



StreamLines

Quarterly Newsletter of the Office of the State Engineer

Governor Ritter Appoints Dick Wolfe as New Colorado State Engineer

Marta Ahrens, Public Information Officer

On November 26, 2007, Governor Bill Ritter named Dick Wolfe as Colorado State Engineer and praised him as the best person to lead the division of water resources at this time in the state's history.

"While it is a privilege and an honor to serve as the next State Engineer, I clearly recognize that such a privilege comes with great responsibility as well," said Wolfe. "I told Governor Ritter that I'm committed to building new relationships with our staff and the water users and I want to work with water users and the water community to establish an open dialogue on our mutual concerns."



State Engineer Dick Wolfe
Director, Colorado Division of
Water Resources

"This is one of the most difficult and important positions in our state," said Harris Sherman, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "While there were several outstanding candidates for the position, we believe Dick's fourteen years of experience in the State Engineer's Office more than prepared him for the challenges ahead." The vacancy was created when State Engineer Hal Simpson retired in May 2007.

Mr. Wolfe is a native of Colorado and was raised on a farm in Weld County. He graduated from Colorado State University (CSU) where he earned both a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master's Degree in Agricultural Engineering. He served on the Fort Lupton City Council and was the mayor of Fort Lupton from 1995 to 1997. He was a partner with Spronk Water Engineers for seven years specializing in water resources on various water right issues in Colorado, Kansas, Arizona, and New Mexico. He has been with the Division since 1993 and has served as a supervising engineer, a team leader, a Chief of Water Supply, and most recently as Assistant State Engineer.

Wolfe received the 2005 Leadership of the Year Award from the Division's staff, and authored several articles in various publications, including, "*Water Administration:*

State Engineer's Office" in the Colorado Water Law Bench Book.

Wolfe stated, "We have some excellent opportunities for change to become even more effective in achieving our mission and objectives. Any changes will be aligned with the values we have established for our agency. We live in a fast-changing and complex world and our jobs reflect this. I welcome the challenge to explore solutions with you to the many complex situations we encounter daily. We must act as a team and communicate accordingly. I promise I will do my best to develop the trust you deserve by listening to your concerns and desires. I expect you to hold me to this promise. I look forward to an exciting period ahead of us. We have much to discover and solve."

The State Engineer is Colorado's commissioner on five interstate compacts and is responsible for assuring compliance with these compacts. The State Engineer is also the Executive Director of the Colorado Ground Water Commission and is the Secretary of the Board of Examiners for Water Well and Pump Installation Contractors.

The Colorado Supreme Court's Water Court Committee

Steve Witte, Division Engineer, Division 2

How to make a system that is arguably one of the finest anywhere, even better? This is a challenge that the Colorado Supreme Court has decided to accept in conducting a review of the state's Water Court system, an institution created by the Water Rights Determination and Administration Act of 1969. On Dec. 4, 2007, Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey signed an order authorizing the establishment of the Water Court Committee of the Colorado Supreme Court. Justice Greg Hobbs was appointed to chair the committee. Among the 21 appointees to the Committee are State Engineer Dick Wolfe, former State Engineer Hal Simpson and Division 2 Engineer, Steve Witte.



Front row, from left: Justice Gregory J. Hobbs, Jr., Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey, Justice Alex J. Martinez. Back row, from left: Justice Nathan B. Coats, Justice Michael L. Bender, Justice Nancy E. Rice, Justice Allison Eid.

The Water Court Committee is charged with reviewing the water court process; identifying possible ways through rule and/or statutory change to achieve efficiencies in water court cases while still protecting quality outcomes; and ensuring the highest level of competence in water court participants. The committee is to make a report including their recommendations to the Chief Justice which will be made available to the General Assembly and the Governor by August 1, 2008.

The first meeting of the Committee was held on December 20, 2007, where the members made plans to address the challenge before them and organized sub-committees to distribute the workload. The Minutes from meetings and a variety of other information relevant to the work of the Committee may be found through the following web page hosted on the State Judicial web site

<http://www.courts.state.co.us/supct/committees/waterctcomm.htm>

Among the initial tasks, the Committee is interested in gathering as much information as possible that will enable it to properly evaluate how well the seven Water Courts are currently performing. This is being done through the efforts of the Case Management sub-committee which is gathering statistical data and qualitative information through surveys of some of the integral participants in the process, such as each of the Division Engineers and Referees. Plans are being developed to collect insights from members of the Bar. Additionally, attempts are being made to solicit input from a broad spectrum of the public concerning their beliefs on those things the state's water courts are doing well, and those that could be improved upon, in terms of process and procedure. A formal public hearing

was held on March 10, 2008, in the Colorado Judicial Building. Comments and an audio recording from this meeting can be accessed from the website above.

A commitment to continuous improvement is a distinguishing characteristic of organizational excellence. Since "we the people" are in charge of this organization, you are encouraged to contribute any suggestion that you think might make the system work even a little bit better for everyone.

COLORADO FARM SHOW

In January 2008, Division of Water Resources employees participated with staffing the exhibit at the Colorado Farm Show located at Island Grove Regional Park in Greeley. Staff responded to numerous questions from many types of water users and, as in past years, experienced good traffic, interesting questions and comments, and provided a public forum for individuals who may not otherwise have contact with DWR staff members. In 2007, in recognition of DWR's commitment to education and efforts of stewardship, the Division was awarded the "Best Use of Theme" award at the conclusion of the Colorado Farm Show. The theme was "Safeguarding our Agricultural Heritage".

HUMAN RESOURCES

New Employees

Caren Aguilar started in a newly created position as Division 1 Augmentation Plan Operations Specialist on November 13, 2007. Caren previously worked for the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District as their Water Accountant where she created and maintained the water accounting for two well augmentation plans covering approximately 1,200 large capacity wells. We look forward to working with Caren as she embraces the challenges of working on all of the large capacity well augmentation plans in Division 1.

Patrick (Pat) Chase began work on February 19, 2008 as the Information Technology Manager. He will direct and manage the activities of the IT Section within the Division. Pat comes to us with over 32 years of IT experience, 26 years of which was with the Department of Revenue.

Rishi Jethwani joined the Information Technology Section in Denver as a full-time IT Professional I on March 17, 2008. His primary duty with the Division will be to provide desktop support. Rishi graduated with a BS in Computer Science from Metropolitan State College of Denver. He previously worked for Avaya Inc. and performed remote programming for small and large business PBX communications systems. He also worked as a 6-month state temp (IT Professional I) for Metropolitan State College in the IT Department providing desktop and smart classroom support for students, faculty, and staff throughout the college. Rishi was born and raised in Hong Kong.

Justina Mickelson joined the Designated Basin Team on March 24, 2008 as a Physical Science Researcher Scientist. Her primary duty will be processing applications for water rights within the Designated Basin. Justina has a BS in Geology from the University of Utah. While in Utah, she was an active member in the Salt Lake Chapter of the Association of Women Geoscientists. Justina previously worked in the hazardous waste management industry for nine years and most recently with Veolia Environmental Services. She grew up in the Bay Area and has been in Colorado for five years.

Employee Changes

Pete Kasper joined Division 7 as Lead Water Commissioner for Districts 29 and 78 in the Pagosa Springs area. Pete comes from District 40 in Division 4, Hotchkiss, Colorado. Pete has extensive water experience as both a water user and a water manager. He most recently was the President of the Board for the Colorado River Water Conservation District. He has served as a Ditch Rider, Manager and President of an irrigation company in Paonia. He operated his own dairy farm as well as managed a cloud seeding operation giving him unique experience in the water arena in which we play. Division 7 is excited to have him join our team.

Robert "Bob" Stahl was promoted to the newly created Division 1 Municipal Water Operations Specialist position on October 3, 2007. Bob started with Division 1 in April 1989 as a Deputy Water Commissioner for both Boulder Creek and Clear Creek. Bob then steadily advanced through the ranks to become the Water Commissioner for District 2 in 1994 and the Metro Area Water Commissioner in 2005. Bob has also been named Division 1 Water Commissioner of the Year three times. We are certain Bob will do an excellent job as he begins to examine the water accounting of the municipal water providers within Division 1, starting with the Denver metro area providers.

Retired Employees

Rich Snyder, lead water commissioner in Water District 10 decided to hang it up after nearly 13 years with DWR and retired on February 29, 2008. Rich started as a deputy water commissioner for District 10 in April of 1995 and became the lead commissioner in September of 2004. During his tenure, Rich played a key role in the care, feeding and development of the USGS Fountain Creek Transit Loss model which is central to administration of Fountain Creek. He was instrumental in representing DWR as a technical resource through several revisions of the model, and gained wide respect with his constituents and colleagues as the "go to" guy not only for water rights administration, but for practical application of the model to solve a number of problems related to routing of transmountain return flows in the creek. His knowledge, work ethic, technical and interpersonal skills will be sorely missed in Division 2.

Ben Cannon retired from the Division on February 29, 2008 after 30 years as a Colorado state employee. Twenty-six of those years were with Water Resources as Water Commissioner for District 20. Ben's duties over the years have included administering major diversions from the Rio Grande, administration of water within the priority system, monitoring trans-basin waters, delivering reservoir and native water, assuring compact deliveries to New Mexico and Texas, ditch/canal flow measurements, and compiling records of diversions. Ben has been a big asset to Division 3 and will be greatly missed.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 1** Colorado Board of Examiners of Water Well Construction and Pump Installation Contractors Meeting, Denver, Colorado; for more information, contact Gina DeArcos at 303-866-3581
- May 16** Colorado Ground Water Commission Meeting, Parker Water & Sanitation District, Parker, Colorado; for more information, contact Marta Ahrens at 303-866-3581
- May 20-21** Colorado Water Conservation Board Meeting, Grand Junction, Colorado; for more information, contact Lisa Barr at 303-866-2599

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