

Director, Colorado Water Center

November 2024



**COLORADO
WATER CENTER**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Executive Summary

The director of the Colorado Water Center (CoWC) will join a team of passionate, experienced professionals dedicated to water-related engagement, outreach and education. Created by the Water Resources Act of 1964, the CoWC serves to convene conversations and connect diverse voices, building on the rich water history at Colorado State University.

Position Overview

The director is appointed by the [President of Colorado State University](#) to serve as the chief executive, academic, and policy officer of the CoWC, reporting directly to the [Vice President for Engagement and Extension](#).

The director provides leadership and oversight of the CoWC's portfolio of research, education, engagement, and service activities, which is developed and implemented in collaboration with CSU faculty and staff affiliates, partner higher education institutions across Colorado, and a variety of partner scholars, agencies, and organizations.

The director facilitates planning and continuous improvement of the CoWC's activities supported by a statutory external advisory committee. The director also develops strategic, staffing, and budget plans to implement an innovative and impactful water agenda that addresses state and regional needs and is accountable for raising extramural resources through grants, contracts, gifts, and program fees.

In addition, the director is a critical public voice and recognized national expert on water scholarship and policy issues, representing the CoWC in various water-related organizations, convenings, and policy conversations.

The director also serves as a key member of the Office of Engagement and Extension's executive leadership team, promoting impactful engaged scholarship to fulfill CSU's land-grant mission.

This position may be considered for a concurrent continuing (non-tenured) or tenured faculty appointment if the individual possesses an outstanding record of achievement that merits appointment as such within one of CSU's academic units.

Additional information about the position can be found at <https://jobs.colostate.edu/postings/153246> and by email to Jennifer Gimbel, search committee chair at Jennifer.Gimbel@Colostate.edu.

About the Colorado Water Center

The Colorado Water Center is located at the CSU main campus in Fort Collins, Colorado. The CoWC serves as a hub for water-related research, engagement, outreach, and education for all of Colorado's institutions of higher education. Established as one of the 54 Water Resources Research Institutes created by the Water Resources Act of 1964, the CoWC, part of Colorado State University's Office of Engagement and Extension (OEE), serves as a convener of critical conversations addressing the complex water challenges faced in Colorado and beyond.

The Office of Engagement and Extension's purpose is to empower lifelong learning; expand access to education; promote prosperity in communities; and advance engagement and research for impact. In addition to the Colorado Water Center, the division includes CSU Online, CSU Extension, professional and continuing education, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). The division is led by [Vice President James Pritchett](#), PhD. Additional information on Engagement and Extension is available online at learn.colostate.edu.

Who We Are

The Colorado Water Center is dedicated to bridging gaps between communities, scientists, policymakers, and educators, aiming to convene diverse voices in water management decision-making, while elevating sustainable practices and leveraging expertise from across Colorado's higher education system to address evolving water challenges.

What We Do

Mission: The Colorado Water Center facilitates transdisciplinary applied research, stakeholder engagement, outreach, and education to address complex water challenges by fostering collaboration, synthesizing water knowledge, and inspiring the next generation of water leaders.

Outreach and Engagement: Through collaboration with CSU Extension and regional water specialists, the CoWC disseminates current and relevant water information, promoting water literacy and inclusivity. Initiatives such as the Water Equity Program champion inclusivity in water conversations, ensuring diverse voices are included, represented, and valued.

Training: The CoWC prioritizes the training and education of future water leaders by partnering with organizations like the U.S. Geological Survey and the Colorado Water Conservation Board to fund student internships, research grants, and scholarships. By supporting students, the Center cultivates expertise and fosters innovation in water management.

Priorities

Engagement and Outreach

- Serve as a trusted resource for Coloradans, providing equitable access to water resources, education, research, and information.
- Support water education programs in K-12 and higher education classrooms, fostering early engagement, and in adult education, expanding understanding of water management and resources in Colorado.
- Convene unbiased, science-based conversations, acting as a neutral facilitator for important water dialogues.

Catalyze Collaboration

- Provide resources and education to county Extension staff to enhance their role as direct links to communities.
- Convene regular discussions with higher education institutes and community stakeholders to foster collaboration and understanding.
- Increase visibility of CoWC staff in leadership conversations across the state.

Programmatic Focus Areas

- **Agriculture:** Research and promote agricultural practices that decrease water consumption or increase water efficiency, including adoption of alternative low water-use crops and irrigation management practices.
- **Water Equity:** Champion inclusivity in water conversations, ensuring diverse voices are included, represented and valued.
- **Water Workforce Development:** Facilitate skill development and training initiatives to cultivate the next generation of water leaders. Programs include:
 - [*Colorado Water Fellows Program*](#)
 - [*Water Workforce Summit*](#)
 - [*Colorado Project WET*](#)
 - [*Water Literate Leaders of Northern Colorado*](#)

Collaborative Engagement

Engaged scholarship is our promise and way of being. We learn from and actively engage diverse stakeholders across a continuum of shared experiences that spans conversation to co-creation. We apply science with collective wisdom for the betterment of society, ask important questions, and value all voices.

Collaboration and Water Offerings at CSU SPUR

The CSU Spur Campus at Denver's National Western Center brings together research, teaching and engagement activities from the three campuses of the CSU System in a modern-day approach to the university's land-grant mission. The public-facing campus celebrates the proud tradition of Colorado agriculture while inspiring innovation with global impact.

Water is the source of all life, and as a headwaters state, Colorado's water footprint impacts millions of people in multiple states and Mexico. At the [CSU Spur Hydro building](#), you'll find Denver Water's new [water quality lab](#), a flexible theater space for public and community use, and educational programs and exhibits, including the annual [Water in the West Symposium hosted in November](#).



Team and People

Colorado Water Center Faculty and Staff

- Karen Schlatter – Interim Director and Associate Director
- Jessica Thrasher – Water Equity Programs Leader
- Brad Udall – Senior Water & Climate Scientist/Scholar (.25 FTE)
- Jennifer Gimbel – Senior Water Policy Scholar (.25 FTE)
- Perry Cabot – Extension Professor & Water Resources Specialist, Western Region
- Joel Schneekloth – Extension Master Instructor & Water Resources Specialist, Eastern Region
- Alex Collopy – Water Workforce Program Coordinator
- Micaela Truslove – Water Equity Program Coordinator
- Nancy Grice – Assistant to the Directors

External Advisory Committee

- David Robbins, President & Co-Founder Hill & Robbins, P.C., *CoWC External Advisory Committee Chair*
- Jim Broderick, Executive Director, Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District
- Deb Daniel, General Manager, Republican River Water Conservation District
- Alexandra Davis, Division Manager, Aurora Water, City of Aurora
- Heather Dutton, Manager, San Luis Valley Water Conservancy District
- Matt Ely, Director, USGS Colorado Water Science Center
- Kate Greenberg, Commissioner, Colorado Department of Agriculture
- David Kanzer, Deputy Chief Engineer, Colorado River District
- Gene Kelly, Professor & Director, AES, College of Agricultural Sciences
- Ken Knox, Director of Water Resources, Extraction Oil & Gas
- Eric Kuhn, Retired, Colorado River District
- Rick Marsicek, Chief of Water Resource Strategy, Denver Water
- Matt McCombs, Director, Colorado State Forest Service
- Rebecca Mitchell, Director, Colorado Water Conservation Board
- Chris Piper, Legislative Liaison and Policy Analyst, Colorado Energy Office
- Kevin Rein, State Engineer & Director, Colorado Division of Water Resources
- Nicole Rowan, Director, Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment
- Travis Smith, Western Water Conservation Coordinator, National Wild Turkey Federation
- Eric Wilkinson, Policy Advisor, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
- Bruce Whitehead, Retired, Animas-La Plata Water Conservancy District

About Colorado State University

Colorado State University is one of the nation's top public research universities and an institution on the rise. CSU is committed to inclusive excellence and to upholding our [Principles of Community](#). In the last decade, CSU has produced record enrollment, expanded its all-time highs in student diversity and student success; achieved record fundraising far outpacing ambitious goals; catalyzed groundbreaking research driven by a highly productive faculty; revitalized the campus with a transformational building campaign; and, perhaps most important, cultivated an unrivaled learning environment where nine of 10 recent graduates rate their education as excellent.

CSU has been recognized repeatedly as one of the most sustainable higher education institutions in the world and was the first institution to receive a Platinum rating in the Sustainability, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). In 2023 we earned our fourth consecutive Platinum rating.

[CSU research has a record year.](#) Sponsored project expenditures grew from \$498 million in the 2022-23 fiscal year to \$576 million in 2023-24 – marking a 15% increase and surpassing \$500 million for the first time in the institution's history. (CSU Source: 10-9-2024)



Sampling of [Rankings at Colorado State University](#)

Overall Quality

- America's Top Colleges, [Forbes 2023](#)
- Best Colleges, [Money 2024](#)
- Top-Producing Fulbright Scholar Institution, [U.S. Dept. of State, 2024](#)
- Top 35% National University, [U.S. News and World Report, 2024](#)

Sustainability Rankings

- Stars Platinum Rating, [AASHE, 2024](#)
- #4 Top Performer for worldwide doctoral university in overall sustainability impact, [AASHE, 2024](#)
- #1 Sustainability Curriculum, [AASHE, 2024](#)
- #2 Campus Engagement, [AASHE, 2024](#)
- #5 Public Engagement, [AASHE, 2024](#)

CSU Water History

Colorado State University can trace its commitment to water to 1883 when Professor Elwood Mead – the man for whom Lake Mead is named – arrived on campus and formulated plans to teach irrigation engineering. Since then, CSU’s reputation as a leader in water research has continued to grow.

Other notable moments in our water history include:

- The Colorado Water Center (formally the Colorado Water Resources Research Institute, and then the Colorado Water Institute) was established in 1965. CoWC facilitates interdisciplinary study and research with Colorado’s institutions of higher education.
- CSU’s **Watershed Science program** was established in 1958, making it the first degree program in the nation to train students in this area of study.
- CSU launched its international water program in the 1950s, establishing graduate-level water programs at Pakistan’s University of Peshawar. By 1959, CSU had worked to form what is now known as the Asian Institute of Technology.
- Maury Albertson joined the civil engineering faculty in 1947. Albertson went on to help draft the plan that became the basis for the Peace Corps, which has aided hundreds of water projects around the world.
- Ralph Parshall, irrigation engineer, developed the Parshall Flume in 1922. Still in wide use today, the Parshall Flume helps regulate water flow and promotes equitable distribution.
- The USDA established the first hydraulics laboratory on campus in 1912. The lab was used to study and test plans for the Hoover, Grand Coulee, and Imperial dams, along with other dams around the world.

About Fort Collins

Consistently included as one of the best places to live and work in the country, Fort Collins provides the breathtaking backdrop and home to Colorado State University.

Located on the northern end of Colorado's economically vibrant and environmentally beautiful Front Range, FoCo boasts major employers including Hewlett-Packard, Woodward, New Belgium Brewing, and OtterBox, along with parks and trails galore.

You will find hiking, biking, running, rock climbing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping and even sledding opportunities.

Fort Collins also is a cultural hub for arts and entertainment that includes CSU's world-class performing arts center, the Downtown Creative District, and a burgeoning live music scene.



SEARCH CONTACT: Jennifer Gimbel, Senior Water Policy Scholar
Jennifer.Gimbel@Colostate.edu

APPLY ONLINE AT [JOBS.COLOSTATE.EDU](https://jobs.colostate.edu)