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**PRESENTER PROFILES**

**Crestina Martinez** is the Vice-Chair of the Costilla County Board of Commissioners. She is a San Luis Valley native whose family has lived in the region for multiple generations. Martinez raises grass-finished natural cattle and hay at the South Ute Mountain Ranch in San Acacio Viejo with her family. Martinez served as a Colorado Acequia Association (predecessor to the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association) Board member for four years from 2005-2009. In 2009, Martinez was selected as “2009 Colorado Freshman County Commissioner of the Year” for her local, regional, state and national leadership, energetic approach and engagement. Crestina is currently the Democratic Candidate for Senate District 35.

**Devon G. Peña** is a lifelong activist in the environmental justice and resilient agriculture movements. He is a Professor of American Ethnic Studies, Anthropology, and Environmental Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. He also works on the family's historic acequia farm in San Acacio, Colorado. An interdisciplinary research scholar and widely-cited author, Dr. Peña is the Founder and President of The Acequia Institute, the nation's first Latina/o charitable foundation dedicated to supporting research and education for the environmental and food justice movements.

**Edward Vigil** is serving his second term as the Colorado State Representative for District 62. He is a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, the Capitol Development Committee, and the Water Review Committee. Representative Vigil owns Sangre de Cristo Laboratory with his wife, Evelyn. He served two terms as Costilla County Commissioner. He has worked in various service roles including factory worker, social worker, substance abuse counselor, peace officer and special investigator for the district attorney. Representative Vigil is a sixth generation native, born and raised in San Pablo near San Luis, Colorado. He graduated from Adams State College and currently lives in the Fort Garland area.

**Lawrence D. Gallegos** lives near Antonito, Colorado with his wife, Julie, and daughters, Isabel and Carmen, on part of a ranch that has been in his family for six generations. He attended college at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces and then worked in Las Cruces and Albuquerque before deciding to move back to the ranch in 1998. He has been active in the community and has served on the boards of several organizations including: President of the New Cenicero Ditch Company; President of El Codo Ditch Company; and President of the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area. He has also been a member of the Rio Grande Basin Roundtable; the SLV Advisory Committee to the State Engineer; the San Antonio, Los Pinos, and Conejos River Acequia Preservation Association; El Santuario de los Pobladores Board; Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish council; and the Knights of Columbus. In 2002 he was named “Water Manager of the Year”, by the Colorado Division of Water Resources Division 3. In 2008 he was chosen as “Conservationist of the Year” by the Rio Grande Watershed Association of Conservation Districts. He has served as the Conejos County Clerk and Recorder since 2006.

**Joseph C. Gallegos** is a former two-term county commissioner in Costilla County and is currently the Democratic nominee for the third district seat for the Board of County Commissioners. Joe was born in San Luis but left to earn a degree in energy conservation and environmental engineering from Colorado State University and then worked internationally as a drilling engineer. Upon returning to his native San Luis, Joe taught high school math and science before returning to his family’s centennial ranch full time. Joe is the co-founder and former President of the Costilla County Committee for Environmental Soundness and co-founder and past President of the Colorado Acequia Association (the predecessor to the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association). Joe is a strong proponent of educational

programs which would encourage youth to stay in Costilla County, or to return after completing college, to operate their family farms and businesses. His family ranch is located on the San Luis People’s Ditch.

**Kent Mace** and his son **Amos Mace** run the Malachite Farm in Huerfano County and operation Collector’s Specialty Woods in Gardner. Kent Mace is a second-generation wood craftsman and began the organic Malachite Farm as a training school. Kent and his son Amos, whose academic background is in hydrology and watershed management, are both concerned about the future of water and have become involved with the Huerfano County Water Conservancy District. Kent serves on the Arkansas Basin Roundtable Board.

**Jack Chavez** is an irrigator on the Santisteven Ditch in the Rurgatoire River Watershed near the town of Weston. Mr. Chavez is concerned about the increasing value of water for non-agricultural uses and the impact of this increasing value on farmers and ranchers.

**Lawrence J. MacDonnell** has been a Professor of Law at the University of Wyoming College of Law since 2009. He teaches courses on water law, natural resources law, public lands, and other subjects. He recently completed the casebook, The Law of Nature’s Resources. Prior to joining the UWYO faculty, MacDonnell worked in private law practice and as a consultant. Between 1983 and 1994, he served as the first director of the Natural Resources Law Center at the University of Colorado School of Law. He has been involved with several acequia law cases in the San Luis Valley.

**Gregory Hicks** is a professor at the University of Washington Law School.  He teaches courses in property, water law, and public land and natural resources law.  Professor Hicks is a member of the American Law Institute and has been a visiting faculty member at the University of Texas Law School (2001) and the University of Arizona College of Law (1998).  Professor Hicks has served on the boards of a number of non-profit organizations, including The Nature Conservancy (Washington, 2000-07) and the Pacific Forest Trust (2001-04). He has also participated on governmental advisory and oversight panels, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the Water Law Advisory Panel of the Washington State Attorney General's Office. Professor Hicks has been studying Colorado acequias for the last decade and played a significant role in passing the Colorado Acequia Recognition Law.

**John McClure** began his practice after graduating from Ohio State University School of Law. His practice emphasizes water law. He has been involved in numerous water court actions in the San Luis Valley. Mr. McClure is a member of the law firm of McClure & Eggleston, LLC, established in 1991, with offices in Denver and Monte Vista.

**Junita Martinez** was born just south of Costilla County in Northern New Mexico and she and her husband, Jose, irrigate their farm using the San Francisco acequia. Junita is very involved in the community, including: the Land Rights Council, the Rio Culebra Agricultural Cooperative, and her local church, where she has organized a retreat for parishoners from Juarez, Mexico. She has served as Clinic Director for the San Luis Valley & Southern Colorado Low Income Tax Clinic and she is currently completing the Colorado Nonprofit Leadership and Management Program of the Community Resource Center.

**Sandra Santa Cruz** is the director of Sembrando Semillas San Luis, a program designed to educate and inspire the next generation of irrigators. Ms. Santa Cruz is originally from Denver and has extensive formal dance training in Mexican, Spanish, ballet and modern dance.  She holds a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Theatre and Dance from the University of Colorado at Boulder.  She is the founder and director of the Novela Project.  Along with Priscilla Salazar-Martinez,

Ms. Santa Cruz began working with Sembrando Semillas in 2008.  Since that time, Sembrando Semillas San Luis has become an important learning experience in traditional agricultural practice and leadership development for the youth of southern Costilla County.

**Bernadette Lucero** is the General Manager of the Rio Culebra Agricultural Cooperative.   She co-founded the nonprofit Rio Culebra Growers Educational Corp. in 1994, which initiated marketing activities on behalf of local farmers.  She is also board Vice President of the Costilla County Economic Development Council (since 1986) and serves on other community boards.  In her spare time, she operates a catering business in traditional foods.  A bilingual, lifelong resident, she is highly respected in the community and retired as District Court Clerk in 2011.

**Phyllis Ann Philipps** is the State Conservationist for the Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service. Ms. Phillips graduated from Humboldt State University, Arcata, California, with a BS degree in natural resources planning and she began working for SCS at its national headquarters location in the Land Use Division. Later she moved to Montana where she served in various locations as a soil conservationist, district conservationist, team facilitator, and team leader. Until her new position brought her to Colorado, Ms. Phillips lived on a third-generation wheat and barley farm in north central Montana.

**Paula Garcia** is the Executive Director of the New Mexico Acequia Association and is also serving as the Chair of the Mora County Commission, an office for which she was recently elected on a platform of ethics in government, revitalization of the land-based economy, and protection of land and water resources. In her years of service to the NMAA, acequias have built a movement around the principle that “el agua es la vida – water is life” and have achieved major policy changes locally and statewide to protect rural water rights. Her contributions to the state and her local community have recently been recognized through the Governor’s Outstanding Woman of the Year Award by the New Mexico Commission. She lives in Mora County where her extended family continues to operate a small-scale ranching and forestry business.

**Janice Varela** is the Acequia Governance Specialist for the New Mexico Acequia Association and has directed the group’s community organizing efforts for over eight years. She conducts outreach and provides technical assistance to acequias throughout the state, and she also assists with various membership tasks.  Janice also works for the Rio de las Gallinas Acequia Association, where she assists with defense of water rights during adjudication proceedings. She is also a board member on the Upper Pecos Watershed Association. Janice has been active in acequia and environmental justice issues in New Mexico for many years.

**David Benavides** is director of the land and water rights project for New Mexico Legal Aid, a position he has held for twenty-two years. He received both his B.S. and J.D. from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and, upon graduating from law school in 1990, was awarded a Skadden, Arps Public Interest Law Fellowship to begin his work on land and water rights in northern New Mexico. He has assisted land grants in retaining their common lands against various legal threats, and in 2008 coauthored a legal history of New Mexico land grants for the New Mexico Attorney General. His work on water rights involves representing acequias in gaining legal recognition for their water rights and their historic water-use customs, and to have a greater decision-making role in local water decisions. He lives outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Peter Nichols** practices water, environmental, conservation, and related law “of counsel” to Berg Hill Greenleaf & Ruscitti LLP (Boulder). Peter is also a special assistant attorney general to the States of Colorado and New Mexico. He is the principal co-author of “Water Rights Handbook for Colorado

Conservation Professionals” (Bradford 2007; Rev’d Ed. 2011) and “Acquiring, Using and Protecting Water in Colorado” (Bradford, 2nd Ed. 2011) and contributor to “Environmental Regulation of Colorado Real Property” (Bradford 2007). Governors Hickenlooper and Ritter appointed Peter to the Interbasin Compact Committee; he is also an elected member of the Metro Roundtable and director emeritus of the Colorado Water. Nichols is a member of the bars of Colorado, the U.S. Supreme Court, the First, Second, Tenth and Eleventh Circuit Courts of Appeal, and the U.S. District Court for Colorado. A resident of Carbondale, Peter is an avid climber, telemark skier, cyclist and mountain biker, and former (and still occasional) international mountaineering guide.

**Ryan Golten** is an independent water attorney in Colorado. Before beginning her legal career, Ms. Golten lived in the San Luis Valley and was one of the original organizers and co-founders of SLV Advocates and La Puente, where she helped create dialogue around critical issues of humane welfare and rural homelessness and low-income housing. She also served as the School Program Director of a Victim-Offender Reconciliation Program in the San Luis Valley. She then went on to law school and worked for New Mexico Legal Aid from 2004-2011. During that time, she worked with David Benavides on the Land and Water Rights Project where she focused on litigation, legal assistance and training on behalf of New Mexico acequias and land grants. She also provided assistance to statewide organizations on policy and legislation affecting low-income Hispano communities. Luckily for Colorado, Ryan and her family now live in Boulder.

**Moderator and Facilitator Profiles**

**Juan Marinez** is the Assistant Director for Outreach with the Julian Samora Research Institute at Michigan State University and Regional Director of Michigan State University Extension. Juan was invited to serve as Secretary of Agriculture Glickman's, National Program Coordinator on Farm Workers between 1999-2001. In that role he assisted in obtaining 20 million dollars to assist-farm workers who had been negatively affected by natural disasters. Mr. Marinez has been a consultant to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation's Rural Initiatives and their National Leadership Program. Juan continues to provide leadership for agricultural constituents in Michigan. He has developed an eight-week Latino Leadership Program for Northwestern Michigan, in partnership with Michigan State University Extension and local Chicano/Latino leaders.

**Shirley Romero Otero** is a mother, Chicana activist, lecturer, and educator who was born and raised in San Luis. She is an heir to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Ms. Romero Otero is a founder of the Land Rights Council and was a plaintiff in the landmark case Rael v Taylor.  As an educator, Ms. Romero Otero has created  a culturally-based, nationally-recognized graduation and retention program for at-risk Latino students in Colorado. She was recently honored by the Chinook Fund for her more than 25 years of civil rights and social justice work.  Shirley is mother of four daughters and grandmother to one grandson.

**Katherine Faz** is a ranger with the National Park Service, stationed at the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Hailing from Texas, Katherine has worked in the fields of environmental policy and water resource management in her home state. She has worked for the National Park Service for 4.5 years first as a community planner for the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program in South Texas, Mexico, New Mexico and Southern Colorado, as an interpretive ranger, and most recently serving as the Division Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services for Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. During her time in Southern Colorado, she has managed community projects for

the Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and was co-author of the Costilla County Trails, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. In May, she was appointed to serve as the Coordinator for America’s Great Outdoors Initiative in the San Luis Valley.

**Ryan Golten** (see Presenter profile)

**Jenny Stricker** is the new Soil Conservationist for the San Luis Field Office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).  Jenny comes from Northwestern Colorado and has worked for the NRCS since 2007, including the Steamboat Springs, Kremmling, and Walden Field Offices.  She had also worked on her family’s farm in Steamboat Springs—raising two sons and establishing field trials of the native medicinal plant Osha (*Ligusticum porteri*); this work led to a USDA grant to develop a producer network for sustainable Osha cultivation and harvest.  Jenny’s background is in plant and soil science. She feels fortunate to able to support the innovative, hard-working, and conservation-minded producers of Costilla County.

**Sarah Parmar** is a Land and Water Protection Specialist with Colorado Open Lands, where she has worked on conservation easements across the state to protect agricultural lands. In Costilla County, she has worked with the Commissioners to develop a comprehensive Trails, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Since January, Sarah has also been working part-time for the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association, organizing the Congreso and exploring ways to protect acequia water rights. Sarah’s passion for land and water conservation stems from her background growing up as the fifth generation on a Centennial cattle ranch on the Arizona-Mexico border, where her parents and their ranching community established the Malpai Borderlands Group, a collaborative conservation group.

**Resource Roundtable**

**Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association**

401 Church Place (above the Community Banks office)

San Luis, Colorado 81152

(719) 695-0060

www.sangreacequias.org

**Colorado Open Lands**

www.coloradoopenlands.org

Sarah Parmar

Office: (303) 988-2373 ext. 220

Cell: (520) 780-1711

Email: sparmar@coloradoopenlands.org

**Colorado Natural Resources Conservation Service**

www.co.nrcs.gov

**ALAMOSA SERVICE CENTER**   
101 SOUTH CRAFT DRIVE   
ALAMOSA, CO 81101-2273

(719) 589-5661   
http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/images/spacer_none.gif

**SAN LUIS SERVICE CENTER**   
903 MAIN STREET   
SAN LUIS, CO 81152

(719( 672-3673

**TRINIDAD SERVICE CENTER**   
3590 E MAIN ST   
TRINIDAD, CO 81082

(719) 846-3681  
http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/images/spacer_none.gif http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/images/spacer_none.gif  
**Colorado Farm Service Agency**

**ALAMOSA SERVICE CENTER**   
101 SOUTH CRAFT DRIVE   
ALAMOSA, CO 81101-2273

(719) 589-5661  
http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/images/spacer_none.gif  
 **LA JARA SERVICE CENTER**   
15 SPRUCE   
LA JARA, CO 81140

(719) 274-5868  
http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/images/spacer_none.gif

**National Park Service**

www.nps.gov

Katherine Faz

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve

(719)378-6341

**Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area**

Christina Gallegos

(206)760-1193

www.sdcnha.org

**Colorado Division of Water Resources**

Division 2 Main Office (Pueblo)  
310 E. Abriendo Ave, Suite B  
Pueblo, CO 81004

(719) 542-3368

Division 3 Main Office (Alamosa)  
301 Murphy Drive (physical) PO Box 269 (mailing)  
Alamosa, CO 81101

(719) 589-6683

**Acequia Advocate Awards**

**Representative Edward Vigil and Senator Gail Schwartz** are being honored for their leadership in recognizing the historic and contemporary significance of Colorado’s acequias and their need for distinction from other types of ditches in our state. Freshman Representative Edward Vigil introduced HB 09-1233 into the Colorado House and Senator Gail Schwartz ensured that the bill moved through the Senate, enabling the passage of what we now call the 2009 Colorado Acequia Recognition Law.

**Gail Schwartz** represents 11 Colorado counties in State Senate District 5. Though she was born and raised in Chicago, Schwartz and her family have called Colorado home for the last forty years. Schwartz has worked as Director of Development, and later Acting Director for the [Pitkin County](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitkin_County,_Colorado) Housing Authority. Gail has dedicated herself to making Senate District 5 the best possible place to live, work and raise a family. Gail has always championed P-20 Education, dedicating much of her career to enhancing educational opportunities. To her credit, Senate District 5 will soon have ten new “BEST” schools. Gail is committed to preserving Colorado’s majestic environment and protecting her district’s water, natural resources, and agricultural lands. Earlier this year, she co-sponsored a bill that will allow small growers to sell products directly to consumers, increasing the viability of small-scale food production and local consumption.

**Edward Vigil** is serving his second term as the Colorado State Representative for District 62. He is a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, the Capitol Development Committee, and the Water Review Committee. Representative Vigil owns Sangre de Cristo Laboratory with his wife, Evelyn. He served two terms as Costilla County Commissioner. He has worked in various service roles including factory worker, social worker, substance abuse counselor, peace officer and special investigator for the district attorney. Representative Vigil is a sixth generation native, born and raised in San Pablo near San Luis, Colorado. He graduated from Adams State College and currently lives in the Fort Garland area.