



# WEST

## Colorado River Forum

SEPTEMBER 12-15, 2023 - PINEDALE, WYOMING



### SPEAKER DIRECTORY



**Christopher M. Brown**

Christopher M. Brown supervises the Water Section of the Wyoming Attorney General's Office whose attorneys represent the Wyoming State Engineer's Office, the Wyoming Board of Control, the Wyoming Water Development Commission, the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, and divisions of the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality. He received his J.D. with honor from the University Of Wyoming College Of Law in 2002. Chris provides day-to-day advice and representation to the Wyoming State Engineer's Office on all water related issues arising throughout the state, and national water issues affecting Wyoming. He is also the primary attorney providing legal representation to the state on all interstate river compacts and decrees such as those associated with the Colorado River. Chris is a member of the Western States Water Council and chair of its legal committee, and a member of the Upper Colorado River Commission legal committee. He was also part of Wyoming's litigation team that defended the United States Supreme Court original action, Montana v. Wyoming.



**Bob Budd**

Bob Budd is the Executive Director of the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, a program established to enhance wildlife habitats and the natural resource heritage of Wyoming.

Prior to helping launch the WWNRT program, Budd was manager of Red Canyon Ranch, and Director of Land Management for The Nature Conservancy in Wyoming. In his work there, he was credited with developing and maintaining large-scale ecological process, while maintaining economic production on a working cattle ranch. Before his tenure with TNC, Bob spent 15 years with the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, ten as Executive Director.

Bob Budd has a Master of Science degree in Range Management, and Bachelor of Science degrees in Agricultural Business and Animal Science, all from the University of Wyoming. He is also trained in Holistic Resource Management, and is a Certified Professional in Rangeland Management.

He is a past-president of the international Society for Range Management and the Wyoming Chapter of the Wildlife Society. He has facilitated development of management plans for the Big Sandy River, Sage-grouse, and Bighorn Sheep in Wyoming.

Bob and his wife Lynn live in Cheyenne and have three children, Joe, Jake and Maggie (Joel).



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**Chuck Cullom**

Since January 2022, Chuck Cullom has served as the Executive Director of the Upper Colorado River Commission (UCRC). Prior to joining the UCRC, he was the Colorado River Programs Manager for the Central Arizona Water Conservation District. He has a MS from Northern Arizona University and a BS from the University of Arkansas. Chuck has more than 30 years of experience in assessing risks and vulnerabilities to Colorado River resources as well as developing and implementing projects, programs and policies to improve water supply resiliency. His work experience includes modeling surface and groundwater systems, developing and implementing water efficiency and conservation programs, implementing habitat conservation and endangered species protection programs, binational (Mexico – U.S.) water conservation and desalination projects, and transboundary water management. He has served as a water resources advisor serving in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.



**Brandon Gebhart**

Brandon Gebhart was appointed as Wyoming State Engineer by Governor Mark Gordon, and previously served as the Director of the Wyoming Water Development Office.

The mission of the Wyoming State Engineer's Office and Board of Control is to provide for the general supervision and protection of both inter- and intra-state waters of Wyoming. This includes the appropriation, distribution and application to beneficial use of water as provided under the prior appropriation doctrine, and to maintain the flexibility within that framework to meet the changing needs of the citizens of Wyoming. The State Engineer's Office collects, analyzes, maintains and provides water related information for ensuring the appropriate management and regulation of Wyoming's water resources.



**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.



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**Jennifer Lamb**

Jennifer is the Director of Conservation Programs for the Wyoming Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. Rooted in Wyoming for 22 years, Jennifer joined TNC after ten years serving as the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Director for the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). At TNC, Jennifer works with TNC's program and science teams, landowners, agencies, and other partners to harness the resources necessary to make conservation happen on the ground. This ranges from helping to craft restoration and management plans that address whole landscapes, to working with landowners on conservation practices and easements, to issues related to water and drought and the development of innovative conservation tools. Jennifer grew up in New England, completed a masters in environmental policy and management at Yale, then made her way west and fell in love with the landscape of Wyoming where she's been ever since. She lives in Lander with her husband and 16-year old son and spends as much time as possible hiking, bike riding, and climbing her way around the mountains. Jen's email address is [jennifer\\_lamb@tnc.org](mailto:jennifer_lamb@tnc.org).



**Jason Mead**

Jason Mead has worked in the field of water resources for 24 years, beginning his career in engineering consulting. For the past 17 years he has worked for the Wyoming Water Development Office, serving as the Deputy Director of the Dam and Reservoir Division starting in 2014 and the agency Director starting in 2022. He earned a Biological Systems Engineering degree from the University of Nebraska and is a licensed Professional Engineer.



**Shari Meeks**

Hello! My name is Shari Meeks, and I am currently employed by the Sublette County Conservation District in Pinedale, Wyoming where I manage both the Range and Surface Water Programs. In 2005, graduated from South Dakota State University with a bachelor's degree in Range Management and then completed my Master's degree in Natural Resources from the University of Idaho in May 2023.

While much of my career has been focused on the terrestrial, I have been working on the aquatic side since 2016, helping collect water quality data for the SCCD surface water program. More recently, my Master's project used SCCD's 20-year water sampling dataset to determine the sources and seasonal fluctuations of salinity along the main stem of the Green River within Sublette County. This project exposes the relevance of geology as it relates to salinity, both as a source and as a sink, along the main stem, among a variety of other findings. The Sublette County Conservation District works with our constituents to conserve the natural resources of Sublette County and it is my hope that we can continue using water quality and quantity data to better inform management decisions throughout our watersheds.



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**Grayford F. Payne**

Grayford F. Payne serves as the Deputy Commissioner for policy, administration, and budget, and as the chief financial officer, in the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation. He has been a member of the Senior Executive Service since 2005 and oversees all aspects of Reclamation's nearly \$5 billion annual budget to manage and protect water and critical infrastructure throughout the drought-stricken American West. Prior to joining the Bureau of Reclamation, Deputy Commissioner Payne served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary and Chief Financial Officer in the Department of the Interior's Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs. He also served as the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary - Policy, Management & Budget for the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Deputy Commissioner Payne has served in a variety of senior positions throughout the Federal government, including leadership positions within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and oversight of the Navy's National Security and Science and Technology Programs while serving with the Department of the Navy's Naval Audit Service.

Deputy Commissioner Payne graduated from George Mason University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. He is a graduate of the Department of Defense Acquisition University's Defense Systems Management College and was honored with the Secretary of the Interior's SES Gold Leadership Award in 2007, Bronze Leadership Award in 2006, and Silver Leadership Award in 2005.

Deputy Commissioner Payne is married and has 4 children and 7 grandchildren.



**Aaron Reichl**

Aaron joined FMC's Alkali Chemicals Division in Green River, Wyoming (now Genesis Alkali) in 1996 as a process engineer after graduating with a BS in Chemical Engineering from MIT. He has held various engineering and production leadership roles at the Green River facility and is currently the VP of Technology & Business Development. From 2012 through 2014, he also served as Technology Director for FMC's Lithium Division. He has been active as part of the Chemical Engineering Advisory Board at the University of Wyoming, was recently president of Wyoming Mining Association, and is a member of the Governor appointed Colorado River Advisory Committee.



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**Noe Santos**

Noe Santos is the River Operations Manager for the Boulder Canyon Operations Office in the Bureau of Reclamation's Lower Colorado Basin Region. Noe manages a group of civil engineers and hydrologists to plan/implement operations at Hoover, Davis, and Parker Dams to ensure the delivery of Colorado River Water to Lower Basin states and Mexico, model basin wide reservoir conditions for the next five years, and to determine shortage/surplus conditions for the states of Arizona, California, Nevada, and the country of Mexico. Together, Noe's group fulfills Reclamation's primary mission and supports the Boulder Canyon Operations Office in implementing the role of Water Master on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior.

Noe received his Bachelor of Science degree in Civil & Environmental Engineering in 2009 and a Master of Science degree in Civil & Environmental Engineering in 2011 from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Noe's graduate research focused on the development of artificial intelligence algorithms to model natural systems.

Noe has been recognized for his academic and professional achievements by the American Society of Civil Engineers and received the 2017 Young Government Civil Engineer of the Year Award and the 2019 Edmund Friedman Young Engineer Award for Professional Achievement.



**Cory Toye**

Cory Toye is the Wyoming Water and Habitat Program Director for Trout Unlimited where he and his team identify and implement restoration projects across the state. Cory also handles TU's water legislation and policy in Wyoming. Since 2016, Cory has helped to facilitate ongoing feasibility studies regarding Demand Management in the Colorado River, specifically through projects in the Upper Green River. Cory and his family live in Lander, WY and try to enjoy everything big, wonderful Wyoming offers, especially Wind River country and the Absaroka Mountain Range. Cory has a Juris Doctorate from the University of Wyoming College of Law and a B.S. in Economics with a minor in Environment and Natural Resources, also from UW. Cory has worked for TU since 2006.



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**Gregory J. Walch,  
Esq.**

Gregory (Greg) Walch was named General Counsel to the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) and Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD) on May 2, 2012. He works closely with colleagues in the federal government and Colorado River basin states on various Colorado River flexibility and sustainability issues.

Mr. Walch is a member of the SNWA and LVVWD Executive Team, oversees the legal department of both agencies, and reports directly to the General Manager. In addition to his duties at both agencies, Greg recently taught water law at the University of Nevada Boyd School of Law as an adjunct professor.

Greg received a B.S. in Agricultural Engineering from Iowa State University in 1985, and thereafter worked with Layne Western Company as an engineer designing and overseeing construction of water well systems for industrial and municipal clients through 1989. Mr. Walch received his Juris Doctor in May 1992 from Lewis & Clark Northwestern School of Law, and has since practiced environmental, water, land use, mining, eminent domain, and administrative law in the Southern Nevada area. His practice afforded him the opportunity to appear regularly before the Nevada State Engineer and other state agencies and administrators, various federal agencies, and state and federal courts in Nevada. In 1996, Mr. Walch co-founded the law firm now known as Holley Driggs and is recognized by Chambers USA, Mountain States Super Lawyers, and Martindale Hubbell for his work in environmental and natural resources law.