



**2025 COLORADO WATER CONGRESS ANNUAL CONVENTION
A GATHERING OF WATER MINDS**

**Hyatt Regency Aurora Denver Conference Center
January 29 – 31, 2025**

WORKSHOPS

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29
8:30 to 11:45 a.m.**

Around Colorado with the State Engineer & Division Engineers

Aurora Ballroom

8:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Moderator: Jason Ullmann, State Engineer

Speakers:

Tracy Kosloff - Deputy Director

Sarah Brucker - Deputy State Engineer

John Hunyadi - Assistant State Engineer for Safety and Systems

Division 1 Engineer - Corey DeAngelis

Division 2 Engineer - Rachel Zancanella

Division 3 Engineer - Craig Cotten

Division 4 Engineer - Bob Hurford

Division 5 Engineer - James Heath

Division 6 Engineer - Erin Light

Division 7 Engineer - Rob Genualdi

Please join the State and Division Engineers as they provide updates and discuss some issues that DWR is dealing with from around Colorado. Topics will include public safety and system updates, water supply and litigation updates, non-Colorado River compact issues, the past-present-future of measurement rules, and projects with new administration impacts.

USGS and Bureau of Reclamation: Opportunities and Partnerships Boosted by Infrastructure Funding

Conference Room I

9:00 – 11:30

Moderators:

Brent Esplin, Bureau of Reclamation

Jeffery Rieker, Bureau of Reclamation

Meghan Bell, United States Geological Survey

Learn more about the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States Geological Survey and their work. Speakers will share their perspectives on how they would/should/could spend \$8.3 billion for their respective projects. What was the process of deciding how the money should be spent? What benefits do they see with the available funds?



CWCB Instream Flow Rulemaking Stakeholder Meeting

Conference Room V

9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Speakers: Kaylea White, Colorado Water Conservation Board Stream and Lake Protection Section & Jennifer Mele, First Assistant Attorney General

CWCB will be asking for input on its draft amendment to Instream Flow Rule 6k, in 2 CCR 408-2. This rulemaking is required to implement Section 2 of Senate Bill 24–197 regarding temporary loans of stored water for instream flow use, which is codified at 37–83–105(1)(c), C.R.S. The new law allows for a holder of water rights to loan stored water to CWCB for use in a stream reach where CWCB does not already hold a decreed instream flow water right.

Building a Vibrant Future: The Essential Nexus of Water Conservation and Resource Planning

Conference Room II

9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Moderators: Jenna Battson, Colorado Water Conservation Board & Julia Gallucci, Colorado Springs Utilities

Speakers:

Jen Dial, City of Fort Collins

Pat Wells, Northern Water

Meryl Corbin, Growing Water Smart

Scott Winter, Colorado Springs Utilities

Kevin Reidy, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Melissa W. McCoy, NEPA Branch, U.S. EPA Region 8

This workshop delves into the critical intersection of water conservation and water resources planning. As communities face increasing water scarcity, population growth, and limited opportunities for new water supplies, the integration of these two practices is paramount. Key themes include understanding the evolution of these practices and implementing integrated approaches to best support water management and stewardship. The workshop will provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between these practices, showcase successful integration examples and case studies, and encourage collaboration among participants. It targets conservation practitioners, water resource managers, environmental advocates, researchers, and academics. The workshop format includes expert presentations, interactive discussions, case studies, and networking opportunities.



The Colorado Airborne Snow Measurement Program (CASM) - Program development, implementation, and capacity building

Conference Room VII

9:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Moderator: Jeff Deems, Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc.

Speakers:

Erik Skeie, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Dave Gochis, Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc.

Page Weil, Leonard Rice Engineers

Taylor Winchell, Denver Water

Nathan Coombs, Conejos Water Conservancy District

Ken Curtis, Dolores River Water Conservancy District

Emily Carbone, Northern Water

Sonja Chavez, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District

Raquel Flinker, Colorado River District

Scott Griebing, St. Vrain and Left Hand Water Conservancy

Kate Burchenal, Airborne Snow Observatories, Inc.

Since the inception of the Airborne Snow Observatory program at NASA in 2013, Colorado has been an early adopter and participant in the application of this ground-breaking technology. In recent years, the stakeholder-led Colorado Airborne Snow Measurement Program (CASM) workgroup has taken the initiative to support the program's implementation and growth, and to sustain operations into the future. Along the way, numerous success stories, novel applications, and user perspectives provide perspective and lessons-learned. This Workshop will provide a forum for discussing outcomes, growth objectives, and implementation lessons from program leaders and data users across the State.



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All sessions in Aurora Ballroom unless otherwise shown

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29

12:00 **Opening General Session**

Lunch

Aurora Ballroom and Conference Rooms III and IV

12:45 **CWC Town Hall – Live Polling**

Welcome

Christine Arbogast, CWC Board President and Kogovsek & Associates

City of Aurora Welcome

Marshall Brown, City of Aurora - Aurora Water

1:15 **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: A Historical Boost for Western Water**

Mat Marcieri, Bureau of Reclamation

1:45 **Reflecting on Progress: 20 Years since the Passage of the Water for the 21st Century Act & 10 Years of the Colorado Water Plan**

Moderator: Russ George

Speakers: Rebecca Mitchell, Colorado River Commissioner

Eric Hecox, Shea Properties

Join us for a special session celebrating two significant milestones in water management: the 20th anniversary of the Water for the 21st Century Act and the 10th anniversary of the Colorado Water Plan. This session will reflect on the achievements, challenges, and successes of these pivotal initiatives. Expert panelists will discuss the evolution of water policy in Colorado, how these frameworks have shaped sustainable water usage across Colorado.

2:15 **2025 Aspinall Award Presentation**

Conversation with Senator Hank Brown

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 2025 Aspinall Award winner.

3:00 **Break**

3:00 **Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority Board Meeting**
Conference Room VI

3:15 **General Session 2**

3:15 **What's Next for the Basin Roundtables?**

Moderator: Lauren Ris, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Speakers:

Sean Chambers, City of Greeley and South Platte Basin Roundtable Chair

Amber Pacheco, Rio Grande Water Conservation District and Rio Grande Basin Roundtable Chair

Lisa Darling, South Metro Water Supply Authority and Metro Basin Roundtable Chair

Wendell Koontz, Delta County and Gunnison Basin Roundtable Chair

Mark Shea, Colorado Springs Utilities and Arkansas Basin Roundtable Chair

Ken Brenner, Yampa/White/Green Basin Roundtable

Open discussion on where the basin roundtables are now and what the expectations are for the future. Chairs from across the state will compare the pros and cons of their respective basin roundtables, and what, if any, changes they see going forward.

4:15 **Regional Forester - Challenges for Sustainable Watershed Health**
Troy Heithecker, Regional Forrester, Rocky Mountain Region 2

5:00 **POND Reception**
Casino Night

Grab a beverage and light snack and join POND for their annual event. POND is bringing back the popular casino night! Many of the Water Congress Board members will serve as dealers.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30

6:30 **Registration, Networking & Breakfast**

Breakfast will be available from 6:30-8:30 a.m. near registration. Seating is available in Conference Rm III, Conference Rm IV, and the Café Lounge.

7:25 **General Session 3**

Morning Welcome

Chané Polo, Executive Director, Colorado Water Congress

Introduction of Career Accelerator Award Winners and CSU Water Fellows

Emily Hunt, CWC EDI Committee Chair and City of Thornton

2025 Legislative Priorities: Dialogue with Colorado Legislators

Moderators: John McClow, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District and CWC State Affairs Chair & Ben Moline, Molson Coors Beverage Company and CWC State Affairs Vice Chair

Legislators:

Senator Dylan Roberts, Chair of Senate Ag Committee

Senator Byron Pelton

Rep. Karen McCormick (tentative)

Rep. Dusty Johnson

Rep. Tisha Mauro, Vice Chair of House Ag

We will hear from Colorado's House and Senate water leadership on what the priorities are for 2025 and what topics the water community can expect this legislative session. Learn how the Colorado Water Congress advocates for water interests in the Colorado Legislature.

8:15 Exploring the Water / Energy Nexus

Moderator: Jackie Brown, Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association

Speakers:

Susan Hunter, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association

Jerry Gibbens, Northern Water

Dr. James Rosenblum, Colorado School of Mines

The development of energy to support economic development has been inextricably linked to water for millennia: from the humble water wheel to steam power, to large reservoir hydro-power generation. Join us for a series of topics showcasing current innovations and planning processes in the water/energy nexus. Experts will discuss the various ways water is considered as industrial water users in the west plan for a direr and more uncertain future. Collaboration between these two economically foundational industries has the potential to conserve both water and energy while improving the economics for water utilities and food production and supporting the transition to cleaner energy.

9:15 Break

9:30 General Session 4

The 119th Congress and Trump 2.0

Moderator: Dick Wadhams, Political Consultant

Speakers: Former Representatives Ed Perlmutter and Ken Buck

Two veteran Colorado congressman share their thoughts with a well-known and respected political mind on 2025 governance by Congress and the Administration.

10:15 The Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Lauren Connell, Chief, Partners for Fish and Wildlife

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife program offers technical and financial assistance to non-federal land managers like private landowners and Tribes to voluntarily improve wildlife habitat. These improvements often occur on working agricultural lands, where changes to grazing or irrigation management serves to benefit both natural resources and business economics. Lauren Connell, Program Chief of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in the Mountain-Prairie states will present project accomplishments and partnerships throughout Colorado. Her talk will highlight the role non-federal land managers can play in voluntarily conserving our state’s natural resources while building resiliency on working lands.

10:45 Paul Formisano, Adams State University

11:00 Break for Concurrent Sessions – Block A

11:15 Concurrent Session A1

Main Ballroom

Navigating Water Supply Challenges with Scenario Planning

Speakers:

Sarah Dominick, Hazen and Sawyer

Greg Gates, Hazen and Sawyer

We will explore the critical role of scenario planning in addressing the complexities of water resource management. This talk will highlight how envisioning diverse future scenarios helps stakeholders anticipate challenges such as climate change, urban growth, and regulatory changes. By engaging in scenario planning, communities can develop flexible strategies that ensure sustainable water supplies. Attendees will gain insights into real-world applications and success stories, illustrating how proactive planning can safeguard water resources for future generations. Join us to discover how to turn uncertainty into opportunity for a resilient water future.

Concurrent Session A2

Conference Room II

Maximizing the Ecosystem Benefits of Landscape Transformation

Jenna Battson, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Two years after the state’s Turf Replacement Program launch, CWCB will provide updates on lessons learned and pathways to advance landscape transformation and support vibrant communities. The presentation will emphasize the need for realistic narratives to confront common misconceptions, thereby leveling set expectations surrounding the impact and water savings often associated with turf replacement efforts. Insights into the potential effects of widespread turf replacement, foundational and practical water conservation tools, and the opportunity cost of focusing on turf replacement will be discussed. CWCB will also stress the risks of accelerating landscape change without incorporating holistic, data-backed, and water-smart development plans in a rapidly warming Colorado that will continue to experience drought, floods, and fires.

Concurrent Session A3

Conference Room VIII

How to Talk with an Irrigator

Speakers:

Paul Kehmeier, Keh-Land Farm, Salinity Program Coordinator, Colorado Department of Agriculture

Robert Sakata, Sakata Farms, Agricultural Water Policy Advisor, Colorado Department of Agriculture

Elena Miller-ter Kuile, Cactus Hill Farm, Colorado Agricultural Commission

Riley May, May Ranch, Regional Assistant Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture

With the pressures of climate change, increased M&I demand, and environmental needs, communication with agricultural water rights holders about quantity and quality is more crucial than ever, but like most professions there can exist barriers to dialog that may be hard to overcome. This panel will explore regional differences in building trust in farming and ranching communities across the state and provide examples of the good, the bad and the ugly.

Concurrent Session A4

Conference Room VII

Water Education and Workforce Development in Colorado

Karen Schlatter, Colorado Water Center

A wave of retirements is flooding the water sector. However, many young people are not aware of or knowledgeable about water-related jobs and careers – nor the education and training pathways needed to attain them. Yet, innovation in water management, policy and infrastructure are critical to adapt to changes in climate, population growth, water quality issues, and regional concerns going forward. This presentation will outline challenges and opportunities, best practices and model career pathway programs, and current gaps in education/training.

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Congressman Gabe Evans, 8th Congressional District

1:00 General Session 5

Colorado River State of Mind: What Now?

Speakers:

Rebecca Mitchell, Colorado River Commissioner

Anne Castle, Upper Colorado River Commission

Jason Ullmann, Colorado State Engineers

Speakers will provide state and federal perspectives on the Colorado River, share state updates, and discuss river accounting.

1:45 Upper Colorado Conserved Consumptive Use Project

Moderator: Hannah Holm, American Rivers

Speakers:

Perry Cabot, Ph.D., Colorado State University

John Ritten, Ph.D., Colorado State University

Kelsea MacIlroy, Ph.D., The Langdon Group

Aaron Derwingson, The Nature Conservancy

This session will review the final results from the Upper Colorado Conserved Consumptive Use project, in which high elevation hay meadows in Grand County underwent partial and full season fallowing in 2020, with the impacts monitored through 2023. This session will focus on the water use, forage recovery, economic, social and streamflow impacts of the project.

2:30 Break

3:00 General Session 6

Accelerating Projects and Capacity through Federal Funding

Moderator: Amy Moyer, Colorado River District

Speakers:

Michael Regan, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Alex Funk, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Kayli Foulk, Grand County

Grace Brofman, Farmers Conservation Alliance

This panel will provide examples of and discussion around the tremendous impact of state and local funding programs designed to increase capacity for organizations applying for federal funding, and how those programs could potentially serve as the inspiration for future federal funding programs.

3:45 Equity in Denver Water's Lead Reduction Program: From funding to community partnerships while addressing new regulations

Moderator: Meg Trubee, Public Affairs Manager, Denver Water

Speakers:

Angela Bricmont, Chief of Finance, Denver Water

Stacey Chesney, Public Affairs Director, Denver Water

Alexis Woodrow, Lead Reduction Program Manager, Denver Water

Join Denver Water to hear about the progress on its Lead Reduction Program and engage in a discussion about navigating program management, financing, and community engagement in an ever-changing regulatory environment, all while honoring equity with every step. Denver Water is at the halfway point of its Lead Reduction Program with nearly 30,000 lead service lines replaced. This audience-centered panel discussion will focus on lessons learned, as well as tips and tools learned through this ongoing organizational initiative.

4:15 General Session 7

Is Colorado on the Same Wildfire Trajectory as California?

Moderators: Esther Vincent, Northern Water & Tricia Waddell, The Denver Museum of Nature and Science's Institute for Science and Policy

Speakers:

Carole Walker, Rocky Mountain Insurance Association

Conor Hall, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry (tentative)

Hollie Velasquez, Xcel Energy

5:00 Adjourn for the day.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 31

6:45 Breakfast

Breakfast will be available from 6:45-8:30 a.m. near registration. Seating is available in Conference Rm III, Conference Rm IV, and the Café Lounge.

7:30 General Session 8

7:30 Acknowledging Existing Beneficial Farming Practices and Shaping the Future of Regenerative Agriculture

Moderator: Adam Kremers, Brown and Caldwell

Speakers:

Kristine Root, Regenified

Zach Thode, farmer in Livermore, CO

John Miller, Colorado Department of Agriculture

This session will explore the vital intersection of agricultural practices and policy development. Featuring a representative from the regenerative agriculture certification process, a policy expert working on recent legislative efforts, and a farmer actively implementing these practices, the discussion will highlight how local farming methods can inform and inspire effective policy changes that reflect on-the-ground realities.

8:30 The Role of the Federal Government in Groundwater: PCAST and TX v. NM, a Contrast and Comparison of Approaches

Samantha Barncastle Salopek, Barncastle Law Firm

Learn about the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) and the work that they are doing – specifically the focus on whether there should be a federal role in groundwater management and what that role might look like. Samantha will also discuss her experience in the Texas v. New Mexico Supreme Court case with the states fighting the U.S. over groundwater.

9:00 Shoshone Water Rights – Motivation and Benefits

Moderator: Dave Payne, Ute Water Conservancy District

Speakers:

Andy Mueller, Colorado River District

Siri Roman, Eagle Rivers Water & Sanitation District

Matt Rice, American Rivers

Bobbie Daniel, Mesa County

For well over a decade, a diverse group of stakeholders has been working toward the permanent protection of the historic Shoshone Water Rights – some of the largest and most senior non-consumptive water rights on the Colorado River. Water users across the state depend on the historical flows supported by these water rights for agriculture, recreation, environmental benefits, and clean drinking water. This panel will bring together diverse voices to share how their lives and livelihoods are directly impacted by the Shoshone Water Rights and to discuss what the next steps will look like as they work to secure this generational investment.

9:45 Colorado River Connectivity Channel

Moderator: Jeff Drager, Northern Water

Speakers:

Kevin Lock, Northern Water

Ed Moyer, Grand County

The Colorado River Connectivity Channel is an important mitigation measure for construction of Chimney Hollow Reservoir. The Connectivity Channel is a collaborative project that reconnects the Colorado River, restoring a vital habitat link between river segments upstream and downstream of Windy Gap Reservoir, and improving stream health and ecosystem function.

10:15 Break

10:45 General Session 9

Cybersecurity in the Water Sector: How Big is the Threat?

Moderator: Lauren Hix, Hix Risk Consultants, LLC.

Speakers:

Traci Dowd, Hi-Tech Crimes Unit – Colorado Bureau of Investigation

Brandon Glant, Coalition Insurance Solutions, Inc.

Sarah Casale, Bureau of Reclamation

In a letter to all 50 governors, EPA Administrator Michael Regan and White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said “Drinking water and wastewater systems are an attractive target for cyberattacks because they are a lifeline critical infrastructure sector but often lack the resources and technical capacity to adopt rigorous cybersecurity practices.

Are you developing a risk assessment plan that addresses cybersecurity and set up backup systems?
Learn more about how to take action to decrease your risk and increase your safety.



11:15 Congressman Jeff Hurd, 3rd Congressional District

11:30 **General Session 10**

Moderator: Andy Colosimo, Colorado Springs Utilities, CWC Federal Affairs Committee Chair
Delegation Staff (*All 10 Delegation offices invited*)

12:30 **Closing Remarks**

Christine Arbogast, CWC Board President and Kogovsek & Associates
Chané Polo, Executive Director, Colorado Water Congress