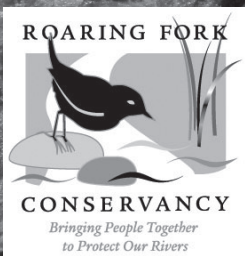


**2016**

**Voters' Guide  
to Water Issues  
in the Roaring Fork  
Watershed**



# Roaring Fork Watershed



A map at the top right of each candidate page shows which county each race affects. Look for your county to determine the races for which you will vote.

Responses from candidates in the following races:

U.S. Senate - Colorado

U.S. House District 2 & 3

Colorado House Districts 26, 57 & 61

Eagle County Commissioner

Pitkin County Commissioner

September 2016

Dear Voter,

Roaring Fork Conservancy is pleased to present yet another edition of the Voters' Guide to Water Issues in the Roaring Fork Watershed. The importance of water in Colorado continues to grow as we plan for the future of our water resources. Roaring Fork Conservancy remains focused on water quality, water quantity and riparian health, in terms of river science, water policy, and helping citizens stay informed of current issues.

Knowledgeable elected officials helps us protect our vital water resources. With the upcoming election, we wanted to give citizens an opportunity to hear from candidates on local water issues and their proposed solutions.

Roaring Fork Conservancy asked candidates in local, state, and federal races for their responses to two water related questions. This pamphlet presents a non-biased forum for candidates to express their qualifications and platforms on water issues affecting the Roaring Fork Watershed and the state of Colorado.

**Roaring Fork Conservancy does not endorse any of the candidates.**  
***Their un-edited responses are presented as submitted.***

We encourage you to vote, whether by mail or at a polling place on Tuesday, November 8, 2016. Your voice is an important part of helping us bring people together to protect our rivers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Lofaro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "L".

Rick Lofaro  
Executive Director  
Roaring Fork Conservancy

# U.S. Senate Colorado



**Darryl Glenn**, Republican  
Colorado Springs



**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Thank you for the invitation to participate in the Voters Guide. While we care a great deal about the issues your organization advocates for, we are declining to participate.

# U.S. Senate Colorado



## Arn Menconi, Green Carbondale



**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

I sat on the statewide water blue ribbon commission under Governor Ritter for 2 years to draft a statewide water plan that was then used as a predecessor to this plan. I feel this plan is a good plan that does not go far enough. We need to conserve water in Colorado which is our most precious resource and we must protect water quality. We have to prohibit fracking that will lead to future water quality issues.

As a U.S. Senator I will work to help us build a green economy to support the front range's projected water needs being addressed without taking from western slope water resources. I am the only U.S. Senate candidate who lives in the Roaring Fork/western slope, and has a proven track record of preserving the western slope's water resources.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

I am the only U.S. Senate candidate that lives in the Roaring Fork and believes in inflow diversion to create more recreational opportunities for boaters.



## Lily Tang Williams, Libertarian Parker

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

As a U.S. Senator, there is little I can do to directly affect water use in the Roaring Fork Watershed specifically. However, the Congress can set broad policy. As a Libertarian, I would prefer for our government to devolve as much control of local resources to the local communities themselves. I would also prefer market solutions over government action. Obviously, with water use, these are not always achievable goals. Nonetheless, Congress can make things easier on local communities and encourage market solutions in water conservation by encouraging additional reservoir development and exempt any such operations from federal taxes. We can also try to make federally controlled land available for such endeavors.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

The balance between recreation and agriculture in water use is indeed important—to say nothing of accommodating the myriad demands of residential use. As a U.S. Senator, again, my impact in this area is limited. However, by encouraging the additional development of private reservoirs for long-term storage, we increase the amount of water available to both agriculture and recreational interests in times of drought or shortage, which can be managed through the pricing system in the market. We can also ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, decisions balancing between the interests of agriculture and recreation remain at the local level rather than at the rather distant and detached Federal level. Naturally, this includes setting policy that enables us to align policies pertaining waterways on federal land with the preferences of local communities.





**Jared Polis**, Democrat  
Boulder

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

As pressure builds on our water system, we need policies that promote conservation and accountability. We need more collaboration between water users to balance competing demands. Colorado River Cooperative Agreement is a good example of how multiple stakeholders can come together to solve our shared interest in conserving water and protecting water quality. Also, I will continue to push for policies that encourage oil and gas developers to reduce waste and contamination through closed loop systems and recycling. In addition, I support policies that benefit our thriving recreation economy by keeping clean water in our rivers so Coloradans can enjoy kayaking, rafting, and fishing, while protecting the aquatic environment and the water for downstream use. My office and I have been working hard to introduce and pass HR 2554 or the Continental Divide Wilderness and Recreation Act. The bill would designate 40,000 new acres as protected wilderness and over 15,000 acres of White River National Forest – one of the most popular National Forests in the country – as Recreation Management Areas. These ‘special management’ zones would allow the US Forest Service to protect the watershed, habitat, and ecological qualities of the area while still allowing for and enhancing recreational land use.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Our state certainly needs a comprehensive plan to address gaps between supply and demand. My district encompasses both Front Range and West Slope interests. Instead of policies that pit these communities against each other, we would work together as a state to promote protection, conservation, and efficiency of our precious water resources. Once again, the Colorado River Cooperative Agreement is a good example of how Front Range and West Slope stakeholders can work together to solve our state's water supply concerns. This year my office and I also passed the Bolts Ditch Access and Use Act (H.R. 4510) out of the Committee on Natural Resources for the House of Representatives. This bill directs the U.S. Department of Agriculture to authorize special use access of Bolts Ditch for the diversion of water and maintenance by the town of Minturn, Colorado. This bipartisan bill finally resolved a long-term local problem that tied the hands of Minturn, Colorado and surrounding communities. It allows the Town of Minturn to use the water without compromising the sanctity of the surrounding wilderness areas.



## Gail Schwartz, Democrat Crested Butte

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

The Colorado Water Plan lays out several challenges we could be facing mid-century. Colorado's population is increasing and could double in the decades to come. Due to the impact of climate change we face as much as 30% less water plus continued drought which will exacerbate future supply problems. Conservation in urban and rural areas will be vital into the future in addition to storage or land use regulations. Changes in agricultural uses of water can also help with crop variations, and less water-intensive irrigation practices. As a State Senator, I sponsored legislation allowing agricultural water users and ranchers to conserve water without diminishing their historical consumptive use levels, or losing water rights in the long run for a good decision. Penalizing users for conservation that can benefit streamflows and our ecosystems is not sensible; in fact, we should do the opposite and reward conservation. Urban users will benefit from reuse with graywater systems, water-efficient plumbing hardware, xeriscaping and smaller lawns. But we need the vast majority of people to do their part, and that will mean new state and federal resources, education and incentives to alter behavior on a larger scale.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

When you have multiple uses of any resource, the best thing to do is to have as many stakeholders at the table as possible so all input becomes part of the comprehensive plan. I have a long history of using this approach, and it's the approach that helped build the Roaring Fork Watershed Plan. The bill I mentioned above, on allowing users to conserve without diminishing their future use rights, is a good example of how we can help protect stream flow levels, which is key for recreational users, and we must remember that recreation will be a big part of our regional economy into the future. If elected to Congress, I would be a voice for action on climate change, which threatens surface water supplies for all uses. Average temperatures are expected to rise several degrees in our area over the coming decades, which can impact snowmelt patterns and evaporation rates. Managing riparian environments will be important: for example, watching for invasive plants that use too much water. We must take all the beneficial local action possible, work to prevent any additional diversions to the Front Range and protect our interests in the Colorado River in spite of the demands of the lower basin states. We must take water issues seriously throughout the state and the Western U.S., and the larger population of the Colorado Front Range must do their part.





**Millie Hamner**, Democrat  
Frisco



**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

I will resist any attempt to take additional water from the Western Slope for the purpose of Front Range development. The current diversions reduce high altitude in-stream flow. The diversions have a drying effect on mountain valleys and puts additional stress on trees, fish, and the entire ecosystem in those basins. We also need every drop down stream to meet Colorado's obligation under the Interstate Compact. A water call on Colorado by the lower basin states would be devastating to the agriculture sector. Instead of diversions I encourage significant Front Range conservation efforts. New developments should pay a fair price for long term water commitments from sustainable sources. Laws and local regulations should allow landscaping without water requirements. Let's not turn our beautiful mountain ranges into mountain deserts.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

I will continue to support legislation and policies that allow agriculture water conserved by more efficient practices to be used for in-stream flow improvements for the benefit of recreation and the riparian habitat. I will continue to work with all Western Slope agriculture, recreation, conservation, and local government organizations to promote dialogue and solutions. In the face of dryer conditions, greater nutrient loads, and the more important role of agriculture, recreation, and tourism to the Colorado economy -- there are both challenges and opportunities with respect to water management. My job is to listen and work with all stakeholders.



## Diane Mitsch Bush, Democrat Steamboat Springs

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Much of the water supply in Colorado comes from our mountain snowpack. Over 50% of municipal water on the Front Range comes from the Western slope via TMD's. Due to hydrologic variability, climate change, and dust on snow events, predicting and planning for our water supply is difficult. Run-off hydrology has changed as the impacts of climate change have become more pronounced: run-off in the Colorado Basin, of which the Roaring Fork is a major tributary, comes much earlier and follows a steeper curve than previously. See Figure 4.7 in the Colorado Water Plan for variability and Tables 4.1-4.2 for impacts of climate change. Climate change also affects demand, both municipal and agricultural. A high conservation strategy in all basins could significantly alter the supply-demand gap, even with the impacts of climate change, particularly for the thirsty Front Range.

On the Joint Water Committee and on the House AG Committee, I continue to stress to my Front Range colleagues that we are in this together: keeping water in the basin of origin, especially the Colorado, Gunnison, and Yampa Basins is crucial because of our compact obligations and because our state-wide economy in Colorado and locally up here in our mountain communities depend on free flowing rivers and healthy watersheds (Ch. 7 of Water Plan), in-stream flows, and habitat protection. I have strongly opposed bills that would facilitate more TMD's and lead to "steamlining" project approval. You can count on me to stand up for our watersheds and free flowing rivers.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Not only are these-water, recreation, agriculture-deeply intertwined, but also all are inextricably linked to protecting healthy watersheds and more generally a healthy environment and a vibrant economy, both statewide and in our headwaters counties. One of the major reasons that Colorado has attracted so many new Front Range biotech-high-tech-aerospace jobs is because our free flowing rivers, watersheds, working ag lands, and mountain valleys are beloved by newcomers- as well as by old timers- for their beauty, ecological benefits, and recreation opportunities.

As the representative of the Upper Colorado, Roaring Fork, Eagle, Yampa and its tributaries on the Joint Interim Water Committee and on the House Ag Committee, I will continue to support bills that keep our water in our basins, support family agriculture, incentivize water conservation strategies, recognize the importance of recreation as a critical water use, and protect/improve water quality and riparian habitat. I will oppose bills that work against these goals. I have and will oppose bills that "streamline" water project approval by taking away local control such as 1041 powers and removing environmental protections. Much of the talk of the need to "streamline" really means gutting environmental protections.

I support more funding for ANS boat inspections, watershed-stream management plans, water banking, in-stream flow protections, reuse, forest health, which is intertwined with watershed health, abandoned mine cleanup, RICDs, and endangered species conservation plans. See sections 6.6, all of 7 & 9 in Water Plan. I continue to strongly support water quality monitoring.



**Michael Cacioppo**, Republican  
Avon

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

I am bombarded with requests from over 50 organizations, most from the front range, which would require up to 2 hours each to respond.

Suffice it to say, that, as the one who videotaped Eagle County's 1041 hearings several years ago, in it's fight against Colorado Springs over water, I understand the importance of protecting water in Eagle County, Routt County and the Roaring Fork valley.

It's easy for anyone to say they care about and will fight to protect our water and to fight for our water rights. It's another thing to actually risk one's home by filing a \$600 million lawsuit against the multi-billion dollar former corporate mine owner, Paramount Pictures Corporation. In 1990, on behalf of Eagle County residents, our lawsuit helped force Paramount to clean up the orange, toxic mine spill at the Gilman Mine site above Minturn, which damaged our Eagle River, the lifeblood of the Eagle valley.

I and two others filed that lawsuit, when local governments failed to act and refused to file suit. The boulders in our river turned orange, the fish and the bugs died, and Beaver Creek was sucking orange, toxic water out of the Eagle

River to make orange, toxic snow at Beaver Creek, until Beaver Creek Resort realized what was happening and shut down the snow-making equipment.

A good Democratic governor, Dick Lamm, had a \$300 million cleanup plan to move 8 million tons of arsenic, cadmium, lead and zinc, from Eagle County to the middle of Utah, where nobody lived.

A not-so-good Democratic governor, Roy Romer, sold us out and wanted to reduce the cleanup plan to only \$30 million, and wanted to move the 8 million tons of toxic waste across from the parking lot of our former Minturn Middle School. When I confronted Governor Romer about this, he was unaware what his administration was doing and promised to get back to me. 30 years later, I am still waiting for Governor Romer to get back to me. This is why we took action and filed suit.

My uncle, may he rest in peace, set up a tent in Hollywood, across the street from Paramount Pictures, exposing Paramount and helped get a story about this in Billboard Magazine, going after Paramount. We sent a former publisher of the Glenwood Post newspaper, prior to her being named publisher, to man the tent with my uncle and handle the public relations effort against Paramount.

No one will fight harder to protect our water than I will, period!



**Bob Rankin**, Republican  
Carbondale

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Thank you Roaring Fork Conservancy for your leadership in rising awareness and providing education about our critical water infrastructure issues. You raise significant but very complex issues that are covered in detail in the water plan and I hope we can continue to make the public aware of the plan.

As a member of the Joint Budget Committee, my concerns run to funding, which I would ask RFC to start to think about. The state will need about 20 Billion for all the projects now identified. At the same time, sources of funding like the severance tax are declining and other funding needs are critical. The water plan won't be complete until we have a funding plan.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

The inevitable tension between agriculture and recreation will of course continue and be the source of debate. It's easy to say that agriculture uses 80% or so of Colorado water and is therefore an easy target, but the argument is both history and economics. I'll be trying to find the right balance. I'm not on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee (I was for my first two years), but I'll follow water bills carefully and participate in debate in the house chamber. I'll expect to hear from RFC on all water bills.



**Jill Ryan**, Democrat  
Wolcott

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Colorado's Water Plan was a tremendous first step in quantifying the state's perilous and impending water shortage, and developing measurable objectives to address it. One of the most positive aspects of the plan was the inclusion of the Colorado Basin Roundtables, which offered local voices to the process. Many have said the plan doesn't go far enough in terms of specific strategies and a legislative agenda. Elected officials need to push for these in order to take the plan to the next level. Western Slope communities are particularly sensitive to trans-mountain diversions as a strategy to increase water supply. We will have to continue to be the voice for conservation and increased storage as alternatives. Additionally, with Colorado's projected population growth, water must be considered in land use decisions as a way to address demand. The Colorado Water Plan calls for a partnership among local water providers, communities, state agencies, and associations like Colorado Counties Incorporated and Colorado Home Builders to incorporate water-saving actions into land use planning. County Commissioners should advocate for model tools and agreements to assure this is able to happen quickly and uniformly throughout the state.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

As Western Slope residents, we are enamored with our environment and lifestyle, much of which depend upon an adequate water supply. This resource is scarce as Colorado is the headwaters of 18 other states and Mexico. States are legally entitled to water, as determined by nine interstate compacts and two apportionment decrees. Recreation (fishing, rafting, kayaking, etc.), and agriculture are vital building blocks of our Western Slope economy. Water law is complex and uses often compete with each other. There is a growing gap in projected water supply and demand in each Colorado basin. This is particularly true in the face of climate change, with predicted wide variability in future precipitation, the potential for less snowpack, and more frequent drought. Guidance from the Colorado Water Plan will help, and Eagle County has had meaningful representation in developing this document. Simply put, the state needs more water storage capacity to capture "extra" water in years with above average snowfall, and conservation efforts need to be ramped up statewide. I will continue to push for policies that enhance both strategies. In addition, Eagle County has historically provided limited funding for the monitoring of instream river flows, macroinvertebrates (as an indicator of water quality), and overall river health. This year, the Eagle County Board of Commissioners has taken the step to place a measure on the 2016 ballot asking voters to expand the definition of our current Open Space tax, with the ability to fund water quality efforts.



## Rick Beveridge, Republican Vail

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

The supply-demand gap is a two-fold problem for the Western Slope: Front Range demand and Colorado River Compact entitlements. Our hydrological system is expected to provide for our needs and growth, while also being asked to support an exploding metro-area population and the continuous demand for water in the lower basin states. The solution is a careful balance of development of our own compact entitlements to protect our future, a hardline position on proposed trans-mountain diversions, and a commitment to protecting the river and riparian environments that make the Western Slope the special place that it is.

As county commissioner I would do these things to address the impact of the supply-demand gap on our water future: 1) I would exercise full 1041 powers to stop additional exports of water to the Front Range, 2) I would act as an advocate of West Slope interests to the legislature and Department of Natural Resources, bolstering support for our delegation which is outmanned 4:1 by metro-area interests, 3) I would seek ways to develop West Slope diversions that exercise and perfect Colorado's rights to our compact entitlements, and 4) I would do so in adherence to the criteria set forth in the CWCB's Colorado Water Plan including emphasis on projects that combine benefits for multiple cooperating entities; that provide non-consumptive benefits to the environment, recreation, and fisheries; that work in concert with irrigated agriculture; and that emphasize conservation/reuse.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

A healthy developing western slope society is only possible through an integrated approach to water, recreation and agriculture. Such a balance is struck through the introduction of flexibility in our water rights administration, an acknowledgement and commitment to sustainable recreation, a recognition of the contribution of agriculture to both water quantity and quality, and the clear-eyed concession that additional storage may be a reasonable tool in securing our collective future.

1) There is room for more flexibility in our water rights administration. Interruptible supply and leasefallowing arrangements with willing participants could provide additional supply for recreational, environmental, and municipal interests during times of drought or in the case of a compact call.

2) We need to support the water needs of recreation, be it in summer or winter. This is our long-term sustainable future. Emphasizing communication, collaboration and cooperation, we should look for win-win approaches to addressing recreational water needs through voluntary flow management programs like the 25-year successful effort on the Arkansas River.





**Kathy Chandler-Henry**, Democrat  
Eagle

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

I am a member of the Colorado Basin Roundtable, Northwest Colorado Council of Governments QQ (Quality/Quantity) group, and the Ruedi Water and Power Authority (RWAPA) which is specific to the Roaring Fork Watershed. Colorado's water supply has long been a concern of the western slope. Water in the Colorado River is over-allocated, and the prospect of a Compact Call from lower basin states is a clear possibility. We worked hard to add a chapter to the State Water Plan regarding the connection between land and water planning. Fellow western slope commissioners and I traveled to the Metro County Commissioner meetings to ask that policy makers consider water conservation and water usage when making land planning decisions. Now that the Water Plan is published we must continue to stress the need for (1) local control regarding western slope water, (2) strong land use planning that takes water into account, and (3) aggressive conservation measures. We know there is no such thing as "new" supply, and that we must plan for and use our precious water resources wisely. I believe these are our best tactics to address Colorado's long-range water supply. The Roaring Fork Conservancy's Regional Water Efficiency Plan is a wonderful example of cross-jurisdictional cooperation to achieve conservation and water planning goals. I support the forward-thinking water planning and education advanced by the Conservancy and the RWAPA, and will continue to support these efforts through our budget process. Eagle County strongly supports conservation efforts through our Open Space program.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Colorado's lifeblood is the water that courses through our rivers and streams, turning barren fields into productive cropland and mountainsides into internationally-renowned winter playgrounds. Our western heritage is based on ranching and farming; and energy development too, with its boom/bust nature and thirst for water. Growth in our communities requires water for households and businesses. Land in our narrow valleys is dear; less than a fifth of the land in our watershed is private. It's a delicate and ever-changing balance among competing interests for scarce resources. We don't have the luxury to do everything – for example, water used for municipal growth may be water no longer available to irrigate fields. We can build on our values and on collaboration across jurisdictions, however – a good recent example is the purchase of the Emma Farms area with Open Space funds from Eagle and Pitkin County, preserving water rights and keeping lands productive for agriculture. Our resort recreation economies are largely based on water – whether flowing in the streams for rafting/kayaking, providing habitat for fisheries, or freezing and covering our treasured mountainsides with snow for skiing. That means in-stream flows, irrigation efficiencies, and keeping water on the western slope are all critical. Land and water planning must be tied to community priorities, and for Eagle County the highest priority continues to be "quality of life." I will work with legislators, regulators, and policy makers to keep and protect the water that provides that quality of life throughout our region.

## Pitkin County Commissioner - District 3



**Greg Poschman**, Democrat  
Aspen



**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Pitkin County is in an enviable position, in that we can, and have already been taking a leadership role on several of the objectives specified in the Colorado Water Plan. The creation of the Pitkin County Healthy Rivers and Streams Board, on which I was proud to serve, is a model for other counties in the state. Through HRSB, Pitkin County will continue to support innovative ideas for conservation of water and riparian resources, agricultural irrigation systems, and restoration of areas critical to river and watershed health.

...

The Colorado Water plan calls for water to be redirected from Agriculture through innovative methods that do not include drying up farms. Pitkin County is already supporting initiatives for water savings along the Crystal River, by supporting efficient irrigation for ranchers and farmers, but there is a lot of work yet to be done. The ranchers are as pragmatic, practical and skeptical, as the conservationists are creative and enthusiastic, while the municipalities are always thirsty. One initiative from Pitkin County that I will continue to support is an analysis of the economic value of water in the stream. Real Estate, tourism, agriculture and healthy riparian areas have valuation that depends on our rivers. We must have hard data that supports our valuation when the front range diverters come calling with arguments for "highest and best use" for Roaring Fork water for the larger cities to the east.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Water is life. Our entire ecosystem and economy depend on healthy streams and riparian areas for survival. 98% of all wildlife and a probably the same percentage of humans rely on the habitat, the food production and the livable bottom land zones. These riparian areas only comprise about 2% of the land mass of our great state, and without them we would be as dry as Death Valley.

...

Outdoorsmen, ranchers and farmers in the west have learned to co-exist with wild-life and to conserve the resources to a great extent, but as we shift more toward a tourism and recreation economy, we can expect user pressure unlike any we have seen to date. I will work to ensure that respect, balance and responsibility are key elements in our relationship with our environment and water resources. I will do all I can to help keep rural wild lands, agricultural lands, ranching and farming operations viable, as they define our western landscape. Education and outreach will be a large component in creating respect and stewardship of wild lands and water resources. Thankfully, Pitkin County is a leader in maintaining water resources and providing for the wide variety of needs. Implementing the Watershed Plan, the Regional Water Efficiency Plan and making sure our voices are heard in State, Regional and National water policy will all be key to fulfilling our commitment to our healthy watershed. I look forward to finding the innovative solutions that keep our best land and water assets in public hands and in improved condition.

*[...portions deleted to fit 250 max word count]*

## Pitkin County Commissioner - District 3



**Scott Writer**, Independent  
Aspen



**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Water, wetlands, riparian and agricultural land conservation will be treated as the highest of priorities if I am elected. Each of these issues is long term and I commit to do the work to keep them on the front burner, and to never claim victory, as these are battles that really never end. Environmentalism is an easy flag to “fiercely” wave, but effective environmentalism is best served with the kind of experience and competence I have accumulated over decades in working with diverse, and seemingly non overlapping interests to put together complicated, detailed agreements and legislation in land conservation, wetland restoration/creation and water rights.

Supply Demand gap: I will do everything in my power to keep western slope water on the western slope. Conservation: Pitkin County should lead by example and work with jurisdictions within the County (and out) to follow that lead. Land Use: We should do all we can to keep the water on the land and riparian and agricultural areas undeveloped. Agriculture: We should work with great entities like the RFC to create partnerships (eg with Open Space and Trails funds) that conserve and preserve agricultural lands, water and uses. Storage: Storage is tricky. Dams and reservoirs can be problematic. We should not rush to damage habitat to claim water rights, but water rights are critical. On this front I would require the input from many specialized experts on specific proposals. Ag lands may present a creative alternative on storage.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Here in Pitkin County we are fortunate to be in a position where our passions, the things we love and cherish, also happen to be our business – eco and recreational tourism. I will prioritize what we love that supports our resort economy ahead of the development economy. That prioritization demands that water, recreation, and agriculture/ open space take precedence over development pressures. This is a demanding pledge, because as our environmental and agricultural resources take greater and greater precedence the demand for our “resort” will grow and development pressures will become more and more determined. I pledge to honor these priorities and stand strong against development pressures that conflict with them.

We should do everything we can to keep and secure water rights associated with the environment - eg minimum stream flows and recreation decrees. Wild and Scenic designations seem best suited to help us keep our water on the western slope. We should work more proactively with the agricultural communities/owners to keep water rights on the land and in the ditches and search for mutually beneficial water strategies. I will leave no stone unturned in finding creative ways to preserve and enhance our riparian and wetland resources. There are many tools in the tool box – for instance, I built the first Wetland Mitigation Bank in Western Colorado. Conservation is not just about land, but water as well.

I will fight to preserve agricultural interests not just because of the conservation of land and water, but also because ranchers and farmers form an amazing cultural heritage in this valley and one I will fight not to lose.

## Pitkin County Commissioner - District 4



**Steve Child**, Democrat  
Old Snowmass

**1. The Colorado State Water Plan has raised significant awareness and questions about Colorado's**

**long range water supply. What actions do you plan on taking to address one of the measurable objectives (Supply-Demand Gap, Conservation, Land Use, Agriculture, Storage) in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Pitkin County has a good record of fighting for responsible use of water to improve water quality and quantity in the Roaring Fork drainage, and I wholeheartedly support these continuing efforts. Examples of recent actions taken by the County include water court actions of opposing the City of Aurora diversions through the Busk-Ivanhoe tunnel in order to leave 2500 Acre Feet of water in the Fryingpan River drainage, a change of use in the Stapleton Ditch to leave about 1 ½ cfs of water in Maroon Creek and the Roaring Fork River that used to be used to irrigate what is now the Aspen Pitkin County Airport, and the application for a RISD (Recreational Instream Diversion) for the construction of the Basalt whitewater park wave which is currently under construction which will help protect the Roaring Fork against future diversions to the Front Range. I also strongly support the efforts of the Healthy Rivers and Streams Board which is a unique entity and the envy of others in the state.

**2. In recent developments, water, recreation and agriculture have shown to be inextricably linked. How will you address these three integral elements of western Colorado's character in the Roaring Fork Watershed and/or your area of influence?**

Since agriculture is the largest diverter of water from our rivers in our state, it is the most logical source of water for bolstering our stream flows for environmental and recreational purposes. Much has been spoken about our "use it or lose it" doctrine which leads to a tremendous amount of unnecessary diversion from our streams by irrigators who are afraid of harming their water rights. I would like to see new state legislation which would clarify that irrigators can leave water in the stream and not jeopardize their rights if they put in water efficiency measures that allow them to irrigate the same acreage using less water, and that during rainy periods when they don't need so much water they can turn down their headgates and not be penalized. The water falling from the sky belongs to the people of the state of Colorado, and should count the same on water diversion records as water being diverted from a stream for beneficial use by an irrigator.

**Please Note:**

After several attempts, we did not receive comments from the following candidates by our print deadline:

U.S. Senate - Michael Bennet

U.S. House of Representatives District 2 - Nicholas Morse, Richard Longstreth

U.S. House of Representatives District 3 - Scott Tipton

Colorado State Senate District 5 - Misty Plowright, Mike McRedmond, Curtis Imrie

Colorado House of Representatives District 61 - Robert Schutt

Eagle County Commissioner District 1 - Michael Dunahay

Pitkin County Commissioner District 5 - George Newman

Garfield County Commissioner District 2 - John Acha, John Martin

Roaring Fork Conservancy (RFC) is one of the most respected watershed action and education organizations in Colorado. We continually strive to fulfill our mission by inspiring people to explore, value and protect the Roaring Fork Watershed. By uniting diverse stakeholders across political boundaries, RFC is able to address current issues and future threats to water resources through scientific studies, restoration projects, participation in local and state water policy, and targeted educational campaigns. Each year RFC education programs reach thousands of students of all ages with hands-on science and exploration. Each program is designed to engage participants with people, places, and/or actions in the watershed which may not be otherwise accessible. Since 1996, we have found new ways to bring people together to protect our rivers by making scientific research and local water issues accessible to both children and adults.



RFC is an independent, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization.

For more information about RFC, please visit [www.roaringfork.org](http://www.roaringfork.org)



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