

In Memoriam
Joe Busto
1967-2019

John Joseph Busto was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1967, and died in Lakewood, Colorado, on December 5, 2019 at the age of 52, after a strong battle against cancer. He is survived by his son, Coyle Busto. Below is a collection of reflections and memories from Joe's friends and colleagues.

Frank McDonough
2020 WMA President, Desert Research Institute
- Research Meteorologist:

"Joe Busto was a scientist and researcher with the Colorado Water Conservation Board. He was a visionary and productive program manager working on a wide variety projects across Colorado. He knew and loved the Colorado Mountains during both winter and summer. His scientific interest and work was primarily focused on mountain snow pack assessment, cloud seeding for precipitation enhancement, and stream flow analysis and forecasting. Joe was passionate about understanding the science and using and developing cutting edge instrumentation in all his projects. He leaves our community a collection of research and cutting edge technology to observe and better understand mountain precipitation and runoff.

As Joe's friends and colleagues know, he had a unique and authentic style to his program management and research, skillfully connecting different groups with common interests to create new projects. This has created a legacy of success across Colorado. Some of these successes include the CO cloud seeding programs, a mountain-top radar, SNOTEL sites, and radiometer deployments. He also had his own snow course near Willow Creek Pass, and even a led the development of a recreational river surfing wave on the South Platte River in downtown Denver.

Joe left an impressive legacy to the State of Colorado



and the greater cloud seeding community. He will be sorely missed."

Tom Ryan
Past WMA President, Metropolitan Water
District of Southern California - Resource
Specialist:

"Joe was respected, endeared and loved by many - he touched our lives with his genuine thoughtfulness, crazy wild fun side, and as a professional in the weather modification industry. It was his natural leadership that brought Colorado cloud seeding programs into the 21st Century. He did that using cutting edge science, and personal dedication and influence. I think his greatest skills were communication and his ability to bring people together. We can all think of examples of his colorful mastery of the language. He was a strong, brave, unpretentious man and wonderful father. We traveled together a lot. We spent many evenings in small mountain town bars drawing on the back of

cocktail napkins, strategizing how to develop new cloud seeding projects and local support. We skied together dozens of times and he was an expert snowboarder from the early days. It was fitting that on the day of his passing the high country received up to 8 inches of snow. I miss him."

Kevin Houck

**Colorado Water Conservation Board -
Watershed & Flood Protection, Section Chief:**

"On December 5, 2019, our agency lost a dedicated staff member with Joe Busto passing away. A nearly twenty year employee of the CWCB, Joe's passion was on full display with all the work he did, and indeed, he continued working for the agency almost to the day of his passing. Joe passed away after an 18-month battle with Stage 4 cancer. Joe was one of the few employees remaining in the agency who was already here when I started in 2003. I remember when I started, Joe was essentially a section assistant for the flood section. He had a few responsibilities but had yet to blossom into the worker he would soon develop into. As most of us know, Joe really took the responsibilities delegated by the DNR regarding weather modification into one of the most respected programs in the country. In fact he served as the president of the North American Weather Modification Council and received two awards, the Black Crow, and the Thunderbird Award, from the Weather Modification Association. He was highly regarded in this field not just in the American Southwest, but indeed in the entire country.

Joe leaves behind a special needs son, Coyle, who he loved dearly. As a parent of a special needs son myself, I know the importance of fatherly love and devotion to these fragile but important members of our society. Joe was a rock in his son's life, and he will be dearly missed in that area of his life as well."

Anonymous:

"Joe Busto was one of the few people you could truly say was passionate about his work. It was

infectious. It didn't matter what the project was, who was involved, or how much of an uphill battle it may be; Joe's excitement permeated the air. Even if you couldn't quite track what was being discussed, you knew that you wanted to be involved in the work. This viral enthusiasm all but ensured that Joe would bring together the right people for the task at hand."

Carolyn Kemp

**Colorado Water Conservation Board -
Interstate, Federal & Water Information
Section, Data and Technology Coordinator:**

"Anyone who knew Joe knew he had a passion for life and for his weather mod program. But it took him a while to find that love of his career. In the late 90s, Joe started out answering phones for the Department's Executive Director's Office. Back then his passion was more for going out to the Denver area Goth clubs than it was for working in state government. It wasn't until he took over my old position as the admin support for CWCB's flood section that he found his career path. (He never lost his love for Goth clubs). The weather mod program back then had been orphaned. It's old champion had retired, and no one really knew what section cloud seeding fit in. Like Joe, the program was a bit of an outlier. Joe took over the program with gusto, and over the length of his career, turned it into more than just a permitting program. As Joe grew, so did the science and the breadth of the program. I can honestly say I don't think the CWCB's weather mod program would be what it is today without Joe. I miss him."

Andrew Rickert

**Colorado Water Conservation Board -
Interstate, Federal & Water Information
Section, Weather Modification Program
Manager:**

"Joe was my mentor, but more importantly, he was my friend. Joe is the reason I work in the weather modification field. His knowledge and determination in the field of cloud seeding was contagious. The idea of sending silver-iodide particles into the sky

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to make it snow; to increase snowpack. This was incredible to me. Some of my best times with Joe were sitting in his backyard discussing weather modification. However, we also just talked. Joe was one of the most interesting people I have ever had the pleasure to know. I owe so much to that man. To this day I still reach for my phone to call him to only remember he's gone. I miss him so much."

Thomas Browning
Past Colorado Water Conservation Board
Section Chief:

"Joe was not your average scientist. He was anything but boring and had a knack for witty humor on a daily basis. His passion for Colorado's weather modification program was "off the charts" and his contributions to the cloud seeding program will not be forgotten. For those of us who spent a significant amount of time around Joe it was no secret that he loved his career, but it was also hard to ignore the clouds that seemed to follow him. Joe had a level of tenacity that was easy to admire. His ardent followers truly supported every waking moment that he dedicated to furthering the science and application of weather modification measures. Others simply stood by with their arms crossed and their eyebrows raised while he forged ahead. Either way, Joe got noticed! When we all look back on his accomplishments at the CWCB over a period of about two decades, it will be very hard to ignore the legacy he's left behind.

Rest in peace, Joe, and thank you for your involvement with water resources in Colorado and beyond."