Crisis on the Colorado River:
From Short-Term Solutions to Long-Term Sustainability

43rd Annual Colorado Law Conference on Natural Resources
Thursday, June 8 and Friday, June 9, 2023
Wolf Law Building, Wittemyer Courtroom
University of Colorado School of Law

Presented by the Getches-Wilkinson Center and the Water & Tribes Initiative
Conference Sponsors

American Rivers
Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy
Central Arizona Project
Center for Climate Adaptation Science and Solutions, University of Arizona
Colorado River Authority of Utah
Colorado River District
Colorado Water Conservation Board
Conscience Bay Company
Denver Water
Environmental Defense Fund
Imperial Irrigation District
Interstate Stream Commission, NM
Living Rivers
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

National Audubon Society
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Somach Simmons & Dunn
Sonoran Institute
Southern Nevada Water Authority
Southern Ute Indian Tribe
The Nature Conservancy
Thornburg Foundation
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Walton Family Foundation
Western Resource Advocates
43rd Annual Colorado Law Conference on Natural Resources

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

This year marks the 43rd Annual Conference on Natural Resources at Colorado Law. Over its rich history, the conference has addressed many different natural resource issues. In more recent years, the Center's summer conference has largely focused on water law and policy. The Center is proud to convene thought leaders, practitioners, and diverse stakeholders to address the most pressing issues of the day—and we want to thank our conference co-sponsors whose generous support allows us to ensure our events are accessible to all.

Conference Introduction

The Colorado River is in crisis. Rapid declines in reservoir storage now threaten many longstanding agreements and operational norms, triggering curtailments in water deliveries and prompting emergency interstate and federal/interstate negotiations.

The challenge is two-fold: adopting rules to equitably “share the pain” in the short-term, while transitioning to a management framework to support long-term sustainability in what will likely be an increasingly arid future. It is both a water and a “people” problem, requiring innovations for stretching limited supplies through processes emphasizing equity and inclusion across all values, stakeholders, and sovereigns, including the United States, Mexico, Tribes, and the seven basin states.
Participate in the Dialogue

Slido

We will be utilizing Slido to manage questions during our facilitated discussions. This platform will be used for both remote and in person attendees. To submit questions during the conference, follow these steps:

1. Go to Slido.com
2. Type in Event Code: 3844111
   OR scan this QR Code
3. Go To Q&A
4. Ask questions/share comments
5. Up vote the questions/comments you like

UCB Guest Wireless

1. Select UCB Guest as your wireless network.
2. Open a web browser and go to www.colorado.edu. You will be automatically redirected to a registration page.
3. Review the Guest Wireless Policy.
4. Click on the Agree button.
5. You are now free to use UCB Guest Wireless for basic Internet activity for 24 hours.
Day One: Thursday, June 8th

Welcome and Introduction: 8:30-8:45
Opening Remarks from the Getches-Wilkinson Center and the Water & Tribes Initiative

Session One: 8:45-10:15
Understanding the Challenges (and Opportunities)
The current hydrology, as manifest by rapidly declining reservoirs, is a wake-up call that the status quo isn’t working, and new ideas and rules are desperately needed both in the short-term and long-term.

8:45 Current and Projected Hydrology: A Dangerous Trajectory.
Science, engineering and management are woven together to show where we are, how we got here, and where we are likely to go without a significant course correction.

Brad Udall, Colorado State University

9:15 Imagine, If You Will.
A thought-provoking critique of our historic and current relationship with the river, and a vision for something more sustainable, equitable and meaningful.

Nora McDowell, Fort Mojave Indian Tribe

9:45 Facilitated Dialogue

10:15-10:45 Morning Networking Break
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Two: 10:45-12:00

Current Negotiations and the NEPA Process
The entire nation (and beyond) is transfixed on the “Colorado River crisis,” and the struggle of the sovereigns and stakeholders to avert disaster. What is the status of those efforts?

The Federal Role
10:45 The View From Interior.
What is the design, timing and status of the ongoing EIS process, the federal objectives of such a process, the federal resources available to incentivize (or discourage) potential courses of action, and the relationship between short-term and long-term solutions for the Colorado River?

Commissioner Camille Touton, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

11:10 Facilitated Dialogue

11:25 A Role for Congress?
What role can the Senate’s Colorado River Caucus potentially play in addressing the current and emerging challenges?

John Hickenlooper, United States Senator for Colorado

11:50 Facilitated Dialogue

12:00-1:00 Lunch
(Lunch provided in Schaden Commons, 2nd floor-west end)
Session Two Continued: 1:00-3:00

The Evolving Role of Tribes

1:00 Over the past few years, several opportunities have emerged that support more meaningfully engagement of Tribes in collaborative planning and problem-solving. This session will highlight what is working and what structural changes are still needed to integrate Tribal sovereigns more fully into decision-making processes currently dominated by the United States and the seven basin states. After opening remarks by the moderator, participating Tribes will share their expectations for future management of the river and the system of decision-making and governance.

Moderator: Daryl Vigil, Water & Tribes Initiative, Jicarilla Apache

Chairman Robert Miguel, Ak-Chin Indian Community
Chairman Glenn Lodge, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
Vice Chairman Dwight Lomayesva, Colorado River Indian Tribes
Governor Stephen R. Lewis, Gila River Indian Community
Council Member Dale Sinquah, Hopi Tribe
Council Member Avery Tafoya, Jicarilla Apache Nation
Alice Walker, Kaibab Band of Paiutes
Crystal Tulley-Cordova, Navajo Nation
Chairman Terry Rambler, San Carlos Apache Tribe
Shanandoah Anderson, Shivwits Band of Paiutes
Vice-Chairwoman Lorelei Cloud, Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Peter Ortego, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe
Vice Chairman Christopher L. Tabee, Ute Indian Tribe

2:00 Facilitated Dialogue

3:00-3:30 Afternoon Networking Break
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Two Continued: 3:30-5:00

The States

3:30  *Insights from the Basin States.*

In a Q&A session, representatives of each basin state are offered an opportunity to reflect on what has, and has not, been accomplished in recent negotiations.

Moderator: **Luke Runyon, Journalist, KUNC**

**Tom Buschatzke, Arizona Department of Water Resources**
**JB Hamby, Colorado River Board of California**
**Becky Mitchell, Colorado Water Conservation Board**
**Colby Pellegrino, Southern Nevada Water Authority**
**Gene Shawcroft, Colorado River Authority of Utah**
**Brandon Gebhart, Wyoming State Engineer**
**Ali Effati, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission**

4:30  *Facilitated Dialogue*

5:00  Adjourn

5:00-7:00  *Conference Reception*

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

Networking reception for all registered speakers and attendees.
Day Two: Friday, June 9th

Conference Reconvenes; Morning Announcements: 8:25

Session Three: 8:30-10:00

Thinking About a Sustainable Future.

On this day, we further transition from talking about the current crisis and the efforts to devise rules for the short-term to a more focused discussion about long-term sustainability, and the possibility that this may require more fundamental changes to rules and practices than previously envisioned.

8:30  An Argument for Transformative Change.

Does achieving lasting equity, sustainability, and “interstate comity” in the basin require confronting the many sacred cows in the basin, and if so, what major reforms must be pursued?

Bruce Babbitt, former Secretary of the Interior and former Governor of Arizona

9:00  An Argument for “Aggressive Incrementalism.”

Currently, the Law of the River isn’t working, but that doesn’t mean the only route forward is to “burn it down” and start over.

Eric Kuhn, Author and former General Manager of the Colorado River District

9:30  Facilitated Dialogue

10:00-10:30  Morning Networking Break
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Four: 10:30-12:00

Some Specific Questions to Answer.
With sustainability, the devil is in the details. What specific actions can be taken to repair the regional water budget? What are the legal, political, and socioeconomic implications of those pathways? What difficult questions will we need to confront?

10:30  
**How Can Agriculture Thrive with Less Water?**
As the major water use in the basin, it’s hard to imagine that a balanced water budget can be achieved without a transition to a more water-smart agricultural sector. How can that be done?

Mark Squillace, University of Colorado Law School  
Jim Holway, Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy  
Pat O’Toole, Family Farm Alliance  
Meghan Scott, Noble Law

11:30  
**Facilitated Dialogue**

12:00-1:00  
**Lunch**  
(Lunch provided in Schaden Commons, 2nd floor-west end)
### Session Four Continued: 1:00-3:00

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1:00  | **How Can Tribal Water Development Fit into Basinwide Belt-Tightening?** | Celene Hawkins, The Nature Conservancy  
       |                                                                         | Jason Hauter, Gila River Indian Community  
       |                                                                         | Dominique Work, New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission |
| 1:40  | **Facilitated Dialogue**                                               |                                                                              |
| 2:00  | **How Can We Protect Environmental Interests?**                       | Eric Balken, Glen Canyon Institute  
       |                                                                         | Jennifer Pitt, Audubon Society  
       |                                                                         | Garrit Voggesser, National Wildlife Federation |
| 2:40  | **Facilitated Dialogue**                                               |                                                                              |

3:00-3:30  **Afternoon Networking Break**  
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)
Session Five: 3:30-4:45

Themes, Lessons and Concerns: Can We Turn Crisis into Opportunity?

3:30 In a moderated Q&A session, panelists will reflect on key themes, lessons and concerns raised during the event, and will use audience questions to identify challenges and opportunities moving forward.

Moderator: John Fleck, University of New Mexico

John Berggren, Western Resource Advocates
Crystal Tulley-Cordova, Navajo Nation
Elizabeth Koebele, University of Nevada

4:45 Adjourn
Speaker Biographies (Alphabetical by last name)

Shanandoah Anderson
Shanandoah Anderson, Shivwits Band of Paiutes, Ivins, UT.
Shivwits Band of Paiutes Liaison for the Upper/Lower Colorado River Basin Waters, Shivwits Cultural committee member, Shivwits Emergency Management member, SPC (Southern Paiute Consortium) Tribal Monitor for the Colorado River Corridor Resource Evaluation Program, Cultural Consultant.

Bruce Babbitt
Bruce Babbitt served as the Secretary of the Interior from 1993-2001 during the Clinton Administration, as the Governor of Arizona from 1978 to 1987, and as Attorney General of Arizona from 1975 to 1978. As Governor, Babbitt was a champion in bringing environmental and natural resource management to the negotiation table. He created the Arizona Department of Water Resources and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and personally negotiated the Arizona Groundwater Management Act of 1980. During his tenure as Secretary, he used the Antiquities Act to create a record number of new National Monuments, created a restoration plan for the Florida Everglades, organized the Northwest Forest Plan, implemented Habitat Conservation Plans under the Endangered Species Act and reintroduced the grey wolf to Yellowstone. Babbitt lives in Washington with his wife, Hattie, a former Ambassador to the Organization of American States.

Eric Balken
Eric Balken currently works as the Executive Director for the Glen Canyon Institute. His interest in water law and policy started at the University of Utah where he pursued a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and geography. From a young age, Eric has worked with non-profits in grassroots organizing, land surveys, and public outreach. For the past ten years, Eric has been entrenched in Colorado River policy and has helped direct research and advocacy initiatives focused on issues relating to Glen Canyon.
John Berggren

John Berggren is a senior regional water policy analyst with Western Resource Advocates (WRA), where he helps develop and advance policies to improve regional and inter-state water governance and management in ways that benefit rivers and the communities, recreation opportunities, and environment they support. He collaborates with conservation community partners, water providers, federal and state agency staff, and other decision makers to further water efficient policies and help improve decision-making processes. He obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, focusing on sustainable and equitable water management of the Colorado River Basin. He currently serves on Boulder's Water Resources Advisory Board, the Colorado Water and Land Use Planning Alliance, and is certified as a qualified water efficient landscaper.

Tom Buschatzke

Tom Buschatzke was appointed Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources in January 2015. With over four decades of water management experience, he is responsible for carrying out ADWR’s mission: To safeguard the health, safety and economic welfare of the public by protecting, conserving and enhancing Arizona’s water supplies in a bold, thoughtful and innovative manner. Mr. Buschatzke serves as Arizona’s principal negotiator on matters relating to the Colorado River. In that role, he co-chaired the public, stakeholder-anchored group that produced Arizona’s Drought Contingency Plan, a critical element of the Colorado River-systemwide Drought Contingency Plan negotiations. On May 20, 2019, he signed the DCP on behalf of Arizona. He now is co-chair of the Arizona Reconsultation Committee, which is preparing for the upcoming renegotiation of operational rules governing the Colorado River system. Mr. Buschatzke is the Chairman of both the Arizona Water Banking Authority and the Governor’s Water Policy Council. He also is an advisory member of the newly created Water Infrastructure Finance Authority board. Further, he is the Co-Chair of the Drought Inter-Agency Coordinating Council and represents the State in Tribal water right negotiations. He also is the U.S. representative to the Binational Desalination Work Group, which is charged with exploring desalination opportunities with the Republic of Mexico. Mr. Buschatzke also serves in an advisory capacity on the board of the Arizona Water Protection Fund. Prior to his service as ADWR Director, Mr. Buschatzke served as the Water Resources Management Advisor for the City of Phoenix. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Western Urban Water Coalition and has served as Chair of their Endangered Species Act Committee. Mr. Buschatzke holds a Bachelor of Science in Geology from the State University of New York at Cortland.
Lorelei Cloud
Lorelei Cloud is a member of the Southern Ute Tribe. She currently serving as the Vice Chairman in her third term the Southern Ute Tribal Council. In previous terms she has served as the Vice Chairman and Treasurer. Lorelei also served a two-year term as Chairman of the Ten Tribes Partnership and is currently a member of The Water and Tribes Initiative, Co-Chair of The Indigenous Women's Leadership Network, Board Trustee for The Nature Conservancy and Board Member for the Colorado Water Conservation Board for the San Miguel, Dolores, Animas, and San Juan River Basin.

Ali Effati
Ali Effati is the Colorado River Basin Bureau Chief with the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission. Ali serves as the Technical Advisor to the New Mexico Colorado River Compact Commissioner. He also represents the State of New Mexico as the Governor’s primary representative on the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program. Ali has been with the State of New Mexico as a Senior Water Resources Specialist and Manager in the past ten years, and his duties have been related to implementing the State’s obligations under Colorado River compacts and decrees in the Colorado River Basin. Previously, he worked as a Civil Engineer in the private sector and worked on a number of water projects including flood control, erosion control, and bank stabilization. Ali has a Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering and a Master's Degree in Civil/Water Engineering.
John Fleck
John Fleck, a former science journalist, is Writer in Residence at the Utton Center, University of New Mexico School of Law; and Professor of Practice in Water Policy and Governance in the University of New Mexico Department of Economics. He is the author of *Water is For Fighting Over and Other Myths About Water in the West* and co-author, with Eric Kuhn, of *Science Be Dammed: How Ignoring Inconvenient Science Drained the Colorado River*. He is working with Bob Berrens on a new book – *Ribbons Green: The Rio Grande and the Making of a Modern American City*.

Brandon Gebhart
Brandon Gebhart P.E. currently serves as Wyoming’s State Engineer. He is a Wyoming native and graduate from the University of Wyoming. His experience had been entirely within the private sector until taking the appointment as Director of the Wyoming Water Development Commission in 2019 and then as State Engineer in 2022. In his role as State Engineer, Brandon serves as Wyoming’s Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River, Bear River and Yellowstone River Compact Commissions, and he represents Wyoming on the North Platte Decree Committee and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program’s Governance Committee.
John Brooks Hamby

JB Hamby is the twelfth Chairman of the Colorado River Board of California and is the State of California’s Colorado River Commissioner, serving since his election in January 2023. As Chairman and Commissioner, JB works closely with the Colorado River Board, California’s contractors, entitlement holders, and agencies to safeguard the rights and interests of the State of California, its agencies, and citizens concerning the Colorado River. Since 2020, he has served as an elected member of the Imperial Irrigation District Board of Directors representing Division 2, which includes southeast El Centro, Heber, Holtville, and Seeley. A fourth-generation resident of the Imperial Valley, JB grew up immersed in water and agricultural issues in the Lower Colorado River region. During his tenure at IID, he has led the formation of and served as the Chairman of the Coachella Valley Energy Commission to collaborate with diverse stakeholders across IID’s Coachella Valley energy service area toward long-term solutions to complex energy matters, developed and established a biennial strategic and budget planning process for the district, launch of a large-scale free shade tree program, among other efforts to modernize the policies, processes, and culture of the organization for the benefit of the district’s residents and ratepayers. JB is a Stanford University graduate with a bachelor’s degree in History and is an alumnus of the Water Education Foundation’s inaugural Colorado River Water Leaders program.

Jason Hauter

Jason Hauter advises clients regarding American Indian law and policy, with an emphasis on economic development on American Indian lands, business entity formation and governance, and development of tribal tax, labor and resource management laws. He also advises tribal clients on implementation of Indian water rights settlements, assists tribal clients with water resource management, advocates on behalf of tribes before Congress and federal agencies, and advises tribal clients on marketing water rights and leveraging water rights to protect tribal government interests. Prior to joining Akin Gump, Jason served for eight years as in-house counsel for the Gila River Indian Community, representing the Community on a variety of matters, including economic development, construction, taxation and internal policy.
Celene Hawkins
Celene Hawkins is a conservation professional and attorney with experience in Colorado River and Tribal water and natural resource management. She serves as The Nature Conservancy’s Colorado River Tribal Partnerships Program Director, where she leads the Conservancy’s efforts to effectively and ethically partner with Tribal Nations and Indigenous peoples on freshwater conservation projects in the Colorado River Basin. Celene serves on the leadership team of the Water and Tribes Initiative and served two terms on the Colorado Water Conservation Board in her personal capacity (2017-2023). Celene enjoys living near the Animas River in Durango, Colorado with her family.

John Hickenlooper
John was raised by a strong single mother after he lost his father to cancer when he was just eight years old. He remembers his father teaching him that if you can learn to laugh at something, it can never beat you. John has carried that lesson throughout his life. John started his career in Colorado as a geologist. After being laid off in the long recession of the mid-80's, he opened the state’s first brewpub in a neglected warehouse district in Lower Downtown (LoDo) Denver. He and his partners started multiple businesses, renovating nearly a full block of LoDo warehouses in mixed-use developments that included 90 units of affordable housing. His company led the renovation efforts of more than a dozen historic buildings in cities across the Midwest. In 2003, John was elected Mayor of Denver. As Mayor, he focused on bringing people together to get things done, just as he’d done as an entrepreneur. He unified all 34 metro mayors to fund and build FasTracks, the most ambitious U.S. transit initiative in modern American history with 119 miles of new track. John made Denver the first large city to provide quality early childhood education for every 4-year old, initiated the most significant police reforms in the City’s history, and opened one of the first offices of sustainability in the country. John served as Governor of Colorado from 2011 to 2019. During his tenure, Colorado’s economy recovered from ranking 40th in job creation during the Great Recession to become the number one economy in the country (U.S. News & World Report). As Governor, he expanded health care to half a million Coloradans, established climate pollution limits that served as a national model, and enacted commonsense gun safety measures.
Jim Holway
Jim Holway is the founding director of the Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. Dr. Holway previously served on the Board of the Central Arizona Water Conservation District from 2011 – 2022, as a Professor of Practice at Arizona State University and as Assistant Director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Jim obtained his Ph.D. in regional planning from the University of North Carolina and a BA in Political Science from Cornell University. Jim’s career has focused on building local capacity for water and land management and as a catalyst for helping urban, agricultural, and tribal communities create sustainable paths forward in the Colorado River Basin. Jim now has a foot in both the upper and lower Basins, dividing his time between Phoenix and Durango.

Doug Kenney
Doug Kenney is the former Director of the Western Water Policy Program within the University of Colorado Law School in the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and the Environment. He is also founder and former chair of the Colorado River Research Group. Doug has written extensively on several water-related issues, including law and policy reform, river basin and watershed-level planning, climate change adaptation, and water resource economics. Dr. Kenney has served as a consultant to a variety of local, state, multi-state, and federal agencies, including several Interior Department agencies, EPA, and the US Forest Service; and national governments and NGOs in Asia and Africa. Additionally, he has made presentations in 21 states (and the District of Columbia), 8 nations, and 5 continents. He has a B.A. in biology from the University of Colorado, a M.S. in Natural Resources Policy and Administration from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. in Renewable Natural Resource Studies from the University of Arizona.
Elizabeth Koebele
Elizabeth A. Koebele, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she is also affiliated faculty in the Graduate Program of Hydrologic Sciences. Dr. Koebele holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in Environmental Studies from the University of Colorado Boulder, as well as B.A.s in English and Education from Arizona State University. She researches and teaches about water policy and management in the western United States, with a particular focus on understanding the systemic impacts of collaborative processes in Colorado River Basin governance. Dr. Koebele’s work has been funded by the US National Science Foundation and the US Department of Agriculture, among others, and she has published her findings widely in policy and interdisciplinary environmental science journals. She also co-edits the scholarly journal Policy & Politics.

Eric Kuhn
Eric Kuhn is the former General Manager of the Colorado River District, a position he held for more than 20 years. He earned his BS in Engineering from the University of New Mexico and an MS in Business Administration from Pepperdine University. Early in his career, he worked as a Naval engineer officer aboard nuclear submarines and as a nuclear start-up engineer for Bechtel Power Corp. After joining the Colorado River District in 1981 as Assistant Secretary-Engineer, he served on the Engineering Advisory Committee of the Upper Colorado River Compact Commission and the Colorado Water Conservation Board representing the Colorado River mainstem. Eric was appointed by Governor Bill Owens as an at-large representative on the Colorado Inter-basin Compact Committee. Since retiring in 2018, Eric has written a book titled “Science Be Dammed: How Ignoring Inconvenient Science Drained the Colorado River,” which is an alarming reminder of the high stakes in the management-and perils in the mismanagement-of water in the western United States.
Nora McDowell

An enrolled Citizen of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, Nora was born and raised on the Fort Mojave Indian reservation located in Needles, California. Ms. McDowell has committed over 45 years to tribal government, starting her career in 1975 as a clerk for the Manpower program and working her way up to Tribal Council Secretary/Administrative Assistant in 1980. Her interest in tribal politics began with her first tribal council campaign and election in 1981, when she began her first four year term at the age of 24. She is proud to have served on the tribal council and tribal community to this day. As Fort Mojave Tribal Chairperson, Ms. McDowell’s leadership has been instrumental in forging many economic projects for the tribe. Ms. McDowell felt it necessary for the Tribe to achieve total tribal self-sufficiency and to exercise its sovereign rights. Her belief and the then standing council was that it was incumbent of the tribal government to take over all of its operations and infrastructure services on reservation. Thus began a long process of numerous legal workings and administrative duties to accomplish that goal. The Tribe provides all utilities on its reservation lands located in three states, California, Arizona and Nevada (Telecommunications, Water, Sewer, and Electric services). Nora has been recognized by many Native American organizations for her leadership and service. Currently Nora serves as Project Manager for the AhaMakav Cultural Center and oversees a hazardous waste cleanup at the Pacific Gas & Electric Compressor Station, which is a known sacred site area of the Mojave people. Nora sits on the Cal EPA Tribal Advisory Board, Water and Tribes Initiative working group on the Colorado River. Co-Chair of the Indigenous Women’s Leadership Network, Member of the Colorado River Tribal Vision Group, Green action Board Member and is a founding Board Member of WEWIN—Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations. Nora is the proud mother of 3 children and Grandmother to 11 grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter. Nora resides within the Fort Mojave Indian reservation in Mohave Valley.
Rebecca Mitchell
Rebecca (Becky) Mitchell serves as the Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board as well as the Colorado Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission. Mitchell played a major role in developing the Colorado Water Plan which involved working with the state’s nine basin roundtables, the Interbasin Compact Committee, and the public. She received her B.S. and M.S. from the Colorado School of Mines before working as a consulting engineer in both the public and private sectors. Her experience working with stakeholder groups and understanding the interplay between them, has allowed her to become an accomplished water leader within the State of Colorado and more widely throughout the Colorado River Basin.

Patrick O’Toole
Patrick O’Toole, a member of the Alliance’s Board of Directors since 1998 and a former member of Wyoming’s House of Representatives, was named as the organization’s fifth President in March 2005. He is a cattle and sheep rancher and hay grower with strong backgrounds in irrigated agriculture and Wyoming politics. Mr. O’Toole and his wife, Sharon, live on a ranch that has been in her family since 1881. Pat O’Toole’s interest in water intersected with the Alliance while he was serving on the Clinton administration’s Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission. Mr. O’Toole was the only commissioner representing Western irrigated agriculture and, in the end, refused to sign the report, opting instead to prepare a dissenting alternative report. The O’Toole family and Ladder Ranch were the recipients of the distinguished 2014 Wyoming Leopold Environmental Stewardship Award. Pat and Sharon met while students at Colorado State University, where Pat graduated with a philosophy degree. They have three children and six grandchildren.
Colby Pellegrino

Colby Pellegrino currently works as the Deputy Manager of Resources for the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD). Collectively, SNWA and LVVWD serve as the wholesale water provider and drinking water utility for 2.3 million residents in the cities of Boulder City, Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and areas of unincorporated Clark County. Pellegrino is responsible for the management of the SNWA’s water resource portfolio, which includes protecting Nevada’s interest and rights to the Colorado River by participating in interstate negotiations and water resource development planning. Colby also serves on the Board of Alliance for Water Efficiency, a non-profit dedicated to efficient and sustainable use of water. Pellegrino earned her B.S. in Civil Engineering from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and her M.S. in Business Administration from Mississippi State University. When not working to protect and develop Nevada’s interest in water, Pellegrino is an avid cook, hiker, and outdoor enthusiast.

Jennifer Pitt

Jennifer Pitt is Colorado River Program Director at the National Audubon Society, where she advises the organization’s strategies to protect and restore rivers throughout the Colorado River Basin. She leads the United States–Mexico collaboration to restore the long-desiccated Colorado River Delta and serves as the U.S. co-chair of the bi-national work group whose partners will, through 2026, implement existing treaty commitments providing environmental flows and habitat creation. Prior to joining Audubon, Jennifer spent 17 years working to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems in the Colorado River Basin at the Environmental Defense Fund. With partners, she led the conservation community’s efforts to prioritize and implement restoration of the Colorado River Delta, and she worked with Colorado River stakeholders to produce the unprecedented Colorado River Basin Supply and Demand Study, the first federal assessment of climate change impacts in the basin and the first basin-wide evaluation of the impacts of river system operation on water supply reliability and river health. Jennifer has also worked at the National Park Service headquarters and in Mesa Verde and Sequoia National Parks, as a legislative assistant to U.S. Congressman Mike Kopetski, and in the headquarters office of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation. Jennifer graduated from Harvard University and received a Master’s in Environmental Science and Policy from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.
Luke Runyon
Luke Runyon reports on water in the Western U.S. for a network of news organizations throughout the southwest. His position is based at NPR member station KUNC in northern Colorado. He is the host of the KUNC podcast, “Thirst Gap: Learning to live with less on the Colorado River.” He is the board president for the Society of Environmental Journalists, and was formerly a Ted Scripps environmental journalism fellow at the University of Colorado. He frequently files stories for NPR’s Morning Edition, All Things Considered, Weekend Edition and APM’s Marketplace. He has a master’s degree in Public Affairs Reporting from the University of Illinois Springfield and his work has been recognized by the Society of Environmental Journalists, the Society of Professional Journalists, the Radio Television Digital News Association, the Colorado Broadcasters Association and the Public Media Journalists Association. He lives in Grand Junction, Colorado.

Meghan C. Scott
Meghan 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.
Gene Shawcroft

Gene Shawcroft leads the new six-member Authority, represents Utah on all Colorado River issues, and serves as a member of the Upper Colorado River Commission. He is also the General Manager for Central Utah Water Conservancy District, the state's largest water conservancy district. Shawcroft grew up on a farm in southern Colorado and enjoyed working and playing in the water. After graduating from Brigham Young University with bachelor's and master's degrees in Civil Engineering, he joined the State of Utah at the Division of Water Resources. Shawcroft came to the Central Utah Water Conservancy District in 1991 and served as a Project Engineer, Assistant General Manager, Deputy General Manager, and was appointed General Manager in January of 2015. A licensed Professional Engineer in Utah, Shawcroft is active in various professional groups and serves on several governing boards in the water industry. He is a frequent lecturer on water-related topics to professional, academic, and civic groups. Shawcroft enjoys his work, outdoor activities, and his family. He is married to Janeen and between them, they have nine children and over 30 grandchildren.

Mark Squillace

Mark Squillace is the Raphael J. Moses Professor of Natural Resources Law at the University of Colorado Law School. His teaching and research focus on environmental and natural resources law and policy. He previously worked as a lawyer for the U.S. Department of the Interior, and in 2000 served as Special Assistant to the Interior Solicitor where he worked directly with Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Professor Squillace is a former Fulbright scholar and the author or co-author of numerous articles and books on water resources law, public lands, and environmental and natural resources law and policy.
Camille Touton
Camille Touton was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on November 4, 2021, as the 24th commissioner for the Bureau of Reclamation. Commissioner Touton returned to the Department of the Interior in January with the Biden-Harris Administration as Reclamation’s deputy commissioner, serving in that capacity until her confirmation. Prior to her appointment as deputy commissioner, she served as professional staff for the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. She was the staff lead on the resiliency provisions enacted as part of the Water Resources Development Act of 2020. Commissioner Touton’s congressional experience also includes serving as professional staff for Interior’s authorization committees – the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee. She also served as Interior’s deputy assistant secretary for Water and Science under the Obama Administration. She is only the second U.S. Senate-confirmed female commissioner in Reclamation’s 119-year history and the first Filipino American confirmed by the Senate to lead a bureau in the Department of the Interior. Commissioner Touton earned a Master of Public Policy from George Mason University and Bachelor of Science in civil engineering and Bachelor of Arts in communication studies from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The Bureau of Reclamation is a contemporary water management agency and the largest wholesale provider of water in the country. It brings water to more than 31 million people and provides one out of five Western farmers with irrigation water for farmland that produces much of the nation’s produce. Reclamation is also the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the country.
Crystal Tulley-Cordova
Crystal Tulley-Cordova, PhD, MWR is a Principal Hydrologist in the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources - Water Management Branch. She is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. She received a doctoral degree in Geology and an Interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate in Sustainability from the University of Utah. She has received a Master of Water Resources in Hydroscience and a Bachelor of Science in Earth and Planetary Sciences from the University of New Mexico. She has worked collaboratively with Navajo Nation partners on water-related research since 2013. Her research interests include learning more about the Navajo Nation water budget, namely the interactions of precipitation, surface, and ground waters, and the nexus with Navajo communities. Her past research consisted of three projects conducted in collaboration with the Navajo Nation Water Management Branch, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and Navajo Environmental Protection Agency; they are entitled (1) Navajo Nation, USA, Precipitation Variability from 2002 to 2015, (2) Stable isotopes in precipitation and associated waters: Recording the North American monsoon in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, and (3) Groundwater sustainability and susceptibility to modern contamination in Fort Defiance, AZ. Crystal has a passion for working with tribal communities. She realizes the importance to help tribal nations dependent on water resources understand the effects of hydroclimatic changes on their tribal homelands. Crystal hopes the knowledge and experiences she gained over the years will help her assist Navajo communities to use their current knowledge about water to build sustainable water projects, seek funding for water-related research, and protect and manage water resources across the Navajo Nation.
Brad Udall
Bradley H. Udall is a Senior Water and Climate Research Scientist / Scholar at Colorado State University’s Colorado Water Center. His expertise includes hydrology and related policy issues of the American West, with a focus on the Colorado River. Brad was a co-author of the 2009 and 2018 National Climate Assessments and a contributing author to the 2014 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 5th Assessment. Brad has testified in both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives on the impacts of climate change of water resources and provided input to multiple National Academy of Science panels. He has published multi peer-reviewed journal articles on the causes of the declining Colorado River flows and on the ongoing aridification of the Western US. Brad was formerly the Director of the Getches-Wilkinson Center for Natural Resources, Energy and Environment at the University of Colorado Law School and Director of the University of Colorado - NOAA Western Water Assessment. Brad has an engineering degree from Stanford and an MBA from Colorado State University.

Daryl Vigil
T. Daryl Vigil (he/him), Jicarilla Apache (enrolled), Jemez Pueblo, and Zia Pueblo, currently the Co-Facilitator for the Water & Tribes Initiative, currently serve on the State of New Mexico’s Water Task Force and on New Mexico’s Fifty (50) Year Water Plan planning committee, former Water Administrator for the Jicarilla Apache Nation, former Chairman of the Ten Tribes Partnership of the Colorado River, former Spokesperson Ten Tribes Partnership, former Interim Executive Director Ten Tribes Partnership, former trustee and Secretary Treasurer of the Colorado River Water Users Association, former President of the Jicarilla Apache Nation’s gaming enterprise which included management of the Nation’s hospitality businesses, former working Chairman of the Board for the Jicarilla Apache Tribal Utility Authority.
Garrit Voggesser
Garrit Voggesser is the Senior Director of Tribal Partnerships and Policy for the National Wildlife Federation. Garrit has worked for the National Wildlife Federation for more than 19 years, engaging Tribes nationwide on a wide array of wildlife and habitat conservation issues, particularly western water issues; buffalo conservation; protecting Tribal resources from energy extraction; wildlife corridors and connectivity; ensuring equity for Tribes in federal natural resource legislation and appropriations; and providing environmental education and outdoor opportunities for Tribal youth. Garrit is a member of the Water and Tribes Initiative, Universal Access to Clean Water for Tribes coalition, Colorado River Tribal Vision Group, and a co-facilitator of a number of Tribal-NGO coalitions seeking increased conservation funding for Tribes. Prior to his current tenure, Garrit served as the National Wildlife Federation’s bison coordinator and as a Tribal natural resource conservation consultant. Garrit received a Ph.D. in environmental history, with a focus on Tribes and Indigenous peoples, from the University of Oklahoma in 2004.

Dominique Work
Dominique Work is an attorney at the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission working primarily on Colorado River issues. She has been working at the NMISC since 2011. She has lived in beautiful New Mexico since 1988 and has been involved in New Mexico water matters since the 1990s. Before working in the water world, she was studying languages and earned a degree from the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, France.
Established in 1892, the University of Colorado Law School is one of the top public law schools in the United States. Colorado Law School’s diverse student body is selected from among the statistically best applicants from every corner of the nation representing over 100 undergraduate institutions, and its highly published faculty is dedicated to interacting with students both inside and outside the classroom. The school’s state-of-the-art green building is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains in beautiful Boulder, Colorado. With about 500 students and a low student to faculty ratio, Colorado Law School is a thriving academic community where the study of law is embraced to create leaders who recognize the civic responsibilities essential to the legal profession.

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

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

Water & Tribes Initiative

The Water & Tribes Initiative | Colorado River Basin (WTI) is a collaborative partnership designed to enhance tribal capacity and support sustainable water use through collaboration. Over the past seven years, it has emerged as a trusted facilitator and connector, bringing together Tribal and other leaders in the Colorado River Basin to build relationships, exchange information, and support collaborative action. WTI is guided by a broad-based Leadership Team that includes representatives from Tribes, states, irrigated agriculture, conservation groups, university experts, and others. The Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, a program of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, serves as the fiscal agent and administrative home for WTI.

www.waterandtribes.org