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## *Introduction*

**P. ANDREW JONES**

In the summer of 2005, I was approached by Tom Cech, director of the Central Colorado Water Conservancy District, with the idea for a water class targeted at non-lawyers. My Windsor law firm, Lind, Lawrence and Ottenhoff, had represented Central for many years. In the course of this representation, Tom and I had met and interacted with thousands of Central's constituents and other members of the public. Whether these meetings occurred within the context of large public gatherings or as one-on-one sessions, there seemed to be a consistent common desire to learn more about water rights and water law issues. Tom suggested that I teach a course on water law for non-lawyers, and he promised to help.

We met with representatives of Aims Community College in Greeley, who graciously agreed to host a series of six seminars on water law issues. Although I had never taught in a formal setting, I was to be the host and teacher of the sessions. Each of the six 3.5-hour sessions was designed to stand on its own and to address a distinct topic.

I wrote the curriculum specifically with the goal of making it both understandable to the layperson and useful in practical application. Although I did not include the level of detail one would find in a course designed for legal practitioners, I nevertheless strove to maintain fidelity to legal authority and to reflect all critical aspects of Colorado water law. I also included material on geology, hydrology, history, and economics.

The course proved immensely popular. During the initial session in Greeley, fifty-five students attended each seminar. Many walks of life and professions were represented: realtors, lenders, appraisers, water district personnel, municipal employees, ditch company representatives, agricultural producers, students of all ages, and even lawyers. Since then, I have taught the course in Fort Collins, Fort Lupton, Loveland, and Greeley to hundreds of students, often refining the curriculum. I have frequently been inspired by the diligence, curiosity, creativity, and experience students have brought to the course.

Many students have encouraged me to record the curriculum so they could have it in reference form for further study. Others have suggested that the curriculum be formatted to reach a wider audience. This book is a response to those requests. Tom Cech, who initiated the idea, volunteered to assist me in creating the manuscript. I am indebted to him for his invaluable assistance and encouragement.

Each of the chapters finds its origins in one of the course seminars. My hope is that readers will find the book useful—in the sense that, like the seminars, each chapter is designed to address a specific topic in a self-contained and concise manner. At the same time, each chapter builds on the others, so a complete reading provides additional context and understanding. I was able to go into far greater detail in this book than time allows in the course.

I tell this story for the reader to provide a context for the book. It is not intended to be a legal treatise or even, necessarily, a textbook. Rather, it is an accumulation of materials my students have found useful and interesting—an eclectic mix of history, geology, hydrology, law, and economics designed to serve as a handbook for the non-lawyer seeking a greater understanding of Colorado water issues.