

How to get farmers and ranchers to love you (and your project)

By Marilyn Bay Drake,
Eaton, Colorado

Who am I and why am I here today?



Grew up on a Colorado crop & sheep farm and continue to operate a freezer lamb business



Degree in journalism, minor in Spanish



Worked in agricultural communications for 30 years, including U.S. Meat Export Federation, National Farmers Union, National Bison Association & Colorado Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association



Retained this spring to work part-time as an ag communications consultant for River Network



Personal: love gardening, freezing & canning, enjoy riding and training horses, lived in Asia for 5 years and Costa Rica for 6 months



I believe good chocolate is an essential food group

Work for River Network: Developed news release distribution lists

Association/Organization	Address	Town	State	Zip
CDA Colorado State Conservation Board		Grand Jur	CO	
Colorado Agricultural Aviation Association				
Colorado Association of Conservation Districts	P.O. Box 1175	Lamar	CO	81052
Colorado Cattlemen's Association	8833 Ralston Rd	Arvada	CO	80002
Colorado Coalition of Land Trusts?	8833 Ralston Rd	Arvada	CO	80002
Colorado Corn Growers Association	127 22nd St	Greeley	CO	80631
Colorado Department of Agriculture	305 Interlocken Pkwy	Broomfiel	CO	80021
Colorado Department of Agriculture		Broomfiel	CO	
Colorado Farm Bureau	9177 E. Mineral Cir	Centennis	CO	80112
Colorado Farm Show		Greeley		
Colorado Foundation for Agriculture	10343 Federal Blvd, I	Westmins	CO	80260
Colorado Livestock Association	2425 35th Ave	Greeley	CO	80634
Colorado Pork Producers Council	P.O. Box 116	Lucerene	CO	80646
Colorado Rural Development Council	2738 S. Newton St	Denver	CO	80236
Colorado Sugar Beet Growers Association	710 11th Ave, Ste. 11	Greeley	CO	80631
Colorado Wine Industry Development Board	305 Interlocken Pkwy	Broomfiel	CO	80021
Colorado Wool Growers Association	P.O. Box 292	Delta	CO	81416
Ditch & Reservoir Company Alliance	P.O. Box 68	McClave	CO	81057

News Media Organization	Address	Town	State	Zip
Ag Journal	422 Colorado Avenue	La Junta	CO	81050
AgInfo Radio Network	173 Baker Ranch Rd	Walla Wa	WA	99362
Agri-Pulse		(national)		
Agri-Pulse West		(national)		
Agri-Talk		(national)		
Akron News-Reporter	69 Main Ave	Akron	CO	80720
AP Denver Office		Denver		
AP Headquarters		(national)		
Aspen Times		Aspen	CO	
Barn Radio Network		Briggsdale		
Biz West	P.O. Box 270810	Fort Collir	CO	80527
Brighton Standard Blade		Brighton	CO	80601
Broomfield Enterprise		Broomfield		
Brownfield Ag Network (radio)		(national)		
Brush News-Tribune	P.O. Box 8	Brush	CO	80723
Chaffee County Times		Buena Vis	CO	
Cherry Creek Media		Montrose	CO	
Colorado Public Radio		Denver	CO	
Colorado Springs Gazette		Colorado Springs		
Colorado Sun		Denver		
Colorado Sun		(statewide)		
Coloradoan		Fort Collir	CO	
Daily Sentinel, The	734 S. 7th St.	Grand Jur	CO	81501
Daily Sentinel, The	734 S. 7th St.	Grand Jur	CO	81501
Delta Independent		Delta	CO	
Denver Post		Denver		
Eastern Colo. News				
Fence Post, The		Greeley		
Fence Post, The	P.O. Box 1690	Greeley	CO	80631
Fort Morgan Times	230A Main St	Fort Morg	CO	80701
Fort Morgan Times		Fort Morg	CO	
Fort Morgan Times		Fort Morg	CO	
Greeley Tribune		Greeley		

Work for River Network: News Release, Feature Story, Fact Sheet Pamphlet

For immediate release: Oct. 2, 2019

Contact: Marilyn Bay Drake marilynbaydrake@gmail.com

Collaborative Water Project in Boulder County Produces Win-Win Result

The Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) has collaborated to produce a video series showcasing farmers, ranchers, ditch companies, conservancy districts, environmental groups and other entities come together to improve river health, irrigation efficiency and environmental and recreational Colorado's limited water supplies.

"As Colorado's population continues to grow, farmland is being converted to development and agricultural water is being sold or rented to municipalities," said Greg Peterson, CAWA executive director. "It is imperative that we work with others to preserve agricultural irrigation water and that farmers and ranchers get involved in water planning."

The first video is the story of how different users united to restore Left Hand Creek in Boulder after the 2013 flood. It shows how working together made the creek better for all users, including improvements for irrigators.

"(The 2013 flood) was the third flood I've seen come through here, but it was by far the most destructive," said cow-calf operator Ron Sutherland, Twin Lakes Ranch, Niwot, Colo. Sutherland has been designated a Colorado Centennial Farm and has been operated by his family since 1881.

"There was 11-15 feet of water, canyon wall to canyon wall," said Terry Plummer, Left Hand Ditch Company, which provides irrigation water for 30,000 acres of farmland as well as providing water to Left Hand Water District to make drinking water for towns and cities.

Farmers and ranchers along the creek had to deal with washouts that were 30 feet long and eight to ten feet deep. The flooding on Sutherland's property washed out Left Hand Creek, eroding pastureland and making the creek difficult for his cattle to access.

According to Jessica Olson, Left Hand Watershed Center, Longmont, Colo., the flood was the catalyst that brought together farmers, the ditch company and municipal and environmental groups to develop a plan that would restore what the flood destroyed. The group worked with the state and federal governments to secure funding to help implement the plan.


The plan included stabilizing the creek bed to protect agriculture infrastructure and restoring creek banks for both aesthetic and practical reasons. It also included reconnecting floodplains and grading low flow channels in the creek bottom. On Sutherland's ranch, ramps were created to allow cattle water at a designated location along the creek, while also protecting newly planted vegetation.

"The low flow channels sped up the water (in the creek), enabling us to get the irrigation water where it needs to go faster and more efficiently," said Plummer.

"That (his ranch land) has all been filled in and reseeded," said Sutherland. "I'm glad to see them come in and restore it."


REBUILDING LEFT HAND CREEK, BOULDER COUNTY

Agriculture Benefits from Collaboration



OVERVIEW

Following the September 2013 epic flooding in Colorado, much of northern Colorado was devastated, including many farms and ranches. In Boulder County, farmers, ranchers, ditch companies, conservancy districts, environmental groups and other entities came together to rebuild. Six years later, the result is improved water flow, irrigation efficiency and environmental water flow, irrigation efficiency and environmental water flow.



For immediate release: Oct. 2, 2019

Contact: Marilyn Bay Drake marilynbaydrake@gmail.com

Collaborative Water Project in Boulder County Produces Win-Win Result

The Colorado Ag Water Alliance (CAWA) has collaborated to produce a video series showcasing how farmers, ranchers, ditch companies, conservancy districts, environmental groups and other entities have come together to improve river health, irrigation efficiency and environmental and recreational use of Colorado's limited water supplies.

"As Colorado's population continues to grow, farmland is being converted to development and agricultural water is being sold or rented to municipalities," said Greg Peterson, CAWA executive director. "It is imperative that we work with others to preserve agricultural irrigation water and that farmers and ranchers get involved in water planning."

The first video is the story of how different users united to restore Left Hand Creek in Boulder County after the 2013 flood. It shows how working together made the creek better for all users, including improvements for irrigators.

"(The 2013 flood) was the third flood I've seen come through here, but it was by far the most destructive," said cow-calf operator Ron Sutherland, Twin Lakes Ranch, Niwot, Colo. Sutherland's ranch has been designated a Colorado Centennial Farm and has been operated by his family since 1881.

"There was 11-15 feet of water, canyon wall to canyon wall," said Terry Plummer, Left Hand Ditch Company, which provides irrigation water for 30,000 acres of farmland as well as providing water to Left Hand Water District to make drinking water for towns and cities.

Farmers and ranchers along the creek had to deal with washouts that were 30 feet long and eight to ten feet deep. The flooding on Sutherland's property washed out Left Hand Creek, eroding pastureland and making the creek difficult for his cattle to access.

According to Jessica Olson, Left Hand Watershed Center, Longmont, Colo., the flood was the catalyst that brought together farmers, the ditch company and municipal and environmental groups to decide on a plan that would restore what the flood destroyed. The group worked with the state and federal governments to secure funding to help implement the plan.

The plan included stabilizing the creek bed to protect agriculture infrastructure and restoring creek banks for both aesthetic and practical reasons. It also included reconnecting floodplains and grading low flow channels in the creek bottom. On Sutherland's ranch, ramps were created to allow cattle to access water at a designated location along the creek, while also protecting newly planted vegetation.

"The low flow channels sped up the water (in the creek), enabling us to get the irrigation water where it needs to go faster and more efficiently," said Plummer.

"That (his ranch land) has all been filled in and reseeded," said Sutherland. "I'm glad to see them come in and restore it."

No wonder there's confusion, ag and environmentalists don't always speak the same language.

Watershed

Stream Mangement Plan

Diversion Structure

Geomorphology

Strip Till

Precision Agriculture

Irrigation Tubes

Flood Irrigation

Irrigation Cuts

Early Water

Set Ditches

Why don't farmers and ranchers come to our meetings?



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)



Don't they
understand what
is at stake?

If you want farmers and
ranchers and their rural
communities to love
your project...

Take time to learn about farming/ ranching in your community



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Build relationships



[This Photo](#) by
Unknown Author is
licensed under [CC](#)
[BY-SA-NC](#)

If you do
this, you will
learn:



The best times, days and seasons to hold meetings with the greatest likelihood farmers and ranchers will attend



Rural people are far more likely to do business with people they know and trust. Outsiders and “city people” need to prove they are trustworthy.



The biggest motivators to participate in Stream Management Planning



Threatening their water rights is like threatening to take someone’s deed to their home.

Here's what one Colorado farmer has to say about water and conservation.



- ▶ He is 81 years of age
- ▶ He has farmed for 60 years.
- ▶ He currently farms just under 800 irrigated acres, largely by himself.
- ▶ He holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture and a master's degree in secondary education.
- ▶ Oh, yah . . . He's my dad.



Thank you for
▶ listening.