

The answers below were prompted by the Roaring Fork Conservancy for publication in their “2024 Voters’ Guide to Water Issues in the Roaring Fork Watershed”

Woodruff has been active in local water advocacy, policy and code through his work serving on the Snowmass and Capitol Creek Caucus and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

“If you could enact one water policy change in Colorado, what would it be?”

Our rural recreational resort economy depends on water. But our economy is under threat. Lower groundwater tables result in increased irrigation use by our farmers and ranchers and built landscapes. In- stream flows are waning just as we are readying for winter recreation.

I applaud the efforts of the County in managing calls, managing instream flows. I applaud irrigators working to protect our watersheds. I applaud open space and trails stewarding both our land and water portfolio. We need the same water stewardship from our growing community.

One policy to enact - reduce consumption through the landscape. Stop overconsumption for aesthetics; reduce non-native grass use. Stop overhead irrigation use eight months of the year. Stop permitting water loss through vanity (non-irrigation) ponds. Reduce domestic water use, plant native species and use water wise irrigation and technology, in order to keep water in the Upper Basin rivers and tributaries.

Nature controls supply, communities manage demand.

“What outcomes of Colorado River negotiations would you advocate for during your term?” Align our state policies with our natural resources.

The 1922 river law resulted in regional comity. Today our water use has exceeded our allotment. We must protect our wildlife, our habitat and our economy. One of our first priorities should be agricultural vs the growth of municipal and industrial use. We can save water, in the Upper and Lower Basins, by producing more food locally.

Why? Growing food closer to the headwaters is more efficient. Growing food locally reduces system losses in the tributaries and reservoirs. Local agriculture additionally preserves our rural character, open spaces and leaves wilderness unchanged. By not allowing for the conversion of agricultural to municipal or industrial uses we preserve and protect open space and rural character. We conserve water through the use of low water plantings and organic mulch. We conserve land in our basin through planning. Eighty-five percent of Pitkin County land is federal and state lands. Like the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management we need to be environmental stewards of our green fields.

The Colorado River Agreement negotiations must be grounded in changes in use by the Upper Basin. Solve the structural deficits in supply by reducing diversions, adapting to changing ecological conditions and utilizing the melting snowpack closer to the headwaters. New industrial uses and municipalities should be reduced in favor of growing an agricultural base in Colorado. We need to prepare for challenging water years and control our own food production.

Local turnips over trans-basin diversions.

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