

Douglas County Commissioners
Abe Laydon
George Teal
Lora Thomas

The San Luis Valley is a magical place filled with natural splendor. In a valley the size of Connecticut, with 14,000 foot peaks on either side, the mighty Rio Grande starts her journey to the Gulf of Mexico. The first irrigation rights filed in Colorado are here in The People's Ditch. Since the mid 1800's settlers have been turning this high desert valley into an agricultural basket through sweat and hard work. A major flyway for hundreds of thousands of wetland habitat birds, the land has been a resting place for many travelers. The Utes, the Navajo and Fremont all found paths to follow on the Rio Grande's tributaries.

Water is life. We know this all too well here in the San Luis Valley. Our elevation of 8,000 feet on the valley floor keeps us close to the sun's full strength. Our arid landscape receives only 6 to 8 inches of precipitation a year. This high, cold desert makes one appreciate the life that blossoms here under such tough conditions. The aquifer that we live on is the mother that nurtures the land through these long dry days.

Early European settlers grew grains from Scandinavia and learned how to irrigate from the acequia communities. Truck farms throughout the valley took their bounty of vegetables to the citizens and soldiers, to help in the fight during WWII. Over the last 40 years the San Luis Valley has received national recognition for its quality potatoes. The aquifer has allowed us to grow rich alfalfa, flavorful barley and green meadows dotting our streams, creeks and rivers. The lifeblood of our home is its rich agricultural history and economy.

Time and time again the people of the San Luis Valley have been told they can make do with less water, to enrich and ensure the boom of economies over the mountains. We have come to another of those efforts to dry up our fragile arid landscape for the monetary gain of outsiders. This time though, we have a hard reality to face. We have mined our aquifer and streams for far too long. We have reached into our water savings account and spent into our children's future. The climate has shifted and we are to ask, "What will become of our magical valley with no water?"

Surface irrigators and well owners alike are struggling with how to remain viable while our resource slowly dwindles. As farmers and communities we have come together to find ways to bring balance back to the land and live within our means. We want our children to raise crops and children here like their ancestors. Our rural towns navigate uncertain times as we try to support local part stores and school districts. This valley will rally again to find a way to protect our water and way of life. I ask you to consider other approaches for how you may take care of your own communities without mining from ours. As the Officers of our local San Luis Valley chapter of Rocky Mountain Farmers Union I strongly ask you to decline any water grab from Renewable Water Resources. Thank you.

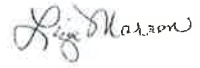
San Luis Valley Farmers Union

President-Kyler J Brown

Vice President- Patrick O'Neill

Handwritten signatures of Kyler J Brown and Patrick O'Neill. The signature of Kyler J Brown is on the left, and the signature of Patrick O'Neill is on the right.

Secretary- Liza Marron



Treasurer- Kris Steinburg

