

# Monthly Briefing

*A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News*

## 2019 Annual Conference less than one month away

The 2019 Alliance Annual Meeting and Conference is set for February 20-22 at the Eldorado in Reno. The conference theme is, *"Standing at the Crossroads: Looming Decisions with Sweeping Consequences for Western Water"*. A.G. Kawamura, a third-generation farmer from Southern California and a former secretary of the California Depart-

ment of Food and Agriculture, has been confirmed as one conference keynote speaker, and will speak to the aggressive and constructive approach farmers and ranchers must take to be heard and forge their future.

driving recent efforts to develop DCPs that seek to stabilize water levels Lakes Powell and Mead. Two DCP panels are planned for the 2019 conference: one for the Upper Basin, and one for the Lower Basin.

"The current situation on the Colorado River has finally



ment of Food and Agriculture, has been confirmed as one conference keynote speaker, and will speak to the aggressive and constructive approach farmers and ranchers must take to be heard and forge their future.

The Western water world is also abuzz with Colorado River drought contingency planning (DCP) efforts. Ongoing historic drought conditions in the Colorado River Basin, coupled with predicted dire near-term Colorado River water supply scenarios, have created a sense of urgency that is

brought the general public to the discussion," says Alliance director Don Schwindt (COLORADO). "Ag water users are also more engaged than ever. All water users need certainty for effective future planning. The ag users need - and want - to be helping - to shape their future instead of relying on others to design their future for them. They are a major audience for our DCP panels."

Mr. Schwindt and other conference organizers want the

*Continued on Page 4*

### STORIES INSIDE.....

	<u>Page #</u>
Partial Government Shutdown Lifted—For Now	2
FISH Act, Other Resources Bills Reintroduced in New Congress	3
Spreading the Alliance Message	4
2019 Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference Registration and Background Information	7
2019 Family Farm Alliance General Session Program Agenda	8
A Big "Thank you!" to our New and Supporting Members	11

## Partial government shutdown lifted—for now

An agreement between Congress and the White House ended a record-setting partial government shutdown earlier this month. Now, Congress has just three weeks to craft an agreement with President Trump on border wall spending or risk another shutdown. The House and Senate have both named formal conference committee members to negotiate a compromise over the \$5.7 billion in border wall funding requested by the President.

"This is an opportunity for all parties to work together for the benefit of our whole beautiful, wonderful nation," the President said.

President Trump and congressional leaders have reached a deal to reopen the government through February 15<sup>th</sup>, temporarily ending the 35-day partial government shutdown. Until that time, President Trump says lawmakers have agreed to "put together a Homeland Security package for me to shortly sign into law" that would address his border security concerns. The President said that if he does not "get a fair deal from Congress" with regard to his border security requests, "the government will either shut down on February 15<sup>th</sup> again or I will use the powers afforded to me under the laws and constitution of the United States to address this emergency," referring to a potential declaration of a national emergency.

Meanwhile, Speaker Nancy Pelosi has sent a letter to President Donald Trump asking him to deliver the State of the Union address on February 5.

The impasse over the partial government shutdown slowed much of what the new Congress was expected to take up in its first days, including oversight hearings in the Democratically controlled House on the Trump Administration and an early push to clear the decks of a handful of legislative items left over from last year. Those orphaned provisions included reviving the expired Land and Water Conservation Fund (*see related story, Page 3*).

Also, the release of the President's FY 2020 budget request to Congress, commencing the annual appropriations process, has been delayed from the usual first Monday in February deadline due to the shutdown.

### Government Shutdown Impacts to Alliance Interests

The government shutdown caused numerous complications at the Agriculture Department and other agencies. Nine major departments and agencies—and the office that reviews all federal regulations—were shut down for 35 day, with some exceptions for employees who conduct critical tasks. However, operations of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) are already funded for FY 2019 as their spending bill passed prior

to the beginning of the fiscal year. Work on non-emergency regulations also stopped in departments and agencies without funding.

"President Trump's announcement of the reopening of the federal government is welcome news, as it will bring thousands of our employees back to work and return us to our mission of providing our customers with the services they rely upon," said Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue. "I extend my sincere thanks to the thousands of USDA workers who stayed on the job during the shutdown to offer as many of our normal activities as we could."

The House Agriculture Committee is reportedly already looking for ways to limit the fallout in case the government has another shutdown. Possible actions include keeping certain Farm Service Agency services running and using Commodity Credit Corporation funds to keep paying employees.

On the policy front, the most likely impact of the shutdown to the Family Farm Alliance is delays to the rulemaking processes the organization has been engaged in. The government shutdown also created a new obstacle for EPA, which had been working on finalizing several important rules, including a replacement for the Obama-era Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction rule.



*President Donald Trump speaks in the Rose Garden of the White House, January 25, 2019, in Washington.*  
(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

### EPA-Corps of Engineers Postpone WOTUS Rulemaking

EPA and the Corps postponed the planned January 23 public hearing on the proposed new "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) definition until after appropriations have passed to fund the EPA. Publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register was also postponed. Last month, EPA and the Corps signed a proposed rule that would provide a clear, understandable, and implementable definition of "waters of the United States" that clarifies federal authority under the CWA while respecting the role of states and tribes in managing their own land and water resources. The agencies have submitted the proposed rule to the Federal Register for publication.

"We are in the process of reviewing the proposed rule and will reconvene our WOTUS2 Subcommittee to prepare written comments for EPA and the Corps," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. "We continue to support the proposed action to repeal the 2015 Clean Water Rule, and re-codify the exact same regulatory text that existed prior to the 2015 Rule, which reflected the then-legal regime under which the agencies were operating."

On the ground, the Obama-era WOTUS rule is currently in effect for 22 states, while the other 28 are subject to the mesh of rules and guidance that were in place prior to that standard being enacted. According to an EPA statement, "implementation issues that arise are being handled on a case-by-case basis."

## FISH Act, other resource bills reintroduced in Congress

In the past month, several natural resource bills supported by the Family Farm Alliance were reintroduced from the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, including the FISH Act, parts of the WILD Act and Water Rights Protection Act, and others. With the government back up and running, there may be opportunities to move some of this legislation, particularly in the Senate.

### FISH Act

The “FISH Act” (H.R. 548), introduced by Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CALIFORNIA) and Rep. Jim Costa (D-CALIFORNIA), would consolidate fish protections and waterway regulations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) under one agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) at the Department of the Interior. Right now, the regulatory authority is split between USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). By placing just USFWS in charge, the bill would prevent different and contradictory regulations, according to its sponsors.

“The FISH Act moves us toward a more consolidated and logical management of our endangered species and our rivers,” said Rep. Calvert. “It simply makes no sense to have multiple federal agencies responsible for enforcing the ESA. This unnecessary bureaucratic duplication delays the deployment and operation of critical infrastructure that drives our economy and enhances the natural environment.”

The ESA is currently administered by USFWS and the Commerce Department’s NMFS. The USFWS has primary responsibility for terrestrial and freshwater organisms, while the responsibilities of NMFS are mainly marine wildlife such as whales and anadromous fish, such as salmon. The FISH Act would transfer NMFS’ ESA responsibilities for management of anadromous species to the USFWS.

“This legislation is a commonsense way to keep the important environmental regulations we need in place while getting rid of the illogical and redundant processes that prevent us from accessing and storing our water wisely,” said Congressman Jim Costa, lead Democratic co-sponsor on the FISH Act.

Many Western irrigators – especially those who operate in watersheds that provide habitat for threatened and endangered species protected by the ESA – are significantly impacted by decisions made by USFWS and NMFS. ESA consultation decisions made by either or both agencies regarding operations plans for federal water projects like those in the Deschutes River Basin (OREGON), Columbia River Basin (WASHINGTON/OREGON/IDAHO/MONTANA), California’s Central Valley and the Klamath Basin have significantly impacted historic operations by re-dedicating water once used to support agricultural irrigation to the perceived needs of fish, frogs and other species protected under the ESA. Similarly, non-federal projects developed by local agencies increasingly find themselves constrained by the “take” prohibition of section 9 of the ESA and accompanying regulatory oversight, demands, and permitting system operated by

USFWS and NMFS.

Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen testified in support of this legislation before the House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee in October 2017.

“Combining NMFS and FWS under one roof will provide for more efficient, effective, and coordinated management of all ESA responsibilities for anadromous and freshwater fish in Western watersheds, from the highest reaches of headwater areas to the Pacific Ocean,” Mr. Keppen said in his testimony.

### Water Rights Protection Act

H.R. 579, the “Water Rights Protection Act”, introduced earlier this month by Rep. Scott Tipton (R-COLORADO), would prohibit conditioning of agreements over the leasing of public lands on the transfer of any privately owned water right to the U.S. by the Interior and Agriculture secretaries.

Earlier versions of the Water Rights Protection Act passed out of the House of Representatives with bipartisan support in the past three Congresses. The Alliance was actively engaged in all of these earlier legislative efforts.

Mr. Tipton introduced the first version of the Water Rights Protection Act in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress in response to the U.S. Forest Service’s (USFS) 2011 and 2012 ski area permit clauses, under which the agency was attempting to require the transfer of privately-held water rights to the federal government as a permit condition for ski areas operating on federal land.

Additionally, federal land management agencies have leveraged Western water users in an effort to acquire additional water supplies for the federal government by requiring water users to apply for their rights under state law in the name of the United States rather than for themselves.

“Our farmers and ranchers rely on their vested water rights to secure operating loans, as well as irrigate crops and water livestock,” said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen. “Federal agencies should not be able to leverage those water rights against farming and ranching families who have long depended upon federal permits and leases to support actions like grazing.”

The Water Rights Protection Act would prohibit any federal agency from requiring the transfer of privately-held water rights as a permit condition

In 2014, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) proposed the Groundwater Resource Management Directive, which gave the federal government jurisdiction over groundwater in a manner that was inconsistent with long-established state water law. The Alliance that year was actively engaged on this matter, and worked with Western Governors Association, National Water Resources Association, and others in the regulated community to express concerns on possible infringement by the proposed directive with state water law.

“That proposed directive went beyond the authority of USFS and could have encroached into states’ rights to manage

*Continued on Page 5*



## Spreading the Alliance message

Family Farm Alliance representatives and members hit the snowy roads of the American West this past month, engaging in water conferences and sharing the Alliance's vision of protecting and enhancing water supplies for Western irrigated agriculture.

### Mid-Pacific Water Users Conference

Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen serves on the planning committee for the Mid-Pacific Water Users Conference, which took place in Reno (NEVADA) earlier this month. The planning committee includes other Alliance leaders, such as past and present Advisory Committee members Larry Bauman (Central Valley Project Water Association), California consultant Bill Luce and Jeff Sutton (Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority). Dues-paying Alliance organizations on the planning committee include Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District I.D. #1, Firebaugh Canal Water District, Del Puerto Water District (all from California) and Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (NEVADA).

A record turnout showed up for this partnership event, which is co-planned by the Bureau of Reclamation's Mid-Pacific regional office and water users from the Central Valley (CALIFORNIA), Klamath Basin (CALIFORNIA / OREGON) and northeastern Nevada. The Mid-Pacific Region contains one of the nation's largest and most complex water projects—the Central Valley Project—as well as Oregon's Klamath Project; Nevada's Newlands, Humboldt, Washoe and Truckee Storage projects; and California's Cachuma, Orland, Santa Maria, Solano and Ventura River projects.

New Mid-Pacific regional director Ernest Conant made his first public appearance in Reno after starting his new job the day before the first day of the conference. Mr. Conant has nearly 40 years of water law experience and previously served as senior partner of Young Wooldridge, LLP (CALIFORNIA).

"Ernest has been at the forefront of California water for

nearly four decades, advocating for water for both agriculture and municipalities," said Commissioner Burman in a press statement. "His experience with California water will serve our Mid-Pacific Region well as we continue to develop new, innovative strategies to meet the needs of water users."

Most recently, Conant served as chair of the Water/Special Districts/Environmental Law Practice Group for Young Wooldridge where he was involved in negotiating major water agreements and has led water banking and other storage initiatives. Mr. Conant, whose family has been farming in California for six generations, was born in the northern California city of Marysville.



*Ernest Conant made his first public appearance as the Bureau of Reclamation's new regional director earlier this month in Reno, NV. (USBR Photo)*

*Continued on Page 6*

## 2019 Annual Conference (Continued from Page 1)

Colorado River panelists to tell their stories with an emphasis on consequences to agriculture. Thus, the majority of the panelists themselves are farmers, ranchers or representatives of agricultural water users. The Upper Basin panel will be moderated by Upper Colorado River Commission executive director Amy Haas. The Lower Basin discussion will be moderated by Dan Thelander, who sits on the Family Farm Alliance board of directors and who farms with water supplied by the Central Arizona Project.

Other key topics for presentations at the 2019 conference will include the Farm Bill, federal interagency cooperation on Western water matters, forest health / wildfire management, and the importance of flood irrigation to meet waterfowl needs. The traditional "Reclamation Roundtable" and "Inside

Washington, D.C." panels will continue at this year's event. A tour of the new Tesla "Giga Plant" in nearby Sparks, Nevada is scheduled for the afternoon of the last day of the conference. That tour has already sold out, due to high demand, and limited seating.

Additional information on the 2019 conference, including an updated conference schedule, is featured in this "Monthly Briefing", beginning on Page 7.

The Family Farm Alliance website includes a special page for allows conference attendees to register, secure lodging and pay on-line. Go to [www.familyfarmallianceconference.com](http://www.familyfarmallianceconference.com) for links to the 2019 Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting, including: conference registration, hotel information, and sponsorship/ exhibit information.

## Reintroduced bills in new Congress (*Cont'd from Pg. 3*)

groundwater,” said Mr. Keppen.

The USFS has since withdrawn the measure, but also indicated a desire to issue a revised directive in the future. The Water Rights Protection Act would require any future USFS directives to be consistent with state water law.

According to the bill’s sponsors, H.R. 579 would uphold federal deference to state water law and prevent federal takings of privately held water rights.

“Water is the most precious resource we have in the arid West, and how we manage and protect our water supply has implications on everything from growing crops to managing wildlife habitats,” said Rep. Tipton. “The Water Rights Protection Act is a sensible approach that would preserve the water rights of all water users and provide certainty that the federal government cannot take their rights in the future.”

### National Resources Management Act

With the partial government shutdown lifted, the agenda in the Senate may now be able to turn to the public lands and water package, which would permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and includes several bills important to Western states. The LWCF authorization lapsed last September 30. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) placed the bill on the Senate calendar via Rule 14, which allows lawmakers to bypass the committee process and bring legislation directly to the floor.

“That gives Mr. McConnell the authority to call up the bill whenever he wants to schedule it for a vote,” said Mark Limbaugh, the Alliance’s voice in Washington, D.C.

Senators Murkowski (R-ALASKA) and Cantwell (D-WASHINGTON) earlier this month introduced the 660-page *Natural Resources Management Act* (S. 47). The Senate could move on this broad public lands package as early as the first week of February.

“It’s about time,” Senator Murkowski told reporters. “We said we wanted to do it in January, and January is coming to a close.”

The provisions of the Water and Power title of this bill were among a package of amendments to the *America’s Water Infrastructure Act* that the Family Farm Alliance supported in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Alliance President Patrick O’Toole (WYOMING) testified before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee on these matters in March 2018. Title VIII of S. 47 contains Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) title transfer provisions and authorizes conveyances of Reclamation facilities. S. 47 also reauthorizes important endangered fish recovery programs in the Colorado River Basin and authorizes Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project.

“Both of these latter projects are important to many Family Farm Alliance members who rely upon the Colorado River Basin and Yakima River Basin waters to supply their irrigation operations,” said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen.

The Alliance responded to the bill’s introduction with a letter sent to the ENR Committee in support of the “Water and Power” title of S. 47.

“In addition to these important provisions, we are hopeful that Congress will revisit and advance other legislative proposals important to Reclamation water customers,” said Mr. Keppen. “These include reintroduction of bills proposed in the last Congress that would improve Reclamation transparency provisions, address aquifer recharge, reauthorize and extend the WaterSMART grants program, and authorize pumped storage hydropower development using multiple Reclamation reservoirs.”

### WILD Act included in S. 47

Legislation introduced by Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-WYOMING) and Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-Delaware) in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress—the “Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act”, or “WILD Act”—is also included in the LWCF package. This legislation would reauthorize the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and certain wildlife conservation funds, establish prize competitions relating to the prevention of wildlife poaching and trafficking, and authorize wildlife conservation, the management of invasive species, and the protection of endangered species.

The WILD Act passed the U.S. Senate in 2017 as Senate Bill 826, but ultimately did not cross the finish line with full Congressional approval before the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress adjourned.

The Alliance is on record for consistently supporting the efforts of the “Partners for Fish and Wildlife”, which helps to fund habitat work on private lands. Alliance members also have strong concerns regarding the need to properly manage invasive species with priority. The Alliance in the last Congress formally supported those specific provisions of the WILD Act.

“The Partners Program already has the infrastructure and relationships with landowners to get effective habitat work done for Endangered Species Act-listed and candidate species,” said Alliance President O’Toole, a rancher from Wyoming. “They have projects on the ground all over the country and are doing yeoman’s work to preserve habitat for toads in Nevada, Sage Grouse in Wyoming, and the Mountain Plover in Colorado, to name just a few success stories.”

Another title of the WILD Act protects water and wildlife from invasive species. It requires that specified federal agencies plan and carry out activities on land they directly manage to protect water and wildlife by controlling and managing invasive species. It also directs those federal agencies to implement strategic invasive species programs, to prioritize the least-costly methods for controlling and managing invasive species, and to allocate not less than 75 percent of funding for on-the-ground control and management of invasive species.

“The WILD Act takes an important step towards prioritizing the Partners Program and addressing the critical challenges Western water users face regarding invasive species management,” said Mr. Keppen.

## Spreading the Alliance message (Continued from Page 4)

Mr. Keppen moderated an area office managers roundtable and also a Washington, D.C. luncheon presentation featuring the Alliance's D.C. representative, Mark Limbaugh, and former California Congressman Dennis Cardoza. He also introduced Steve Ford, an actor and son of former U.S. President Gerald Ford, who delivered a well-received breakfast keynote address.

### Four States Irrigation Council Annual Conference

The Four States Irrigation Council (COLORADO/KANSAS/NEBRASKA/WYOMING) hosted its 2019 annual conference in Fort Collins (COLORADO), where Alliance President Patrick O'Toole and Executive Director Dan Keppen were luncheon speakers and provided an update on Alliance activities and priorities. The event was organized by Alliance member Northern Water (COLORADO) and featured several panel discussions on developments in the four-state region, led by Alliance Advisory Committee member Pete Gile, who manages the Kansas Bostwick Irrigation District along the Republican River.



*Family Farm Alliance executive director Dan Keppen speaks to the luncheon meeting of the Four States Irrigation Council annual conference in Fort Collins, CO earlier this month. (Sharon O'Toole photo).*

### Colorado Water Congress Annual Convention

Mr. O'Toole and Mr. Keppen will also participate in a keynote panel discussion on agriculture profitability at the Feb. 1 Colorado Water Congress annual convention in Westminster.

They will be joined on the panel Tom Vilsack, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, the featured speaker, who will introduce Kate Greenberg, Colorado's new Commissioner of Agriculture.

"This is the premier water industry event in the state, attracting 500 plus attendees that convene for networking and collaboration on the important water issues of the day," said Doug Kemper, Executive Director for the Congress.

Mr. Keppen's keynote address will cover recent successes in working policy matters in Washington, focusing on the Farm Bill and water infrastructure. He'll also outline how the Alliance is engaging in the multiple state Colorado River

Drought Contingency Plans and the new proposed Clean Water Rule.



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***2019 Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference  
Standing at the Crossroads:  
Looming Decisions with Sweeping Consequences for Western Water  
February 21-22, 2019  
Eldorado Resort Casino***

“Crossroads” means different things for different people. Some remember it as the title of a song by the legendary bluesman, Robert Johnson. Others know it as a terrible movie starring Britney Spears. Most, however, agree that it represents a point at which a crucial decision must be made that will have far-reaching consequences. Water users throughout the West find themselves at a variety of crossroads today:

- Ongoing historic drought conditions in the Colorado River basin have prompted the Department of Interior and 7 states to fast-track drought contingency plans to reduce the likelihood of Colorado River reservoirs – particularly Lake Powell and Lake Mead – from further declining to critical elevations that will have extremely negative consequences for water and power users throughout the watersheds. Both the benefits of action and the burdens of inaction rest squarely with the states right now.
- Media coverage of Western water challenges often highlights critics of agriculture who point their fingers at farmer and ranchers and blame them for Western environmental problems. Can constructive conservation interests work with their agricultural partners to solve the environmental challenges they all face? Or, will we allow extreme interests on both sides to define the debate and lose opportunities to work together and accept each other’s expertise?
- Recent deadly and devastating Western wildfire disasters have underscored the importance of improving on-the-ground management that can lead to improved forest health. Will policy leaders blame climate change, or also look to see how active forest management can increase forest resiliency?

The Family Farm Alliance recognizes that when people sit down and put their heads together – being cognizant of the farmer’s burden to balance food production and environmental health – they can come up with some intelligent solutions. Alliance members have a long and proven history of sharing experiences and learning from one another. This February, they will once again gather together with prominent Western water policy makers for the kind of insightful, outside-the-box presentations and discussions you’ve come to expect from the West’s most effective grassroots irrigated agricultural organization.

Important decisions lie ahead. Will Western water users be able to navigate the crossroads and see their way clear to solutions to their challenges? ***Come join us in the “Biggest Little City in the World” to learn for yourself!***

**Join us at the Eldorado Resort Casino in Reno for the Family Farm Alliance’s 2019 Annual Meeting and Conference and see for yourself!**

**Download the complete conference registration package at [familyfarmallianceconference.com](http://familyfarmallianceconference.com)**



*Protecting Water for Western Irrigated Agriculture*

## 2019 Annual Meeting & Conference

### *Standing at the Crossroads: Looming Decisions with Sweeping Consequences for Western Water*

### **DRAFT AGENDA**

**Wednesday**  
**February 20, 2019**

**ELDORADO CONVENTION CENTER (LOWER LEVEL)**

**8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**      **Board of Directors and Advisory Committee Internal Meetings**

**Thursday**  
**February 21, 2019**

**ELDORADO CONVENTION CENTER (LOWER LEVEL)**

**7:00 a.m.**      **Registration Desk Open**

**8:00 a.m.**      **Welcome – Opening Comments:** Alliance President Patrick O'Toole will summarize the busy year he and the Alliance had, engaging in a variety of national initiatives, developing new partnerships, and strengthening existing networks. He will set the stage for the 2019 general session, which will be forward-looking and focused on continuing to advance Alliance initiatives in the 116th Congress and with the Trump Administration.

**8:15 a.m. to 9:35 a.m.**      **Reclamation Roundtable** – Commissioner Brenda Burman (invited) will be the keynote speaker prior to the panel discussion featuring all five regional directors from the Bureau of Reclamation, who will participate in an interactive discussion of key policy issues that span the West in this time-honored Alliance conference tradition. Dan Keppen (Alliance Executive Director) will moderate a panel that includes regional directors Terry Fulp (Lower Colorado Region), Mike Black (Great Plains Region), Brent Rhees (Upper Colorado Region) Lorri Gray (Pacific Northwest Region); and Ernest Conant (Mid-Pacific Region).

**9:35 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.**      **Break**

**9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.**      **Water Resources Benefits from Landscape-wide Forest Management** - Recent deadly and devastating Western wildfire disasters have underscored the importance of improving on-the-ground management that can lead to improved forest health. Learn from U.S. Forest Service officials and resource managers how active forest management can improve water yield, provide new jobs, and reduce the cost of firefighting, all while increasing forest resiliency. Moderated by Alliance President Patrick O'Toole, invited speakers include USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment James Hubbard.

*Cont'd on Pg 9*



# 2019 Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference

## DRAFT AGENDA

### February 21 (Continued)

- 10:45 a.m. to noon** ***Sustaining Agriculture, Wildlife, and People*** – Privately-owned wet meadow habitats in the Intermountain West are typically associated with irrigated agriculture and occur on working ranches and farms in landscapes important to wildlife, native fish, and people. Yet these working wet meadows are under significant pressure due to urban and exurban growth, shifts in water policy, drought and changing environmental conditions, and in some landscapes, declining aquifers. Hear diverse perspectives around these issues and how conservation programs, policies, and partnerships can support working lands, wildlife habitat, and western communities. Presented by representatives of the Intermountain West Joint Venture, invited speakers include Pat O'Toole (Ladder Livestock), Ron Alvarado (Oregon State Conservationist, NRCS), Paul Souza (Director, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), Dave Smith (Coordinator, IWJV), Joy Morris (Water 4 Initiative Coordinator, IWJV) and Laurel Anders (Communications Program Coordinator, IWJV).
- Noon to 1:15 p.m.** ***Luncheon featuring Keynote Speaker: A.G. Kawamura.*** A.G. Kawamura, a third-generation farmer from Southern California and a former secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture will discuss the crossroads faced by Western agricultural producers. Mr. Kawamura participated in recent global climate talks in Katowice, Poland, where he was troubled by the events, actions and lack of actions he witnessed there. Listen to his concerns about these recent developments and why they may have a significant impact on how Americans produce food and on how producers deal with the efforts being made by those who want to change what – and the way – consumers should eat.
- 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.** ***A Look at D.C. from the Hill:*** Mark Limbaugh moderates this panel of staff from key congressional water committees and conservation and water groups. Get the inside scoop on how the new Congress will tackle Western water and environmental challenges from Republican and Democrat staff directors on Capitol Hill. Invited panelists include Lane Dickson (Republican Professional Staff, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee), Rebecca Bonner (Democrat Professional Staff, Senate ENR Committee), Matt Muirragui (Democrat Staff, House Water, Power & Oceans Subcommittee), William Ball (Republican Staff, House Water, Power & Oceans Subcommittee), Jimmy Hague (Senior Water Policy Advisor, The Nature Conservancy) and Ian Lyle (Executive VP, National Water Resources Association).
- 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.** ***Western Litigation Update—*** Alliance general counsel Norm Semanko will moderate a panel of attorneys involved with critical court cases involving Western water resources matters. Ramsey Kropf (Somach Simmons and Dunn, Colorado) will discuss the Klamath takings litigation. Patrick Sigle (Counsel to Salt River Project, Arizona) will speak on the County of Maui/Kinder Morgan Clean Water Act cases. Chip Wilkins (Remy Moose Manley, California) will describe important ESA implications of *Friends of the River v. NMFS*.
- 3:15 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** ***Break***
- 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** ***Trump Administration “Water Subcabinet”*** - This panel discussion will feature representatives serving on President Trump’s “Water Subcabinet,” which consists of six water related agencies represented by officials at the assistant secretary level. Hear directly from some of these invited officials, and how they are coordinating and collaborating on cross-cutting issues that impact Western water use.

Cont'd on Pg. 10

## 2019 Family Farm Alliance Annual Conference DRAFT AGENDA

Thursday

February 21, 2019

(Continued)

5:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. *Exhibitors' Presentations (5 minutes each)*

5:15 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. *2019 Annual Meeting*

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. *Evening Reception - Come unwind for drinks and food at the Eldorado Resort Casino's newest nightspot—Novi!*

Friday

February 22, 2019

ELDORADO CONVENTION CENTER (LOWER LEVEL)

8:00 a.m.– 9:15 a.m. *Upper Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency Plans Panel Discussion—*featuring the voices of Family Farm Alliance members from Colorado's Front Range, West Slope and Wyoming. Panelists include Mark Harris (General Manager, Grand Valley Water Users Association), Patrick O'Toole (Yampa River watershed rancher), Bennett Raley (Northern Water general counsel), and Bruce Whitehead (Southwestern Water Conservation District general manager). Moderated by Upper Colorado River Commission Executive Director Amy Haas.

9:15 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. *Break*

9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. *Lower Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency Plan Panel Discussion—*featuring the voices of water managers and agricultural producers from Arizona and Southern California. Moderated by Alliance director Dan Thelander (ARIZONA), panelists include Wade Noble (Noble Law Offices, Yuma, Arizona), Paul Orme (General Counsel to five special districts in Pinal County, Arizona), Randy Record (farmer and former chairman of the board, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California), and Tina Shields (Imperial Irrigation District water department manager)

10:45 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. *The 2018 Farm Bill—perspective from Western agriculture and conservation interests.* The Family Farm Alliance worked closely with a coalition of Western agriculture and conservation interests to influence the 2018 farm bill recently signed into law by President Trump. Moderated by Marc Thalacker (Three Sisters Irrigation District, Oregon), speakers include Josh Maxwell (Senior Staff, U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, *invited*) Jack Rice (California Farm Bureau Federation) and Laura Ziemer (Trout Unlimited).

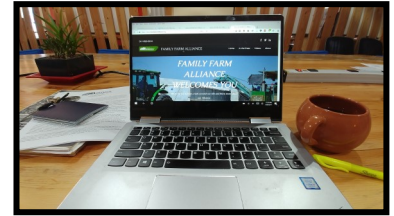
11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. *Keynote Speaker - Acting U.S. Interior Secretary David Bernhardt (invited).*

11:45 a.m. to noon *Award Presentation and Closing Comments – Patrick O'Toole*

12:45 p.m. *Tour—Tesla Gigafactory—tour is sold out.*

**Change of E-Mail Address!**

If you haven't done so already, please note that Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen's email address has changed.  
**His new address is [dan@familyfarmalliance.org](mailto:dan@familyfarmalliance.org).**



Check out [www.familyfarmalliance.org](http://www.familyfarmalliance.org) to see how the Family Farm Alliance advocates to protect and enhance water supplies for farmers and ranchers in the 17 Western states. Our new website includes links to breaking water policy news, comprehensive policy reports and case studies, insightful commentary, agency correspondence, and recent written testimony from some of our 70 appearances before Congress since 2005.

**A Big Thank You to Our New and Supporting Members!**

***LATE 2018***

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**DONOR SUPPORT**

**Make your tax-deductible gift to the Alliance today! Grassroots membership is vital to our organization. Thank you in advance for your loyal support. If you would like further info, please contact Dan Keppen at [dankeppen@charter.net](mailto:dankeppen@charter.net), or visit our website: [www.familyfarmalliance.org](http://www.familyfarmalliance.org).**



Contributions can also be mailed directly to:  
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22895 S. Dickenson Avenue  
Riverdale, CA 93656.