



Colorado Water Stewardship Project 2021 Strategy Outline

The Colorado Water Stewardship Project is a committee of Colorado Water Congress members deeply concerned about the adverse impact of ballot measures on Colorado's water community. Funding support is by modest continuing commitments from these members.

Project Financial Status

- End of 2020 projected balance: around \$15,000.
- Budget funds primarily covered the development and submission of a CWC amicus brief on *Hill v. Warsewa* in July 2020; the case has since been appealed, and the CWSP may need to consider joining another amicus in 2021.
- Budget funds also covered the development of two workshops at the 2020 CWC Virtual Summer Conference: the first covered the U.S. Senate Race; the second covered the 3rd Congressional District Race.
- Finally, budget funds also covered the continuous tracking of 2019-2020 ballot initiatives, a CWSP webinar in May, 2020, and continuous analysis on Amendment 71, the Gallagher Amendment, and the 2020 election.
- For 2021, the funding target is \$50,000.

Colorado Water Stewardship Project Team

The CWSP team is comprised of a Project Manager, an Interim Chair and two independent contractors: one who provides legal services and one who provides political insights.

- **Project Manager**
 - Chané Polo, Colorado Water Congress. Chané was raised on a horse farm in the outskirts of Venice, Italy before moving to the family ranch in Paris, Texas in 2005. She obtained her B.A in Plan II Honors from the University of Texas at Austin in 2011, where she was also awarded the Dedman Distinguished Scholars Scholarship Award. In 2015, she also received both her M.A. and J.D. in Environment and Natural Resources with an energy concentration from the University of Wyoming. Her Master's thesis analyzed the global ship emissions framework, scrutinized its three main weaknesses, and prescribed a way to modify the framework to reduce harmful ship emissions. Chané has worked for the Colorado Water Congress since 2016, and a Board Member of the Ditch and Reservoir Company Alliance.
- **Project Chair**
 - Andrew Colosimo, Colorado Springs Utilities. Mr. Colosimo joined the Colorado Springs Utility in 2002 and is responsible for all state and federal legislative activities affecting Colorado Springs Utilities including water, wastewater and gas and electricity issues. Mr. Colosimo serves on the Board of Directors of the National Water Resources Association and the Colorado Water Congress. He also chairs the CWC Federal Affairs Committee. Mr. Colosimo spent more than seven years working in Washington, D.C. and Colorado on energy and natural resources for U.S. Senators Bill Armstrong and Wayne Allard. Mr. Colosimo was born in Grand Junction and has a B.A. from the University of Utah.
- **Independent Contractors**
 - Legal Services, Steve Leonhardt, Burns, Figa & Will P.C. Mr. Leonhardt is a shareholder with the law firms of Burns, Figa & Will, P.C. in Greenwood Village. He works primarily in water law, as well as

environmental and governmental law and related litigation and appeals. Mr. Leonhardt represents public agencies and private parties on a variety of water and governmental matters. Mr. Leonhardt graduated from Washington University in St. Louis (B.S.C.E., with honors, 1982) and Stanford Law School (J.D., 1985). He has spoken and written articles on water law issues, and on the initiative and referendum process in Colorado. Mr. Leonhardt has represented the CWC for decades on Public Trust issues. Mr. Leonhardt was also a member of the Ethics Committee of the Colorado Bar Association from 1988 to 1996, and lectures frequently on issues of legal ethics.

- Political Insights, Floyd Ciruli, Ciruli & Associates. Floyd Ciruli holds a law degree from Georgetown university, and a B.A. cum laude in political science from UCLA. He is a member of the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) and is the past-president of the Pacific Chapter of AAPOR. Mr. Ciruli is the Director of the Crossley Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Denver Josef Korbel School of International Studies. He is a board member of the Social Science Foundation of the University of Denver Josef Korbel School of International Studies and past president of the Georgetown Law Alumni Board. Mr. Ciruli is widely known as a pollster and political analyst for 9-KUSA TV, KOA Radio and The Denver Post. In 2016, Mr. Ciruli was inducted into the Denver Press Club Hall of Fame. He hosts Colorado's leading blog for politics and trends at www.fciruli.blogspot.com

Response System

Tier 1. Monitor and Update.

- Monitor and summarize ballot initiatives filed.
- Scan websites and social media of likely ballot proponents.
- Continuous online reports on the content and status of ballot initiatives.
- Tracking and reports on both lawsuits (*Hill v. Warsewa* and Amendment 71).

Tier 2. Presence at Title Board Hearings.

- Participate in and present oral arguments at Title Board Hearings for initiatives that are a specific threat.

Tier 3. Public Engagement.

- Work with state and local government, other natural resources interests, and other interested parties to prepare communications on current threats.

Tier 4. Legal Action.

- Develop and file title appeal or amicus brief.

If a credible ballot threat emerges, a strong CWC response is needed on a larger scale. Although CWC maintains a reserve fund for an initial response, overall project success would ride on the strength of a separate, one-time appeal for at least \$100,000. Ballot campaign activities by the private sector aimed at defeating a measure would be costlier.

The deadline for filing ballot initiatives is March 2021 and the deadline for signatures will be August 2021. We expect that number of initiatives to be filed for 2021-2022 to reach 300, and a few of those to directly affect the water community. In 2021, we will continue to track proposed initiatives filed, the *Hill v. Warsewa* case, and study the shifting political landscape.