



COLORADO  
**WATER CONGRESS**  
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# Shaping Our Future

# 2021

## VIRTUAL

## ANNUAL CONVENTION

February 9 and 12

**2021 CWC ANNUAL CONVENTION**  
**Shaping Our Future**

**February 9 and 12, 2021**

**Tuesday, February 9**

**8:00 am**      **Annual State Affairs Breakfast**  
**How the 2021 Legislative Session Is Shaping Up**  
*Hosted by the Colorado Water Congress State Affairs Committee*  
Moderators: Chane Polo, Colorado Water Congress  
Dianna Orf, Orf & Orf

We will hear from Colorado’s House and Senate water leadership on what the impacts of COVID-19 during the 2020 Legislative Session will mean for the water community in 2021 and the future. Where will water priorities fit and how will they be handled? What new legislation can the water community expect? What will the Interim Committees’ schedule look like after the suspension last summer?

**Recognition of Chris Piper\***

*\* Throughout our program, we will briefly recognize several CWC Board members and Aspinnall winners.*

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**9:00 am**      **Opening Session**  
**How the Future Looks Now**  
**Views of Our Members**  
Moderator: Linn Brooks, Colorado Water Congress President

What do you believe will be the most important factors shaping your thinking in 2021? Water Congress Members will help us present the results from our January 2021 Member Survey. Perspectives from many members as to where they stand now that we are nearly a year into working under pandemic protocols. We have much to learn from each other as we adapt to uncertainty. What are the challenges, plans, and expectations for the year ahead?

**Recognition of David Merritt**

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**10:00      Agricultural Transfers**  
**Grappling with Old-School Buy and Dry**  
**(Or Not the Buy and Dry of Times Gone By)**

Moderator: TBA

Water providers continue to look to irrigated agriculture to satisfy a portion of the state’s municipal water supply gap. In response, agricultural to municipal transfers in Water Court become more sophisticated each year to ensure protection to water rights, and local jurisdictions enact their regulating authority to protect against local impacts. However, water providers still have significant discretion in how they navigate the land management decisions related to the transfer, and these decisions often have far reaching consequences. Some water providers and communities have embraced innovative – and voluntary – efforts to help navigate the land management and community impacts of the agricultural to municipal transfers. Panelists from different stages in the process will discuss the issues at play, the approaches they used, and lessons learned.

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**11:00      Water for the Lower Arkansas Valley**

Moderator: TBA

The Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) will be a 130-mile pipeline serving 40 communities and 50,000 people east of Pueblo who face compliance issues with State salinity or radionuclide standards. The AVC was authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1962 as part of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, however construction costs exceeded the capacity of many participants to repay. We will place this story in context of the historic hardships the lower Arkansas Valley has faced and how the AVC is a game changer for the Ark Valley.

*“We have an important decision to make in this country, and that’s if we’re going to have a rural America or not. You can’t have rural America if you don’t have clean water or agriculture and that’s what this project is all about.”*  
**Senator Michael Bennet**

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**12:30 pm      POND Networking Activity**

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**1:00 pm      How the Economy Might Shape Your Financial Decisions in 2021**

Moderator: TBA

Did any of us predict the Dow Jones Industrial Average would top 30,000 if the pandemic lasted until the end of the year? Remember when borrowing even one trillion by the Federal government was a big deal? These are crazy times indeed! How should we be managing money in 2021? Stocks. Bonds. Borrowing. Interest rates. Budgets. Let’s get some advice.

**Recognition of Reagan Waskom**

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## **Friday, February 12**

### **8:00 am Annual Federal Affairs Breakfast**

#### **2021 Federal Policy Forecast**

*Hosted by the Colorado Water Congress Federal Affairs Committee*

Moderator: Christine Arbogast, Kogovsek and Associates

With a new Administration will come a series of new appointments including a new Secretary of Agriculture, Interior Secretary, and EPA Administrator. Session panelists will review cabinet appointments and provide an update on committee leadership affecting the legislative agenda on water. We will also review the priorities and strategy outline set at the National Water Resources Association Leadership Forum and what is anticipated with the Biden Administration, including plans to alter Trump-era regulatory reforms, a potential infrastructure stimulus initiative, and the water piece of climate change policy efforts. Finally, we will look at what our congressional delegation priorities for water are, including our newest members, Senator Hickenlooper and Congresswoman Boebert.

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### **9:00 am How Do You Like Your Smoke?**

Moderator: Travis Smith, Colorado Water Congress Vice President and  
National Wild Turkey Federation

Our current approach to addressing the Western wildfire crisis is not working. The two largest fires in Colorado's history -Cameron Peak (204,000 acres) and East Troublesome (193,000 acres) extensively damaged Colorado River headwaters, wildlife, scenery, recreation, roads and trails.

Most experts believe things will get worse without a new strategy. Every year, there is yet another "record fire season".

It is time for a new conversation and action to deal with our unhealthy forests in Colorado - a focused, comprehensive, and proactive approach involving state, federal and local entities to bring together the right people. To succeed, this plan may mean changes to existing national forest land management plans and will require investments – and the private sector.

Is there an Operation Warp Speed in the future for forests?

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### **10:00 am Making Water Quality Great Again**

*Hosted by the Colorado Water Congress Water Quality Committee*

Moderator: TBA

There was a time when we could have straight-forward conversations on water quality policy. However, numerous complex aquatic issues have had their day as the crisis of the moment - acidification of mountain reservoirs, abandoned mine drainage water, nutrients, contaminants of emerging concern (are they still emerging?), lead in drinking water, etc. Maintaining focus on water quality is no small feat

in today's world. The number of entities working on a wide range of water quality matters is staggering. Yet we don't have an overarching, comprehensive water quality plan/strategy. So what to do?

In this session, we will focus on how the Water Congress can be of service to our members on water quality policy matters now. Our emphasis is to improve communication and member engagement. We will do our best to keep the conversation fun, relevant and informative.

### **Recognition of Mark Pifer**

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#### **11:00 am      Some Grassroots Perspectives on Colorado River Demand Management**

Moderator: TBA

Demand Management is the concept of temporary, voluntary, and compensated reductions in the consumptive use of water in the Colorado River Basin. A Demand Management program would have a goal of filling a 500,000 acre-foot Demand Management Pool in Lake Powell. Although the IBCC, Basin Roundtables, CWCB, and other State authorities will shape and implement any Demand Management process; many entities are discussing Demand Management in their own forums. This is a complicated topic with many layers and potentially significant implications – too much information to cover at once. CWC offers a forum to share perspectives of its various members. So that we can clearly hear and understand each perspective, we will listen to one at a time. Other points of view will be presented in the near future. Some of our members are concerned that agriculture, the major user of water, may be asked to carry the burden of a Demand Management program. This panel will feature some of those concerned West Slope agricultural water users.

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#### **12:30 pm      POND Networking Activity Auction**

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**1:00 pm      What's Next?**  
**The 2021 Colorado Water Supply Picture**  
**The 2021 Priorities for the Colorado Executive Branch**  
**John Porter Tribute**  
**Announcement of the 2021 Aspinall Water Leader of the Year Award**  
*(Presentation of the Award is planned for the Summer Conference)*

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