



Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

El Parciante

PO Box 721 San Luis,
CO 81152

Congreso de Acequias –Come Join Us !

The SdCAA in partnership with Colorado Open Lands, NRCS, and the Costilla County Conservancy District, is preparing to hold the Congreso de Acequias. As we celebrate another growing season, and the opportunity to share knowledge. We exercise our traditional role in governing community access to water and protecting our acequias.

This year the Congreso de Acequias will take place on Saturday January 20, 2018 at Centennial High School in San Luis, CO. from 8:00 am - 5:00 pm .

The SdCAA also has their annual meeting during the Congreso. The annual meeting is to help inform the community about SdCAA Board activities.

Other topic will include:

- Colorado Law
- Bylaws and Incorporation
- Colorado vs New Mexico Law
- New Mexico Acequia Association
- Hemp Panel

Come learn, laugh and share with other Acequia Parciantes and ensure the future of the Colorado Acequia.



2017 Landowner Workshop and Tours Series

The SdCAA and NRCS hosted the 2017 Landowner Workshop and Tours Series. Held in August and September. The first workshop was on Irrigation, NRCS explored water efficiency and the DWR presented water law for acequias,

The second workshop and tour was on grazing management and Cindy Villa, NRCS

Presented had an outstanding presentation on the various species of grasses and grazing. Lucias Casias County Weed Coordinator explained the different species of weeds that affect Costilla County.

The 3rd workshop Kevin Terry presented on River Habitat. The workshops will be hosted again in 2018.



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Acequia Profile:

Acequia de Cerro Project



The Acequia del Cerro was established November 30, 1857 and holds 44 adjudicated water rights granted by a court decree in Colorado, dating June 14, 1889. The Cerro serves 82 owners and irrigates approximately 1880 acres that are considered primary acres of hay, grass, other row crops and vegetables gardens.

The majority of landholders are descendants of the original founders of the "Acequia" system dating back to the mid-1800's

In November 2013, The Acequia del Cerro, applied for some funding in the amount of \$100,000 to the Rio Grande Basin Round Table. The funding is to rehabilitate approximately 16,

900 linear feet of the Northern Cerro Ditch. By removing extensive overgrowth of willow/trees and repair the bank, widen and replace 1,900 linear feet of concrete lining and 15,000 linear feet with high-density plastic pipe. The Southern Cerro Ditch which is the original heritage ditch will not be effected.

The Culebra Creek diversion is in good condition and is not planned for replacement. The old concrete ditch will be cleaned and maintained and will be used to catch sediment loads from runoff, without effecting the water flow, ecosystem or riparian habitat.

The contractor laid the concrete structures in 2016 and should be finished laying the pipe in the Winter 2017 or spring 2018.



The Acequia By-Laws Legal Assistance Program OPEN TO ALL ACEQUIAS IN COSTILLA AND CONEJOS COUNTIES

The Acequia By-laws assistance program will be accepting applications for 2018 water year. We are asking that interested acequias please, contact Eugene Jacquez @ (719) 580-6850. Eugene will get your acequia set up with an application and be able to walk you through the application process. We are asking all applications be submitted to the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association by November 20, 2017. This will allow time for the by-laws team to review the applications and then assign your acequia to a legal team to develop your by-laws . We are scheduling this first meeting with your lawyer at the annual *Congreso de Acequias* on January 19-20, 2018.

These assistance programs are made possible by grants awarded to the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association, Colorado Open Lands, and the University of Colorado Law School. They are also a result of the dedication of attorney's who care about the acequia community. Because of grant funding, we are limited in the number and type of applications we can accept. Please submit an application through the SdCAA.

The by-laws team will review and prioritize the applications, and if your case is accepted the attorneys and student-attorneys at Colorado Law will follow up with you at the annual *Congreso de Acequias*

on January 19-20, 2018.

For the bylaws project, applications will be considered based on a number of factors: 1) acequias that do not have any existing by- laws will be prioritized, 2) we strive to serve a balance of large and small acequias, but acequias that serve a large number of irrigators may be prioritized, 3) avoiding conflicts of interest, 4) willingness of parciantes to share information that they learned with others in their community (when applicable), and lastly, all else being equal, an application received earlier will have a higher priority.

The Acequia By-law Legal Assistance is a FREE program

You can develop bylaws or review existing bylaws, provide legal guidance on issues such as voting, enforcement, insurance, etc. and incorporate or re-incorporate with the state. Please contact Eugene Jacquez @ (719) 580-6850



Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

Acequias as Recognized Under the Law

Acequias, or community ditches, are recognized under New Mexico law as political subdivisions of the state. Many of the state's acequia associations have been in existence since the Spanish colonization period of the 17th and 18th centuries. Historically, they have been a principal local government unit for the distribution and use of surface water.

The associations have the power of eminent domain and are authorized to borrow money and enter into contracts for maintenance and improvements. Acequia associations do not have the power to tax, so the expenses of maintenance and improvements are borne by the individuals served by the acequia.

Colorado law recognizes acequias as Corporations. C.R.S., 7-42-101.5

"Acequia ditch corporation" Section 3 - An acequia ditch corporation may be organized pursuant to this article may convert to an acequia ditch corporation, an unincorporated acequia ditch association may be formed, and an unincorporated ditch association may operate as an unincorporated acequia ditch association, if the ditch meets the definition of an acequia ditch and, as applicable:

(I) as required pursuant to section 7-42-101, the stockholders of the ditch file articles of incorporation, or an amendment to the articles of incorporation, state stockholders intention to create or convert to acequia ditch corporation; OR

(II) The members of an unincorporated ditch association have

agreed to operate in accordance with this section.

(4) An acequia ditch corporation, if its articles of incorporation so state, or an unincorporated acequia ditch association, may specify in its bylaws that:

(d) The corporation or association has a right of first refusal regarding the sale, lease, or exchange of any surface water right that has historically been used to irrigate land by the acequia.

Section 2: C.R.S. 7-30-101, Refers to "Nonprofit association". Meaning an unincorporated organization consisting of two or more members joined by mutual consent for a common lawful, nonprofit purpose.

Reviving Community Managed Irrigation Systems

Acequias are community-based irrigation systems that date back to the Spanish and Mexican settlement of the Southwestern United States, but remain vital to the agricultural heritage and economy of New Mexico and Southern Colorado to this day. There are currently over 700 acequias in New Mexico and 140 in Southern Colorado, with each acequia serving anywhere from 3 to 300 families who own land along the acequia ditch.

Each acequia in New Mexico is governed by a three-member commission and caretaker or

Mayordomo. In Southern Colorado especially in Culebra River Basin each ditch consist of a Board or commission and *Mayordomo*. Most acequias in New Mexico and Southern Colorado are constructed along small mountain streams. Typical acequias will have a surface water diversion from the river, traditionally made of logs and river rock; in the last few decades many acequias have modernized to incorporate concrete and metal head-gates. A main ditch brings water from the acequia to all the parcels of adjacent land

and each landowner has the right to water their fields using their particular acequias.

Without the proper support and advocacy from water rights organizations such as the SdCAA, acequias face extinction from redevelopment and competing demands for water. Water is scarce in the Culebra River Basin and pressure to move water away from agriculture use can halt agriculture production, ultimately threatening land ownership.

The Board & Staff

Delmer Vialpando, President

719-672-0944

Bea Ferrigno, Secretary

719-580-7378

Charlie Maestas, Treasurer

719-672-3949

Junita Martinez

719-588-0605

Norman Maestas

719-672-3933

Juan R. Maestas

719-672-4471

Andy Manzanares

719-588-7607

Dave Marquez

719-672-0334

Mathew Valdez Executive Director

719-672-0810

SdCAA Meeting Dates:

SdCAA Meeting are held the 2nd Tuesday of the Month @ the Economic Development Conference Room.

The SdCAA is looking to fill two (2) vacancies. If you would like to serve on the SdCAA Board, submit a letter of intent to SdCAA, P.O. Box 721, San Luis, CO 81152 or 719-672-0810.



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