

CAWCD Board Election Candidates

Your Name	Candidate Website	What makes you qualified to serve as a CAWCD board member?	Why did you decide to run for the CAWCD board?	The crisis on the Colorado River poses an existential threat to agriculture in Arizona. As a member of the CAWCD board, what approach would you take to ensuring that agriculture's access to water is prioritized?
Cory Mishkin	www.CoryForCAP.com	With a family history that has been shaped by water in Arizona, I have seen first hand how important water is to our way of life. On our family farm we needed to make sure each drop of water went as far as possible. Today in running a small business I understand what it means to live within your budget and make sure you make payroll. I intend to use those same guiding principles when serving as a board member overseeing this, the largest taxing district in the State. Additionally, my longstanding involvement in local politics have shown me the importance of making sure all stakeholders are engaged, respected and heard. By serving on the board I will continue with that same perspective to make sure no one stakeholder's interests are put above another's.	I believe we are all called to a life of public service and have lived according to that. As an Arizona native who's life has been shaped around real estate and agriculture I know how important water is to our way of life in this desert. Without continuing the efforts of those who have gone before us to ensure that all Arizonans have the water they need, we will start down a dangerous path that will lead to central Arizona becoming less and less productive and prosperous.	In times like this there are no silver bullets. We need to take a holistic approach that spurns innovation, protects Arizona's food independence and calls out the hypocrisy in neighboring States unwillingness to share in the burden of tough times. Arizona has, and continues to be, a leader in conservation. Our farmers make sure every drop is used wisely and we need to protect them, their efforts, and our food supply. This includes making sure they receive the water they need at a cost effective rate. It also requires that we engage other entities that hold Colorado River water and allow them the ability to use the CAP to deliver water to those who are willing to pay for that water.
Karen Peters	https://www.karenpeters.info	I've been working on Arizona water issues for over 30 years. As a lawyer in private practice I helped negotiate state water laws and regulations and worked with a wide variety of water stakeholders including water providers, farmers, tribes, developers, and industry. As a city executive I have worked to fund large infrastructure projects, set water rates, and make recommendations on complex issues such as tax policy or regional groundwater contamination, among other things. I have a track record of working with diverse stakeholders on tough issues and coming to consensus.	I love Arizona - I want to help preserve our quality of life and economic vitality, which are threatened by diminishing Colorado River supplies and failures of leadership. I want to bring my perspective to the CAWCD Board because I've seen these issues from many diverse perspectives throughout my career. I will ask the right questions, challenge assumptions, and work to make sure all voices are heard. CAWCD has a vital role in convening and facilitating the important Basin State and federal discussions ahead and I want to help make them productive and successful.	I firmly believe that the only lasting solution to the crisis on the Colorado River is for every sector to adapt to using less, not just one sector. While it is certainly true that agriculture is the largest water user in Arizona and the region, it's also true that agriculture is an essential element of our region's economy and food security and must be preserved. In my current work I'm leading discussions regarding urban farmland preservation and enhancing the local food system. At scale, what's needed at this critical moment is to accelerate and build on the innovation that's occurring in the agricultural sector. We need investment in permanent solutions that allow for certainty rather than annual following programs that merely kick the can down the road.
Donovan Neese	https://neese4az.com/	I am a registered civil engineer with over 20 years in the water industry. As the manager of a water district – water and power issues are my everyday job. I also have a Master's degree in Business Administration. I am a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Colorado River Water Users Association, the Water Reuse Association and the United States Committee on Irrigation and Drainage. I also sit on the board of the Irrigation and Electrical Districts Association and am the Vice President of the Agri-business and Water Council of Arizona. I have accrued many years of leadership skills helping organizations through solid fiscal management. I also have experience navigating through complex contract litigation, negotiation and mediation.	I hear it everywhere that, "Water is the blood of Arizona's economy", and I agree with this statement. When I couple the desperate state of our water issues with my experience running an irrigation district; I realized that Arizona needed my experiences. I felt an obligation to use my skills to contribute towards technical and economic solutions. We need someone that works in agriculture to keep pumping that life-blood into our economy.	The benefits of agriculture to our economy, security and communities is sharply undervalued. It is my goal to bring that value to bear as negotiations continue regarding the future of the river. I have always believed that there needs to be a better equilibrium between development and agriculture. As a board member to CAWCD I look forward to representing all of Arizona and its agriculture to reach that balance of economy, security and community.

I have spent the last seven years working at the Empire Group of Companies as the president of land development but have been in the industry for more than 25 years. I am a professionally licensed civil engineer in the state of Arizona, and I've spent much of my career in project management for public and private developments throughout the state.

My background as a civil engineer and experience designing infrastructure are extremely valuable on this board. I have worked through Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) with municipalities, created Community Facilities Districts (CFDs) with development teams, completed and sealed engineer estimates on every project over the course of my career, and produced and managed hundreds of project proformas, budgets and contracts in the millions of dollars for each development project individually. I will utilize my engineering and construction expertise while reviewing and approving contracts as needed and adding a value engineer approach to minimize the costs as much as possible. As a state and county, we need to examine the various needs within our communities, and work together to ensure that we are doing the best job we can to manage our water sources and usage.

Shelby Duplessis

<https://shelbyforcap.com/>

Most residents are aware that Arizona's water supply is the main topic that is prompting growing concerns. As a resident and businessperson working in development, I thought it was important to learn more about what was going on and that's what inspired me to get involved and run. Our CAP water is essential to Arizona's economy and quality of life. I want to be at the table and bring my knowledge and experience to help develop solutions and create a plan for building a sustainable future. As a board member, I will utilize my knowledge and willingness to listen, learn and collaborate. I recognize how important it is to work with all stakeholders, particularly farmers, to create plans that not only work for everyone but also address the challenges of drought.

Agriculture is the backbone of the American economy and its people. Agriculture provides America with the resources needed to feed and clothe our families every day. Moreover, agriculture is the building block that is needed to provide raw goods for everything from manufacturing of medicine.

Given this sentiment, I would approach this matter the way it should be treated, a matter of national security. I will treat farmers, ranchers, and the entire AG community as priority stakeholders deserving access to water. The nation's food supply is the foundation for our state and country.

As an engineer and developer, I understand the science and the economics of the water crisis. More importantly, I know what it takes to work with all parties to establish sensible solutions and policy that is beneficial for everyone. I will remain committed to be accessible to the entire AG community to work together to navigate this problem with the interest of protecting Arizonans and our future.

<p>Alexandra Arboleda</p> <p>Alexandra4az.com</p>	<p>Specializing in the areas of water and natural resources law, I have worked for two decades as an attorney in Arizona. The depth and breadth of my experience with water and natural resource issues gives me a unique understanding of Arizona's water challenges as well as the insight to develop innovative and collaborative solutions. My primary focus is on finding creative solutions to complex problems involving water issues so that my clients can continue to thrive and also be good water stewards.</p> <p>Elected to the CAWCD Board in 2016, I have six years of experience and serve in leadership positions, including as Secretary of the Board, Chair of the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGR) and Underground Storage Committee, and Secretary and Commissioner on the Arizona Water Banking Authority (AWBA).</p> <p>During my term, I also participated in two civic leadership programs: 1) Flinn Brown Civic Leadership Academy, where I heard from and engaged with many Arizona community leaders to better understand the diverse and complex challenges faced by the State, and 2) the Public Leadership Credential Program at Harvard Kennedy School, where I developed skills and strategies to be a more effective leader, decision-maker, and policy-maker.</p>	<p>My interest in running for the Central Arizona Water Conservation District (CAWCD) Board of Directors stems from my love of Arizona, its people, and the Colorado River. As an experienced attorney steeped in water policy and a leader on the CAWCD Board committed to listening to all stakeholders, I am uniquely qualified to help us achieve a more prosperous future while protecting Arizona's water supplies. My extensive background working on Arizona's water challenges allows me to develop innovative and collaborative solutions for water conservation, efficiency, reuse, and augmentation so that we can continue to thrive in this arid environment. Forging a sustainable path forward that protects the Colorado River and balances water conservation with economic growth and fiscal responsibility is a top priority.</p> <p>I have the experience and expertise needed to confront our water challenges, the creativity to develop innovative solutions through collaboration and partnership, the humility and grace to engage in civil discourse while listening to diverse viewpoints, the commitment to work hard and serve the public as a steward of our Colorado River water, the judgment to know when to compromise, and the leadership qualities to make bold decisions and provide a vision for a sustainable future.</p>	<p>Agriculture in Arizona contributes more than \$23.3 billion to the state's economy, according to the Arizona Department of Agriculture. In Arizona, approximately 70% of water is diverted to agriculture in the year-round production of food and fiber, according to the Agribusiness & Water Council of Arizona. The crisis on the Colorado River has resulted in a 65% reduction in Central Arizona Project water delivered to central Arizona farms in 2022 and will result in a 100% reduction in 2023. Along the Colorado River, high priority agricultural users are facing the possibility that, within a few years, Lake Mead levels will be so low that some quantity of water will not be physically available for delivery to downstream users.</p> <p>To prioritize agriculture's access to water, water users must understand the importance of agriculture in their lives, the economic impact of agriculture, and the importance of growing food and fiber locally. My husband was from a cattle ranching family, and I developed an appreciation of the hard work and dedication of men and women in the cattle and dairy industry. I represent irrigation districts, farmers, and ranchers as well as municipalities, developers and others, so I have a balanced understanding of different viewpoints and can share the perspective of agricultural water users with other stakeholders.</p> <p>I am a creative problem-solver, and my approach to ensuring that agriculture's access to water is prioritized involves collaboration, partnership, and innovation. Throughout my term on the CAWCD board, I have made a point of engaging with agricultural stakeholders by attending conferences and meeting with them individually. Understanding all the nuances of the different viewpoints helps me to find common pathways towards a sustainable future that includes a thriving agricultural economy.</p>
<p>Amanda Monize</p> <p>CAPWaterBoard.com</p>	<p>As an educator, working in administration, my profession is multifaceted. One such facet is working within the confines of policy created to ensure we are following Arizona Revised Statutes and the boundaries outlined by our Arizona Constitution. This includes budget, project management, working with stakeholder and transparency. My experience includes developing training designed to increase effective and knowledgeable educators. I work with budgets, including federal funding, to ensure individuals are paid on time and we have the supplies needed to accomplish our goals. Moreover, I ensure there is clear communication to all stakeholders. Whether working with colleagues or community members the transfer of information allows us to make informed decisions based on facts and reason. While on the CAWCD Board, communication will be essential to serving our customers and overcoming our most pressing challenges.</p>	<p>I decided to run for the CAWCD Board because I am concerned about Arizona's future. The CAWCD Board of Directors is not a well-known position but is arguably one of the most impactful on our everyday lives. Ensuring the delivery of water through the CAP canal system is only one of the responsibilities of the Board. The greater duty falls on the Board's ability to levy taxes and set rates for said water delivery. When looking at the operations of the Board, I see how outside interests have influenced policies that waste our tax dollars and put us all at risk. I am running for this important position to provide accountable management and pragmatic leadership for Arizona's economic and environmental future.</p>	<p>One of my biggest concerns is the lack of emphasis on our local agriculture. Although the supply of water to our homes is important to our way of live, agriculture is important to our overall survival. I am a native Arizonan and I have seen our farmlands diminish as water restrictions increase. It is frightening to consider; what happens to our food supply if we do not have local agriculture.</p> <p>As agricultural lands dry up, developers come in and covert our prestigious agricultural communities into shopping malls and residences. This is bad for our state and our nation. As conditions change regarding water availability and economic stressors, adjustments will need to be made to limit the impact on users whenever financially and environmentally feasible. This most certainly includes Arizona's agriculture. I will fight for responsible growth and financial incentives that benefit local agriculture as well as Arizona taxpayers.</p>