



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

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO LAW SCHOOL



**Water & Tribes Initiative**  
Colorado River Basin

## **NEXT CHAPTERS ON THE COLORADO RIVER: SHORT-TERM COPING, POST-2026 OPERATIONS, AND BEYOND**



Photo by Len Necefer

### **44th Annual Colorado Law Conference on Natural Resources**

**Thursday, June 6 and Friday, June 7, 2024**

**Wolf Law Building, Wittemyer Courtroom**

**University of Colorado School of Law**

*Presented by Getches-Wilkinson Center with co-convener Water & Tribes Initiative*



**COLORADO LAW**  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER



# **44th Annual Colorado Law Conference on Natural Resources**

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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 44th 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**

For many years, full reservoirs on the Colorado River made for relative peace and stability among the basin’s major water users, despite lingering concerns over environmental degradation, unfulfilled promises to Tribal Nations, and the eventual consequences of water over-allocation and overuse. That era has abruptly ended, challenging the authors of modern Colorado River policy to quickly draft new chapters to stabilize the system through 2026, direct post-2026 reservoir operations, and articulate a long-term vision and strategies to achieve a healthy, sustainable and equitable river system. It is a formidable, multi-faceted agenda being addressed in many ways.

## **GWC and WTI**

Last year and again, this year, the Getches-Wilkinson Center (GWC) has partnered with the Water & Tribes Initiative | Colorado River Basin (WTI) to organize and convene the annual conference. WTI is a collaborative partnership designed to enhance the capacity of Tribes and to support sustainable water use through collaborative problem-solving. Read more about WTI, and find a link to its website, on the last page of this program.

# Participate in the Dialogue

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## 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](http://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 6<sup>th</sup>

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### **Welcome and Introduction: 8:15-8:30**

Opening Remarks from the Getches-Wilkinson Center and the Water & Tribes Initiative

### **Session One: 8:30-3:00**

#### **Sovereign Perspectives on the Post-2026 Management Framework**

A defining characteristic of the Colorado River is the large number of sovereign governments with legally defined water rights and responsibilities. How are the many parties working together to craft post-2026 rules?

#### **8:30 *State of the Basin: The Federal Perspective***

What is the federal government doing to manage the river through 2026 (under various hydrologic scenarios), to lead the states and tribes to new reservoir operating rules post 2026, and to advance US/Mexico cooperation?

**Commissioner Camille Calimlim Touton, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation**

#### **8:55 *Facilitated Dialogue***

#### **9:20 *Reflections on the US-Mexico Relationship***

Building on past (but expiring) Minutes (i.e., binational agreements), how is Mexico working with the US on a post-2026 management framework?

**Roberto F. Salmon, former IBWC Commissioner for Mexico**

#### **9:40 *Facilitated Dialogue***

**10:00-10:20 Morning Networking Break  
(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)**

10:20 *Keynote Address*

**Jared Polis, Governor, State of Colorado**

10:30 *States Panel*

Despite current tensions between the Upper and Lower Basin, all the basin states remain committed to arriving at a consensus vision for new rules. Where does that effort stand?

Moderator: **Shannon Mullane, Colorado Sun**

**Tom Buschatzke, Arizona Department of Water Resources**

**JB Hamby, Colorado River Board of California**

**Becky Mitchell, Colorado's Colorado River Commissioner**

**John Entsminger, Southern Nevada Water Authority**

**Gene Shawcroft, Colorado River Authority of Utah**

**Brandon Gebhart, Wyoming State Engineer**

**Estevan López, New Mexico Upper Colorado River Compact Commissioner and Governor's Representative on Colorado River**

11:30 *Facilitated Dialogue*

**12:00-1:00 Lunch**

**(Lunch provided in Schaden Commons, 2nd floor-west end)**

1:00 *Tribes Panel*

How are the 30 sovereign tribal governments participating in ongoing negotiations?

Moderator: **Daryl Vigil, Water & Tribes Initiative**

**Lorelei Cloud, Vice-Chairwoman, Southern Ute Indian Tribe**

**Stephen R. Lewis, Governor, Gila River Indian Community**

**Dwight Lomayeva, Vice Chairman, Colorado River Indian Tribes**

**Dr. Buu Nygren, President, Navajo Nation**

2:00 *Facilitated Dialogue*

**2:30-3:00 Afternoon Networking Break**

**(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)**

## **Session Two: 3:00-5:00**

### **Other Perspectives on Post-2026 Management**

Beyond the sovereigns, many additional parties and viewpoints must be integrated into the NEPA process and, ultimately, into the new rules.

#### **3:00 *Stakeholder Panel***

What do the “big 3” water using sectors – agriculture, urban, and environment – hope to see in the new rules?

Moderator: **John Fleck, University of New Mexico**

***Karen Kwon, Colorado River Sustainability Campaign***

***Andy Mueller, Colorado River District***

***Adel Hagekhalil, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California***

#### **4:00 *Facilitated Dialogue***

#### **4:30 *Pulling it All Together***

Within the confines of the NEPA process, how does Reclamation integrate all the ideas and submissions into a decision?

***Carly Jerla, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation***

#### **4:50 *Facilitated Dialogue***

#### **5:00 *Adjourn***

### **5:00-6:30 Conference Reception**

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

**Networking reception for all registered speakers and attendees.**



## Day Two: Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

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**8:15: Welcome Back, Morning Announcements**  
**Doug Kenney, Getches-Wilkinson Center**

### **Session Three: 8:30-10:00**

#### **Toward a Sustainable Future: Beyond 2026**

While it is easy to find points of disagreement about future management alternatives, we all agree that any future regime must support a sustainable river system.

**8:30 *Visions of Sustainability: The Long View***

What can we take from past experiences, future projections, and thoughtful reflection to shape our thinking about the best road forward?

**Timothy Nuvangyaoma, Chairman, Hopi Tribe**

**Jonathan Overpeck, University of Michigan**

**Daryl Vigil, Water & Tribes Initiative, Jicarilla Apache Nation**

**9:30 *Facilitated Dialogue***

**10:00-10:30 Morning Networking Break**  
**(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)**

### **Session Four: 10:30-4:30**

#### **Moving from Vision to Action**

Crafting new reservoir operating rules is a necessary and important step forward, but a variety of management issues will remain. Presenters: What, if anything, would you add to the vision discussion, and what steps/tools are needed to make it happen?

**10:30 Strategies to Achieve the Vision: Part 1**

*Forging an Equitable Process to Achieve a Vision of Sustainability.*

**John Berggren, Western Resource Advocates**

*Translating the Trust Relationship in Colorado River Management.*

**Jason Robison, University of Wyoming**

*Defusing Law of the River Landmines and Tripwires.*

**Eric Kuhn, Author**

**11:30 *Facilitated Dialogue***



**12:00-1:00 Lunch**  
**(Lunch provided in Schaden Commons, 2nd floor-west end)**

**1:00 Strategies to Achieve the Vision: Part 2**

*The Future of Ranching in the Upper Basin.*  
**Jim Howell, Grasslands LLC**

*Growing A Viable Future for Irrigated Agriculture.*  
**Will Thelander, Pinal County Farmer**

*Reshaping Cities to be Water Smart.*  
**Liesel Hans, Alliance for Water Efficiency**

**2:00 Facilitated Dialogue**

**2:30-3:00 Afternoon Networking Break**  
**(Refreshments provided in Boettcher Hall)**

**3:00 Strategies to Achieve the Vision: Part 3**

*Reviving a Living River.*  
**Jennifer Pitt, Audubon**

*Protecting Recreational Opportunities.*  
**Kestrel Kunz, American Whitewater**

*Building Resilience: Opportunities to Maximize Federal Funds Today and Post-2026.*  
**Alex Funk, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**

**4:00 Facilitated Dialogue**

**4:30 Wrap-up and Adjourn**

## Speakers

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### **John Berggren**

John is a Regional Policy Manager with Western Resource Advocates, where he helps develop and advance equitable 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. Using his deep knowledge of Western river and water issues, he collaborates with conservation community partners, water providers, federal and state agency staff, and other decision makers to further the next generation of water management strategies. He obtained his Ph.D. from the

University of Colorado at Boulder, 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 the Governor's Representative for the state of Arizona on matters relating to the Colorado River.

He is the Chairman of both the Arizona Water Banking Authority and the Governor's Water Policy Council, as well as a 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 rights negotiations. He is the U.S. co-chair for the Minute 323 Binational Desalination Work Group, which is charged with exploring desalination opportunities with the Republic of Mexico.



### **Lorelei Cloud**

Vice Chairman Lorelei Cloud is a member of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and proudly serves the Tribal Membership on the Southern Ute Indian Tribal Council. Born and raised on the Southern Ute Reservation, Cloud was first elected to the Tribal Council in December 2015. During her first term on Tribal Council, she welcomed the opportunity to serve as Vice-Chairman and Treasurer. After being re-elected in December 2018, Cloud continued her service to the Tribal Membership as the Treasurer. In 2021, Ms. Cloud was once again sworn into office, serving her third term on Tribal

Council.

She also serves on the Water & Tribes Initiative, Tribes and States Dialogue, and The Nature Conservancy Board for the Colorado Chapter. Cloud is Co-Founder and Co-Chairman of the Indigenous Women's Leadership Network. In 2023, Governor Polis appointed Cloud to the Colorado Water Conservation Board, making her the first Native American to sit on a state water board for the State of Colorado.

She is a true advocate for the Ute language, traditions, and culture, actively participating in cultural events and traditional gatherings. She is passionate about helping the Southern Ute youth, women, and elders.



## **John Entsminger**

John J. Entsminger oversees the operations of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, which is responsible for acquiring, treating and delivering water to local agencies that collectively serve 2 million residents and more than 40 million annual visitors, and the Las Vegas Valley Water District, which serves more than 375,000 customer accounts. He was appointed general manager by both agencies' Boards of Directors in early 2014, having previously served as director of environmental and water resource law and senior deputy general manager. Entsminger joined the organization

in 1999 as an attorney.

Entsminger has spent his career addressing the unique water challenges facing Southern Nevada. He has been instrumental in developing inter basin and international agreements protecting Lake Mead water elevations, including the 2007 Colorado River Interim Guidelines and Minutes 319 and 323 to the 1944 U.S. - Mexico Water Treaty. In April 2014, he was appointed by Governor Sandoval to serve as Nevada's lead negotiator on Colorado River matters.

On the national front, Entsminger serves on the Boards of Directors of the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies and the Water Research Foundation, and the Desert Research Institute Foundation Board of Trustees.

Committed to public involvement, Entsminger works closely with a committee of community stakeholders tasked with making recommendations on issues related to funding, planning and facilities construction and maintenance. These recommendations will guide future organizational initiatives, including a renewed commitment to maintaining its vast water systems.

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



### **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. The former director of the University of New Mexico's Water Resources Program, 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 of Green:*

*The Rio Grande and the Making of a Modern American City.*



### **Alex Funk**

Alex Funk is the Director of Water Resources and Senior Counsel for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, which works to guarantee all Americans a quality place to hunt and fish. Alex has over a decade of experience working on Colorado River and western water challenges. In his role with the TRCP, Alex leads the organization's national freshwater policy efforts focusing on issues ranging from the Clean Water Act to securing federal funding to increase the pace and scale of watershed conservation and restoration projects benefiting fish and

wildlife. Alex previously served as the Agricultural and Rural Resiliency Policy Specialist at the CWCB, where he acted as the agency's liaison to agricultural stakeholders on federal and state water policy issues, including such topics as demand management and voluntary water sharing agreements. In this role, he also assisted with the implementation of the Colorado Water Plan and represented CWCB in multiple venues, including Colorado's Natural Working Lands Task Force and the Colorado River Basin Salinity Forum. Prior to CWCB, Alex served as the Western Policy Director for the National Young Farmers Coalition, focusing on Farm Bill policy, and a legal fellow with American Rivers.

Alex earned his Juris Doctorate from Vermont Law School and his bachelor's degree in environmental policy and planning from Virginia Tech. Alex is a graduate of the Colorado Water Leaders Program with Water Education Colorado and is currently a member of the 2024 Colorado River Leaders cohort with the Water Education Foundation. Alex lives in Denver, Colo., with his family and can frequently be found mountain biking, backpacking, climbing fourteeners, and paddling his kayak around the West.



### **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.





## **Adel Hagekhalil**

Adel Hagekhalil is the general manager and chief executive officer for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, the largest wholesale drinking water supplier in the country that provides water to 26-member public agencies, serving 19 million people.

As general manager, Hagekhalil is responsible for leading Metropolitan's operations and long-term planning to provide safe, reliable drinking water to Southern California. He oversees Metropolitan's \$1.9 billion annual budget, 1,800

employees, and an extensive system of conveyance, storage, treatment, and delivery infrastructure.

Under Hagekhalil, the agency is entering a new era of sustainability and resiliency in the face of climate change and other threats to the region's water reliability. He is committed to a "One Water" vision that incorporates every source of water, including imported and groundwater supplies, reuse, conservation, stormwater and wastewater. And he is focused on empowering Metropolitan's workforce, promoting diversity, equity and inclusion and fostering innovation and partnerships so that Metropolitan can better serve its Southern California communities.

Hagekhalil is a registered civil engineer and national board-certified environmental engineer, having earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from the University of Houston in Texas.

Before joining Metropolitan, he was the executive director and general manager of the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services. There, he worked to integrate climate adaptation, equity and green infrastructure into the largest municipal street system in the nation.

Hagekhalil has more than three decades of experience in water, climate and environmental issues, and infrastructure management, including as assistant general manager of the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation, where he oversaw the city's wastewater collection system, stormwater and watershed protection program, water quality compliance, advance planning and facilities. He also helped develop the city's 2040 One Water LA Plan.

Hagekhalil is a member of the American Public Works Association as well as the Water Environment Federation, which recognized him in 2019 as a WEF Fellow for his contributions to and impact in the global water environment. In 2021, he received the Edward J. Cleary Award for his public service in the conduct of environmental protection programs from the American Academy of Environmental Engineers and Scientists. He also served for more than a decade as a board member on the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, including a term as president.

Hagekhalil and his wife, Lubna, reside in Fullerton. They have three adult children.





### **JB 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. As Colorado River Commissioner, he led California's negotiations with Arizona and Nevada that yielded the Lower Basin Plan to generate an

unprecedented 3 million acre-feet of conservation by 2026, and the Lower Basin Alternative announced this March for post-2026 operations of the Colorado River. Since 2020, he has served as an elected member of the Imperial Irrigation District Board of Directors, setting water and power policy for the nation's largest irrigation district and California's third-largest public power provider. A fourth-generation resident of the Imperial Valley, JB grew up immersed in water and agricultural issues in the Lower Colorado River region. 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.



### **Liesel Hans**

Dr. Liesel Hans has been Director of Programs for the Alliance for Water Efficiency since April 2022. She focuses on program leadership and management, knowledge development, and fostering partnerships and collaborations, while serving a collective of amazing water conservation and efficiency organizations and professionals. She is passionate about connecting people and advancing knowledge to create a sustainable future. Dr. Hans previously led the Water Conservation and Water Resources teams at Fort Collins Utilities in Fort Collins, CO. She also worked at Lawrence

Berkeley National Laboratory on energy policy, behavioral research, and the energy-water nexus. She received her PhD in Economics from Colorado State University where she focused on water and energy, utility rates, and behavioral economics.



### **Jim Howell**

Jim's life and career have centered on ecologically regenerative and economically profitable livestock ranching. He is passionate about the intersection of wilderness, wildlife, domestic livestock, food and fiber production, and land-based human cultures—all of which overlap and can harmoniously coexist in the space of grassland agriculture. In addition to managing his family's own ranch in western Colorado for 17 years, he has managed and consulted for large landscape working ranches, mostly in native rangeland environments, across the American West

and Northern Great Plains, the South Island of New Zealand, the Pampean and Patagonian regions of Argentina, and peninsular Florida. He has also traveled extensively, working on, visiting and capturing stories of progressively managed ranches across southern Africa, Australia, and Mexico. Much of his lessons are captured in his book, *For the Love of Land—Global Case Studies of Grazing in Nature's Image*. He co-founded Grasslands, LLC in 2010, and has served since then as its CEO.



### **Carly Jerla**

Carly Jerla is a senior water resources program manager with the Bureau of Reclamation. She is currently leading Reclamation's efforts to develop updated long-term operating rules for Lake Powell and Lake Mead (the "Post-2026 Process"). She is currently stationed at the University of Colorado's Center for Advanced Decision Support for Water and Environmental Systems (CU-CADSWES) alongside Reclamation's Upper and Lower Colorado River Basin Regions' research, planning, and modeling teams. She is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University and the University of

Colorado. Carly has worked for the federal government, primarily with Reclamation, for over 20 years.



### **Doug Kenney**

Doug Kenney has been with the Natural Resources Law Center/GWC since 1996, where he is the Director of the Western Water Policy Program, the Chairman of the Colorado River Research Group, and the host/organizer of the summer water conference. He researches and writes extensively on several water-related issues, including law and policy reform, transboundary resource management, and climate change adaptation. Dr. Kenney has served as a consultant to a variety of local, state, multi-state, and federal agencies, including several Interior Department agencies,

EPA, the U.S. Forest Service, and special commissions (e.g., the Western Water Policy Review Advisory Commission); and national governments and non-governmental organizations in Asia and Africa. Additionally, he has made presentations in (at least) 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.



### **Eric Kuhn**

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

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

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



### **Kestrel Kunz**

Kestrel has worked for American Whitewater for eight years where she directs the river protection program in Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. Through local river management collaboratives and state and federal policy, Kestrel works to ensure that rivers in the region support a sustainable outdoor recreation economy and that river recreation has a voice in water management decisions. She has a Bachelor's in water science and policy from Quest University Canada, studied at Colorado College, and received honors for her thesis research on alpine lakes in Peru and

Canada. Kestrel lives in the headwaters of the Gunnison River in Colorado where she enjoys getting out on rivers in all types of crafts and skiing Colorado's snow before it melts.



### **Karen Kwon**

Karen Kwon is the Associate Program Director for the Colorado River Sustainability Campaign where she works with groups focused on advancing collaborative solutions to the water supply and ecosystem challenges existing within the Colorado River Basin. Karen is a 2003 graduate of CU Law and has more than 20 years of experience in problem-solving resource scarcity challenges and expertise in water law and policy related to the Colorado River Basin. Karen's Colorado River experience stems from her Colorado roots, tenure at the Colorado Attorney General's office, and many

years of engagement with the Upper Colorado River Commission, Lower Basin States, and Mexico. Through her work in interstate water law as well as the Interim Guidelines, Drought Contingency Plans, Long-Term Environmental Management Plan, and Minutes 319 and 323 to the US/Mexico Water Treaty, Karen has secured a reputation for sifting through polarizing differences to arrive at workable solutions to the water supply and resource challenges confronting federal and state agencies, water users, conservation districts, Tribal Nations, municipalities, and non-governmental organizations.



### **Stephen R. Lewis**

Stephen Roe Lewis was raised in Sacaton, "Gu-u-Ki", on the Gila River Indian Community. His father is the late Rodney Lewis and mother Willardene Lewis. Mr. Lewis has a son, Daniel currently attending Arizona State University.

Mr. Lewis is in his fourth term serving as Governor of the Community, having previously served as Lt. Governor. Prior to serving in elected leadership, Governor Lewis served the Community as a member of the Board of Directors for the Gila River Healthcare Corporation, as a Gaming Commissioner for

the Gila River Gaming Commission, and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Gila River Telecommunications, Inc.

Stephen Roe Lewis graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor's of Science and pursued graduate studies at John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Governor Lewis currently oversees the implementation of the Community's Water Settlement of 2004 (at that time the largest water settlement of its kind in United States history). Governor Lewis advocates for renewable and green technologies guided by O'odham agricultural history and cultural teachings. Governor Lewis's vision is to support a new generation of Community member agriculturalists with the goal of promoting and protecting the Community's shudag (water) and agricultural development.

During his tenure as Governor of the Gila River Indian Community, Governor Lewis has brought innovative solutions to long-standing issues that will create long-term gains for the Gila River Indian Community. One of these projects, Management Aquifer Recharge sites, brings together the need for access to water while restoring the return of the Community's riparian area which is vital for farming and the return of wildlife to the Community. Governor Lewis also oversaw the development of the Solar-Over-Canal project which is the first of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. The Community broke ground on this project in 2023 and will generate power and reduce evaporation thereby conserving water. Bringing back the Gila River and water conservation projects are critical to the culture and identity of the Gila River Indian Community, and have been key milestones during Governor Lewis' Administration and one that will lay the foundation for future projects across the Community.

In addition, Governor Lewis' innovation can be seen in his approach to providing educational opportunities for the youth of the Gila River Indian Community. The Community was the first tribal community in the Nation to utilize the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to create a program that revolutionized how infrastructure is constructed and maintained throughout Indian Country. This program, (Section 105(1)) was utilized for education construction in the Community, and the Community is working to expand the uses of the program to other infrastructure in the Community and throughout Indian Country.



Governor Lewis has also prioritized the Community's Veterans and youth by working to establish the Community's first Veteran's and Family Services Department. In 2023, the Community received accreditation as a Veterans Service Organization, only the second to receive such accreditation in Indian Country. Governor Lewis has also committed resources to protect the Community's children by advocating for the protection of the Indian Child Welfare Act both at home and nationally.



### **Dwight Lomayesva**

Dwight Lomayesva was first elected Vice Chairman of the Colorado River Indian Tribes in 2021 and again in 2023. He is Hopi/Miwok and a member of the Sun Clan. He was raised on the CRIT Reservation with nine brothers and sisters on land assigned to his father in 1945 during the closing of the Japanese Internment Program in Poston, Arizona. He attended the local schools on the reservation, Le Pera Elementary and Parker High School, and left to pursue a higher education.

He received his BS degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Arizona, a BS degree in Civil Engineering from California State Polytechnic University, and a Master's degree from California State University, Fullerton where he studied History and American Indian land tenure.

Vice Chairman Lomayesva taught mathematics to high students in Snowflake, Arizona and Sherman Indian School in Riverside, California. He taught history to college students at Riverside College, and served as President of the Faculty Academic Senate and President of the faculty union (CTA) for the three-college district. He was awarded a full professorship by the Board of Trustees for his work in education in California and curriculum development at the college. As an adjunct professor, he taught at the University of California, Riverside, California State University, Fullerton and San Diego State University. After retiring from teaching, he came back home and started farming on the Colorado River Indian Reservation.



### **Estevan López**

Estevan López is New Mexico's Upper Colorado River Compact Commissioner and Governor's Representative on Colorado River matters. He is a native New Mexican with 40 years of engineering experience including over 20 years in top-level water management. He served as *Commissioner of the US Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)* from 2014-17. Before that, he served as *Director of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC)* from 2003-14, during which he also served as Upper Colorado River Compact Commissioner and Governor's Representative on Colorado River matters.



### **Rebecca Mitchell**

Rebecca Mitchell (Becky) is the State of Colorado's Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission. Mitchell took on this upgraded role in July 2023 to enhance the state's position in Colorado River interstate issues and negotiations on the operations of Lake Mead and Lake Powell. She is an accomplished water leader with over 20 years of experience in the water sector and is highly knowledgeable in Colorado water law. Mitchell was also appointed Director of the Inter-Basin Compact Committee (IBCC) in October 2023. Mitchell's appointment

has strengthened and integrated water policy discussions happening across the state and the Colorado River Basin.

Previously, Mitchell was the Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board and played a significant role in developing the Colorado Water Plan, working with the state's nine basin roundtables, the Interbasin Compact Committee, and the public.

She has worked as a consulting engineer in both the public and private sectors. She received her B.S. and M.S. from the Colorado School of Mines.





### **Andy Mueller**

Andy Mueller is the General Manager of the Colorado River Water Conservation District. Prior to taking the helm at the Colorado River District he spent 23 years in private law practice on the West Slope of Colorado. His work ranged across the breadth of critical western Colorado topics: water, natural resource, land use and community issues.

For nine years from 2006-15, he was Ouray County's Director on the Colorado River District Board, his last two as Board President. His combined experience prepared him to lead the

River District, whose work is to lead in the protection, conservation, use and development of the waters of the Colorado River for the residents of the West Slope and to safeguard for all of Colorado all waters of the Colorado River to which the state is entitled. Andy also serves on the advisory board of the Family Farm Alliance and as an ex-officio member of the Water & Tribes Initiative Advisory Board.

Andy earned his law degree from University of Colorado in 1995 after earning his BA in history from Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. When he is not delving deep into Colorado River issues or spending time outdoors with his daughters, he is actively engaged with his community, serving on various community boards.



### **Shannon Mullane**

Shannon Mullane writes about the Colorado River Basin and Western water issues for The Colorado Sun. She frequently covers water news related to Western tribes, Western Slope and Colorado with an eye on issues related to resource management, the environment and equity. Her work is funded by a grant from the Catena Foundation.

Born in East Tennessee, Shannon has been in Colorado for about a decade and is based in Durango in southwest Colorado. Before joining the Sun's team, she contributed award-winning reporting on government, environment, health and more as a staff writer for The Durango Herald and as an intern for the Colorado Independent. She has also contributed reporting and photography to High Country News, The Salt Lake Tribune, ProPublica and Collective Colorado.

During her master's program at the University of Colorado Boulder, she focused her studies on environmental issues in Colorado and the West. Shannon attained a conversational fluency in French while working as an English language teacher in southern France.



### **Timothy Nuvangyaoma**

Chairman Timothy Nuvangyaoma was born and raised on the Hopi Reservation, Tobacco Clan, from the Village of Mishognovi. He attended Santa Fe Indian School in Santa Fe, NM, and later transitioned to Phoenix, AZ where he began a career in the financial field. After 25-plus years of living in Phoenix, AZ, he returned to his Village of Mishongnovi and engulfed himself in working with non-profits as a volunteer. Chairman Nuvangyaoma also returned to work with the Wildland Firefighting Program.

Chairman Nuvangyaoma ran for office in 2017 and was elected to a four-year term as Chairman of the Hopi Tribe. Chairman Nuvangyaoma was re-elected and sworn back into office on December 1, 2021, to carry out another four-year term working with, and on behalf of the Hopi people.



## **Dr. Buu Nygren**

Elected the youngest Navajo Nation President in history at the age of 35, Dr. Buu Nygren is a carpenter, construction manager, and father. After serving Navajo communities throughout the pandemic, the President committed himself to securing the basic necessities for every Navajo home: water, power, and reliable roads. His focus on combating poverty is a guiding principle for the Navajo Nation Executive Branch.

Prior to announcing his candidacy, Dr. Nygren was the Chief Commercial Officer for the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority (NECA), a quasi-independent tribal enterprise headquartered in Shiprock, New Mexico. His tenure at NECA began in 2019.

In 2018, President Nygren was selected as the vice-presidential running mate for the Shirley-Nygren ticket in the Navajo Nation General Election. The prior eight years, from 2010 to 2018, the President was a national operations trainer and project manager at a multi-billion dollar construction company that built schools, senior living homes, and public safety facilities from Nevada to Florida.

A graduate of Red Mesa High School, the President obtained his Bachelor of Science in Construction Management from Arizona State University in 2012. He then pursued a Masters of Business Administration from Arizona State University and completed his Doctorate of Education in Organizational Change and Leadership from the University of Southern California in 2021.

Last year, the President was recognized as one of the Top 40 Native American Leaders Under 40 by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED). Dr. Nygren is married to former Arizona State Representative Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren, and together have two daughters. Both proudly reside in Red Mesa, Arizona, about 35 miles from the Four Corners National Monument and 80 miles from Monument Valley, Utah.



### **Jonathan Overpeck**

Professor Jonathan Overpeck (Peck) is an interdisciplinary climate scientist and the Samuel A. Graham Dean of the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan. He has written over 230 published works on climate and the environmental sciences, served as a Working Group 1 Coordinating Lead Author for the Nobel Prize winning IPCC 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment (2007), and as a Working Group 2 Lead Author for the IPCC 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment (2014). Other awards include the US Dept. of Commerce Gold Medal, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Walter Orr Roberts award of

the American Meteorological Society, and the Quivira Coalition's Radical Center Award for his work with rural ranchers and land managers. Overpeck recently served on the University of Michigan's President's Commission on Carbon Neutrality, and currently serves on the State of Michigan Governor's Council on Climate Solutions, as well as the City of Ann Arbor, Michigan's Energy. He has appeared and testified before Congress multiple times, is a Fellow of AGU and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences. He tweets about environmental and climate-related issues @GreatLakesPeck.



### **Jennifer Pitt**

Jennifer Pitt advises Audubon's strategies to protect and restore rivers throughout the Colorado River Basin. As a senior member of the team, she mentors staff in a number of Audubon's regional offices. She seeks to improve river and water management for habitats and communities excluded from consideration in the 19th century legal framework and 20th century infrastructure that shapes the Colorado River Basin today.

Jennifer has a long history helping with the United States–Mexico collaboration to restore the long-desiccated Colorado River Delta. She serves as the U.S. co-chair of the bi-national work group whose partners will, through 2026, implement existing treaty commitments to environmental flows and habitat creation. This program benefits nearly 400 bird species and more than one million Mexicali Valley residents who live in a landscape transformed by catastrophic ecosystem loss. Jennifer lives in Colorado with her family and has come to appreciate that river restoration is as important for people as it is for birds and wildlife.



## **Jared Polis**

Governor Jared Polis is focused on helping our state make the transition to 100% renewable energy, protecting our public lands, and preserving our Colorado way of life.

This includes passing historic tax credits to increase access to clean energy for Coloradans, giving local governments a voice when it comes to oil and gas development in their communities, investments to expand the availability and infrastructure for electric vehicles and other clean transportation options, more efficient building standards, and air quality improvements. In addition, the Polis administration has worked with Colorado utilities to lock in more than 80% renewable energy by 2030.

The Governor has also created the Office of Climate Preparedness to ensure that Colorado is prepared to address future climate challenges and protect the Colorado we know and love for decades to come.



## **Jason Robison**

Jason is the Carl M. Williams Professor of Law & Social Responsibility at the University of Wyoming College of Law, as well as an Adjunct Professor at the Haub School of Environment and Natural Resources. A graduate of Harvard Law School and the University of Oregon School of Law, Jason's writing and teaching generally revolve around water, public lands, and Native peoples in western North America, focusing mainly on transboundary water law and policy. In addition to authoring his treatise, [\*Law of Water Rights & Resources\*](#), Jason is the editor of the 2022 Colorado River

Compact centennial volume, [\*Cornerstone at the Confluence\*](#), and lead editor of the 2019 Powell Expedition sesquicentennial volume, [\*Vision & Place\*](#). Jason's most recent article focuses on the trust relationship and the U.S. Supreme Court's *Arizona v. Navajo Nation* decision last June 2023, [\*Relational River: Arizona v. Navajo Nation & the Colorado\*](#). Jason is honored to serve on the leadership team of the Water & Tribes Initiative and as a member of the Colorado River Research Group.





### **Roberto F. Salmon**

Roberto F. Salmon Castelo is a founding partner and consultant at Centro Luken de Estrategias en Agua y Medio Ambiente. He served from April 2009 until May 2020 as the Mexican Commissioner to the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) and has a solid experience in international negotiations related to water and boundary issues between Mexico and the United States. In this capacity, he led the Mexican team to accomplish the signing of 11 binational agreements (Minutes) with the United States, which are binding for both countries.

From 2002 until 2009, he worked for the Mexican National Water Commission (CONAGUA), first as the Northwest Regional Manager and later as the General Director of the Northwest Basin Region, based in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico from where he oversaw all affairs related to water resources. In addition, Mr. Salmon served as the Planning and Special Projects Director for the Center for Research and Development of Natural Resources (CIDESON) of the State of Sonora. He also started a consulting company oriented to surface, groundwater, and environmental studies and projects.

He also has vast experience in financial projects. He served as the Director of Budget and Planning and later as the Chief Financial Officer at the University of Sonora and other private entities. He is also a founding partner in three financial enterprises in the State of Sonora.

Mr. Salmon has participated as a leading consultant in many projects on various subjects, such as water resources, plant location, financial engineering, statistics, economic feasibility, agriculture, and strategic planning.

In the academic sector, he served as a professor at the Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora, University of Sonora, Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey (Campus Guadalajara and Obregón), as well as a teaching and research assistant at the University of Arizona in the departments of Agricultural Economics and Hydrology and Water Resources.

He has authored or co-authored several articles on water resources and US-Mexico transboundary water issues and has been a speaker at binational and international conferences.



### **Gene Shawcroft**

Gene Shawcroft leads the Utah Colorado River Authority, representing Utah on all Colorado River issues. He grew up on a farm in southern Colorado and loved the day the water turned on more than Christmas. After graduating from BYU with a B.S. and M.S. in Civil Engineering, Gene joined the State of Utah at the Division of Water Resources. He joined the Central Utah Water Conservancy District in 1991 and was appointed General Manager in 2015. He is active in various professional groups, serves on several governing boards, and in January 2021 he was appointed by Utah's Governor as the

Utah Commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission. He works with the governor, the other six basin states, and the federal government to use the best available data and management practices to make sure Utah, along with the other six states and Mexico, can use their fair share of the Colorado River. He is married to Janeen and between them, they have nine children and 30 grandchildren.



### **Will Thelander**

Will Thelander is a third-generation Arizona farmer. He works with Bridgestone tire company and The University of Arizona on developing a bio rubber plant called guayule.





## **Camille Calimlim Touton**

Camille Calimlim 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 nearly 122-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.



### **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 serves as a Water Ambassador for New Mexico 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.

## **University of Colorado Law School**

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

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

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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.colorado.edu/center/gwc/>

## Water & Tribes Initiative

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**Water & Tribes Initiative**  
**Colorado River Basin**

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](http://www.waterandtribes.org)