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Stephen Leonhardt Shareholder — Water Law

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Stephen H. Leonhardt concentrates his practice on water law, related governmental and environmental issues, and litigation. Mr. Leonhardt counsels clients on the establishment, protection, and modification of water rights throughout Colorado. His clients include local water suppliers, industrial water users, land developers, individual landowners, non-profit organizations and a regional water conservancy district. He represents clients in judicial and administrative proceedings and transactions concerning rights to use both surface water and groundwater. He has represented clients in hundreds of cases in Colorado's Water Courts, in several appeals in the Colorado Supreme Court, and in civil litigation involving ownership of water rights and operation of water systems. He is recognized in *Best Lawyers in America* for his work in water law.

Mr. Leonhardt is admitted to practice in the State of Colorado, the United States District Court for the District of Colorado, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Before joining Burns, Figa & Will, P.C., Mr. Leonhardt practiced law with Fairfield and Woods, P.C., from 1985 to 2002.

Mr. Leonhardt is an active member of the Denver Bar Association, the Colorado Bar Association, and the American Bar Association. He is actively involved in the Colorado Water Congress, and has represented the CWC in several legal proceedings involving proposed amendments to the Colorado Constitution. He is also a member of the Christian Legal Society (having served on the national Board of Directors). Mr. Leonhardt served on the Ethics Committee of the Colorado Bar Association from 1988 to 1996. He is a frequent lecturer on legal ethics, ballot initiatives, and issues related to water law. Mr. Leonhardt was born in Santa Monica, California, and grew up in Colorado Springs, Colorado. He enjoys playing piano, hiking, fishing, travel, history and baseball.



Stephen Leonhardt

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Education

J.D., Stanford University

B.S.C.E., Washington University

Areas of Expertise

Water Rights and Water Quality

Administrative, Governmental and
Legislative

Litigation and Appeals

Municipal and Special Districts

Natural Resources and Public Lands

Environmental

Professional Activities

American Bar Association; Colorado Bar Association (Water Law Section, Ethics Committee 1988-1996)

Advisory Board, University of Denver Water Law Review

Colorado Water Congress (State Affairs Committee)

Christian Legal Society (Board of Directors 2000-2003)

Martindale-Hubbell – AV (highest rating)

Best Lawyers in America, Water Law 2010-2015



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Reported Cases

High Plains A & M v. Southeastern Colo. Water Conservancy Dist., 120 P. 3d 710 (Colo. 2005).

ISG, LLC v. Ark. Valley Ditch Ass'n., 120 P.3d 724 (Colo. 2005).

In re Proposed Initiative 2011-2012 #3, 274 P.3d 562 (Colo. 2012).

In re Proposed Initiative 2011-2012 #45, 274 P.3d 576 (Colo. 2012).

In re Proposed Initiative 2013-2014 #103 (No. 14SA137), 2014 CO 61 (Colo. 2014).

Centennial Water & Sanitation Dist. v. City & County of Broomfield, 256 P.3d 677 (Colo. 2011).

In re Title, Ballot Title and Submission Clause for #17 (2007-08), 177 P.3d 871 (Colo. 2007).

MacRavey v. Hamilton (Public Rights in Waters II), 898 P.2d 1076 (Colo. 1995).

Frontier Ditch Co. v. Southeastern Colo. Water Conservancy Dist., 761 P.2d 1117 (Colo. 1988).

Southeastern Colo. Water Conservancy Dist. v. Twin Lakes Associates, 770 P.2d 1231 (Colo. 1989).

Speaking Engagements

Colorado Water Congress – Workshop on Legal Ethics in Water and Environmental Law – “Professional Conduct: Rules, Values and Obligations” (annually from December 2002 – November 2014)

Colorado Water Workshop – “Colorado Water Law: Is There Room for the Public Trust Doctrine?” (June 2014)

Colorado Bar Association CLE – Compacts and Interstate Water Allocation. “Arkansas River Compact Issues: Recent Litigation and Solutions” (May 2014)

CLE International - Law of the Rio Grande: “Ethics Considerations for Lawyers Working with or Representing Government Entities” (April 2014)

Southwestern Water Conservation District - Annual Water Seminar, “Public Trust Doctrine: The Real Story” (April 2014)

Colorado Bar Association Water Law Section - Luncheon CLE: “The Public Trust Doctrine vs. Colorado Water Rights” (March 2013)

CLE International, Colorado Water Law – “Legal Ethics: Issues for Colorado Water Law Practice” (March 2012)

CLE International – Colorado Water Law Conference - “Surface Water Irrigation Improvements Rules in Water Division 2: Implications for Colorado Water Users and Administration” (May 2010)