topics:

Introduction

Alan Searcy, City of Lakewood

Kevin Houck, CWCB

Overview of CWCB Watershed and Flood Protection Section

Kevin Houck, CWCB

What is the authority/role of the CWCB in developing floodplain maps. How is floodplain mapping accomplished? How are floodplain maps used? What is the role of counties?

Reservoirs and Floods

John Hunyadi, Colorado Division of Water Resources

The safety of dams during major high flow events is directly related to spillway capacities. Why? Do all reservoirs have to be able to pass the Probable Maximum Floods? How are PMFs calculated? What is the role of the State in ensuring adequate sizing of spillways?

Case Study: 2013 South Platte Flood

Kevin Houck, CWCB

We are just past the 10th anniversary of the most destructive natural disaster in State history. Kevin will take us on a guided tour of the event.

Restoring Ag Diversion Structures after the Flood

Kevin Houck, CWCB

After flood water recedes, ag diversion structures can suffer significant damage. Many irrigation companies do not have the budget and/or resources to rebuild them.

Workshop

Thriving in the Deluge - Managing High Flows in Colorado

Conference Room V
9:00 – 11:45 a.m.

Urban Stormwater Systems

Alan Searcy, City of Lakewood

Stormwater in the cities must be managed to protect structures and downstream water quality. What are stormwater collection and detention infrastructure designed to do?

Case Study: Mile High Flood District

Bruce Rindahl, Mile High Flood District

Storms are a part of every climate, everywhere in the world and no matter where you live, they're a fact of life. The larger the storm, the bigger the impact and the flooding repercussions from the more severe events can send out ripple effects—from physical damage to the community to the emotional psyche of residents. The Mile High Flood District works to minimize adverse impacts from flooding the Denver Metro area.

Flood Warning Systems

Bruce Rindahl, Mile High Flood District

Flash flood prediction programs have been developed to ensure safety of citizens during floods. Information from partnerships with NOAA National Weather Service and local governments is used to provide notifications of heavy rain and flood threats. Once notified, local officials can act according to their respective emergency plans and warn people in affected high risk areas when a flooding threat becomes more likely.

Water Quality and Stormwater

Nathan Moore, Colorado Water Quality Control Division

The Water Quality Control Division monitors and reports on the quality of state waters to prevent water pollution, protect, restore and enhance the quality of surface and groundwater while ensuring that all drinking water systems provide safe drinking water. The WQCD inspects water systems, issues permits, ensures compliance, and takes action when entities violate state and federal regulations. We will learn how the Division implements state and federal rules to protect Colorado's water quality from pollutants discharges during wet weather.

Workshop

Thriving in the Deluge - Managing High Flows in Colorado

Conference Room V
9:00 – 11:45 a.m.

Case Study: South Platte Water Quality Trends

Craig Wolf, GEI Consultants

Craig will explore trends in water quality and volume of storm flows in the South Platte River over the past 20 years.

The Advocacy of the Colorado Stormwater Council

Alan Searcy, City of Lakewood

Federal regulations require stormwater management practices to reduce water pollution discharges. The Colorado Stormwater Council is an organization of local governments with storm drainage systems serving populations over 10,000, which are termed Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems or MS4s. What is the role of the CSC?

Projects to Restore Natural Stream Systems - Training on SB270

Conference Room II
9:00 – 11:45 a.m.

Moderators and Speakers: Jackie Corday, Corday Natural Resources Consulting and Abby Burk, Audubon

Speakers: Julie Ash, PE, Sr. Restoration Engineer, Stillwater Sciences

The Co-chairs of the Colorado Healthy Headwaters Working Group, Abby Burk (Audubon) and Jackie Corday (Corday Natural Resources Consulting) will present information about what types of stream restoration projects fit within the SB270 Minor Restoration Activities, which may not, options on how to proceed in either case, other key legal language in the bill, and guidelines to reduce the risk of potential conflicts for restoration projects. Abby and Jackie have traveled all around the state giving this presentation to numerous water stakeholders, including DWR staff, and have incorporated many of their helpful questions/comments/ideas into this updated version.

Workshop

Will Gen Z Change the Way We View Water Issues?

Conference Room VI
9:00 – 11:45 a.m.

9:00 - 9:40 Water Programs in Colorado's Universities: Challenges and Opportunities

Moderator: John Tracy, Colorado State University

Aditi Bhaskar, University of Colorado Boulder

Kaitlin Mattos, Fort Lewis College

Nona Shipman, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Wyatt Sassman, Sturm College of Law, University of Denver

9:40 - 10:20 Gen. Y, Z and A: Current Projects and Hope for the Future

Moderator: Gregor MacGregor, University of Colorado Boulder

Amy Nash, Colorado State University

Jorge Santiago Ramírez Núñez, University of Colorado

Amelia Marsh, University of Denver

Brooke Laughter, Fort Lewis College

Alexia Lor, Metropolitan State University

10:20 - 11:20 Breakout Session – Small Group Discussions between Water Users and Students

Moderator: Jennifer Gimbel, Colorado State University

Moderators for Individual Group Discussions:

John Tracy, Colorado State University

Kaitlin Mattos, Fort Lewis College

Nona Shipman, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Karen Schlatter, Colorado State University

Jessica Thrasher, Colorado State University

Water Users Represented by: CWC Board Members and Aspinall Award Recipients

Jim Yahn, North Sterling Irrigation District

Mark Pifher, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District

Aaron Citron, The Nature Conservancy

Lisa Darling, South Metro Water Supply Authority

Erin Wilson, Wilson Water Group

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

12:00 **Lunch**

12:30 **Colorado Forest Health Council Quarterly Meeting**
Conference Room VIII

12:45 **Opening General Session**

Aurora Ballroom

Welcome

Travis Smith, CWC Board President and National Wild Turkey Federation

Introduction of Career Accelerator Award Winners and CSU Water Fellows

Emily Hunt, CWC EDI Committee Chair and City of Thornton

12:50 **Convention Keynote**

Erica Gies, author of *Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge*

Join independent reporter and author, Erica Gies, for a captivating keynote address centered around her book, "*Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge.*"

Floods and droughts are growing more frequent and intense not just from climate change but also due to our development patterns. But today, across the world, people are asking a revolutionary question: What does water want? We've erased many of water's slow phases in wetlands, floodplains and forests. What water wants is to reclaim that space. Practitioners of what Gies is calling the "Slow Water movement" -- inspired by ancient geology, microbes, beavers, older cultures, and cutting-edge science -- are now making space for water within our human habitats. Delve into the profound narratives and insightful research as Gies navigates the complex relationship between humanity and the formidable forces of water. This keynote promises an inspiring exploration of our dynamic coexistence with water and unveils pathways toward a more sustainable future amidst nature's relentless ebbs and flows.

Meet the author at 2:00 in the Café Lounge.

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

1:30 2024 Aspinall Award Presentation

Moderator: Patti Wells, 2023 Aspinall Award Winner

This award, established in 1980, is presented to that person exemplifying the courage, dedication, knowledge, and leadership qualities shown by Wayne N. Aspinall in the development, protection, and preservation of the water of the State of Colorado. Please join us to honor the 2024 Aspinall Award winner.

2:00 Meet the Author

Cafe Lounge

Meet Erica Gies, author of *Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge*. Erica will be available to answer any lingering questions and sign copies of her book.

2:00 Break for Concurrent Sessions - Block A

2:15 Concurrent Session A1

Aurora Ballroom - Will be broadcast to virtual participants

Don't Bet the Farm – Strategies for Protecting the Many Values of Irrigated Agriculture

Robert Sakata, Sakata Farms

Jack Goble, Lower Arkansas Water Conservancy District

Amy Moyer, Colorado River Water Conservation District

Agriculture is a critical component of our state's economy, and it is a foundational driver of the culture and environment in our rural areas. Changes to agriculture driven by factors such as buy-and-dry, groundwater sustainability, and socioeconomics can disrupt the benefits and values that irrigated agriculture provides. The Colorado Water Plan includes an Agency Action (Action 2.6) to identify the values associated with irrigated agriculture (economic, environmental, cultural, etc.) and strategies that can be implemented to protect those values. This session will feature a panel discussion that explores the values of irrigated agriculture and promising strategies for maintaining those values in the face of increased competition for water and climate change.

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

2:15 **Concurrent Session A2**

Conference Room I

Stack & Scale: An Innovative Approach to Funding Water Projects

Chris Wolff, Quantified Ventures

Colorado communities have a chance to leverage an unprecedented amount of funding to pursue nature-based solutions (NBS) projects that can combat climate change, enhance equitability, improve water quality, sustain watersheds, and more. But individual funding sources aren't always the solution to making paper projects a reality. To catalyze and scale NBS projects in Colorado, organizations, NGOs, and partners need know how to stack funding and financing approaches.

2:15 **Concurrent Session A3**

Conference Room II

Identifying the Problem: Overview of the CBA Survey Results

Sponsored by the Colorado Bar Association, Water Law Section

Speakers: April Hendricks, Burns Figa & Will P.C.

Alyson Scott, Alyson Scott Law LLC

Martha Whitmore, Montrose County

Building on the momentum from the 2023 Summer Conference Workshop, the Water Law Section of the Colorado Bar Association will discuss the role of the State Engineer and Division Engineers in water court, Rulemaking, and the Engineers' development of guidance documents. The goal of this session is for attendees to have a collaborative discussion about your personal experiences with the State and Division Engineers throughout the water court process and identify two common areas of interest or concern that will have a more in-depth focus in the following concurrent sessions.

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

2:15 Concurrent Session A4

Conference Room V

Engaging the Whole Community

**Sponsored by the CWC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Patricia Ferrero, Conservation Colorado, Protége**

Explore the transformative impact of community engagement within Protége and Conservation Colorado. At various levels – city, county, state, and district – boards and commissions, composed of community members, wield significant influence in decision-making processes, particularly with water. Yet, a need exists for increased representation from all of Colorado’s communities. Protége and Conservation Colorado equip people with the tools to better engage community leaders and equip those leaders with a diverse skill set, empowering them to bring their communities to decision-making tables. Discover how their program enables individuals to contribute meaningfully to the equitable implementation of water laws and policies, cultivating more participation from Colorado’s communities.

2:15 Concurrent Session A5

Conference Room VI

Urban Landscape Transformation – A Lightning Year in Review & What to Expect Next

**Laura Belanger, Sr. Policy Advisor, Western Resource Advocates
Lindsay Rodgers, Policy Advisor, Western Resource Advocates
Tim York, Water Conservation Manager, City of Aurora**

Water efficient landscaping has emerged as a statewide water conservation priority with great progress achieved in 2023 and more coming in 2024. Last year, the Colorado Water Conservation Board released an updated Colorado Water Plan that calls for transformational landscape change, allocated 100% of funding from its new statewide turf replacement program, and convened an Urban Landscape Conservation Task Force. Local and regional initiatives also made significant progress. These include a project by Western Resource Advocates and WaterNow Alliance to assist communities in scaling up non-functional turf replacement, the production of a Native and Water Wise Grass Guide led by Colorado Springs Utilities,

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

2:15 **Concurrent Session A5 - continued**

Conference Room VI

and the passage of new water wise landscaping codes by local governments. 2024 initiatives will include the expansion of Resource Central's Garden in a Box and turf removal programs around the state, the pursuit of landscaping professional water efficiency training and certification, and legislation that would set limits on non-functional turf on some properties. We'll also hear from Aurora, which embarked on landscape transformations almost two decades ago. A combination of incentives and ordinances have shaped a change in their built environment for a more sustainable future. Join us to learn about Colorado's progress in 2023 and what to expect in the year ahead.

2:45 **Break**

3:00 **General Session 2**

Aurora Ballroom

Resilience Rhythms: Flood and Drought in Colorado

Kathryn Weismiller, Deputy Section Chief - Water Supply Planning, Conservation, & Climate, CWCB

Join us for an insightful session delving into the intricacies of Colorado's water supply planning. Gain a comprehensive overview of the state's approach, examining the challenges, priorities, and goals shaping its water management strategies. Explore the initiatives spearheaded by the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) addressing the critical issues of floods and droughts, and discover innovative strategies, proactive measures, and impactful interventions crafted to mitigate these challenges and ensure a sustainable water future for Colorado.

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

3:10 Drought & Resilience

Aurora Ballroom

**Gretel Follingstad, PhD, National Drought Planning Program Lead/
Intermountain West Drought Early Warning, NOAA/Natioal Integrated
Drought Information System (NIDIS)**

Embark on an enlightening session diving into the historical context and contemporary impact of drought on water resources and communities. Explore the far-reaching effects of droughts, examining their profound influence on vital resources and the resilience of communities. Learn about the role played by the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) in mitigating these challenges. through resources and strategies aimed at bolstering resilience against droughts.

3:40 Flood & Risk

Aurora Ballroom

Kevin Houck, Chief, Watershed and Flood Protection, CWCB

Gain insights into the specific flood risks that Colorado faces and delve into comprehensive watershed protection initiatives and strategies designed to mitigate these risks. Discover the power of collaboration and community engagement in fostering resilient responses to floods and explore the Colorado Water Conservation Board's (CWCB) initiatives, shedding light on their efforts to address flood risks and their proactive measures towards safeguarding communities.

4:10 Keeping the “Crisis” in Our Wildfire Crisis Strategy

Aurora Ballroom

Moderator: Travis Smith, CWC Board President and National Wild Turkey Federation

Speakers:

Brian Ferebee, US Forest Service, Chief Executive for Intergovernmental Relations, Chief Executive of the Wildfire Crisis Strategy

Tom Spezze, National Wild Turkey Federation, National Director of Field Conservation / State Policy

Wednesday, January 31 - Convention Day 1

4:10 **Keeping the “Crisis” in Our Wildfire Crisis Strategy - cont.**

Aurora Ballroom

Crisis- a time of intense difficulty, trouble or danger, a time when an important decision must be made.

Catastrophic wildfire on the American landscape over the last decade has created a crisis that threatens watersheds/water supplies, communities, and all of our natural resources. The US Forest Service launched the Wildfire Crisis Strategy in January 2022 with Congress committing nearly \$5 billion to take on this crisis. The National Wild Turkey Federation, a long-time partner in forest stewardship, recently signed the FIRST Master Stewardship Agreement with the US Forest Service to help implement this important strategy.

Included in this session will be a dive deep into the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, the urgency for a new approach, and the important role of all the partners – federal, state, and private – to implement a longterm strategy to reduce the risk of wildfire impacts.

Do we have the courage and commitment to support a long-term strategy or continue to be subject to the tyranny of the urgent?

4:45 **The Colorado River**

Aurora Ballroom

Michael Elizabeth Sakas, Colorado River Communications Specialist
Rebecca Mitchell, CO Commissioner Upper CO River Commission

5:00 **POND Reception - Casino Night**

Aurora Ballroom

Grab a beverage and light snack and join POND for their annual event. Because the 2024 convention is focused on risk, what better way to get into the spirit than testing your luck? POND is bringing back the popular casino night! Many of the Water Congress Board members will serve as dealers.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

7:30

General Session 3

Aurora Ballroom

2024 Legislative Priorities: Dialogue with Colorado Legislators
Moderator: John McClow, General Counsel, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District and CWC State Affairs Chair
Sen. Dylan Roberts, Rep. Marc Catlin, Sen. Jeff Bridges, Rep. Karen McCormick Additional Legislators TBA

Our annual session with Colorado legislators. What are the key issues for 2024? How does the Water Congress advocate effectively for water interests in the Colorado Legislature?

8:20

CWC State Affairs Committee: 2024 Advocacy Report

Aurora Ballroom

Moderators:
John McClow, General Counsel, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District and CWC State Affairs Chair
Chane Polo, Deputy Director, Colorado Water Congress
CWC Advocacy Team: Lee Miller, Southeastern Water Conservancy District; Aaron Citron, The Nature Conservancy District; Beth Van Vurst, Van Vurst Law, LLC; Dianna Orf, Orf & Orf, P.C.; Richard Orf, Orf & Orf; Sara Orange, Orange Political Strategies

The Colorado Water Congress is putting every effort into its advocacy. As a result, we have expanded our advocacy team to ensure we are as prepared and proactive as possible during the 2024 Legislative session, and beyond. Come meet 'the team' and learn about CWC's advocacy strategy.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

8:40 **Colorado River Drought Task Force**

Aurora Ballroom

**Speaker: Kathy Chandler-Henry, Eagle County Commissioner
Kelsea MacIlroy, The Langdon Group**

During the 2023 legislative session, the Colorado Legislature formed a task force to provide recommendations for programs to assist Colorado in addressing drought in the Colorado River Basin and the state's interstate commitments related to the Colorado River and its tributaries. A report of recommendations for and narratives on drought resilience in the Colorado River Basin was released on December 15, 2023. This report identifies areas of opportunity for legislative action and continued discussion that prioritizes the well-being of Coloradans and citizens of sovereign nations, but does not cause undue harm to any residents, citizens of sovereign nations, or the environment of Colorado.

9:00 **Integrating Equity into Water: Best Practices in Action**

Aurora Ballroom

**Moderators: Jared Romero, Walton Family Foundation
Panelists: Jessica Thrasher, Colorado State University; Breanna Gonzalez, Environmental Justice Supervisor for CDPHE and Metro Roundtable member; TBA (tribal perspective)**

Join our panel discussion dedicated to exploring avenues for enhancing equity within the water industry. Delve into the multifaceted approach encompassing education, workforce development, and community engagement, all aimed at fostering greater inclusivity. Embrace the unique perspectives offered by tribal communities in shaping equitable water practices. Learn from experts as they share innovative strategies and opportunities to broaden access, diversify participation, and promote equity across all facets of the water field.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

9:30

General Session 4

Aurora Ballroom

EPA Priorities and Water Updates

Speaker: KC Becker, EPA Region VIII Administrator (Mountains and Plains Office)

With the resources available through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is making historic investments in our nation's water infrastructure, climate change mitigation, and environmental justice programming. EPA Regional Administrator KC Becker will address these topics in addition to upcoming water related rulemaking and funding opportunities.

10:00

General Session 5

Aurora Ballroom

Mayors Panel Land Use & Water Planning

Moderator: Heather Stauffer, Legislative Advocacy Manager, Colorado Municipal League

Mayor Jason Gray, Castle Rock

Mayor Anna Stout, Grand Junction

Mayor Pro-Temp Liz Hensley, Alamosa

This session will feature diverse perspectives from three of Colorado's esteemed mayors as they share invaluable insights into the intersection of land use and water planning. Join us for a unique opportunity to understand how these visionary leaders navigate the intricate balance between land development and water resource management within their respective communities. Explore firsthand accounts of innovative strategies, collaborative approaches, and visionary policies driving sustainable land use practices while ensuring responsible water stewardship.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

11:00 Break for Concurrent Sessions - Block B

11:15 Concurrent Session B1

Conference Room VIII

CDSS, Everything Water Data, Everywhere, All at Once

**John Rodgers, Hydrobase Coordinator—CDSS Tools
Chris Brown, GIS Coordinator—GIS MapViewer**

During this session Division of Water Resources staff will explain the myriad of tools available through the online Colorado Decision Support System (CDSS) landing page (dwr.state.co.us/Tools/) maintained by DWR and the CWCB. This will be a high-level overview of tools that include access to tabular data such as water rights, diversion records, telemetered streamflow and diversion gages, active call data, groundwater data, climate data and dam safety data. Prepare to be surprised at all the data that is already available to the public regarding their water resources.

11:15 Concurrent Session B2

Conference Room I

Platte Valley Water Partnership—Collaboration for Mutual Benefit

**Joe Frank, General Manager, Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District
Ron Redd, P.E., District Manager, Parker Water & Sanitation District
Rebecca Tejada, P.E., Director of Engineering, Parker Water & Sanitation District**

The Platte Valley Water Partnership (PVWP) is an innovative, long-term water supply solution that will benefit both agriculture and municipal communities in the South Platte Basin. The project, a collaboration between the Lower South Platte Water Conservancy District (LSPWCD) and Parker Water and Sanitation District (PWSD), will store available water on the South Platte River and use new and existing infrastructure to provide much needed renewable water to farms and cities.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

11:15 Concurrent Session B3

Conference Room II

Discussion of Concerns with Summary of Consultation Process and Engineer's Participation in Water Court

**Sponsored by the Colorado Bar Association, Water Law Section
Speakers: April Hendricks, Burns Figa & Will P.C.; Alyson Scott, Alyson Scott Law LLC; Marti Whitmore, Montrose County**

Building on the momentum from the 2023 Summer Conference Workshop, the Water Law Section of the Colorado Bar Association will host a series of discussions concerning the role of the State Engineer and Division Engineers in water court, Rulemaking, and the Engineers' development of guidance documents. These sessions will cover a variety of perspectives and issues, including reflection on results from a poll distributed to the Water Law Section prior to the workshop.

11:15 Concurrent Session B4

Conference Room V

Colorado Water Trust Equity Assessment Toolkit: Putting EDI into Practice

**Sponsored by the CWC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Moderator: Dr. Tom Romero
Josh Boissevain, Staff Attorney, Colorado Water Trust
Dana Hatellid, Deputy Director, Colorado Water Trust
Dr. Patience Crowder, Colorado Water Trust**

Directly tied to the Colorado Water Trust's strategic plan to focus on projects that improve the health of both our rivers and our communities and to use social metrics to measure our success in community resiliency, the Equity Assessment will allow us to understand and engage more deeply and directly with diverse communities where our projects live now and into the future. The primary goal being how our projects can be win-win scenarios for all those humans who so deeply rely on and are connected to our rivers.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

11:15 **Concurrent Session B5**

Conference Room VI

Is Turf the Silver Bullet for Urban Water Conservation?

Moderator and Speaker: Julia Gallucci, Water Conservation Supervisor, Colorado Springs Utilities

Panelists: Jenna Battson, Outdoor Water Conservation Coordinator, CWCB; Kate Mack, Sr. Landscape Architect, City and County of Broomfield; Heather Stauffer, Legislative Advocacy Manager, Colorado Municipal League

Is turf grass prohibition an answer to our water woes? This is a conversation about saving water—the best methods, the best savings and in the best interests of Coloradans. Finding water solutions is hard! It's understandable that we want a simple solution. This panel represents a variety of expertise to share the myths and realities around turf prohibitions.

12:00 **Lunch**

1:00 **General session 6**

Aurora Ballroom

Out of the Silo and Into the Field How Unlikely Alliances Are Driving Resilience in Agriculture

Moderators: Kate Greenberg, Colorado Commissioner of Agriculture

Greg Felt, Colorado Water Conservation Board Chair

Speakers: Todd Olander, Root Shoot Malting; Nels Wroe, Dry Land Distillers; Brandon Francis, New Mexico State University; Sarah Jones, Co-Owner, Jones Farms Organics, Board Member Colorado Grain Chain

Sometimes in ag, we like to keep things the way they are. But the world is changing, and farmers and ranchers are changing with it. Join us for this panel to hear stories of unlikely alliances that are shaping a more profitable, diverse, and resilient agricultural [and hence water] future.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

2:00 **Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority Board Meeting**

Conference Room VI

2:00 **Break for Concurrent Sessions - Block C**

2:00 **Concurrent Session C1**

Aurora Ballroom - Will be broadcast to virtual participants

Administrative Calls and REST Services

**Doug Hollister, Data & Software Implementation Specialist—
Administrative Call Tools**

Casey Veneman, Chief of Water Information—REST Services

This is a follow up session to the morning where DWR presented an overview of all CDSS tools and will focus on a couple of specific tools. The first tool is the Administrative Calls and Call Analysis, which allows users to access important data regarding the priority that each stream reach is being administered to and allows users to see when their water rights are/were in and out of priority. The second tool is REST Web Services that provides a way for users to programmatically download Hydrobase data for use in their own spreadsheets and models.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

2:00 **Concurrent Session C2**

Conference Room I

An Update on the Ongoing Exploratory Analysis of Potential Water Savings, Costs, and Benefits of Turf Replacement in Colorado

Moderators: Russ Sands and Jenna Battson, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Speaker: Doug Jeavons, BBC Research and Consulting

Removing and replacing nonfunctional turf continues to be a topic of much interest across the West and is one of the valuable water conservation tools available in Colorado. As interest gains and more voluntary turf replacement occur, increased information is available to help understand the nuanced components, including potential water savings, the range of costs, and other ecological benefits of turf replacement in Colorado. To take advantage of the growing knowledge base from these efforts, BBC Research & Consulting, in collaboration with CWCB, refined the January 2023 Exploratory Analysis of Potential Water Savings, Costs, and Benefits of Turf Replacement in Colorado. Insights will be shared on incorporating new data and information through the state's Turf Replacement Program and a series of interviews to help further inform Colorado's efforts to remove nonfunctional turf.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

2:00 **Concurrent Session C3**

Conference Room II

Potential Solutions

Sponsored by the Colorado Bar Association, Water Law Section
Speakers: April Hendricks, Burns Figa & Will P.C.; Alyson Scott, Alyson Scott Law LLC; Marti Whitmore, Montrose County

Building on the momentum from the 2023 Summer Conference Workshop, the Water Law Section of the Colorado Bar Association will host a series of discussions concerning the role of the State Engineer and Division Engineers in water court, Rulemaking, and the Engineers' development of guidance documents. These sessions will cover a variety of perspectives and issues, including reflection on results from a poll distributed to the Water Law Section prior to the workshop.

2:00 **Concurrent Session C4**

Conference Room V

CSU Water Fellows Panel: Listening to our next generation of water professionals

Sponsored by the CWC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee
Speakers: Past and Present Water Fellows
Leah Dory, MSU Denver
Daniel Dominguez, CSU
Robert Lamm, CSU

This panel of future water professionals will reflect on what excites them about a career in Colorado Water issues, challenges they are facing, and how we as a water community can support them.

2:45 **Break**

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

3:00 **General Session 7**

Aurora Ballroom

Generational Views on Risk and Water Resources

Moderator: Jennifer Gimbel, Colorado State University

Speakers:

Nona Shipman, Metropolitan State University of Denver

John Tracy, Colorado State University

Dixie Poteet, Colorado State University

Tom I. Romero II, University of Denver

Ruth Elizabeth Morris, University of Denver

Kaitlin Mattos, Fort Lewis College

Brooke Laughter, Fort Lewis College

Gregor MacGregor, University of Colorado

Nathan Boyer-Rechlin, University of Colorado

What are prospective water professionals learning about the challenges and opportunities in the water sector? What do students think about the future sustainability of water and how to address future risks? Join us for a dialogue between students and practicing water professionals. The panel will also provide a summary of the issues and actions explored during the higher education workshop.

4:00 **General Session 8**

Aurora Ballroom

Remarks from Governor Jared Polis

A Conversation with Dan Gibbs and Phil Weiser

Regarding Colorado's Most Critical Natural Resources Priorities

Panelists:

Dan Gibbs, DNR Executive Director

Phil Weiser, Colorado Attorney General

Dan Gibbs and AG Weiser will chat about Colorado's most critical natural resources issues.

Thursday, February 1 - Convention Day 2

5:00 **Presentation & Tasting Reception**

Aurora Ballroom

Coors Banquet, 150 Years of Colorado Legacy in the Water Community

Ben Moline, Director, Water Resources & Environmental Policy, Molson Coors

Neal Satangelo, Sr. Manager of Water Resources, Molson Coors

Join Molson Coors Beverage Company's Ben Moline and Neal Santangelo for a pub-style discussion on the history of Coors in Colorado. Coors Banquet celebrated 150 years in 2023 and continues to grow across the country, while only being brewed in Golden! Ben and Neal will talk about the history of the brewery, water innovations that allow for the brewery to operate, and interactions along Clear Creek.

This will be a casual discussion and we encourage you to grab a Banquet before the session and engage with Ben and Neal as they share the legacy of Coors and the Rocky Mountain water that makes it all possible.

6:00 **Adjourn for the day**

Friday, February 2 - Convention Day 3

8:30 **General Session 9**

Aurora Ballroom

Colorado Water Congress Member Survey The Top 3 Things We Must Do Now

Moderator: Linn Brooks, CWC Immediate Past President

Speakers:

David Kennedy, Corona Insights

Travis Smith, National Wild Turkey Federation and CWC Board President

Christine Arbogast, Kogovsek and Associates, Inc. and CWC Board Vice President

Chane Polo, Deputy Director, Colorado Water Congress

In 2023, the Colorado Water Congress retained Corona Insights to conduct a survey of its members. This survey will shape the future direction of the organization, and the resources needed to achieve this vision.

Members of the Colorado Water Congress Executive Committee will share the survey results and how we plan to turn them into reality.

8:55 **Honorary Life Membership Award: Recognition of Kevin Rein**

9:00 **General Session 10**

Aurora Ballroom

CWC Federal Affairs Committee: 2024 Advocacy Report

Moderator: Chane Polo, Deputy Director, Colorado Water Congress

Speakers: Andy Colosimo, Colorado Springs Utilities; Christine Arbogast, Kogovsek & Associates; Zane Kessler, Colorado River Water Conservancy District ; Kathy Kitzmann, Aurora Water; Sandy Fabritz, Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold

Join our Federal Affairs Committee leadership to get an update and the latest information on Colorado's 2024 Federal Priorities. We will also learn more about the National Water Resources Association, their work and connection to the Colorado Water Congress.

Friday, February 2 - Convention Day 3

9:30 2024 Western Water Priorities - State Executives Panel

Aurora Ballroom

Moderator: Doug Kemper, Executive Director, Colorado Water Congress and Chair of NWRA State Executives Council

Speakers:

Chris Udall, Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona

Mark Rude, Kansas Water Congress

Vanessa Silke, Baird Holm (Nebraska)

Doug will lead a discussion with some of his fellow State association executives on the top priority issues in neighboring States. What do we have in common? On what do we differ?

10:00 Meet the First-Ever CDA Agriculture Water Policy Advisor: Robert Sakata

10:15 General Session 11

Aurora Ballroom

Cooperation Over Conflict - A Lower Basin Perspective

Moderator: Sandy Fabritz, Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold, Colorado Water Congress Board

Panelists:

Tanya Trujillo, Water Policy Advisor to the New Mexico Governor, Deputy New Mexico State Engineer

Pete Silva, Silva Silva International

Ted Kowalski, Walton Family Foundation

Jeff Kightlinger, Acequia Consulting (retired General Manager and CEO of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California)

Meghan Scott, Noble Law Office (Yuma, Arizona)

The panel will discuss the development of cooperative solutions to some the issues that have arisen since the establishment of the 2007 Guidelines, including the Drought Contingency Plan, agreements with Mexico and NGO interests, as well as addressing some of the common myths around Lower Basin activities.

Friday, February 2 - Convention Day 3

11:15 General Session 12

Aurora Ballroom

2024 Political Landscape

Election Coverage: Media Picks Main Contests

Moderator/Speaker: Floyd Ciruli, Ciruli and Associates

Speakers:

John Frank, Axios

Marianne Goodland, Colorado Politics

Ernest Luning, Colorado Politics

What was the 2023 political surprise of the year? How will the Congressional delegation change in 2024? After the loss of Prop. HH, what's next for legislation/initiatives on taxes? Can Democrats unify their moderates and the far left to pass legislation on affordable housing, crime, etc.? Does Governor Polis have a better year?

What is the legislature's role in water this year? What's the urban-rural divide: wolves, agriculture? If Joe Biden and Donald Trump are the presidential nominees in 2024, is a third party the winner?

12:00 Closing Remarks

Aurora Ballroom

Travis Smith, CWC President, National Wild Turkey Foundation

F.A.Q

01

Parking

Parking is included for all attendees: The parking garage is located on 14th Place, directly to the west of the hotel. Attendees will pull a ticket as you enter the garage; you will need to hang on to it, and you will receive a parking voucher at the registration desk; when you exit the garage, you will need to insert the parking ticket and scan the QR code on the voucher to exit.



02

Special Meal Needs

If you requested a special meal, you will receive a special meal card from the registration staff when you pick up your name badge. If you don't receive one or misplace it, please visit the registration desk for a replacement. The card will be handed to waitstaff at each meal to identify your special meal request.



03

Convention Space Layout

You can find all meeting space rooms and our exhibitors through our convention map link below.

[Find Map Here](#)



04

CLE Credit Request

We have CLE credit available for the Annual Convention. Please complete the form through the link below and once attendance has been verified, a CLE form will be emailed to you.

[CLE Form Request](#)

F.A.Q

05

Wi-Fi Access

HYATT_CONFERENCE
HYATT24



Thank you to our MediaTech Sponsors!



06

POND Casino Night

Grab a beverage and light snack and join POND for their annual event. Because the 2024 convention is focused on risk, what better way to get into the spirit than testing your luck? POND is bringing back the popular casino night! Many of the Water Congress Board members will serve as dealers.



07

Coors Tasting

Join Molson Coors Beverage Company's Ben Moline and Neal Santangelo for a pub-style discussion on the history of Coors in Colorado. Coors Banquet celebrated 150 years in 2023 and continues to grow across the country, while only being brewed in Golden! Ben and Neal will talk about the history of the brewery, water innovations that allow for the brewery to operate, and interactions along Clear Creek.



08

Keynote Speaker - Book Signing Opportunity

Erica Gies, Author
Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge

Meet the author after the session in the Café Lounge.

CAREER ACCELERATOR AWARD WINNERS

2024 Colorado Water Congress *Career Accelerator Award* Winners



Victor Galvan



Eleanor Hasenbeck



Jon Harley



Kathleen Voight



Congratulations!



Save the Date

Summer Conference - August 20-22, 2024

We are looking forward to you joining us at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs for our Summer Conference.

Contact Us

(303) 837-0812
PO Box 181398
Denver, CO 80218
www.cowatercongress.org

