**February 14, 2025**

**For Immediate Release**

**Ark Basin Water Forum celebrates 30 years**

The Arkansas River Basin Water Forum celebrates its 30th anniversary on Wednesday and Thursday, March 5 and 6, in Pueblo. The Forum will feature top Colorado and Arkansas Basin water experts discussing critical water issues and possible solutions for the challenges facing basin water users.

Colorado’s Upper Colorado River Commissioner Rebecca Mitchell will deliver the March 5 keynote address. Mitchell is the State of Colorado’s commissioner to the Upper Colorado River Commission where she represents the state in interstate issues on the Colorado River, including negotiations on the operations of Lake Mead and Lake Powell.

Mitchell’s background spans over 20 years of work in the water sector, including director of the state Inter-Basin Compact Committee, and director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Mitchell brings extensive knowledge of Colorado water law to the table, and she played a significant role in developing “Colorado’s Water Plan.”

Gregory Styduhar, Chief Judge of Colorado’s 10th Judicial District, will deliver the March 6 keynote address. Styduhar also serves as the Water Judge for Water Division 2 – the Arkansas River Basin.

Judge Styduhar grew up in Pueblo, graduated from Pueblo Central High School and earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from the University of Southern Colorado (now Colorado State University – Pueblo). He obtained his law degree at Creighton University School of Law.

The judge has worked in the private sector, where he was an associate attorney at a private law firm. His work in the public sector has included positions as assistant city attorney for Pueblo, Pueblo County Attorney and magistrate in the 10th Judicial District. He was appointed to the District Court bench in 2020 before becoming the 10th District’s chief judge in 2023.

The first plenary session, March 5, will be a panel discussion of multi-basin strategies for water preservation moderated by Colorado Department of Agriculture Water Policy Advisor Robert Sakata.

The March 6 plenary session will feature the four new leaders of the Ark Basin’s water conservancy districts – Jack Goble, Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District; Leann Noga, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District; Greg Felt, Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District; and Tony Arnhold, Purgatoire River Water Conservancy District.

The 2025 Water Forum will explore topics like the early history of Colorado water use, “Water Law 101,” Fountain Creek water quality, reusing potable water in El Paso County, mountain precipitation and water supply outlooks, and groundwater augmentation.

Wednesday evening’s Percolation and Runoff event includes dinner, drinks and networking in a fun, informal setting. Perc and Runoff is always a highlight of the Forum, and all proceeds support the Forum’s college scholarship fund.

Each afternoon, a variety of outdoor field trips will be offered. Field trip options for March 5 are:

* Fountain Creek with a focus on collaborative efforts to protect and enhance Fountain Creek in Pueblo.
* Water Works Park, a multi-purpose project that removed a dangerous feature and created a popular recreation site.
* Pueblo’s Historic Arkansas Riverwalk by Boat.
* A screening of the award-winning documentary “Mirasol: Looking at the Sun.”

March 6 field trips are:

* El Pueblo History Museum, learn about the reconstructed historic trading post established in 1842 on the Arkansas River, at that time the border between the U.S. and Mexico.
* Pueblo Dam and related infrastructure, including the Colorado Parks and Wildlife fish hatchery.
* A bicycle tour of the Arkansas River Levee Loop.

Registration costs for the Forum remain a very good value:

* Two-day full registration, including lunches – $300
* One-day registration, either Thursday or Friday, including lunch – $150
* Percolation and Runoff networking dinner and drinks – $20

Complete details about the Forum – including how to register, afternoon field trips and speaker bios – is online at [www.arbwf.org](http://www.arbwf.org).

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The Arkansas River Basin Water Forum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves as a conduit for information about the Arkansas River Basin in Colorado and about issues related to water allocation and management. Since 1995, our annual Forum has evolved into the basin’s premiere water event. It addresses a broad scope of water issues in the Arkansas Basin and provides the opportunity to find common ground among all categories of water users.