

Interdisciplinary Water Resources Seminar GRAD592

Fall 2016 Theme:

Topics in Western Water Law

Monday, August 29, 2016 4:00 – 5:00 PM,
BSB Room 103

Water's Role in Shaping Colorado and the Rocky Mountain West

Justice Greg Hobbs, Colorado Supreme Court

Biography:

Greg Hobbs, Jr., former Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court who retired from the court on August 31, 2015, is the author of five books on water law, history, culture, and poetry. After earning his degree in history from the University of Notre Dame in 1966, he attended Columbia University to study Latin American history before he and his wife, Bobbie, joined the Peace Corps. In 1971, he earned his law degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

In the 1970s Hobbs worked for the then newly formed Region 8 Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and then the Natural Resources Section of the Colorado Attorney General's Office. At both organizations, he worked on environmental law, aimed at cleaning up polluted water and air, including Denver's "brown cloud." Hobbs later was a partner at the law firm Davis, Graham, and Stubbs in 1979 and became Principal Counsel to the Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District. Hobbs and two others left Davis, Graham, and Stubbs to establish their own firm of Hobbs, Trout, and Raley in 1992 primarily to serve NCWCD.

In 1996, Hobbs was appointed to the Colorado Supreme Court, where he authored more than 250 majority opinions for the court in civil and criminal cases, including 30 water decisions. He chaired the Supreme Court's Water Court Committee and its Judicial Advisory Council. He currently serves as a Senior Water Judge assigned to the mediation of water cases and is Publications Chair of the Colorado Foundation for Water Education.



Abstract:

Recurring drought and federal land laws continue to shape the land and water laws of the eight interior Rocky Mountain States. They experience the lowest rate of annual precipitation of any region of the United States: Nevada 10 inches, Utah 12 inches, Wyoming 13 inches, Arizona 14 inches, New Mexico 15 inches, Montana 15 inches, Colorado 16 inches, and Idaho 19 inches. Within the continental United States, they have the highest percentage of federal land ownership: Nevada 84.5%, Utah 57.4%, Idaho 50.2%, Arizona 48.1%, Wyoming 42.3%, New Mexico 41.6%, Colorado 36.6%, and Montana 29.9%.

To encourage settlement of the western public domain brought into the United States by the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, the 1846 Oregon Treaty, and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Congress adopted the 1862 Homestead Act and established land offices for the purpose of accepting claims and issuing patents transferring land into state, local, and private ownership. Through the 1866 Mining Act and a series of subsequent acts, Congress provided authority for the territories and states to adopt their own water laws.

Colorado
State
University



All interested faculty, students, and off-campus guests are encouraged to attend.
For more information, contact Reagan Waskom at reagan.waskom@colostate.edu or visit watercenter.colostate.edu.

