



Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

El Parciante

PO Box 721 San Luis,
CO 81152

The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association held their annual Congreso de las Acequias on January 20, 2018 and was a great success with over 130 participates.

The SdCAA board presented the audience with the blessing of the water. Each board member took a glass of water from each creek to be blessed. Fr. Heriberto Torres blessed the water and prayed for the success of the congreso.



Arnie Valdez, Principle of Valdez & Associates and Rezolana Farm was the keynote speaker. Mr. Valdez presented on the local acequia traditions and kept the audience focused on acequia irrigation and culture. Other topics included the Water Law presented by Craig Cotton and James Heath of the Division of Water Resources. They also presented with Attorney Peter Nichols on the Hallet Decrees. The Hallet Decrees is a series of consent decrees between Free-

hold and the parciantes on each acequia . In the decrees, the parciantes agreed to give Freehold a portion of the water rights they had obtained under state law in 1889. These decrees are still unclear on when the DWR will implement them.

Sarah Krakoff, pictured below discussed the Acequia Program in which CU Law students are assisting acequias with there By-Laws and other issues relating to their acequia.



SdCAA Sponsors Poster Contest with Centennial Students

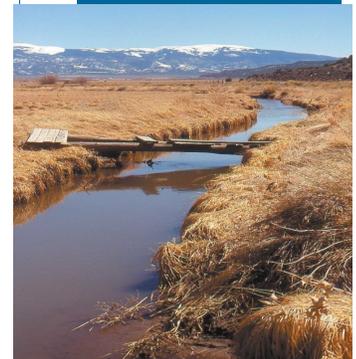
The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association sponsored a poster contest with Centennial School's K-4 grade classes. 1st place price was \$25, 2nd place was \$15 and other participates \$5 each. Each student had to draw what an acequia was and knew about acequias and over 46 participated. The winners are listed by grade. Kindergarten win-



ners: 1st place was Lynn Martinez, 2nd place was Joey Rameriz. 1st Grade winners were: 1st Jaleia Archuleta, 2nd

Aliyah Arellano, 2nd Grade winners were: 1st Place Damien Sanchez, 2nd place Sezzerae Medina, 3rd Grade winners were: 1st place Miquel Salcido, 2nd place Reina Aquilera. The 4th grade winners were: Celena Green (pictured) 1st place, there was a tie for 2nd place Ana Felix Duran and Angel Sandoval.

The Parciante



[USDA Enrollment Period for Safety Net Coverage in 2018](#)

Farmers and ranchers with base acres in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) safety net program may enroll for the 2018 crop year. The enrollment period will end on Aug. 1, 2018. Call your local NRCS Office @ 719-672-3673.

Inside this issue:

Congreso de Acequias	1
Poster Contest	1
Acequia Law Articles	2
Acequia as Teacher	3
SdCAA Board & Staff	3
Scholarship Fund	4

Are Acequia's Being Protected Under the Law

The history of water management in the Culebra Watershed is that acequias continue the water practices and customs grounded in the principals of Mexican Water Law long since gone.

In 2009, Colorado passed a law that allows acequias to be recognized as unincorporated acequia associations. The law acknowledges that acequias have unique governance structures and powers. For acequias to take advantage of the new law, they must adopt written bylaws or acequias will not be recognized and protected by the new law. Adopting bylaws can help acequias maintain traditional governance and water-sharing systems, and help protect water rights on the

acequia.

Colorado law states 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:

(l) 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

(ll) 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.

Acequias have the right to adopt By-Laws or Articles of Incorporation but remember, if not, you will not be protected under the Acequia Law.

Colorado Open Lands Acequia Initiative Receives Funding

The Colorado Open Lands Acequia Initiative has been awarded \$1.722 M in funding from the National Resources Conservation Service and a additional \$638,000 from Great Outdoors Colorado. The NRCS Award came through the agency's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and was the only project in the State of Colorado that received funding in the 2017 award cycle.

"We are grateful that this award will help secure water rights and conserve wildlife habitat in the Rio Culebra Watershed," said U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo. "Colorado's agriculture and economic wellbeing depends on our

water infrastructure. This region contains acequia dating back to the 1850's, many that were dug by hand by some of Colorado's first farmers and ranchers. It is important that we protect this infrastructure and preserve these working agricultural lands for future generations."

The Acequia Initiative aims to strategically protect private land irrigated by acequias-shared irrigation canals and ditches, along the Culebra watershed. The acequias present the oldest water rights in Colorado, and their protection is critical to preserving the heritage and way of life in the Culebra River Basin,

Communal water use is critical to the area, without these historic water-sharing agreements, the region's agriculture way of life would not be possible. Many acequia properties have been in the same families since the mid-1800s, and the acequias form the agriculture, social, and ecological foundation of the communities.

Acequia properties are the backbone of these communities. Their preservation will ensure the Culebra Watershed is protected from the risk of water transfers and takeovers.



[File a Notice of Loss for Failed Acres and Prevented Planting](#)

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report prevented planting and failed acres in order to establish or retain FSA program eligibility for some programs. For more information call your local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office @ (719) 672-3673



Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

The Acequia as Teacher

Unknown Author

For thirty years, the acequia has been my teacher.

The experience begin with the moment I stood on the wooden plank bridge and looked down into the slow moving water of the Acequia del Medio, in Dixon in the Emdudo Valley, as it flowed through the back yard of a crumbling adobe that I was fixing. I watched the water swirl down around the old apple tree, and under a fence, into the back yard of the neighbor's place. The moment I saw this thing, whatever it was beyond a small channel of water. I knew I had found a home. That was late in the Indian Summer of 1969.

The acequia begin to teach me, with a certain brushqueness about physical labor, It prodded myself to plant a garden, just above the banks, the laborious garden I had ever grown.: it taught me thus to feed myself and taught me about the special form of health that come from growing and harvesting and preparing and eating your own food. The neighbor, Henry Martinez, leaned over the fence each morning and patiently articulated those instructions the acequia considered too obvious to state itself. The acequia, another one now on the other side of Embudo Valley, gave me my first job in Northern New Mexico, a job unpaid and thankless which yet abruptly connected with me with thirty other families in El Bosque—and connected me, because these were the dry years, with two dozen other comisionados and mayordomos running the eight other acequias in the valley.

The acequia is a strong teacher. Nothing else in the country seems to be able to convince men

young and old and occasionally women to labor together out there in the sun and rain and snow, sometimes day after day, for little money. Because this business of digging out a ditch together in these times seems so unbelievable—why would anyone want to do that? It seems a small miracle every year when a new crop of workers turns up bright and early on these mornings in March and April and May, to do something as inelegant, unglorious, and undramatic as dig out a ditch. We are surprised that people turn up year after year. For thirty years, I have listened to people worry that next year nobody will turn up at all to dig out the ditch. But the acequia knows that despite our personal, individualist doubts, parciantes and their workers will turn up, because the acequia is giving them something they need and need very badly: a sense of community, a sense of engaging in labor essential to themselves, essential to their neighbors, to their community. More lessons, more lessons. The acequia insisted that I learn how to work with everybody in our community of prickly anarchists, Not just with the Martinezes, Sanchez's, Valdez's, Maestas's and Gallegos's and my hippie Ph. D neighbors, but everybody especially, it sometimes seemed, those that drank too much or smoked too much or who were angry at everything and everybody. The acequia patiently explained to me why feuds develop in small places but it also suggested

how people could make up their differences, and why they had to. At least now and then, at least once a day, or at least on those days when they need to irrigate.

Consensus? Mediation? Conflict resolution? I got a quick lesson in all that at the Canoncito turnoff in the heat of July and August afternoons where the comisionados from the three lower ditches assembled for their self-righteous vigilante runs up to the four Upper Ditches to take what was rightfully theirs—through the acequia made us tone down the rhetoric.

You see, the acequia explained, what dry years are good for is to make people work together and cooperate again and realize how interdependent they all are. Therefore, the acequia subtly suggests the most abundant times, the most materially prosperous of times might not be really the best times for people and their communities. The acequia taught me that it doesn't care at all about your last name or the color of your skin or how you have lived anywhere, through it does suggest that settling down in one place and sticking with it will best serve its end. It has mapped its progress through multiple cultures through the lexicon of Arabic, Latin, Spanish, and now English terms. The acequia is like that Greek term that now finds expression in virtually every society in the world: democracy.

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.

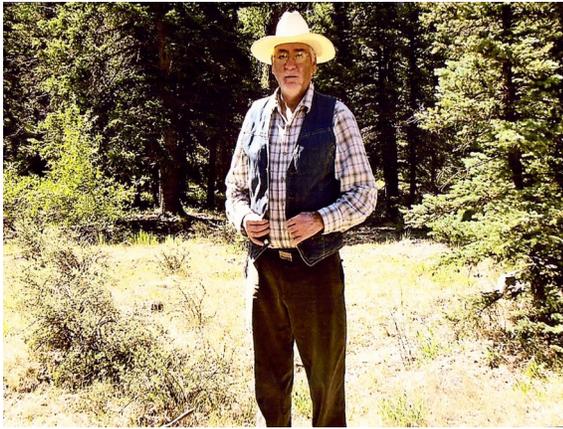


Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association



**Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association
401 Church Street – PO Box 721
San Luis, CO 81152
719-672-0810**

The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association Memorial Scholarship Fund



Following the sudden deaths in 2016 of two valued board members, the SdCAA established a scholarship fund in their honor. Felix Lopez and Joe Gallegos were devoted to acequia traditions and lifeways; they also recognized the importance of both academic and practical education in sustaining the acequia way of life under changing conditions. To continue their work, the scholarship fund will help defray the expenses of college courses as well as internships and practical training. Modest scholarships will be available to parciantes, their family members, and others committed to upholding the acequia traditions. We are currently growing the fund, developing the application process, and defining award criteria. Watch our newsletter, *El Parciante*, for updates.

Please address contributions to the SdCAA Memorial Scholarship Fund, and mail to PO Box 721, San Luis, CO 81152. We are a 501 c (3) non-profit organization so your donation is tax deductible. The Acequia Association will send you a return receipt acknowledging your donation.