



**COLORADO
WATER CENTER**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN COLORADO**

Water Literate Leaders of Northern Colorado

January 10, 2024 | Speaker Biographies

JIM YAHN | General Manager, North Sterling Irrigation District

Jim Yahn is the manager of the North Sterling and Prewitt Reservoirs, a position that he has held for over 30 years. He is responsible for overseeing the diversion and distribution of water to over 350 farmers. Together the reservoirs are a source of irrigation water for approximately 70,000 acres. Jim is a registered professional engineer, receiving his B.S. in Agricultural Engineering from Colorado State University. Prior to his employment with North Sterling and Prewitt he worked as a private consulting engineer in Fort Collins for 5 years. He is a native of Colorado growing up on a family ranch, which used water from the North Sterling Reservoir System. In June of 2016, Jim was appointed by the Governor to the Colorado Water Conservation Board to serve as the South Platte Director and served for 5 years, one 2 year as Chair. Jim has been a member of the South Platte Basin Roundtable since its inception in 2005, served as chair from 2009 to 2012, and currently serves as the roundtable's representative to the Interbasin Compact Committee. Jim and his wife Tracy farm and ranch in their spare time and are the parents of two grown children, Hannah and Austin.

JOEL SCHNEEKLOTH | Regional Water Resource Specialist, Colorado Water Center & CSU Extension

Joel Schneekloth is the Regional Water Resource Specialist for Colorado Water Center and Colorado State University Extension. He grew up in Northeast Nebraska on an irrigated dairy farm. Joel graduated from the University of Nebraska with a B.S. and M.S. in Mechanized Agriculture with an emphasis upon irrigation and water management. Joel has been with Colorado State University since 2000. Prior to that, he held a Water Resource Extension Educator and Research Coordinator position with the University of Nebraska based in North Platte, NE.

Joel conducts research and educational programs relating to irrigation and crop production with a primary emphasis upon limited water supplies. He has also conducted several on-farm demonstration projects dealing with limited water management.

Joel has conducted research and education programs on drought tolerant corn, alternative irrigated crops, nitrogen management, tillage and residue management for irrigated corn production, irrigation timing impacts on crop production.

BRETT BOVEE | President, WestWater Research

Brett Bovee is the President of WestWater Research. Brett brings close to 20 years of experience conducting a variety of engineering, economic, and water rights studies across the Western states. Many of these projects have been focused on water resources management and water development concepts in the pursuit, protection, and use of water rights. Since joining WestWater, Brett has performed dozens of focused water right valuation studies and broader economic and water market analyses. Brett brings a unique perspective to projects, combining a background in water resources engineering with a developed knowledge of water rights and economics.

EMILY HUNT | Deputy Utilities Director, City of Thornton

Emily Hunt has over twenty-five years of experience in Colorado Water Resources issues. Emily participated in the Colorado Foundation for Water Education's Water Leaders Program in 2006. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Colorado Water Congress and the Metro Roundtable. Emily earned her bachelor's degree in Geology from the University of Colorado at Boulder, and her master's degree in Geography from the University of Denver. When not at work, Emily enjoys being outside, and growing spicy things.

JESSICA THRASHER | Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Program Leader, Colorado Water Center

Jessica Thrasher is the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Programs Leader at the Colorado Water Center. She has a bachelor's degree in Sociology from Southern Methodist University and a master's degree in International Development Anthropology from Colorado State University. She focuses on creating and managing programs that promote a diverse water workforce representative of the communities served, equitable access to water resources and information, and developing resources that promote integration of DEI practices into the water field. She is dedicated to fostering collaboration, innovation, and inclusion of diverse perspectives to build an equitable, sustainable water future for all.