



**For Immediate Release:** January 29, 2025

## **Russel George awarded prestigious 2025 Aspinall Award**

*Presented by the Colorado Water Congress*

**Colorado Springs – Jan. 29, 2025-** The Colorado Water Congress awarded Russel George, a life-long advocate of Colorado water issues, the 2025 Wayne N. Aspinall “Water Leader of the Year” Award.

The Aspinall Award is given annually in recognition of a career of service and contribution to Colorado’s water community. It is awarded to a person who has dedicated a significant part of his or her career to the advancement of the state and its programs to protect, develop and preserve the state’s water resources.

It is tradition for the Aspinall Award to be presented at CWC’s annual event. This year, the previous Aspinall Award winners decided to honor Mr. Kemper with this award at his last CWC conference preceding his upcoming retirement this fall.

### About Russel George

Early in his career, Russ served as a municipal judge in Rifle, as general counsel for the Rio Blanco and West Divide Water Conservancy Districts and as a board director for the Silt Water Conservancy District. From 1976 until 2000, Russ practiced law in the firm of Stuver and George, PC., in Rifle which handled water, real estate, oil and gas, business and related legal matters. Russ was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives for four terms from 1992 through 2000. In his fourth term Russ served as director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

In 2004, Governor Bill Owens appointed Russ to serve as Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. In 2005 and 2006, Russ’ foresight resulted in the passage of House Bill 1177, creating the Interbasin Compact process and the basin roundtables. This process serves as the foundation for Colorado’s Water Plan. During this time at DNR, Russ also led critical negotiations with the other basin states on the Colorado River, oversaw the implementation of Recovery Plans on the Colorado and South Platte Rivers, helped settle interstate litigation on the Arkansas River, led the expansion of CWCB’s Instream Flow program, and directed state resources to important water projects. He then served on the Colorado Water Conservation Board of Directors 2016-2019, appointed by Governor Hickenlooper to represent the Colorado River Basin. In 2019, Russ was appointed by Governor Polis as the Interbasin Compact Committee Chair where he served until February 2021.

### About the Wayne N. Aspinall Award

The Colorado Water Congress presents the prestigious Wayne N. Aspinall Award annually to a Coloradan who has long demonstrated courage, dedication, knowledge and leadership in the development, protection and preservation of Colorado water - those attributes possessed by Mr. Aspinall. The late Wayne Aspinall, a lawyer and former member of the U.S. House of Representatives, remains one of the most influential water leaders in Colorado history.

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