



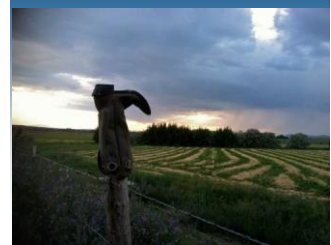
Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

# EL Parciante

PO Box 721 San Luis,  
CO 81152

## The Mission of the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association

The mission of the Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association is to preserve acequias in Costilla, Conejos, Huerfano and Las Animas counties as the core social, political and economic institution of their watersheds, and to protect the water rights and unique governance structures that will ensure the viability of the acequia system and the rich ecology, heritage and food production it supports for generations to come.



## Become an SdCAA Member

The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association is beginning a member drive, each acequia will have an opportunity to appoint one member who will represent their acequia. Also, if you are a member of 2 or more acequias you may only represent one acequia. Members will be helping to guide the association as it works to fulfill

its mission to protect and preserve the viability of the acequia system and the rich ecology, heritage and food production that are a kin to acequia success.

Duties and responsibilities include:

- ◇ electing the next years board members (as seats

become available). In keeping with tradition, there will be one acequia—one vote.

- ◇ Helping to build membership to ensure all of Colorado's Acequias are recognized and supported.
- ◇ Volunteer for SdCAA events when possible!

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## EL Parciante SdCAA Programs

### Legal and Technical Assistance Program

Water law in Colorado is complex and there are circumstances under which an irrigator can lose their water rights or be adversely impacted by a change of use within the watershed. To a small-scale farmer, water is wealth – the means by which you support your family and the means by which you participate in your community.

However, the process through which a farmer must go to defend his water rights, either in an abandonment challenge or as an intervener in a change of use proceedings, can be costly and time consuming, requiring technical and legal expertise beyond what an individual farmer can afford.

Our culture is one in which knowledge is shared orally, from generation to generation. While this strong oral tradition has meant that acequia knowledge and sustainable farming practices have been passed down for

nine and ten generations, the oral tradition has also been a hindrance in the legal and administrative world of Colorado water. Some acequias do not have written bylaws and often lack the diversion records necessary for proof of historic use in water court.

Another problem facing acequias is the challenge of governance. Most agricultural ditches in Colorado are incorporated companies with recorded bylaws and leadership structures. One goal of this program is to support acequia governance through empowerment of its members and strengthened internal controls. Thus far, we have worked to draft model bylaws which can be adopted by acequia ditches and we are currently working to develop a governance handbook for Colorado acequias. The Legal Assistance Program has assisted the following acequias to draft their by-laws and other necessary docu-



mentation: Montez Ditch, Guadalupe Sanchez Ditch, Association Ditch, Aban Sanchez Ditch,, Chalifu Ditch, Garcia, CO, and currently working with the Robert Allen Ditch on their by-laws.

Please see <http://www.colorado.edu/law/acequia-assistance-project> for a description of our partnership with Colorado Open Lands and the University of Colorado on this program.

For more information contact our SdCAA , Legal Assistance Liaison, Eugene Jacquez and download an application at [www.coloradoacequias.org](http://www.coloradoacequias.org)



### Congreso de Acequias

Acequias are unique and longstanding cultural and legal institutions in Colorado. Spanish and Mexican farmers and ranchers who settled here long before Colorado became a state created these systems for irrigation and water sharing that ensure sustainable use of water, and create important community bonds.

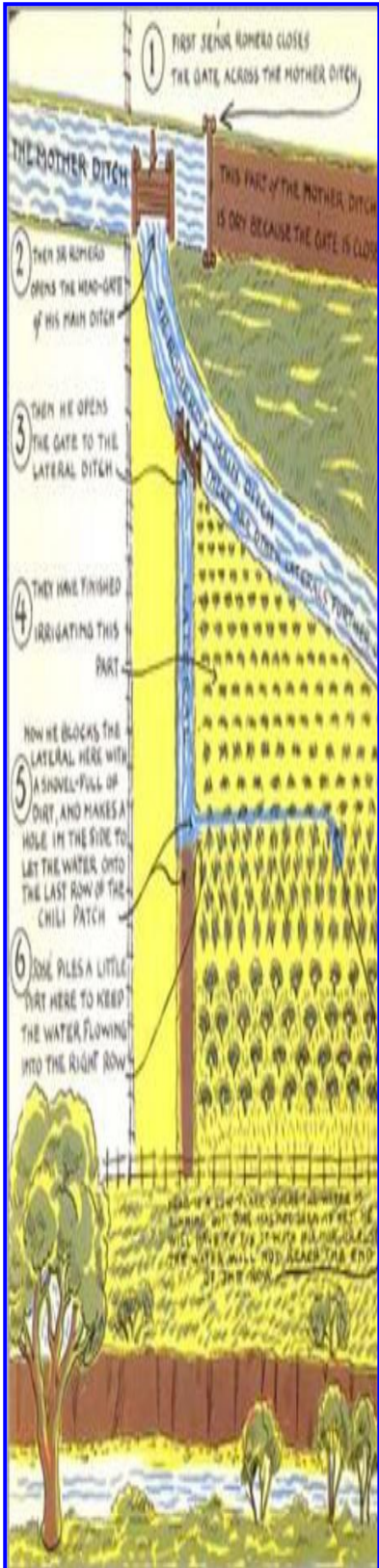
The Congreso de Acequias is an event that brings acequia Irrigators together to share not only concerns and issues, but share knowledge, heritage, and community!

The Congreso de Acequias will be held on Saturday October 14, 2017 @ Centennial High School.

I hope to see many of you there!



Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association



## The Board

- Delmer Vialpando 719-672-0944
- Andy Manzanares 719-588-7607
- Junita Martinez 719-588-0605
- Charlie Maestas 719-672-3949
- Norman Maestas 719-672-3933
- Jaun R. Maestas 719-672-4471
- Bea Ferrigno 719-580-7378
- Dave Marquez 719-672-0334

### SdCAA Meeting Dates:

SdCAA Meeting are held the 2nd Tuesday of the Month.

Next Scheduled Meeting  
Tuesday August 8, 2017  
EDC Conference Room

### Come Join Us!

The SdCAA in partner with the NRCS will be hosting a series of workshops addressing gated pipe, grazing and the hoop houses including field trips to several locations. The scheduled dates for the workshops and field trips are below.

Wednesday August 16, 2017 Topic:  
Irrigation and 1st Field Trip

Thursday September 7, 2017  
Topic: Grazing Management and 2nd  
Field Trip

Wednesday September 27, 2017  
Topic: River and Riparian Habitat and  
3rd Field Trip

In addition to the workshops the SdCAA will be hosting the annual Congreso de Acequias on October 14, 2017 @ Centennial High School. Schedule of events will be forth coming.

## Acequia Association Appoints Executive Director



The Sangre de Cristo Acequia Association SdCAA recently welcomed Mathew Valdez

as Executive Director. Valdez has 17 years of local government and land use experience and is a *parciante* (Irrigator) on the Acequia del Cerro. The non-profit SdCAA was formed to ensure the sustainability and traditional governance of acequia culture; it operates under a volunteer board and has held a congreso for acequeiros each fall since 2012.

In 2016, it received an initial grant from the San Luis Valley Conservation and Connection Initiative (SLVCCI) which provided board training and development of a strategic plan. The Strategic Plan includes capacity development and membership expansion in the four counties in which acequias are recognized in Colorado Law: Costilla, Conejos, Huerfano, and Las Animas. The Strategic Plan will

also strengthen the association's foundation to ensure it's long-term sustainability and viability of its mission to provide services and assistance to Colorado acequias and education for the generation and the public about the historic and contemporary significance of aequias and traditional agriculture in the region.

The 2017 grant cycle enabled the association to engage Valdez as its first full-time employee and will provide office equipment, improvement to the website, and support for the Congreso as well as a number of workshops with additional funds from the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

The SdCAA acknowledges with thanks the support of the SLVCCI and its coordinating partners: the LOR Foundation, Western Rivers Conservancy, Colorado Open Lands, and the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust.

For further information, you may contact Mathew Valdez Executive Director SdCAA , Telephone 719-672-0810, in-fo@sangreacequias.org



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