

FROM THE RMSAWWA CHAIR

## The Stewards of Our Time

Brett Pugh, RMSAWWA Chair, Project Manager, Burns & McDonnell



Welcome to the March-April 2026 issue of *Rocky Mountain Water*. As we explore this issue's theme, "Climate Resiliency & Sustainability," I am reminded of the legacy projects that first made life in our region possible.



During a family trip to the Grand Canyon this past Thanksgiving, we visited the Hoover Dam, a spectacular wonder of American civil engineering. I was inspired by the sheer audacity of the project. Think of the vision required to overcome the immense permitting, political, and technological hurdles of the early 1930s. Originally scoped for flood control and power generation, its impact today is even more profound, providing 32-million acre-feet of critical water storage for the West. An entire city was created just to house the construction workers! Approximately \$93 million in contracts were awarded in 1931 for dam, powerhouse, intake towers, pressure pipes, materials, and freight – the equivalent of nearly \$2 billion today.

I am humbled by the vision and execution of these projects. Those pioneers in our field had the ideas, motivation, and means to build systems that remain critical to this day. Our work as water professionals is more important than ever as we face new challenges in a changing climate. We are the stewards of our time, privileged to work on the infrastructure that will become a legacy for future generations.

It is inspiring to see projects at the scale of the Hoover Dam and the more recent Mike O'Callaghan-Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge that now crosses the canyon. Let that same spirit of ambition guide your work today.

### SECTION LEADERSHIP UPDATES

I am pleased to announce that two new members are joining our board of trustees. Please welcome Chris Cerreta and Amadeo Trujillo.

Chris, with CDM Smith in Denver, has done great work as co-chair of the Membership Committee for the past two years, along with Rebecca Hutchinson. Amadeo, with Tierra West in Albuquerque, has served as chair of the New Mexico Water Committee and will provide valuable representation from the state. We look forward to the passion and insight they will bring to the Section.

I also want to extend a sincere thank you to Jon Chill and Ryan Decker for their dedicated service to the board.

### 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

During our winter planning session, the Board of Trustees worked with its consultant to develop a new three-year strategic plan. Guided by AWWA's 2030 strategic plan, we aim to focus the Rocky Mountain Section's energy on similar goals that benefit our membership. We look forward to sharing the new strategic plan with you in the coming months.

### A CALL FOR ENGAGEMENT

As a section, our growth and ability to support your career in the water industry depend on your feedback and engagement. This is a repeated call to get involved and to encourage your colleagues to do the same. We want your input and are a better organization for it.

Thank you for being a member. •