



GWC Summer Conference A Huge Success

On June 8-9, the Getches-Wilkinson Center hosted “*Crisis on the Colorado River: From Short-Term Solutions to Long-Term Sustainability.*” The conference, organized in partnership with the Water & Tribes Initiative, attracted a full-house of approximately 260 attendees intent on exploring both the current water scarcity challenges facing the basin and the long-term goal of sustainable management. Combined with the 150+ online (Zoom) registrants, the conference was likely the best attended in our 43-year history of June water conferences. Much of that success can be attributed to the lineup of top-tier speakers, including Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Camille Touton, U.S. Senator John Hickenlooper (via Zoom), leading water officials from each of the basin states, former Arizona Governor (and Interior Secretary) Bruce Babbitt, and leaders of 13 (of 30) Colorado River tribes.

For many attendees, the highlight of the event was the “tribal panel” featuring leaders from Ak-Chin Indian Community, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe, Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT), Gila River Indian Community, Hopi Tribe, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Kaibab Band of Paiutes, Navajo Nation, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Shivwits Band of Paiutes, Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Ute Mountain Tribe, and the Ute Indian Tribe. Despite having rights (quantified and unquantified) to at least a fourth of the river’s flow, these tribes have historically been left on-the-sidelines in Colorado River discussions and decision-making, an era that thankfully appears to be ending as new negotiations begin to develop post-2026 management rules in the basin. Meaningful tribal engagement is likely to bring several benefits to these discussions, which too frequently in the past has cast the resource as merely a complex plumbing system, and not a river with unparalleled cultural, spiritual, and environmental values.

Given the size and scope of this event, it was perhaps the most expensive in our history, making the contributions of our sponsors even more critical than usual. Major GWC sponsors included the Walton Family Foundation, the Conscience Bay Company, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Overall, over 2 dozen organizations provided support to the GWC, and/or our partners in the Water & Tribes initiative, for this event. The time donated by speakers and attendees was equally essential and heartening; the Colorado River is clearly on the minds of many talented people.

Arizona v. Navajo Decision

By Frannie Monasterio

On Thursday, June 22, 2023, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its Arizona v. Navajo Nation



Adam Fisher (Colorado Law '24) Named 2023-2024 Wyss Scholar

University of Colorado Law School student **Adam Fisher** ('24) is this year's Wyss Scholar. Fisher, a JD candidate, is Colorado Law's sixth Wyss Scholar. He is committed to spending his career negotiating new public land designations, advising decision-makers, working with tribes, and advocating for public land conservation. The Wyss Scholarship, given to one Colorado Law student each year, supports graduate-level education for promising leaders in Western land conservation. Recipients receive generous financial assistance to cover the full cost of one year of law school, as well as funds for internship opportunities, research assistance, and postgraduate support.

Ella Merrill (Colorado Law '25) Named 2023 David Harrison Innovations in Water and Energy Law & Policy Fellow

University of Colorado Law School student **Ella Merrill** ('25) is this year's Harrison Fellow. The Innovations in Water and Energy Law & Policy Fellowship, initiated in 2010 by partners of the law firm of Moses, Wittemyer, Harrison and Woodruff, P.C. in honor David L. Harrison (Law '71), is awarded each year to a Colorado Law student on the basis of academic performance, commitment to public service, and interest in the study of water and energy law and policy. To the extent practicable, each Harrison Fellow will focus on a specific project where the partner organization is advancing innovative solutions for sustainable management of water or related energy resources outside the United States.

This summer, as a Harrison Fellow, Ella has partnered with the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network and the Legal Resources Centre in Cape Town, South Africa, to assist with and write about a series of cases that address the right to clean and accessible drinking water, guaranteed by the South African Constitution.



