

Chief justice Corey Swanson

Montana Supreme Court

Honorable Chief Justice:

My name is Steve Kelly from Fort Benton, and I am the zone 1 commissioner on the lower Teton River. I am also a member of Lower Teton Water Users as well as a water rights holder, irrigator and rancher on a multi-generational ranch. The membership of the LTWU is a diversified and somewhat eclectic collection of people who represent not only irrigators and ag producers but residential landowners, contractors, corporate interests as well as developers. In total they represent a good cross section of typical water users in Montana.

While it is difficult for such a diverse group to come to an agreement on anything there is agreement on what it would take to be our next associate water judge. It is going to require a person that is knowledgeable, firm and have the courage to be fair.

Having looked over the list of applicants it is a pleasure to say that it is an outstanding group of people. Rare in this day and age to get so many qualified applicants. That being said we feel as a group that the criteria for Associate Water Judge is best met by Julia Nordlund. Being raised in a small town in Montana in an irrigated farm family she would have a true appreciation of using and being thrifty with the limited resource that water represents in Montana.

Her experience in private practice and with the water court has provided her with the essential tools to be a good associate water judge. The fact that she has worked with people and lived in places that make extreme demands on water has prepared her well for this position. Her work in water commissioner training provides a view into how she works with the general public. Prepared, efficient, and congenial all make her a great choice.

As a group of people with a lot of water court and district court experience all we can ask for is the issuance of timely, fair and impartial decisions. We feel comfortable in saying that Julia Nordlund is that person.

Thank you.

Steve Kelly

Zone 1 commissioner and LTWU