



National Young Farmers Coalition
Colorado Water Conservation Board final report | April 15, 2024

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NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION

PO BOX 1074 / HUDSON, NY 12534 / (518) 643-3564 / YOUNGFARMERS.ORG

National Young Farmers Coalition
Colorado Water Conservation Board final report | April 15, 2024

Project Summary:

With support from the Colorado Water Conservation Board, the National Young Farmers Coalition has worked throughout the grant period to support Colorado farmers and ranchers with a focus on young and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers. We confirm that all matching commitments for this project have been fulfilled.

The Colorado Water Equity Partnership assembled a group of advisors and partners including urban and rural farmers, an environmental and equity expert, a water lawyer, and an acequia user. This group met four times between March and September in 2022 to develop and plan the projects described below. In addition, the group engaged a total of 163 members of the public—including 64 who identified as farmers/ranchers—via a series of five webinars on Colorado water management and the Colorado Water Plan, including;

- World Water Day Celebration (March 22, 2022)
- Colorado Water Plan Panel (June 2, 2022)
- Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop & Water Celebration (Sept. 14, 2022)
- Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop, Jefferson County Food Policy Coalition (Sept. 15, 2022)
- Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop, San Luis, Colorado (Sept. 24, 2022)

With support from CWCB, we continued to facilitate the second year of the Colorado Young Farmer Water Fellowship, supporting 8 fellows to complete the program. Fellows participated in 7 virtual workshops, a 3-day in-person retreat, and a trip to Washington DC to learn about federal policy. 75% of this year's cohort—6 out of the 8 fellows—ran for a role on a local water board. At the time of writing, four fellows have secured a role; two fellows are still waiting to hear about their applications. Boards include the Human Services Fund Advisory Committee in Boulder County, Colorado Farmers Market Association Board of Directors, Ellis Pipeline Board (Montezuma County), Arroyo and North Alamosa Ditches, and the New Americans Community Advisory Committee. The unprecedented level of engagement demonstrated by this year's fellowship cohort constitutes a huge win for our program and validates what we know already from our organizing in Colorado and elsewhere; with training and support, farmers are successful policy leaders.

Overall, the fellowship increased knowledge of water planning and policy in Colorado, specifically regarding issues relevant to BIPOC farmers and ranchers. In a pre-fellowship survey, fellows were asked about their perceptions around their leadership in agriculture and water, their knowledge of water management and policy in Colorado, and their understanding of the Farm Bill and its impact. At the end of the fellowship, fellows answered the same questions. Overall, comprehension and confidence scores across all areas increased. The biggest impact of the fellowship on the participants was around their ability to understand “how the Farm Bill works and its impact on me,” “water policy in Colorado,” and “how water is managed in Colorado.” See attached for a more detailed analysis of the evaluation.

| Task | Status | Progress on the Project | Obstacles Encountered and Overcome |
|---------------------------------|--------|--|---|
| Task 1 - Build Coalitions | 100% | <p>At the beginning of 2022, The National Young Farmers Coalition and Frontline Farming pursued connections within our broad networks of peer organizations—particularly those that are BIPOC or frontline-led and serving—to create an advisory committee that reflects the diverse agricultural populations we serve and those that are most often marginalized from water policymaking.</p> <p>The result of this trust and relationship-building work is evident in our committee, which met for a kick-off meeting on March 10, 2022, and includes members Devon Peña from The Acequia Institute, farmer Candice Orlando, Equity Consultant Michelle Gabriel Parish, and Kia Ruiz, an environmental consultant. To bring in a water law perspective, Gregory Hicks, a water law expert and Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington School of Law, joined the advisory team.</p> <p>The advisory team has met four times; we had our fourth and final meeting on September 29, 2022 and were joined by Nora Flynn and Elizabeth Schoder from CWCB.</p> | <p>Building coalitions takes time; we have completed this goal and are proud of the time our staff committed over months to convene a committee.</p> <p>In our first meeting, the advisory committee identified a few perspectives that are missing from the group - a water lawyer and an indigenous water user from one of Colorado's Tribes. Greg Hicks since has joined as a water law expert, but we were not able to identify a water user from one of the Tribes to join. To ensure we included Indigenous perspectives, we have reached out and had discussions with a few Tribal members to get their perspectives on the Colorado Water Plan.</p> |
| Task 2 – Outreach and Education | 100% | <p>As the Water Plan Public Comment period came to a close in Fall 2022; we offered opportunities and resources to support farmers to learn about the Water Plan and to make their voices heard through the process while building knowledge and connections.</p> <p>In celebration of World Water Day, we hosted a webinar on March 12, 2022, to discuss water issues affecting some of the most vulnerable communities in Colorado. We had 59 attendees.</p> <p>On June 2, 2022 we hosted our second webinar, which focused on the Colorado Water Plan. Speakers, Alex Funk and Kia Ruiz discussed the Colorado Water Plan and what it means for BIPOC communities in Colorado. After the speakers, Michelle Grabrielloff-Parish led a collaborative activity to capture the attendees ideas and aspirations for the Colorado Water Plan. 45 people attended.</p> <p>Our third webinar was held on September 14, 2022 and was a comment-writing workshop to support BIPOC producers in submitting comments to CWCB. Devon Peña of the Acequia Institute and Erin Foster West of Young Farmers discussed the water plan draft. They</p> | <p>In 2022, we had hoped to complete all our webinars before the summer and the major growing season. However, capacity within our team and with our partners only allowed us to conduct two webinars in the spring. We postponed the other two to late summer so that it was still within the public comment period for the Water Plan, but it was later in the growing season and attendance was lower since this is peak production time for farmers and ranchers.</p> |

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| | | <p>shared recommendations that have come out of discussions with the advisory group and with other partners. Michelle Gabrieloff-Parish led the comment writing workshop, and we compiled ideas from the group about the water plan. We also shared resources to support attendees to submit their own comments. The webinar had 26 attendees.</p> <p>Another workshop was led on September 15, 2022 with the Jefferson County Food Policy Council. Cole Dickerson, a consultant on the project, led a comment-writing workshop with 25 attendees on the Water Plan. The workshop had urban farmers and Latino and Hispanic organizations present, two of our target demographics.</p> <p>Our last workshop was an in-person event in San Luis, Colorado on September 25, 2022. The workshop focused solely on acequia users and was hosted by Dr. Devon Peña and The Acequia Institute. The workshop had 8 attendees.</p> | |
| Task 3 – Water Fellowship | 100% | <p>The Water and Equity Partnership built on the momentum of the Water Plan Webinars to deepen the engagement of BIPOC and young farmers in water planning through the second Colorado Young Farmers Fellowship. We used the knowledge gleaned from the project thus far to design outreach and curriculum for this program, drawing heavily from our advisory committee’s networks.</p> <p>After many conversations about program design, we launched the application for the next Colorado Young Farmer Fellows cohort. We received 21 applications (the most we’ve received for a state water fellowship) and selected a group of 10 farmers to participate. The cohort had a majority of farmers who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color and all expressed a strong commitment to water conservation and environmental justice.</p> <p>After the cohort was selected in October 2022, we hosted 7 virtual workshops, a 3-day in-person retreat, and a trip to Washington DC to learn about federal policy. The virtual workshops covered CO water law, water rights, communications, leadership, and the spectrum of community engagement. Two of the workshops were in the winter 2023. The October workshop was led by fellows. They presented on the community projects and experience participating in water boards. Our last workshop in December 2023 was</p> | <p>We are committed to designing farmer-centered programming, led by farmers. While planning in the summer allows the Fellowship to launch in the off-season for farmer fellows, engaging our majority-farmer advisory committee during the growing season proved challenging.</p> <p>To ensure we have adequate time to gather input from advisors and other partners, we extended our fellowship design period by an additional two months. We used this extension to continue conversations and allow more time to shape the program to serve young and BIPOC producers best.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we had two fellows exit the program in spring 2023. They were no longer able to complete the program. This is consistent with other water fellowships Young Farmers has run - typically 10-20% of fellows who start the program do not complete it. For future fellowships, we are considering a different model that would allow for fellows to move in</p> |

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| | | <p>a celebration of the completion of the fellowship. We invited previous CO and NM water fellowship alumni, as well as past and current program partners, to attend to connect across cohorts and geographics.</p> <p>During the 3-day retreat in Boulder, CO, February 3-5, we toured a fellow's farm, learned about the new Water Plan from CWCB staff, and were joined by Rep. Karen McCormick to discuss current water and agriculture issues in the state legislature. Advisory board member Michelle Gabrieloff Parish discussed challenges within the broader Colorado River Basin and led a walking tour to look at intentional water design. CO Water Partnership partner, Fatuma Emmad led a discussion on water justice. Two former CO fellows - Megan Davey (now Young Farmers Water Fellowship Coordinator) and Andy Breiter - discussed their experiences as water leaders and fellow alumni.</p> <p>Lastly, 9 fellows joined 125 other national Young Farmer fellows in DC in March to discuss federal policy and the 2023 Farm Bill. They also met with their Members of Congress to share their experiences and challenges around water equity and access. This was an optional activity for the fellowship so fellows were not required to participate and no CWCB funds were used for this activity.</p> <p>During the summer 2023, the fellowship moved into an independent work period, and we did not meet as a group during the summer to accommodate farmer schedules. Fellows completed creative advocacy projects of their choosing and ran for water conservation boards and other leadership roles. We facilitated one-on-one coaching calls with each fellows to support them throughout this time. Megan Davey, Water Fellowship Coordinator, connected with 5 fellows to have coaching conversations in-person, 2 of which were onsite at farms.</p> <p>The final stage of the project was evaluation. We had each fellow complete a pre and post survey to gauge their knowledge and perceptions around leadership, water, and agriculture. Fellows also submitted information on their advocacy projects and boards. Results of the survey and fellowship outcomes are attached.</p> | <p>and out of the fellowship depending on their needs and interest, to allow for new fellows to join if the original cohort members cannot complete the program. Our National Land Advocacy Fellowship uses this model successfully to open up opportunities to more participants.</p> |
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Above: fellowship. alumni panel at fellowship retreat. Below: group photo at fellowship retreat.





Above: group photo at farm tour. Below: farm tour at fellowship retreat



Gabriela Galindo

Gabriela is of mixed Indigenous lineage of Northern Mexican-Southern U.S. After years in government and higher academia, she was called to study and promote holistic health and reconnecting to Nature. She began reclaiming and remembering her Indigenous roots and culture and how to walk from a community centered, Earth-centered perspective. As an Aztec Dancer, she dances with her dance community for healing, celebration, ceremony, social and environmental justice movements, and the preservation and passing on of this thriving tradition. She currently works out of a prominent university helping center BIPOC voices and leaders in equity, climate and social justice efforts in partnership with the City of Boulder and affordable housing partners.



Jesus Flores

Soy el manager de el Rio Grande Farm Park. Tengo dos anos y siete meses trabajando para el Parque. Me siento muy contento con el trabajo que estoy haciendo en el parque. Toda mi vida desde la edad de tres anos e sido agricultor. Aprendi de mi papa con mis siete hermanos y tres hermanas en una comunidad rural en Mexico del estado de San Luis Potosi.

[Jesus is the manager of the Rio Grande Farm Park. He has been working for the park for two years and seven months. Jesus is very happy with the work he is doing at the park. Jesus has been farming his entire life, since he was three years old. Jesus learned from his father, along with his seven brothers and three sisters in a rural community in Mexico in the state of San Luis Potosi.]



Gretchen Groenke

Gretchen Groenke (she/hers) is a mother, a poet, a birthworker, and a student of the plants and Earth. She was raised on an orchard in the vast industrial agricultural landscape of Washington State where she learned to love rich soil, fresh food, plants, people and language. It was also in this place that she came to know injustice and exploitation of land and people as inherent to a corporate globalized food system. These formative experiences set her life's course to try to understand and dismantle oppression and injustice wherever she has reach. Gretchen has spent her life working with plants, agriculture, and community. Currently, she facilitates and supports community based education and organizing specific to food and racial justice, with an emphasis on building strength, dignity, and justice from the land up. She has served as the Co-Director of Mancos FoodShare, a Co-Founder of the Four Corners Food Coalition, Co-Founder of 4 Corners Collaborative, Raise Colorado Steering Committee member, and is a Co-Creator at 4th World Farm. You can find her writing, poetry, and latest adventures at @flamesinherveins



Amyas Maestas

Amyas Maestas is learning every day about the practice of Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems in a biodynamic way, consisting of classic farming practices, the liberal arts of farming, forestry, draft power, and good land stewardship. His future passion is to be a farmer, work with food co-ops, build a successful business, strengthen my rural community, & most importantly work with rural advocacy groups. Amyas has been learning these strong liberal arts and scientific backgrounds, as well as acquiring a stronger work ethic, and having passion and drive. His dream is to farm a historically draft power, mid-scale livestock farm, with integrated crops and vegetables on the farm. To practice agrarian-like practices and borrowing from yesterday to do the work of today!



Audrey Paugh

As a child, the Continental Divide was not more than a stone's throw away from the place Audrey calls home. For the first 8 years of life in Alma, Colorado, it was easy to take for granted the freshness in the mountains, the drinkable water, and the excitement of a sudden pattering on the roof from the summer rain. Since then, much of Audrey's life experiences have taken place in Eastern Europe and Asia, as her parents were international elementary teachers. After graduating from high school in Ukraine, Audrey lived in Vancouver, Canada for 6 years where she completed her Bachelor of Science in Global Resource Systems in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at the University of British Columbia, before finally returning home. With influences from the many places that have shaped her life and the unraveling lessons from my studies and experiences, it is clear that water is something that inevitably holds the world together. Audrey is excited to be a part of the 2022-23 Colorado Water Fellowship to learn with and from agricultural peers, to be able to communicate to others the context of Colorado's water, and to continue supporting our local food systems. In her free time, Audrey enjoys writing, singing, being in the mountains, and spending time with family and friends.



Lauren Kelso

Lauren works at Growing Gardens, in Boulder, Colorado, where she leads a team of excellent and passionate farmers in urban agriculture projects. They work to educate her community about gardening, farming and agricultural issues, as well as feed them! They also provide support and resources so that they can feed themselves! Lauren is also working toward her Masters of Public Affairs at CU Denver, where she has focused on policies and programs at the intersection of people, natural resources and agriculture in the west.



Shannon Maes

Shannon completes her second season as a regenerative ranching apprentice through the Quivira Coalition at San Juan Ranch in Saguache, Colorado at the beginning of December 2022. She joined the program in the spring of 2021 as an apprentice at Sol Ranch in northeastern New Mexico. From Denver, Colorado originally, her educational background is in environmental studies and social justice. She has worked and volunteered on a variety of agricultural operations including fruit orchards, dairies and vegetable farms. Before working on a ranch her favorite former job was being the garden/farm to school coordinator at an elementary school. Shannon came to ranching through a deep love for nature, western landscapes, community, food, agrarian/rural tradition and her desire to be an instrument of positive change. Since then she has discovered an obsession with grazing animals and their impacts on the land as well as a conviction that better land stewardship must be an inclusive, just and collaborative effort. In the future Shannon hopes to continue caring for land through ranching, producing food and building community.



Thai Nguyen

Thai Nguyen came to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam in 1980 after spending time in four refugee camps. She is the founder and executive director of Kaizen Food Rescue, a non-profit organization that is the only refugee-led food access organization in Colorado. Through her organization, Thai and her team of volunteers have distributed over 11 million pounds of fresh food to thousands of families in 93 zip codes. Now as a former refugee, Thai is passionate about food justice and works to address food insecurity in her community by serving on various food policy councils. In her free time she enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and pets.



Colorado Water Equity Partnership: 2022 Workshop Series Report

An analysis of the engagement and outcomes of five justice-oriented water workshops hosted between March and September 2022.



October 2022

Colorado Water and Equity Partnership

Cole Dickerson: Water Equity Partnership Coordinator

Erin Foster West: Water Director, National Young Farmers Coalition

Kasey Neiss: Data Activist and Systems Manager, FrontLine Farming

Executive Summary

The Colorado Water Equity Partnership organized a series of five community workshops on Colorado water management and how people can take action to promote a just and equitable water governance system. The workshop series was held from March 2022 - September 2022. The goal of these workshops was to engage with communities that are historically underrepresented in Colorado water decision making (acequia users, Indigenous communities, urban farmers, communities of color etc.), to understand their vision for Colorado water management and to support them in submitting their own public comments to the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) on the 2023 Colorado Water Plan Draft. This report developed by the Colorado Water Equity Partnership offers a high level analysis of these workshops and their outcomes.

The Colorado Water Equity Partnership finds that this workshop series on Colorado water management and the Colorado Water Plan was successful in starting an initial conversation in historically underrepresented communities about the importance of equity and justice in water management and how we can work towards that vision. Across the 5 webinars the Colorado Water Equity Partnership engaged with over 240 Coloradans and came to understand the collective vision for future Colorado water management of the communities we worked with. Some of the most consistent themes we see in this vision are:

- Equity and Justice
 - Work towards greater representation from historically underserved and underrepresented communities on the CWCB and River Basin Roundtables that help guide water policy and management
 - Support new and young farmers in accessing land and water
 - Prioritize water project funding for historically underserved communities in Colorado
- Ecology
 - Ensure that water distribution systems (irrigation, municipal consumption, industrial use) are supporting the environment and biodiversity
 - Embrace and value water as the most vital resource to life, resilience and thriving communities
- Education and Engagement
 - A robust effort to engage and educate communities across Colorado on water management and policy, and opportunities to take action. Also, a commitment from the State of Colorado to support communities to lead their own engagement and advocacy efforts on Colorado water management.

The Colorado Water Equity Partnership supported the submission of over 12 individual comments on the Water Plan and submitted a comprehensive report to the CWCB with our technical Water Plan comments. The Colorado Water Equity Partnership understands that there is far more work to be done beyond the Colorado Water Plan Public Comment Period for historically underrepresented communities to help lead water decision making in the state. We

found that the communities we worked with had a limited understanding of water management systems in Colorado and would benefit from more robust engagement and education efforts and more opportunities to become involved in water decision making groups.

What is the Colorado Water Equity Partnership?

The Colorado Water Equity Partnership—a collaboration of Frontline Farming, National Young Farmers Coalition, and The Acequia Institute—has a vision of equitable water governance that fosters a vibrant agricultural community, symbiosis between urban and rural water use, healthy ecosystems, and water justice for historically underserved and systematically excluded communities in Colorado. Water justice in this vision includes a water system that explicitly elevates the water interests of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and young and beginning farmers. The decisions made around Colorado's water resources today will impact the state for decades to come. The Colorado Water Equity Partnership aims to better engage young farmers, BIPOC farmers, and allies within these decisions.

Workshop Series

The Colorado Water Equity Partnership developed and hosted a series of five webinars on Colorado water management and the Colorado Water Plan. The following is a list of the workshops hosted by the Colorado Water Equity Partnership (more information below):

- **March 22, 2022** - World Water Day Celebration
- **June 2, 2022** - Colorado Water Plan Panel
- **September 14, 2022** - Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop and Water Celebration
- **September 15, 2022** - Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop for Jefferson County Food Policy Coalition
- **September 24, 2022** - Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop for San Luis, Colorado

Please see below for an individual report on each of these webinars.

Outcomes

The workshop series helped to develop, and in many cases start, community conversations at the intersection of water and justice. Attendees engaged in conversation and critical thinking at every workshop and most were clearly enthusiastic about learning more and continuing the conversation. Almost everyone understood the importance of stewarding water resources and ensuring they were accessible to everyone. The workshops helped folks connect their experience with water to broader water challenges and narratives, like water management in Colorado as a whole.

The workshops also helped to support community members in submitting individual public comments to the CWCB within the Colorado Water Plan public comment period. We held three comment writing workshops in September 2022 that provided attendees with information on the Colorado Water Plan and the importance of submitting comments, and with help to develop and submit their own comments. Attendees of these workshops submitted 10+ individual comments via the online comment portal and submitted 2 individual comments via the September 28 Robust Agriculture Listening Session.

In two out of three of the comment writing workshops we ran out of time to develop comments with attendees. We included a survey to track comment submissions from workshop attendees, but only had one person respond indicating that they submitted a comment. In the third comment writing workshop, with the Jefferson County Food Policy Council, we helped the attendees to develop their own comments and submitted them before we concluded the meeting. In this workshop we helped attendees to submit 9 comments. We can account for 10 individual online comment submissions from folks who attended at least one of our workshops with a reasonable assumption that more attendees submitted comments and didn't fill out our survey.

Several attendees of these workshops attended the Robust Agriculture Listening Session hosted by the CWCB on September 28, 2022. Two folks who attended both one of our workshops and the listening session submitted verbal comments.

The workshop series helped the Colorado Water Equity Partnership understand that community members needed more time than was given to fully comprehend Colorado water management, the Colorado Water Plan and leverage points for systems change. Considering that our team was at or beyond capacity (many of us were farming during the public comment period) during this workshop series, we recommend that future education and engagement efforts are granted adequate time so that participants can learn and effectively engage.

Individual Workshop Reports

World Water Day

Date: March 22, 2022

Hosted By: Colorado Water Equity Partnership with Green Latinos, Ekar Farms, Repair the World: Colorado, and Colorado Jewish Climate Action

Speaker/Title/Topic:

- Ean Thomas Tafoya - Colorado State Director at GreenLatinos
- Aaron Citron - Senior Policy Advisor at The Nature Conservancy

Attendee Information

- 94 registrants / 59 Attendees (63% Show Rate)

Modality

- Held virtually via Zoom available in English and Spanish

Overview

World Water Day, held via Zoom on March 22, 2022, was hosted by The Colorado Water Equity Partnership (consisting of National Young Farmers Coalition, FrontLine Farming, and The Acequia Institute), in partnership with Green Latinos, Ekar Farms, Repair the World: Colorado, and Colorado Jewish Climate Action. This report summarizes data collected during the World Water Day event. Data were collected in two main approaches: (1) event registration process via Eventbrite and (2) a live, interactive survey conducted during the event via Mentimeter. The event attendees were able to choose to participate during the event in either Spanish or English.

The event had a total of 94 registrants, however not all who registered for the event attended so this report analyzes registrant data and participant data separately. Registrant data is best used to assess interest in the topics regarding water. 59 of 94 registrants (63% answer rate) provided thoughts on what they felt were important water related issues. The answers were then thematically coded into six categories: drought and climate change, conservation efforts, pollutants and contamination, equity/inequity and access, irrigation and farming concerns, and policy action to address siloed efforts.

77 of 94 registrants (82% answer rate) provided thoughts on what they were eager to learn more about in regard to water-related issues. A few indicated they are looking to learn and gain more general knowledge on water but did not voice specific questions. The answers that did provide clear areas of inquiry were thematically coded and summarized in higher level discussion topics:

1. Are there contingency plans in place for water conservation in face of increasing droughts? What is the current condition (data) of drought and water conservation? Where does agriculture fit in?
2. Education for community members about conservation practices in public and private spaces
3. Demystify Colorado Water Plan and Local water policy/laws
4. Discovering implications to regional water usage, practices of neighboring states, and interactions between different political/regional entities.
5. A broad discussion around Tribal, Indigenous, POC Water rights and advocacy.
6. What can be done for preventing or addressing contamination and pollutants?
7. Exploring the convergence of water, land and rights

Of the 94 registrants, 59 people were in attendance (63% show rate). When asked to summarize their reaction to the event in three words, participants identifying both emotional responses and knowledge gained from the panelists. Most emotive words were positive (eg. Inspiring, hopeful, motivated). It seems many walked away from this event with renewed strength in tackling issues around water and with new knowledge or terminology they can use when engaging with others in their networks. However, some participants expressed negative emotions (eg. Upset, worried, distraught). So-called negative responses demonstrated that participants grasped the gravity of the situation related to water equity.

Participants were invited to share questions they had about water-related issues. The questions shared demonstrate that the event and speakers successfully guided participants in developing future thoughts and curiosities about water in Colorado. Many questions were centered on equitable use of water and how to help bring change to those seen to be violating “water rights”. 3 Participants were asked to list the locations where they interact with water. Most participants identify their interaction with water within domestic settings, and especially inside a home. They also acknowledge the use of water when caring for plants, gardens, lawns, and trees. Farms were also commonly mentioned as a few attendees identified as farmers or ranchers. Importantly “urban farm” was mentioned specifically as a setting. Other outdoor places commonly mentioned had to do with the appreciation of the natural world (eg. Rivers, forests, rain). These sites of interaction are important to call back to in advocacy work as they are tangible points that allow people to see themselves as stakeholders and influencers.

The term “water rights” did not have a universal definition for the participants. To most respondents, water rights meant the fundamental right to access, and to fulfill basic needs of humans and the planet. Many participants also pointed out that water rights are linked to the control of water, which is related to legal ownership, power imbalances, wealth (including land wealth) and representation. A smaller number felt water rights was a colonial conception of ownership that needs to be overturned and others recognized water itself as a stakeholder.

Broadly, participants were interested in taking two types of actions (1) policy-level action, and (2) increasing their own personal involvement and getting involved in community-level change. Policy actions were related to both contacting legislators and learning about what legislation to

support or advocating for certain changes in water law. Personal and community action topics showed interest in attendance of more public meetings and connection with the community already doing the work. A few specifically mentioned looking for current leaders and following their leadership.

The participants had two main messages for Colorado legislators and policymakers: (1) Legislators should treat this as an opportunity to lead by example and demonstrate to others what equitable water policy can look like and recognize the multiple places where water and life intersect already within our lives, and (2) policymakers should actively build relationships with and include the people most affected by emerging water issues, especially indigenous voices. The Colorado Water Equity Partnership intends to use the data collected for this event in planning and consideration of future events to best elicit and elevate the voices and desires of communities who are historically oppressed or made vulnerable by current social and political systems.

Colorado Water Plan

Date: June 2, 2022

Hosted By: Colorado Water Equity Partnership

Speaker/Title/Topic:

- Alexander Funk - Director of Water Resources and Senior Counsel at the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Kia Ruiz - Environmental and Economic Development Consultant
- Michelle Gabrieloff-Parish - Environmental Consultant and Facilitator

Attendee Information

- 82 Registrants / 45 Attendees
- 36/81 registrants identify as farmers/ranchers/agricultural professionals
- 30/79 Registrants who answered our survey identify as a Person of Color
 - Black/African American: 5
 - Latinx: 8
 - Chicano: 1
 - Asian: 7
 - POC: 8
 - Mixed Indigenous and Mexican American: 1

Modality

- Held virtually via Zoom available in English and Spanish

Overview

This workshop was designed to provide a baseline knowledge of the Colorado Water Plan and water policy in Colorado to attendees and gain an understanding of the collective future vision from attendees of water management in Colorado. To better understand the knowledge and questions of attendees before the event, we asked registrants to indicate areas of Colorado water-related issues they wanted to learn about. Responses to these survey questions were thematically coded and compiled below:

- *What are some of the most important water-related issues you experience in your work?*
 - Water access for farmers in Colorado (Urban, Rural, Suburban alike)
 - Growing food
 - Drought resilience
 - Misusing/Wasting water
 - Water conservation
 - Water Equity and environmental justice
- *Are there any Colorado water-related issues you would like to learn about?*
 - Water rights
 - What can realistically be changed in the Colorado Water Plan
 - How the state of Colorado manages water in Colorado
 - How to give more water back to aquifers, rivers, streams etc.
 - Efforts to ensure equity and justice is included in Colorado water management
 - Interactions and relationship between urban and rural communities in Colorado when it comes to water management
 - Building resilient communities
 - Drought and water conservation

We split the workshop into three sections: The Colorado Water Plan; History of Colorado Water Policy; and Collective Vision for Colorado Water management.

Alex Funk gave a presentation on the Colorado Water Plan from a technical standpoint. He answered questions like: *What is the Water Plan used for?* ; *How is the Water Plan developed?* ; *Who creates the Water Plan?* ; *What efforts are being made to ensure the Water Plan includes historically underrepresented communities?* ; *What improvement areas are evident in the Water Plan?* ; and more. This information is important to convey to the communities we work with. Based on the questions we received from attendees, we determined there need to be more robust efforts to engage Colorado residents around water management as it was a complex topic for folks to understand.

Kia Ruiz gave a presentation on the history of Colorado Water Policy. She spoke about prior appropriation and certain principles included in this water management system Green Latinos, Ekar Farms, Repair the World: Colorado, and Colorado Jewish Climate Action. that worked to exclude Native Tribes, Indigenous communities and communities of color from participating in water management decisions.

Michelle Gabrieloff-Parish worked in a visioning exercise that helped attendees identify aspects of a future water management system they wanted to see and helped the Colorado Water Equity Partnership to understand what the collective community vision of future water management is. Below are some themes found from this exercise:

- *Culture & Community*
 - Embrace and value that water is life
 - Build a culture of service and justice
- *Agriculture*
 - Emphasize native and drought tolerant plants
 - Integrate ecosystems and agricultural systems
 - The Colorado agricultural system should balance efficiency and ecosystem health
- *Governance & Decision-making*
 - Integrate more systems of democratic governance like Acequias where a vital resource is shared when it is scarce
 - More youth voices in decision making conversations
 - Better regulate systems that are harmful to the environment and people
- *Water Quality & Quantity*
 - Better regulate harmful chemicals that end up in Colorado waterways
 - Reform the system of prior appropriation and Colorado water rights so all communities have enough water
 - Center culture and community in water quality and water quantity discussions
 - Return more water to rivers and ecosystems
- *Ecological*
 - Restore the hydrological cycle of water
 - Stop piping and cementing irrigation ditches as they dry up landscapes and reduce riparian biodiversity
- *Infrastructure*
 - Improve water infrastructure in underserved communities
 - Update water infrastructure to ensure needs of both people and the environment

Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop and Water Celebration

Date: September 14, 2022

Hosted By: Colorado Water Equity Partnership

Speaker/Title

- Devon Peña - Director of The Acequia Institute, Farmer in San Luis, Co
- Erin Foster West - Water Director at National Young Farmers Coalition
- Bianca Mikahn - Cultural activist, educator, poet and Executive Director of Check Your Head

- Michelle Gabrieloff-Parish - Environmental Consultant and Facilitator

Attendee Information

- 35 Registrants / 26 Attendees
- 20 / 35 registrants identify as a farmer/rancher/agricultural professional
- 7 / 35 registrants identify as a Person of Color
 - Latinx: 3
 - Indigenous: 1
 - POC: 2
 - Mixed Indigenous and Black: 1

Modality: Held virtually via Zoom available in English and Spanish

Overview

We developed this workshop to provide a brief overview to attendees of the Colorado Water Plan Draft released in June 2022. We intended to discuss what was included and what was missing from our perspective, to answer questions about the Water Plan and fill out comments as a group. To better understand the knowledge and questions of attendees before the event, we asked registrants to indicate areas of Colorado water-related issues they wanted to learn about. Responses to these survey questions were thematically coded and compiled below:

- *What are some of the most important water-related issues you experience in your work?*
 - Better access to water for young farmers, urban farmers, new farmers and farmers of color
 - Equity and justice included in Colorado water management plans
 - Quality water access by communities
- Are there any Colorado water-related issues you would like to learn about?
 - How does the Colorado Water Plan address water conservation over time?
 - How are water rights considered in the Colorado Water Plan?
 - Is there a plan in the Water Plan to restore rivers and riparian areas?
 - What processes are in place to make water access more equitable in Colorado?

Devon Peña spoke about the effort beyond the Colorado Water Plan that is needed to overcome the challenges caused by the exclusion of communities of color from the current water system in Colorado. Erin Foster West gave an overview of the Water Plan including what we felt was missing and should be addressed in our comments. Michelle Gabrieloff-Parish led another visioning exercise for folks to figure out what they wanted to see in the final draft of the 2023 Colorado Water Plan.

We had 35 registrants and 26 attendees for a 74% show rate. There was representation from the Metro Denver area, Western Slope and Acequia communities in the San Luis Valley. We found there to be several interesting collective recommendations from attendees:

- *Equity*
 - Greater representation from diverse groups with lived experiences on the CWCB and Roundtables that help guide water policy and management
 - Need to ensure good water quality for disproportionately impacted communities in Colorado
 - Collaboratively developing a system where Indigenous people and other historically excluded communities have agency to steward our water and land
 - Real community inclusion in foundation of Water Plan
 - Subsidies and incentives switched to be reflective of our actual values around water
 - Support new and young farmers in accessing land and water
 - Address the historic exclusion of communities of color and new and young farmers from access to water rights
- *Ecology*
 - Every water initiative in the state should have to make a case that it is a) equitable and b) ecologically-sound. Going forward these should be the baseline.
 - Integrate natural water storage systems that support biodiversity like beaver dams
 - Support/compensate acequia communities for their contribution to ecosystem services
 - Make funding and education accessible for xeriscaping and native plant landscaping
- *Education and Engagement*
 - Need more education on water system and water policy in communities that have been excluded from water decisions
 - At this point it is a privilege to be up to date water issues
 - Develop a mechanism for everyone, especially those in marginalized communities, to understand and educate people on what the water issues are affecting them, taking into account language barriers through meeting interpretation and written translation of materials.
- *Agriculture*
 - Prioritizing water for production of food and support for biodiversity
 - Support for costs of irrigation that small farm or the farmers pay. Some programs/grant money that would help the small farmers
 - Responsible water usage in agriculture is mandated. Fines won't work - but don't allow irrigation during parts of the day.
- *Miscellaneous*
 - Rethink transmountain diversions - idea that we have this constant flow of water and that it will be coming.

- Create a system for water wise communities so that neighborhoods and HOA's can work together to solve water use issues

Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop for the Jefferson County Food Policy Council

Date: September 15, 2022

Hosted By: Colorado Water Equity Partnership

Speaker/Title

- Cole Dickerson - Community Organizer with the Colorado Water Equity Partnership

Attendee Information

- 25 (No registration information available)

Modality: Held virtually via Zoom available in English and Spanish

Overview

We conducted a comment writing workshop for the Jefferson County Food Policy Council. Through the Colorado Water Equity Partnership's outreach and community organizing efforts, we made a connection with this coalition of food system professionals in Jefferson County and organized a comment writing workshop. We focused on making the connection between the Colorado Water Plan and local food systems to show the relevance of the Water Plan to the coalition. There was representation from Latino and Hispanic organizations as well as urban farming and food policy organizations. There were 25 attendees at the meeting who participated in the workshop.

We found the following recommendation themes from the attendees:

Equity

- Greater representation from diverse groups with lived experiences in the boards/committees that help guide water policy
- Need to ensure water quality for disproportionately impacted communities in Colorado
- Support new and young farmers in accessing land and water
- Address the historic exclusion of communities of color and new and young farmers from access to water rights
 - Develop a system for giving people access to ditch water regardless of priority based on when the rights were initially obtained
- Increase representation on the CWCB
- Farmers of color need better access to water

Ecology

- Better funding for xeriscaping
 - Replacing lawns with native plants that promote pollination
 - Collaborating with HOAs to promote lower water usage and xeriscaping
- Support gray water use
- Education and resources to plant native plants

Education and Engagement

- Need more education on water system and water policy in communities that have been excluded from water decisions
 - At this point it is a privilege to be up to date water issues
- Develop a mechanism for everyone, especially those in marginalized communities, to understand and educate people on what the water issues are affecting them, taking into account language barriers through meeting interpretation and written translation of materials.
- Educate children to help educate parents

Water conservation

- Incentivizing lower water usage rates among residential customers
- Create a system for water wise communities so that neighborhoods and HOA's can work together to solve water use issues

Colorado Water Plan Comment Writing Workshop and Water Conversation in San Luis, Colorado

Date: September 24, 2022

Where: San Luis, Colorado

Hosted By: Colorado Water Equity Partnership

Speaker/Title

- Devon Peña - Director of The Acequia Institute, Farmer in San Luis, Co
- Cole Dickerson - Community Organizer with the Colorado Water Equity Partnership

Attendee Information

- 8 Attendees (No registration information available)

Modality: In-Person

Overview

We conducted a comment writing workshop in San Luis, Colorado with members from the local farming community and acequia community. The goal of this workshop was to engage directly with acequia communities in Colorado and understand what they wanted to see included in the Colorado Water Plan. We marketed this event through the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association listserv and through word of mouth. We didn't require pre-registration and had 8 community members join us: 2 on Zoom and 6 in-person.

The following recommendations to the CWCB were frequent in the comments attendees made:

Equity

- Address what is allowing groundwater/well users to draw water after acequia users / farmers have to turn their water off for the season even though acequia users and farmers have higher priority
- Better regulate groundwater users because they are currently using water without proper augmentation back to the river/water table

Ecology

- Compensate acequia users for ecosystem services they provide

Education & Engagement

- Sharing scarcity is an important principle that should be incorporated into Colorado water management
- There needs to be better education and engagement opportunities for communities to learn and be involved
- Educate folks moving to Colorado about the state's natural water system as people moving to the San Luis Valley are using too much groundwater
- Fund and help organize a community meeting/summit led by community members/acequia users to get feedback and educate outsiders on:
 - What is an acequia?
 - What are the impacts of Parciantes losing water?

Water Conservation

- Create a water credit system where communities can bank water not used in the current season for next season when it is needed. Not to be sold for money, but similar to the NM acequia use.

Funding

- Acequias should have a line item on the State budget to fund projects and maintain the rich cultural/ecological tradition

Conclusion

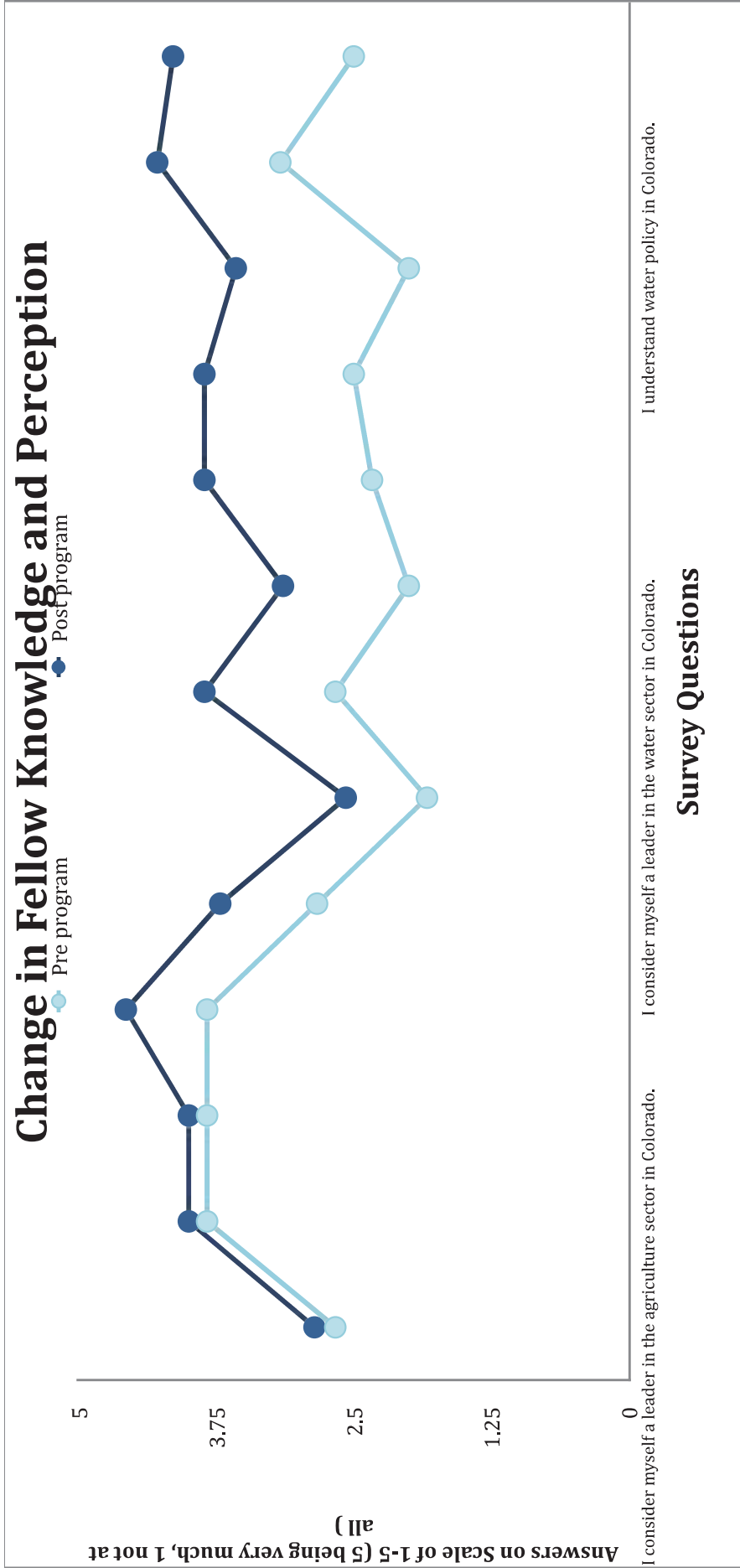
The Colorado Water Equity Partnership summer 2022 workshop series represented a healthy and successful beginning stage of what will be an ongoing and growing conversation on just and equitable water governance in Colorado. We engaged with over 240 people in our workshops – countless more through meetings and word of mouth – and supported at least 12 people to submit public comments directly to the CWCB with the likelihood that that number is far higher.

Community members we worked with are excited to continue these conversations, become more involved in water decision making and take action in whatever way they can to promote just water governance systems in Colorado. We found that when there is adequate time for communities to match this excitement with knowledge and understanding of Colorado water management and opportunities for action, there is more potential for successful engagement. We look forward to continuing this conversation in the future.

Summary:

At the beginning of the fellowship, before any workshops or coaching, we surveyed fellows, asking about their perceptions around their leadership in agriculture and water, their knowledge of water management and policy in Colorado, and their understanding of the Farm Bill and its impact on them individually. At the end of the fellowship, fellows answered the same questions. Overall, the scores across all areas of the fellowship increased. The biggest impact of the fellowship on the participants was around their ability to understand “**how the Farm Bill works and its impact on me,**” “**water policy in Colorado,**” and “**how water is managed in Colorado.**” The lowest areas of change in scores were in “**feel[ing] confident in my leadership abilities**” and “**consider[ing] myself a leader in the agriculture sector in Colorado.**” An interesting note, when reviewing the post-program survey data, is that while fellows had high confidence in their individual leadership abilities, with an average rating of 4*, in the context of considering themselves “leaders in agriculture in Colorado,” the group’s average score was 2.9. Below is a chart that shows the average rating fellows provided in surveys before and after the program.

*on a scale of 1 - 5, with 1 “feeling not at all confident” to 5 being “extremely confident”



We also asked a number of open-ended questions to gain further insight into the impact of the program and their experience. From the open-ended portion of the post-program evaluation, some key themes emerged. Overwhelmingly, the most positive aspect of the water fellowship was the community and connection built - primarily the strong connections fostered amongst the fellows, but also

with the speakers and topic brought to the program. Fellows loved the time spent with each other, and the opportunities to connect with past Water Fellows from New Mexico, as well as former CO fellows.

Another theme present was room for growth in the program. Responses to this theme included a deeper approach to curriculum and for more in-depth material about water policy. Other points included a desire for more intentional and explicit conversations around equity, especially around building knowledge around the issues of equity in agriculture and water. A final feedback point was around meeting in-person more often, meeting (virtually) more frequently than the program was set up (monthly), and having more frequent speakers.

Some highlights of feedback responses:

How satisfied were you with the fellowship program? Average response: 3.5

Any additional comments on your overall fellowship program satisfaction? (responses from fellows, with names removed)

- It's been a rewarding experience, and I've found it fulfilling to contribute to community initiatives in this way.
- I am so grateful to have been part of this fellowship, I really loved it! There were so many great parts of the program, one of the highlights being getting to know other fellows in this cohort. I'm so glad to be in community with these awesome people who are inspired to lead and I hope for ongoing connection with them. I've learned a lot this year through fellowship-related programming and through my project, but mostly through ditch riding. Ditch riding was (many times literally) an immersive experience that, for me, was also deeply educational. I had never lived so closely with water itself and with people whose lives are so directly and visibly tied to it. This experience was transformative in that I now have a completely different view of water and its value, and the impact of water use over time on the landscape. I think the community involvement piece of this fellowship is extremely important and powerful. I fell in love with water itself and with the water community through this fellowship and I'm so grateful for that. Not only do I understand the water situation in my area so much better, I feel really energized to get more involved.
- I wish we met more frequently online, especially to meaningfully and actually have dialogue about equity and tangible approaches to solutions in the way I understood and hoped the Fellowship would. Aside from Michelle Gabrielloff-Parish's very short piece and Fatuma Emmad's (though it was more about farming), unless we already had prior knowledge of equity, water rights, and systemic injustices and their deep interconnectedness in farming and water rights, this fellowship could not stand alone and missed these 3 crucial issues

What are 1-3 key takeaways from the fellowship program?

- 1) Community Empowerment: The program highlighted the importance of engaging and empowering communities in addressing water-related issues. It emphasized the significance of community-driven initiatives and the role of education in fostering change. 2) Cultural Sensitivity: Working with BIPOC communities, I've gained a deeper understanding of the importance of cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in outreach and education efforts. It's essential to tailor programs to the unique needs and backgrounds of the community. 3) Collaboration: Collaborating with partners and stakeholders has been a central theme. Effective partnerships, like the one with Gretchen Groenke's booklets, can amplify the impact of projects and create some change."
- Our relationship with water is entirely what we make of it, and our choices have profound impacts on water itself, on the land, and on the whole living community including ourselves. There are so many ways to be involved and make positive change, and there are actually many others already in community with us. The farming community seems at least a couple decades ahead of the ranching community in terms of diversity, inclusivity and consensus around the need for collective liberation, so THANK YOU farmers for leading the way.
- -water law is incredibly complex and will take years to fully comprehend -we're already in a large crisis -more awareness and steps for the future need to be made quickly
- Unfortunately, that "understanding" water, water rights, water law and water policy in Colorado and elsewhere is extremely complex and no easy task. It is unlikely to get any easier or accessible to People of Color or Indigenous communities or Tribal nations, as the CO River is endangered and legal battles continue across the upper and lower river basins. Seeing that the Supreme Court delivered a devastating blow to Navajo Nation in excusing the U.S. Federal Government in any responsibility to provide the reservation with access to water, I feel it's so crucial to more deeply have these necessary conversations about not just advocating for equitable access to water but to water as a source of life and the rights of nature versus water as a commodity and resource to be exploited.
- Conocer más sobre el agua de Colorado. Conocer más de las políticas del agua en Colorado. Tener más comunicación con personal del agua de Colorado.
 - [Learn more about Colorado water. Learn more about Colorado water policies. Have more communication with Colorado water staff.]
- We have work to do around how we find solutions in the field when it comes to water. This was a reality check for me as a vegetable producer about how important it is to recognize the limits of our resources and also how important soil health solutions are to our long term ability to keep producing food in this climate. The implications of always thinking about "efficiencies" in water use was really eye opening for me.

What are 1-3 things you liked most about the fellowship program?

- Seeing familiar faces at events like the Food Summit has been a great aspect of my fellowship program. It creates a sense of community and connection. In addition, what I liked most about the program:
 - Networking and Relationships: I've truly appreciated the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and build valuable relationships within the fellowship community.
 - Learning Opportunities: The program's emphasis on education and workshops has been a highlight for me. It's incredible to continually learn and grow through these experiences.
 - Impactful Projects: I'm particularly drawn to the hands-on, community-focused projects that allow me to make a real difference in addressing water-related issues.
- I loved getting to know the other water fellows in Colorado and New Mexico! I love that it feels like I'm now part of a community of awesome water leaders, that feels like a big inspiration as well as a big responsibility. The community engagement requirements of the fellowship (project and board search) have helped me get to know the water community in my area and actually fall in love with it as well as with water itself. I see water very differently now than I did a year ago, and I'm so glad because I truly wanted to see it differently and feel differently about it. I don't want the fellowship to end and I do want my relationship with water to grow and deepen.
- 1) the connection with other people advocating for water especially when we were able to connect with water fellows in DC. Gaining ideas, knowledge, and skills. 2) gain an understanding of what "water" really is and how it is used in the state. 3) going to Boulder to understand water and "practice" understanding as a whole. how we engage with water in our community.
- 1) Community of likeminded folks 2) Sense of awareness and networking in overlapping fields 3) In-person gatherings and learning from others
- I loved some of our presenters. The legal underpinnings presented by Greg Hicks was really fantastic and will stick with me for the rest of my career. I also really appreciated our time together in person and felt like a truly important way to bring these learnings to action. What a privilege. I also loved the diverse perspectives of my cohort. They taught me so much.

What are 1-3 things you would have changed about the fellowship program?

- My overall experience with the fellowship has been positive. I think when we're not in meetings, connecting fellows with more experienced mentors in the field would help me personally navigate challenges and maximize my contributions.
- 1) Implement outdoor workshops going to places like town/farms/ranches/ to see what projects look like at local levels. 2) Go to a Colorado water board meeting from a division in our district to see what locals are saying. 3) Learn to advocate from a local level and educate from a local level.

- 1) more frequent speakers 2) more in-person meeting opportunities 3) collaborative projects
- Please genuinely and meaningfully center discussing equity, systemic racism and oppression that has led to inequities in farming and water rights issues and what are ways we can play in our different roles and privileges to transform these systems.
- I loved all the technical aspects of the fellowship program. I would have liked one more session with more regarding the Colorado Water [Conservation] Board and more insight into their decision-making process. More about how state and federal entities make change in such a challenging landscape.

Gabriela Galindo

Name of Board/Group: Human Services Fund Advisory Committee

Successful: Yes

Term: October 2023-October 2025

Jesus Flores

Name of Board/Group: Colorado Farmers Market Association Board of Directors

Successful: Yes

Term: March 2023-March 2026

Gretchen Groenke

Name of Board/Group: Ellis Pipeline Board

Successful: Yes

Term: Began Summer 2023

Amyas Maestas

Name of Board/Group: Water District 20 (Monte Vista)

Successful: No

Term: N/A

Audrey Paugh

Name of Board/Group: Park County Water and Land Trust Board

Successful: No

Term: N/A

Lauren Kelso

Name of Board/Group: Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council and USDA Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

Successful: No on COFSAC, TBD on USDA

Term: December, 2023 - December 2025

Shannon Maes

Name of Board/Group: Ditch Rider - Arroyo Ditch and North Alamosa Ditch

Successful: Yes

Term: May 1, 2023 - July 2023; Both companies asked Shannon to do it again in 2024

Thai Nguyen

Name of Board/Group: New Americans Community Advisory Committee (NACAC) at the Colorado Office of New Americans, USDA Beginning Farmers and Rancher Advisory Committee, Arapahoe County Water and Water Waste Authority board

Successful: Yes for NACAC

Term: February 2024-January 2026

Gabriela Galindo

Boulder Watershed Collective, Once and Future Green, Eco-Arts, San Lazaro Mobile Home community residents and myself began collaborating in January 2023. We collectively applied for and received an Environmental Justice Grant from CDPHE. The mobile home community, across the street from City of Boulder proper has had unpotable water for hygiene and nutrition for 20+ years causing great emotional, physical, mental and economic burdens on the 1000+ residents, most of whom are Latinx. We've formed a Water Council made up of 7 residents and meet monthly. Our purpose in guiding this group is to elevate their leadership, create education/training/action based on their requests and to elevate their leadership. So far we've had a water walk tour of their small water reservoir and water treatment facility with the Property Manager and Water Engineer and Water Treatment Plant Manager and have formed group agreements. We will attend a workshop detailing the new Mobile Home Water regulations, test the water and will hire a consultant to help us co-create natural solutions for improving the aeration and contaminants in pond reservoir their water comes from. Our grant funding ends in June 2024 and we anticipate applying again or asking for a grant extension as figuring this all out in a year is not doable.

Jesus Flores

Estoy trabajando en el proyecto de un invernadero para producir comida todo el año para la comunidad. Estamos creciendo lechuga, espinaca, chard, y tomates.

I am working on a greenhouse project to produce food year-round for the community. (Attached are pictures of the greenhouse.) We are growing lettuce, spinach, chard, and tomatoes.

Gretchen Groenke

I wrote a zine about the Colorado River crisis. Introduction:

"What's written here is intended to provide a very basic introduction to the waters of the Colorado River ecosystem and the current systems of power related to them. Water crisis and associated injustices define the region. The reasons why should be something we all know. Much has been written about water crisis in the West. What I set out to do here is provide something short and easy to understand as a tool to fuel our collective learning. There are vast amounts of information for every topic mentioned here- my hope is that you pursue anything you find interesting. At the end, you'll find a list of websites with more information. Anything with a * has a website noted in that section. These sources are far from comprehensive."

Audrey Paugh

This year I collaborated with my high-school art class in my local community, where I created and shared an in-person presentation on the state of the Colorado River with the students. The students then created Colorado River-inspired art pieces, which I have compiled into a 2024 calendar for distribution to the class and community.

Lauren Kelso

I created a presentation for the staff and community of my organization, Growing Gardens of Boulder County, which combined information from nearly all of the sessions we participated in from the Fellowship. That presentation will be updated each year as we onboard new farming and education staff and interns.

Shannon Maes

My project is based on elevating the knowledge of several of my elder 'water mentors,' each gained from a lifetime of working with people and water. My interest is in providing a platform for these people to share a little about themselves and their perspective on how best to work with others on using, managing and sharing water. The project itself was to create audio recordings of a series of 'archival interviews' with these water leaders to be used as an educational resource for the water-interested community in our local area. The interviews were designed to discover who each interviewee is to the extent that their life experience has shaped their ability to effectively work with others in their community on water stuff, how they describe their approach to cooperation and conflict management as well as their overall history with and relationship to water itself. I believe that knowledge transfer is an important part of empowering younger water leaders so these interviews are in part a response to the generational succession taking place in agriculture right now, during which I hope the best of the place-based wisdom of our elder's lived experience can be handed down and celebrated through helping the next generation create the path ahead. I still need to finish one last interview, so the estimated completion date for the project is set at the end of January 2024.

Thai Nguyen

For my CO Water Fellowship project, I'm purchasing 200 copies of Gretchen Groenke's Colorado Water booklets (100 in English, 100 in Spanish) and organizing education and nutrition workshops for BIPOC children and youths interested in CO Water 101. The project is set to be completed by the end of the 2024 growing season, aiming to raise awareness and improve nutrition in our community.