

For Immediate release:

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2019 Congreso de Acequias - Preserving Acequia Traditions

The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association (SdCAA) will be hosting their annual Congreso de Acequia on Saturday January 26, 2019. Congreso de Acequias is a dynamic and vibrant gathering that celebrates the acequias as part of our way of life and our livelihood. We celebrate the people who keep our acequias flowing and the deep connection to land, family, and community. Our theme this year is “Preserving Acequia Traditions.” The event will host a variety of topics and speakers that are pertinent to acequia irrigators.

Our keynote speaker will be Arnold Valdez, who will present on the Culebra Watershed ecosystem and its importance to the acequias. There will be breakout sessions which will include: “Understanding Aquifer Withdrawal and the Effects on Acequia Water” and a concurrent session will focus “Watershed Health Issues.” The afternoon will wrap up with Craig Cotton, Division 3 Engineer, Tom Stewart, Water Commissioner and Water Attorney, Peter Nichols who will be doing a follow-up session on the Hallett Decree meeting that was held in September.

Registration begins at 8:00 am and the Congreso will commence promptly at 8:30. We will begin the day with the SdCAA annual report and election of new board members. We are asking that all designated acequia delegates be present to vote. If you are unsure if your Acequia has assigned an SdCAA delegate please contact Mathew Valdez, SdCAA Executive Director, at 719-672-0810.

The SdCAA will be providing a light breakfast and a full lunch for all participants. There will be an opportunity to win some great door prizes throughout the day. Additionally, there will be a chance to purchase tickets for a drawing for a hunting rifle, \$500 ditch cleaning and a surprise that will be announced at the Congreso reception. Lunch time will feature the Mariachi San Luis and an opportunity to highlight student work and to announce winners of the student scholarships. Winners for the mini-grants will also be announced. There will be a variety of vendors to chat with and get the latest information on topics pertinent to acequias.

Additionally, the Acequia Association will be hosting a reception on Friday January 25, 2019 at the Parish Hall beginning at 6:00 pm. This will be an opportunity to connect with other parciantes and for those acequias working on by-laws or research a first meeting with their legal team to layout plans to get their project completed. Light refreshments will be served and like all acequia events there is no cost. The Acequia Association works to build the acequia movement by protecting our land and water resources for future generations of acequia farmers and ranchers.

The event is made possible by these great partners and sponsors: Natural Resources Conservation Service, San Luis Valley Conservation Fund, the LOR Foundation, Costilla County Conservancy District, Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area and Colorado Open Lands.

For more information contact Mathew Valdez, at 719-672-0810 or visit our website at [www.coloradoacequias.org](http://www.coloradoacequias.org)