

The Family Farm
Alliance:
Advocating for
the West,
Connecting for
the Future

Samantha R. Barncastle
Incoming Executive
Director

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Water Sustainability
Summit 2025



A young girl with blonde hair tied in a ponytail with a blue bow, wearing a light blue shirt and dark overalls, stands in a field of tall, dry grass. Behind her is a large, dark wooden wheel, possibly a water wheel or a large wagon wheel. The background is a soft-focus landscape with more grass and some distant structures. The overall tone is warm and nostalgic.

My transition into the FFA Executive Director role is based on a deep love for our western way of life and production agriculture.



Background

- Agriculture –
 - family farm dates back to 1830s
- Conservation –
 - Father worked for NM Dept of Game & Fish
- Education –
 - Not something that stops when you leave school

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there are large, rectangular fields. One field is bright green, while the others are dark brown, indicating they have been plowed. A dirt road runs through the fields. In the middle ground, a river flows through the landscape, bordered by trees and vegetation. A small tractor is visible in the lower left, working in a field. The background shows a distant town or city under a clear sky.

Key features of FFA leadership

- Collaboration
- Non-partisan advocacy
- Problem solving mindset
- Willing to work with anyone willing to work together
- Anyone who is a friend of farmers is a friend of FFA
- Education – keeping producers aware of their surroundings; help connect why locals (should) care about what's happening on the federal level

Transition Timing

- Hired in April, 2025 – announcement to public
 - Began getting engaged ‘behind the scenes’
- August 1 – became a contractor – shadowing Dan Keppen
- October 30-31 – annual conference in Reno, NV
- November 1 – ‘the swap’ (BUT, no ride into the sunset for Dan, yet)



Family Farm Alliance's work on the ground



We are PROBLEM SOLVERS

Our philosophy is simple: the best solutions come from the ground up and are driven locally by real people with a grasp of reality “on-the-ground.” We work across the federal government to find solutions through education on a policy level and in full partnership to fully use available funding and cost-share opportunities.

- ***Proven Track Record of Success***

Since 2005, the Alliance has been asked to testify before Congress **99** times.

- ***Grassroots Activism***

The individual family farmer is the most effective voice for preserving Western water. With the Alliance, these individuals have a voice in Washington.

- ***Coalition Builders***

We have a frequent presence in Washington, DC and bring together other organizations from other sectors to tackle challenges we all have in common.

- ***Innovative Solutions***

We seek innovative solutions to recover water supply certainty through modernizing and expanding infrastructure.

- ***Curb Environmental Litigation***

We work with the executive branch and Congress to find ways to mitigate litigation and encourage collaboration and cooperation: critical elements to ensure that federal environmental laws are properly and effectively implemented on the ground.

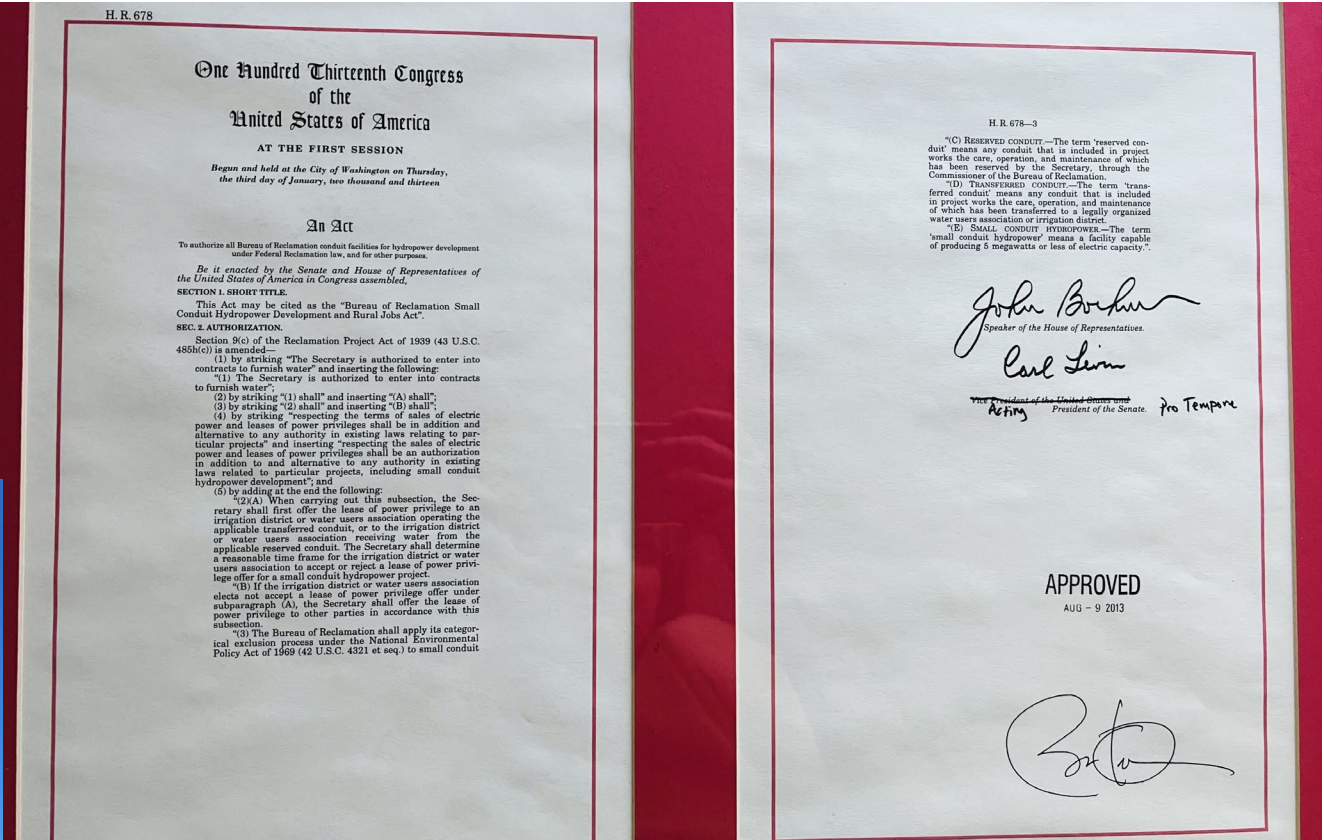
- ***Modernize Antiquated Laws***

We work to streamline and modernize implementation of federal environmental laws written nearly 50 years ago, so they work better for food production, ecosystems, and rural communities.

Building big things together – educating through ‘show and tell’



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Goals for the West as we move forward:

1. Collaboration – all horses pulling in the same direction
2. Education – more ‘show and tell’
3. More storage! – surface & underground infrastructure



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