



Unheard voices of the Colorado River Basin: Bringing Mexico and Native American tribes to the table

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By Navajo-Hopi Observer

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - There are a multitude of serious challenges facing the seven-state Colorado River Basin, including predictions that by 2050, there will not be enough water in the river to meet the needs of the communities that depend on it. As researchers and policy makers continue to search for a solution, there are two significant groups that are often left out of the discussion: Mexico and Native American tribes.

The Colorado College State of the Rockies Project will host a discussion with Mexican and Native American representatives titled "Unheard Voices of the Colorado River Basin: Bringing Mexico and the Native American Tribes to the Table" as part of this year's Speakers Series. Bitah Becker, a member of the Navajo Nation, and Osvel Hinojosa-Huerta, representing Mexican interests, will speak to the issues surrounding Native American Tribes, the Republic of Mexico, and the Colorado River. As traditionally underrepresented groups, the speakers will address the challenges facing their respective nations in the future as pressures continue to mount on the entire region.

Becker is currently employed with the Navajo Nation Department of Justice where she focuses on pursuing and protecting the Nation's water rights. She is a graduate of the University of New Mexico School of Law and the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service.

Hinojosa-Huerta is the director of the Water and Wetlands Program and the associated director of the Birds Program of Pronatura Noroeste, based in San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora. He obtained his Ph.D., specializing in wildlife ecology at the University of Arizona. Hinojosa-Huerta has worked in research and conservation projects in Northwestern Mexico since 1997, especially in riparian and wetland areas in the Sonoran desert. In recent years, he has designed and directed efforts to restore the Colorado River delta, including the implementation of strategies to reestablish the water flows in the river and the implementation of reforestation activities and wetland restoration.

The Colorado College State of the Rockies Project is an undergraduate team research project that studies issues affecting the environmental, social and economic health of the region.

This free talk is part the Colorado College State of the Rockies 2011-12 Project Speakers Series, where leading experts and well-known river advocates examine the Colorado River Basin and the complex water use, environmental and economic challenges facing future generations.

Monthly programs are scheduled through February, leading up to a public conference April 8-10 where students will present the 2012 State of the Rockies Report, which examines current water, agricultural and recreational issues in the Basin and highlights how economic, demographic and climate changes will impact what the Colorado River looks like to future generations. Sessions with national experts also will explore the future of the basin.

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