

OPINION COLUMNS

Guest column: A collaborative path forward on water

Brady Janzen, a partner in Riverview, LLP, writes about a voluntary \$11M water settlement it recently made in Arizona.

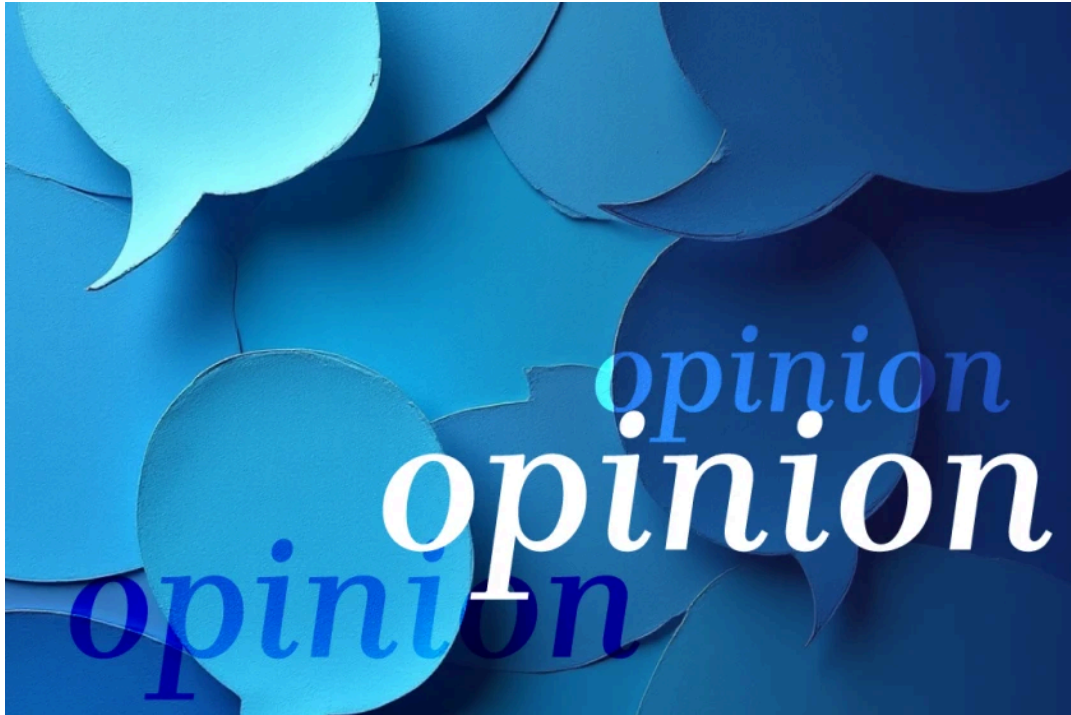


Illustration by Carli Greninger / Forum Communications

Opinion by Brady Janzen

January 22, 2026 at 1:16 PM

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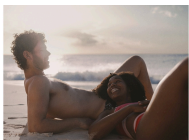
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communities where we operate. Those values guide our work everywhere, including in the Sulphur Springs Valley of Cochise County, Arizona.

Water has always shaped life in the Sulphur Springs Valley. For more than a century, agriculture has been the cornerstone of this region, supporting generations of families and rural communities. The town of Willcox, Ariz., is known as the “Cattle Capital of the World,” reflecting how deeply farming and ranching are woven into the Valley’s economy and identity.

(<https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/riverview-farms-reaches-11m-water-settlement-in-arizona>)

NORTH DAKOTA([HTTPS://WWW.INFORUM.COM/NEWS/NORTH-DAKOTA](https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota))

Riverview Farms reaches \$11M water settlement in Arizona(<https://www.inforum.com/news/north-dakota/riverview-farms-reaches-11m-water-settlement-in-arizona>)

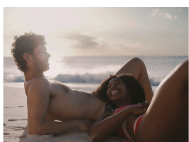
Riverview Farms agreed to an \$11 million settlement in Arizona to restore groundwater access after wells ran dry, as the MN-based company also works to build dairy farms in North Dakota.

Jan 14 • **By Michael McGurran**(<https://www.inforum.com/michael-mcgurran>)

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Recently, there has been media coverage about a voluntary agreement between Riverview and the state of Arizona focused on water conservation and long-term water security in the Sulphur Springs Valley. To understand that agreement, it helps to understand the history, facts and shared concerns that brought it together.

Riverview became part of the Valley’s agricultural community 10 years ago through the purchase of an existing dairy farm that included irrigated farmland. We did not introduce irrigation in this



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Riverview's arrival – the Sulphur Springs Valley had roughly double the number of acres under irrigation compared to today.

[BUSINESS\(HTTPS://WWW.INFORUM.COM/BUSINESS\)](https://www.inforum.com/business)

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Minnesota mayor says Riverview Dairy has been 'great' but some North Dakota residents worry about new site(<https://www.inforum.com/business/minnesota-mayor-says-riverview-dairy-has-been-great-but-some-north-dakota-residents-worry-about-new-site>)

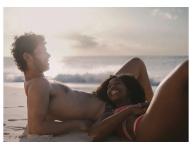
The Gary, Minnesota, mayor said Riverview Dairy has been a good neighbor since it began milking there. But neighbors of a proposed Riverview site in North Dakota are concerned about their water.

Oct 22, 2024 · *By Jenny Schlecht*

(<https://www.inforum.com/jenny-schlecht>) ¹

From the outset, Riverview has worked to be a responsible steward of water. Over the past decade, we invested heavily in upgrading wells and irrigation systems to improve efficiency and reduce water use. These investments include low-energy precision application systems, drop hoses, variable frequency drives, and automated pivots. Together, these efforts improved water-use efficiency by approximately 30% across the cropland we manage.

It is also important to understand scale. Riverview is, and always has been, a minority water user in the Sulphur Springs Valley. The majority of groundwater pumped annually is used by others. From a historical perspective, 95% of groundwater used for agriculture in this Valley has been used by others – not Riverview. Groundwater dynamics today reflect decades of use combined with unprecedented drought, not the actions of any single operation.



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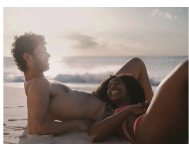
Because of these challenges, Riverview has spent years engaging with state agencies, elected officials and agricultural organizations to support thoughtful groundwater management. Since 2018, we have been actively encouraging responsible policy. We have also supported local efforts to improve water access, including the creation of a rural water district and direct assistance to neighbors in need.

More recently, we have taken additional voluntary steps to conserve water, including modifying crop rotations, fallowing acreage, and sourcing feed grown outside the Sulphur Springs Valley (including 50,000 tons of beet pulp pellets largely produced in the Red River Valley over the last two years). These decisions were not without cost, but they reflect our commitment to being a good neighbor.

Against this backdrop, shared concerns about water sustainability led to conversations between Riverview and the Arizona Attorney General's Office. What emerged was common ground and a collaborative approach focused on solutions rather than conflict.

Those conversations resulted in the recently announced voluntary agreement. The agreement includes meaningful financial commitments to help ensure reliable water access for homes and schools for decades to come, while formalizing Riverview's ongoing commitment to conservation best practices. It is not an admission of wrongdoing or an assignment of fault, but a proactive step to support the Sulphur Springs Valley and its residents.

The water challenges of the Sulphur Springs Valley are complex, and no single entity can solve them alone. Riverview remains committed to being part of the solution – working alongside fellow farmers, residents, regulators, and policymakers to protect the




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We invite anyone with questions about our farms to reach out, and we welcome continued dialogue with our neighbors and community members.



Brady Janzen is a partner in Riverview, LLP.

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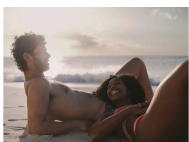
What is the Sulphur Springs Valley's water usage like?

How does Riverview's water conservation efforts impact the Valley?

What is the significance of the recent voluntary agreement between Riverview and Arizona?

Ask a question...

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