



MEMORANDUM

TO: SLDMWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
FROM: DAN KEPPEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
DATE: MAY 3, 2021

This memo is intended to keep you apprised as to what is happening behind the scenes on policy issues the Family Farm Alliance is engaged in. I spent over an hour one day with federal law enforcement officials, who are seriously concerned with civil disorder and possible violence breaking out over federal water management decisions associated with the dry water year we are experiencing here in the Klamath Basin. There are some very desperate farmers here, who feel that they have been backed into a corner after 20 years of ESA-driven water management decisions. Sound familiar?

I don't need to tell you that things are also very grim in California and the Southwest. With the exception of parts of the Pacific Northwest, much of the rest of the Western U.S. is dealing with serious drought conditions. We've been working closely with Mike Wade and his team at California Farm Water Coalition, who has been coordinating drought messaging with water communications experts from around the Central Valley. In the past month, much of our other efforts have focused on engaging the Biden Administration, tracking water legislative developments in Congress, and advocating that Western water infrastructure provisions be included in COVID recovery stimulus legislation.

These issues and other matters important to our members are further discussed in this memo.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION DEVELOPMENTS

1. White House: Western Water Drought Relief Working Group

The Biden-Harris administration last month announced the formation of an Interagency Working Group to address worsening drought conditions in the West and support farmers, Tribes, and

communities impacted by ongoing water shortages. The Working Group will be co-chaired by the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to build upon existing resources to help coordinate across the federal government, working in partnership with state, local, and Tribal governments to address the needs of communities suffering from drought-related impacts. The White House [released a readout from the National Climate Task Force Meeting](#) announcing the new Working Group. The Working Group will work to identify immediate financial and technical assistance for impacted irrigators and Tribes. Development of longer-term measures to respond to climate change and build more resilient communities and protect the natural environment will also be a priority, including through President Biden's proposed American Jobs Plan and through a recommitment to strengthening the National Drought Resilience Partnership (NDRP). Formed in 2013, the NDRP brings together multiple federal agencies to build long-term drought resilience, including developing innovative science-driven actions to address water supply challenges.

A rare "[Joint Statement](#)" was issued last month from U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in response to the worsening drought conditions in the West. Farmers served by the Klamath Irrigation Project along the California-Oregon border are facing historically low water allocations. Further south, neighboring California is in a critically dry year, the same as in 2015. Water will be extremely tight for thousands of farmers around the state, and many of them have already received notice that their water supplies are being cut by up to 95 percent. The California Farm Water Coalition (CFWC) last month posted a [blog](#) that explains what the devastating drought of 2015 can tell us about the impacts of a drought in 2021. The Family Farm Alliance, CFWC and other Western agriculture and water organizations believe the drought underscores the urgent need to take immediate action to help better manage impacts to water resources from drought in the West.

2. Appointments

Biden Cabinet nominees with important roles that impact Western farmers and ranchers are steadily being confirmed by the U.S. Senate. The Senate on April 14 confirmed Brenda Mallory to lead the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on a 53 to 45 vote. Three Republicans, Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Susan Collins of Maine, joined every Democrat in voting in favor of confirmation. Mallory served as general counsel at CEQ during the Obama administration and drew Republican opposition over concerns that she would work to unwind Trump administration NEPA rules that sped up permitting timelines and shrank review documents.

a. Recent White House Nominees

President Biden announced several picks for environmental and climate posts scattered throughout the government last month. The recent nominations will now be considered by the Senate.

i. Department of Interior

A slate of nominations for top Interior positions were announced by the Biden White House last month, including Tommy Beaudreau to be Deputy Secretary. Beaudreau, who is from Alaska and is currently a partner at Latham & Watkins where he focuses on project siting and approvals, is being nominated after the Biden administration withdrew the candidacy of Elizabeth Klein amid concerns from Republican senators about her anti-fossil-fuel agenda. Klein will remain at Interior serving as a senior advisor.

President Biden last month nominated Interior 's principal Deputy Solicitor, Mr. Robert Anderson, to the position of Solicitor for the Department, a post he has temporarily filled in the administration's first months. Mr. Anderson, who was on the Biden transition team before joining the Administration, previously served on President Obama's transition team. He also held the post of Associate Solicitor for Indian Affairs and counselor to the Secretary under then-Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. He is an enrolled member of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa in Minnesota and began his legal career at the Native American Rights Fund.

Additional Interior nominations recently announced include Shannon Estenoz as assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks; Winnie Stachelberg as assistant secretary for policy, management and budget; and Tanya Trujillo as assistant secretary for water and science. Tanya Trujillo – who spoke at our February “virtual” annual conference - previously worked with the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and handled water issues for then-Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NEW MEXICO). Estenoz, who was also on the Interior transition team for Biden, previously served as the COO and vice president of policy at the Everglades Foundation. Stachelberg is the executive vice president for external affairs at the Center for American Progress. Sources are also reporting that Tracy Stone-Manning will likely get the nod to lead the Bureau of Land Management. Stone-Manning is currently the associate vice president for public lands at the National Wildlife Federation and previously served as chief of staff to former Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, director of Montana Department of Environmental Quality, and senior advisor for Sen. Jon Tester (D-MONTANA). The timing of a formal nomination remains unclear.

ii. Department of Agriculture

The White House last month announced that President Biden would nominate Robert Bonnie, who is currently Deputy Chief of Staff and leads the Department's efforts on climate change, to be undersecretary of Agriculture for farm production and conservation. Bonnie served as undersecretary for environment and conservation during the Obama Administration, and during the 4 years of the Trump Administration was vice president for land conservation at the Environmental Defense Fund. The American Farm Bureau praised his nomination, citing his experience and engagement with farmers and ranchers during his past stints with USDA. The Family Farm Alliance two weeks ago sent a formal letter of support for Mr. Bonnie's confirmation to the Senate Committee on Agriculture. Another letter was sent to the Senate Committee on the

Environment and Public Works in support of Radhika Fox’s nomination to serve as the next Assistant Administrator for Water at EPA.

iii. Department of Commerce

Rick Spinrad, a professor of oceanography at Oregon State University, was picked by President Biden to lead the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He retired in 2016 as chief scientist at NOAA and held similar science positions at the U.S. Navy.

3. FY 2022 “Skinny” Budget Request

President Biden last month announced the release of his “skinny” budget request for FY 2022, a \$1.5 trillion discretionary budget plan that calls for a 16% increase for domestic programs but only a 1.7% increase to defense accounts (which would amount to a 0.4% decrease in defense spending in real terms, adjusting for inflation). A more detailed budget will likely be submitted to Congress in either May or June. The budget plan is likely to be rejected by Republicans which could spell trouble for the timing of the FY 2022 appropriations process, especially given the 50-50 split in the Senate. Democrats can move forward with their own top-line numbers, but Republican support will be necessary to garner the 60 votes needed in the Senate to pass any appropriations bill to fund the government by the September 30 deadline. The budget proposal suggests \$769.4 billion in nondefense discretionary spending in FY 2022, a \$105.7 billion increase over the FY 2021 level of \$663.7 billion. Defense would rise to \$753 billion, \$12.3 billion greater than its current level of \$740.7 billion. Overall, base discretionary spending would increase by \$118 billion, from \$1.4 trillion to \$1.5 trillion, not including emergency spending.

4. Biden Infrastructure Plan

Joe Biden addressed Congress on April 28 for the first time as president. While he highlighted COVID relief and the pace of vaccinations, infrastructure was on everyone’s mind, with bipartisan negotiations continuing on Capitol Hill. Biden’s proposed \$2.2 trillion American Jobs Plan was rolled out on March 31 and encompasses a broad array of both infrastructure and a greener economy. President Biden on the day of his speech unveiled his new \$1.8 trillion American Families Plan, that focuses on childcare, health care and access to preschool and community college, less than a month after his \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package was rolled out. Republicans were quick to criticize the plan, as described below.

a. Initial Reaction from Western Ag Organizations

President Biden’s \$2.2 trillion infrastructure plan is of interest to Western water users and many others. It has been met with both support and opposition in Congress, as Democrats and Republicans begin to craft their own proposals on infrastructure. Some farm groups are wary. The American Farm Bureau Federation said it worries the tax increases the administration and congressional Democrats are considering paying for the improvements will be borne by some

farmers. While details from the White House infrastructure plan include references to resilience, drought and water recycling, many advocates were disappointed not to see more direct reference to repair and construction of water storage and conveyance systems. A national coalition of over 200 agricultural organizations and urban and rural water districts – led by the Family Farm Alliance, California Farm Bureau, Western Growers, Association of California Water Agencies and National Water Resources Association – are urging the federal government to further bolster investment in the nation’s aging water facilities. Our coalition in a press release said it looks forward to working with the administration and Congress on the larger need for Western water infrastructure, such as above- and below-ground water storage facilities, conveyance and desalination, along with federal financing mechanisms for such water projects.

The cost of this multi-billion package is still being fine-tuned, but it is large, especially relative to federal efforts in recent years to upgrade Western water infrastructure. We’ve developed some big numbers - especially in terms of storage, aging infrastructure, and some of the other top irrigation priorities – but we feel they are justified by agency data and statements. Our coalition has developed an overview of Western state -specific projects that have varying levels of readiness based on authorities and levels of planning and permitting completion, but are important context to the overall water supply infrastructure need on the ground. The need is not dictated by some funding cap.

In the meantime, we are targeting members throughout the West to push our agenda, and pushing our message throughout the West. Several media publications picked up on the press release, and Dennis Nuxoll from Western Growers was quoted in *E&E Daily*. I also co-authored an op/ed with Western Growers and the California State Water Contractors on the importance of Western water infrastructure, which Mike Wade from California Farm Water Coalition is shopping around with large urban newspapers. Last week, I toured a reporter from *USA-Today* around the Klamath Project, and emphasized the similarities between the regulatory nature of the drought here and in the Central Valley.

b. Congressional Response

Weeks after the ambitious Biden infrastructure plan was rolled out, top GOP Senators released their \$568 billion plan for investing in more traditional infrastructure, leaving out President Biden’s “human infrastructure” proposals that would provide funding for more domestic social programs. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell today essentially said no Senate Republicans will support the Biden plan as constructed. He also said there will not be support for undoing the 2017 tax bill to support \$4 trillion in spending.

Republican lawmakers provided their own \$568 infrastructure counteroffer, which is limited to traditional infrastructure priorities, such as roads, bridges, ports, and airports, as well as newer priorities such as water infrastructure, expanded broadband, and modernization of the electric grid. The Republican proposal includes \$14 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation for water storage. The 58-member bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus has also released a similar policy framework

for infrastructure, focusing on streamlined permitting, financing, public-private partnerships and tax enforcement. One of the more controversial and contentious parts of all infrastructure proposals is how to pay for huge additional investments in infrastructure, with everything on the table – from increased corporate tax rates to modernized excise taxes.

Now, bipartisan talks on a compromise proposal between \$600 billion and \$1 trillion are underway. The Biden Administration and Senate Republican staff have begun conversations about the Senate GOP's recent \$568 billion counteroffer on infrastructure, as Democrats consider how much to compromise on President Biden's \$2.25 trillion American Jobs Plan. Other issues are in flux, including the specific policy proposals, how to pay for them, and the process. Democrats want to move fast, and seek to pass the president's sweeping proposal - at least in the House - by the start of the August recess. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) is now reportedly ramping up discussions with Republicans about what a scaled-down infrastructure package should look like, according to *The Hill*. Sen. Manchin wants to take time to do things right. Sen. Manchin said that he wants to focus on "conventional infrastructure" such as roads, bridges, water projects and expanded broadband internet. He has recently met with Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) to explore ways to fund a compromise infrastructure package without relying heavily on tax increases.

5. Climate Change Initiative

The Family Farm Alliance last month helped prepare two comment letters to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in response to an agency request for public input on Biden Administration climate and forest initiatives. The Alliance was also represented on a United Nations landscape roundtable discussion. President Biden in January issued an Executive Order (EO) on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad. This EO laid out a series of actions for federal agencies to take regarding climate change mitigation and resilience, including directing the Secretary of Agriculture to collect stakeholder input on a climate-smart agriculture and forestry strategy. As part of this process, USDA sought input from the public to ensure that relevant information is considered. This was a good opportunity to provide comments to USDA on a variety of issues important to our membership, including climate-smart agriculture and forestry, biofuels, bioproducts, renewable energy, and catastrophic wildfire. We're hopeful that Secretary Vilsack and his leadership team at USDA will consider them as the agency develops a climate-smart agriculture and forestry approach.

a. High Points of Alliance Comment Letter to USDA

The 18-page long Alliance letter to USDA provided background on Western agriculture and forestry challenges, and recommended several actions regarding climate-smart agriculture, with an emphasis on looking to experienced Western producers who have a proven track record for innovation. The letter urges USDA to encourage more participation, more investment and more recognition of private property owners efforts engage in landscape-scale solutions. It notes that existing USDA programs (like the Regional Conservation Partnership Program) provide funding, financing and authority to conduct many climate-smart agricultural and forest programs. The

Alliance letter also provides recommendations on employing USDA programs to catalyze biofuel, bioproducts and renewable energy projects in Western watersheds and finding ways to use those programs to decrease wildfire risks in the West, a topic of that was recently discussed at a recent hearing on the U.S. Forest Service’s budget outline for the next fiscal year. The Forest Service already needs to more than double the pace at which it’s thinning or carefully burning land it oversees if the threat of wildfire is to be tamed. Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen told a House Appropriations subcommittee the agency would need to treat an additional 2.6 million acres a year, on top of the 2 million or 3 million it already does, for the next decade to eliminate a backlog that's dominated the agenda for several years. The Alliance comment letter closes with recommendations that emphasize the need to improve inter-agency coordination and incentive-based water quality trading programs.

b. WACC Letter

The Alliance also worked with the Western Agriculture and Conservation Alliance (WACC) to craft a another, more conservation-oriented response to USDA’s request. The WACC was formed in February 2012 to support the common interests of agriculture, conservation, and other interests tied to resources on behalf of a viable and sustainable rural West. No other national coalition combines industry and conservation interests to advocate for resource sustainability for all. We believe that unless agricultural producers and conservation come together, the public policies and resource management strategies necessary to maintain a viable and sustainable rural West will be impossible to achieve. The WACC focuses on resource issues on working lands, which in the West are on both private and public lands. Private lands in the West are often located in riparian areas and are both the most fertile for agriculture production and the best habitat for biodiversity. Farmers and ranchers have cultivated these areas for more than 100 years in some cases.

c. U.N. Landscape Roundtable

Family Farm Alliance President Patrick O’Toole (WYOMING) was the sole American agricultural producer represented on a recent “Independent Dialogue” convened by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (U.N.) to discuss landscape partnerships in the context of the U.N. Food System Summit (UNFSS). The UNFSS will be looking for bold actions to receive global support and mobilization to transform food systems. The Roundtable is part of an on-going series of discussions focusing on climate change, agriculture, and landscapes. The series has been jointly organized by EcoAgriculture Partners and FAO since 2009. This was a great opportunity to get our foot in the door and provide the perspectives of on-the-ground producers.

5. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)

a. New Technical Reports & Interactive Web Tool

Reclamation recently released final technical reports supporting the Water Reliability in the West-2021 SECURE Water Act Report. Reclamation’s 2021 West-Wide Climate and Hydrology

Assessment and seven individual basin reports provide detailed information on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies to increase water supply reliability in the West. A new [2021 SECURE Report Web Portal](#) is also available to provide a user-friendly, web-based format for delivery of information in the reports. The 2021 West-Wide Assessment provides estimates of changes in temperature, precipitation, snowpack, and streamflow across the West using consistent methodology, similar to previous SECURE Water Act Reports. For this report, additional drought analyses based on paleohydrology (using tree rings) was performed. These results will enable water managers to compare the frequency and severity of droughts that occurred several hundred years ago to projections of future droughts and develop water management strategies.

b. MR&R Needs

In 2019, Congress passed the *John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act*, Public Law No. 116-9, Title VIII, Subtitle G – Bureau of Reclamation Transparency Act (Transparency Act). The Transparency Act requires Reclamation to provide Congress with a detailed assessment of major rehabilitation and replacement (MR&R) needs, categorization of the importance of these repair needs, and regular reporting of information related to Reclamation’s investments in infrastructure. The Transparency Act requires Reclamation to submit a list of MR&R needs at reserved works (Reclamation-operated and maintained) by March 2021 and a list of MR&R needs at both reserved and transferred works (partner-operated and maintained) by March 2023, with additional reports every two years. In compliance with the Transparency Act, Reclamation has transmitted the first Asset Management Report to Congress containing MR&R needs at reserved works facilities. This report can be accessed at <https://www.usbr.gov/infrastructure>. In the coming months, your Reclamation area office will be reaching out to you to further collect MR&R needs at transferred works facilities.

DEVELOPMENTS IN CONGRESS

Congress last month got its first look at President Biden’s fiscal year 2022 [budget outline](#). The Administration is expected to release the traditional full budget later this year, likely by late May. The big news out of the \$1.52 trillion discretionary request is an expansive 16 percent proposed increase in nondefense programs. Defense spending, by contrast, would get only a 1.7 percent increase. President Biden would also halt the use of Overseas Contingency Operations emergency funding that has been used to pay for military operations in the Mideast, but has also increasingly been tapped for more routine expenses, leaving critics to describe it as a slush fund. The release of the outline means the start of the traditional parade of agency leaders to Capitol Hill for testimony.

6. Drinking Water, Wastewater Bills

The Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021 ([S. 914](#)) has passed out of the Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee unanimously and EPW Chairman Tom Carper (D-DE), along with Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, have indicated they expect quick approval by the full Senate. S. 914 includes \$35 billion to upgrade drinking water and wastewater systems,

with over 40% of the funding going to disadvantaged, rural and tribal communities through grant programs or the Clean Water and Drinking Water state revolving funds. The bill that is heading to the floor also includes language that would make WIFIA more accessible for projects that make improvements to federal water infrastructure.

On the House side, Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee leadership are backing the *Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021* which invests \$50 billion over five years for water quality and wastewater projects, including \$40 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Last month, the T&I Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held a hearing on [“Sustainable Wastewater Infrastructure: Measures to Promote Resiliency and Climate Adaptation and Mitigation.”](#)

7. Dems Re-Up Sustainable Agriculture Bill; House Republicans Drop Their Own Bills

Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) recently introduced the "Climate Stewardship Act," a modified version of legislation introduced last Congress. The bill would reestablish the Civilian Conservation Corps, provide billions in new funding for the Department of Agriculture's working lands conservation programs, establish a NOAA grant program for wetlands restoration, and advance the goal of planting 100 million trees in urban areas, among other things.

Republicans from the House Agriculture Committee also unveiled five bills addressing conservation partnerships and climate change:

- Rep. Glenn Thompson's (R-PA) [Sponsoring USDA Sustainability Targets in Agriculture to Incentivize Natural Solutions Act](#) (SUSTAINS Act) which establishes an account within USDA to accept and match private sector contributions for conservation initiatives.
- Rep. Doug LaMalfa's (R-CA) [Restoring Environments, Soils, Trees and Operations to develop the Rural Economy Act](#) (RESTORE Act) which provides new authorities and funding for landscape-scale watershed restoration and forest health;
- Rep. Rodney Davis' (R-IL) [Naturally Offsetting Emissions by Managing and Implementing Tillage Strategies Act](#) (NO EMITS Act) that establishes a program to help producers promote soil health, sequester carbon and reduce net emissions;
- Rep. Dusty Johnson's (R-SD) [Forestry Improvements to Restore the Environment Act](#) (FIRE Act) that requires a survey of Forest Service land impacted by wildfire and aims to expedite forest treatments and timber salvage opportunities; and
- Rep. Ashley Hinson's (R-IA) [Producing Responsible Energy and Conservation Incentives and Solutions for the Environment Act](#) (PRECISE Act) which modifies existing federal programs to increase the cost share for the purchase of precision agriculture equipment, systems, and technology.

8. Canal Conveyance Capacity Restoration Act

Congressman Jim Costa (CA-16) last month held a press conference over Zoom to answer questions on the introduction of the *Canal Conveyance Capacity Restoration Act*. This important water bill would authorize more than \$653 million to restore the capacity of the Delta-Mendota Canal, Friant-Kern Canal and California Aqueduct. Repairs to these canals will improve water availability, help California's drought resilience and reduce reliance on groundwater pumping. The bill also authorizes an additional \$180 million to restore salmon runs on the San Joaquin River.

9. Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act

Colorado U.S. Senator Michael Bennet last month introduced the *Outdoor Restoration Partnership Act* to create or sustain over two million jobs in the outdoors by investing in forest and watershed restoration. This legislation will provide direct support to local, collaborative efforts to restore habitat, expand outdoor access, and mitigate wildfire. It will also spur federal investment in areas at high-risk of wildfire, with high priority wildlife habitat, or in the wildland-urban interface – where homes and businesses meet wildland vegetation -- to build climate resilience in the West.

The Family Farm Alliance has long held that the best natural resource solutions are unique and come from the local, watershed and state level. Alliance President Pat O'Toole was quoted in [Senator Bennet's press release](#). Forests and watersheds are the natural infrastructure that sustains our economy in the West. Catastrophic wildfires and prolonged drought are becoming the norm, yet Congress has failed to fully invest in our Western lands, undermining our economy and way of life. As a result, local governments are often left to foot the bill for conservation, restoration, and wildfire mitigation. The bill text is available [HERE](#). A one-pager on the bill and a list of supporting organizations is available [HERE](#). A section-by-section summary of the bill is available [HERE](#).

ALLIANCE INITIATIVES

15. Western Agriculture and Conservation Alliance (WACC)

The Family Farm Alliance co-founded the WACC a decade ago, with the intent of finding solutions to Western water and environmental challenges where we could partner with constructive conservation groups. Last month, the WACC finalized a water infrastructure letter that urges Congressional leaders to support investments in irrigation and municipal water infrastructure that provide important co-benefits of enhanced drought resilience and aquatic habitat. Our letter details ways to make these essential and successful western water infrastructure investments. The WACC is also working on a comment letter to address USDA's request for comments on climate change policy (see related discussion, above). Climate-smart agriculture, forestry and wildfire are all good areas for the WACC to engage in.

10. Universal Access to Clean Drinking Water for Native Americans

Last month, we were contacted by Anne Castle, former Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of Interior, who currently is a Senior Fellow at the Getches-Wilkinson Center at the University of Colorado. She has been working with a “small but dedicated” team to bring attention to the lack of access to clean drinking water in Indian country. This work was started within and is supported by the [Colorado River Water and Tribes Initiative](#). Bidtah Becker of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority is leading the charge with Anne.

As you may be aware, the disproportionate incidence of COVID in Indian Country has been correlated with the lack of access to clean water and has brought considerable attention to this long standing public health issue. The initiative was launched to both educate the public about the lack of this basic service that most Americans take for granted and make real, tangible progress on the ground. They have a research team working on a report showing the specific lack of access experienced by the 30 tribes in the Colorado River Basin, the applicability of the federal trust responsibility, and the various federal agency programs that cover at least a piece of this problem. While this fact finding work has been in the Colorado River Basin, the message is broader and nationwide.

The Alliance board of directors later in April issued a statement by Alliance President Patrick O’Toole in support of this initiative. Pat’s statement is intended to qualify our support, and ties to the 2021 priorities adopted by the Board earlier this year.

11. Excess Capacity D&S

Late last year, the Bureau of Reclamation coordinated with the Alliance and other stakeholder interests to host a stakeholder ZOOM call on two draft Directives and Standards (D&S’s) that Reclamation had been finalizing on excess capacity in Reclamation facilities. We send out a detailed memo on that meeting, prepared by The Ferguson Group. The issues of concerns raised were satisfactorily addressed by Reclamation, who has incorporated those changes into the Reclamation Manual and posted online. You can link to them from the Rec Manual D&S page [here](#), or use these direct links: <https://www.usbr.gov/recman/pec/pec05-10.pdf> , and <https://www.usbr.gov/recman/pec/pec05-11.pdf>. Frances Mizuno and Scott Peterson played key roles in getting water users concerns reflected in the final D&S.

12. U.S. Water Alliance “Listening Sessions”

Last month, I represented the Alliance on a virtual forum hosted by the U.S. Water Alliance, an organization for which I once served as a director on its board. This was one of a handful related forums that are taking place this spring; this one included about two dozen representatives from diverse water and environmental organizations from the Southwest and Rocky Mountain region.

I was one of four speakers asked to provide introductory comments in response to the question: *when you think about water sector recovery, what is giving you hope?* Before I shared “my hopes”, I acknowledged the grim reality many of our farmers are facing this summer. I noted that the only silver lining is that the drought will hopefully draw public and political attention of the need to find solutions in order to maintain food security for the nation and the economic wellbeing of the Western landscape. New opportunities are now emerging to invest in Western water traditional and natural infrastructure, better manage our forests, and put farmers and ranchers in a leadership role to tackle climate change challenges. There are also opportunities to create collaborative partnerships between tribal, federal, state and local entities who are also interested in finding solutions to our water-climate problems. These solutions can be reached using adaptive strategies that can work on the ground.

This is a quick summary of just a few of the issues the Alliance has been engaged in. Please do not hesitate to contact me at dan@familyfarmalliance.org if you would like further information about what the Alliance is doing to protect water for Western irrigated agriculture.