

Speaker Biographies
TRACK A: Supervision & Leadership

DAY ONE		
Tuesday, July 28, 2026		Supervision & Leadership
#1	9:00-10:00am	Get Inspired: Create a plan for personal and organizational success
		Wade Hathhorn, Ph.D.
		<i>Sunrise Water Authority</i>
		The greatest asset in any public agency or water service related industry are the people within the organization. Empowering and constructing individual success is a key component in creating positive outcomes. The main ingredients include a combination of skill-development and desire. This presentation will examine those ideas and look to inspire personal growth and development through stories and experience over the past 25-years.
		Dr. Hathhorn has more than 30 years of experience in the public water business. He started his professional career as a civil engineering professor at Washington State, specializing in fluid mechanics and hydrology. He left WSU to enter the private sector where he spent 13 years as a professional consultant, including roles as president and senior executive in several local, national and international engineering consulting firms. Today, he serves as the General Manager of the Sunrise Water Authority and the North Clackamas County Water Commission. He is a recognized expert in the management and operation of public water utilities. Dr. Hathhorn was recently honored by the Special Districts Association of Oregon as the 2025 General Manager of the Year.
#2	10:20-11:20am	Talk It Out: Turning Operator Knowledge into SOPs with AI
		Laura Oxsen, PE (WA & OR)
		<i>Grayling Engineers and Oxsen Learning</i>
		You don't need to write a report to share what you know. In this session, we'll walk through how operators can simply talk through a task—like you would while training someone on the job—and use basic tools to record it, get a written summary, and clean it up into something useful like a checklist or SOP. No fancy tech skills required. Just real knowledge, made easier to pass on.
		Laura is the Organizational Development Lead at Greyling Engineers. In addition, Laura started her own company, Oxsen Learning. Laura's journey begin in technical design to team management and now into learning and development. She has 10 years in the water industry and previously served as the the President for the AWWA Northwest Oregon Subsection.
#3	11:25-12:25pm	Navigating Water Rights & Groundwater Challenges in Oregon and Well Maintenance
		Robyn Cook, RG, LG, CWRE
		<i>Development of clean and reliable groundwater supply sources in the Pacific Northwest has become increasingly challenging with newly adopted regulatory restrictions for obtaining new groundwater rights, and demand pressures associated with increased economic development. This presentation will provide an overview of the rules changes and provide alternatives to help overcome the challenges. In addition, this presentation will provide a brief summary of well operations best practices including well maintenance.</i>
		<i>Robyn Cook is a Principal hydrogeologist at GSI Water Solutions, Inc., with 19 years of experience in water resources and environmental consulting, in Oregon and Washington. Her focus includes municipal drinking water supply, hydrogeologic evaluations, aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) feasibility, and water rights. She has extensive experience in groundwater supply well design and developing technical specifications for public procurements. She manages and supports projects for municipal, agricultural, and private clients, including groundwater assessments, production well construction and rehabilitation, aquifer testing, and water rights transactions. Robyn is a registered geologist in Oregon and Washington, and a certified water rights examiner in Oregon.</i>
		Source Water Protection Planning in an Agricultural Watershed
		<i>Maly Haghsheenas & Robert Annear</i>

#4	1:10-2:10pm	<i>City of Hillsboro</i> The Joint Water Commission (JWC) is a drinking water provider formed by the Cities of Hillsboro, Forest Grove, Beaverton, and the Tualatin Valley Water District. The JWC is the primary drinking water supplier in Washington County, Oregon and is responsible for treating, transmitting, and storing potable water for approximately 458,000 customers and several wholesale customers. The JWC received a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop a Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) for the Drinking Water Source Area (DWSA) where one of the predominant land uses is agriculture. This presentation will provide background on the DWSA and an overview of the analyses conducted as part of the SWPP development including a contaminant source and risk assessment, with an emphasis on agricultural sources. The SWPP paves the way for outreach to local producers and additional support from the NRCS to implement non-point source pollution mitigation strategies. Maly Haghshenas is a Source Water Protection Project Specialist at the City of Hillsboro, the managing agency of the Joint Water Commission (JWC). Maly administers the source water protection program for the JWC in an effort to prevent potential contaminants from entering the JWC drinking water source area. Outside her employment, Maly is a J.D. candidate at Lewis & Clark Law School. • Bio: Rob Annear is an environmental engineer with 29 years of experience, specializing in hydrodynamic and water quality modeling. Rob supports clients with regulatory permits and requirements, drinking water studies, source water protection studies and planning, surface water system assessments, climate change studies, and water quality management for multiple uses.
		Blueprints for Leadership in Collaborative Delivery Michael Lubovich, PE, PMP, Assoc. DBIA <i>Black & Veatch</i> Water industry projects are becoming increasingly complex, and Owners are turning towards “alternative” delivery methods to increase early collaboration between owners, designers, and contractors to unlock insights that improve constructability and project outcomes. While these “alternative” delivery methods are more collaborative inherently, maximizing the potential benefits GC/CM or Progressive Design-Build offer require project leaders to think, plan, and execute differently. This session highlights essential leadership skills that elevate performance in collaborative delivery environments, including team incentive alignment, trust-building, and construction-focused design. The session draws upon real experiences from projects such as the Award-Winning Morro Bay Water Reclamation Facility Progressive Design-Build, to illustrate how to leverage approaches that strengthen leadership effectiveness, promote team cohesion, and support confident action in dynamic project settings. Practical examples and frameworks will be shared to illustrate how leadership can shape outcomes and drive success throughout the collaborative delivery process. Michael is a professional engineer with over 18 years of in the water industry. He has served as the engineer of record, construction manager, and now primarily serves as project manager for traditional and collaborative delivery projects. He has contributed to over 10 collaborative delivery projects including both CM/GC and progressive design-build. His experience leading both traditional and collaborative delivery projects provides him a unique insight into the communication gaps that inherently exist between designers, builders, and owners.
#5	2:15-3:15pm	Applying the New Effective Utility Management Framework to Your Utility <i>Michael Grimm, PE</i> <i>Aquamize, LLC</i> This presentation provides an overview of the modernized EUM Framework for 2024 including the 5 Keys to Management Success and the 10 Attributes of an effectively managed utility

#6	3:30-4:30pm	Retired General Manager West Slope Water District, Founder of Aquamize, LLC B.S. degree from Oregon State University in Civil/Environmental Engineering Registered professional civil & environmental engineer since 1989 10 years of utility engineering and management experience 5 years of consulting engineering experience 18 years of water quality engineering, management and optimization with OHA Two truths and a lie: I took the “First Parachute Jump” class at OSU; I was once held at gunpoint by multiple law enforcement officers; I shook the hand of Gerald R. Ford (does anyone know who he is?)
DAY TWO		
	Wednesday, July 29, 2026	Supervision & Leadership
#7	8:00-9:00am	Drinking Water Legislative Updates & Information and Lessons Learned
		Michael Martin, Lobbyist
		<i>League of Oregon Cities</i>
		The update will provide an overview of key water-related policy and budget issues from the 2025-2027 biennium, including key budget issues, Oregon Water Resources Department funding, the Legislative Water Caucus - and upcoming changes. It will cover the League of Oregon Cities' role in representing Oregon's 241 cities and preview major water policy issues likely to shape the 2027 session.
		Michael Martin is a lobbyist with the League of Oregon Cities where he has represented Oregon cities on water, wastewater, and natural resources, and solid waste issues for the past five years. He works closely with local governments, state agencies, and legislators on infrastructure funding, water policy, permitting, and regulatory issues affecting communities across Oregon. Prior to joining LOC, Michael worked in and around the Washington State Legislature on public policy and advocacy efforts. He holds a master's degree in public administration and regularly provides legislative and policy updates to city officials, utilities, and partner organizations across Oregon.
		Approaches for Expanding Source Water Protection Programs
		Suzanne de Szoeki and Mikaela Clarke
		<i>GSI Water Solutions, Inc.</i>
		Water providers are responsible for providing high-quality drinking water, and many face similar challenges rooted in risks to their water sources. Source water protection activities help address risks. Source water protection encompasses actions taken to safeguard and enhance the quality and quantity of drinking water sources. Proactive protection not only improves drinking water quality and protects public health, but can also help reduce long-term treatment costs. Drawing on their experience assisting water providers with source water protection programs, the presenters will discuss approaches for water providers to expand and strengthen source water protection programs. The presentation will cover: Identification of risks to water sources, Strategies to reduce risks, Drinking Water Protection Plans (DWPPs), including: Planning process and regulatory requirements, Benefits to water providers, Implementing DWPPs , Developing partnerships to achieve source water protection goals, Funding opportunities for source water protection projects. This session will provide water providers with actionable tools and strategies to enhance source water protection.

#8	9:05-10:05am	Mikaela specializes in water rights and water resources management projects. Mikaela develops municipal Drinking Water Protection Plans (DWPPs) and grant applications for source water protection work. She conducts water rights due diligence, develops water right strategies, and supports water right transactions, including municipal permit extensions, water right transfers, and permit applications. She assists water providers with their water conservation efforts, including conducting cost-benefit analyses, developing Water Management and Conservation Plans (WMCPs), and developing public water conservation outreach materials. Bio for Suzanne: Suzanne specializes in water resources planning and management. She assists communities with source water (i.e., drinking water) protection planning and implementation, including facilitating planning processes and public meetings. She develops Water Management and Conservation Plans (WMCPs) and helps clients enhance and implement water conservation activities for their conservation programs, such as producing consumer friendly outreach materials, conducting cost-effectiveness analyses of water conservation measures, developing rebate programs, and creating water conservation lessons for students. In addition, Suzanne assists watershed groups/partnerships with planning, analyses, and coordination.
#9	10:20-11:20am	VENDOR DISPLAY-Gregory Forum
#10	11:25-12:25pm	A Model for Regional Collaboration
		Bonny Cushman, Managing Director
		<i>Regional Water Providers Consortium</i>
		The Regional Water Providers Consortium is a group of 26 water providers that have worked together for almost 30 years. Its mission is to provide leadership in the planning, management, stewardship, and resiliency of drinking water in the greater Portland, OR metropolitan region. This presentation will focus on the Consortium's success and longevity in bringing together water providers to collaborate on programs and projects that advance the planning and resiliency of long-term water regional supplies. The presentation will include an overview of the Consortium's organizational structure, funding sources, membership benefits, and highlight several projects to demonstrate the value of this regional collaboration.
		Bonny Cushman is currently the Managing Director for the Regional Water Providers Consortium. Bonny's served several roles with the Consortium over the past 20 years including coordinating conservation and emergency preparedness-focused programming and leading annual multimedia public outreach campaigns. Prior to the Consortium, Bonny worked for 10 years with the Educational Service District 112 (ESD112) coordinating programming for five of its Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) Programs which served communities throughout Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.
#11	1:10-2:10pm	Fire Sprinkler Systems - Protecting Public Health Through Cross-Connection Control
		Kristi Lucht
		<i>City of Vancouver</i>
		This session will examine the water quality implications for fire sprinkler systems, the importance of cross-connection control applications for these systems, and the importance of coordinating between your cross-connection control department and your Fire Marshall department. In the event backflow occurs, to protect public health, adding a backflow prevention assembly as a form of cross-connection control to the fire sprinkler system will prevent non-drinkable water from the fire sprinkler system from traveling back into our public drinking water system. Cross-connection control plays a key role in the protection of public health for fire sprinkler systems. Coordination between your cross-connection control department and your Fire Marshall department is a great way to share information, collaborate on projects, and improve communication between your departments.
		Kristi has worked for the City of Vancouver since 2005 in the water quality department. Her responsibilities at the city include the management and development of the city's cross-connection control program, water distribution water main flushing and water quality monitoring and sampling programs. She is currently a Washington State certified Water Distribution Manger Grade 2, Water Treatment Plant Operator - Operator in Training Grade 1, Cross Connection Control Specialist and Backflow Assembly Tester. Kristi holds a B.S. in Chemistry, B.S. in Environmental Science, and A.A.S. in Water/Wastewater Technology
		Hybrid Utility Work: What Works, What Doesn't, and What's Next
		Gabe Solmer

#12	2:15-3:15pm	<i>Stantec</i> Six years after the pandemic began, we've experienced every facet of remote work, return to office, and hybrid schedules. Since not every job can be done from home, how do we support staff and consultant's diverse needs and wants, keep teams connected and engaged, and align with our missions and values? This presentation shares simple, practical approaches and reviews how to work through common roadblocks Gabe Solmer (she/her) is a Program Manager with Stantec's Program Management and Construction Management team. She has more than two decades of experience with public agencies and nonprofits, including a nine-year career at the Portland Water Bureau, Oregon's largest water utility. Her tenure included four years as the Administrator, developing and implementing an employee-led Strategic Plan, and overseeing Portland's largest capital project, the Bull Run Filtration Program. At Stantec, Gabe has worked on megaprojects in the Pacific Northwest, including program management for King County and Cascade Water Alliance. Gabe is recognized for her executive leadership, ability to unite diverse groups for common purposes, proactive and risk-based management approach, and communication skills; all in service of delivering sustainable water infrastructure solutions.			
		"Who Do I Include?" - Forays into Project Management Communications Adam Bjornstedt, PE (Principal Engineer II) <i>West Yost</i> Water and wastewater infrastructure projects come in all shapes and sizes. In this session, participants will learn about communication best practices when part of the planning and execution of these projects, effectively working with various teams and stakeholders internal to and outside of their own organizations. The speaker will share some of his own experience and stories to highlight key points and take-aways. Adam Bjornstedt is a Principal Engineer with West Yost, which focuses on planning and engineering creative and lasting solutions for a wide array of water-related infrastructure projects and challenges throughout Oregon, California, and Washington. At West Yost, Adam serves in a variety of roles including project manager, mentor, client services manager, and team manager within the Infrastructure sector. Prior to joining West Yost, Adam spent nearly 25 years in the public sector successfully completing numerous planning and construction projects for a variety of stakeholders throughout the nation. His projects range from complex canyon crossings in Arizona, to community water and wastewater system upgrades in remote Washington State, and treatment plant seismic and electrical upgrades in Oregon. Adam is a registered professional engineer in Oregon and Washington. Outside of work, he enjoys time with his family, flyfishing, hiking, music, and serving at his church.			
#13	3:30-4:30pm				
<table> <tr> <td>DAY THREE</td> <td>Thursday, July 30, 2026</td> <td>Supervision & Leadership</td> </tr> </table>			DAY THREE	Thursday, July 30, 2026	Supervision & Leadership
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#14	8:00-9:00am	Effective Accountability Systems for Water Utilities Mark E. Hurliman, CSHM <i>Oregon OSHA Voluntary Programs Coordinator</i> This session defines accountability and covers why we do what we do, and at-risk behaviors. The session ends up covering measuring our performance to ensure accountability. Attendees will learn the differences between accountability, blame, and discipline, while understanding the components to an effective accountability system. Mr. Hurliman has an occupational background that includes work as a dairy farmer, self-employed commercial fisherman, construction worker, logger, and mill worker. He has worked at Oregon OSHA since 1990, as a Compliance Officer and a Safety Consultant, and has managed the VPP and SHARP programs for Oregon OSHA for nearly two decades. Mark is recognized by the Institute for Safety and Health Management as a Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM). He has developed and presented a variety of training presentations on SHARP, VPP and a wide variety of safety and health management related topics. His presentations, workshops and classes have been presented throughout Oregon as well as at Regional and National safety and health conferences.			
		Oregon's Voluntary Compliance Programs for the Water Industry Mark E. Hurliman, CSHM			

#15	9:05-10:05am	<i>Oregon OSHA Voluntary Programs Coordinator</i>
		This session covers Oregon OSHA's Voluntary Compliance programs offered by Oregon OSHA Consultation. The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) has been around since 1982. The Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP), since 1995, and the newest voluntary compliance program is the Challenge Program. Join us for a deep dive into how voluntary compliance can help make your company safer and more profitable moving forward! Attendees Will Understand and Be Able to: Recognize the benefits of voluntary compliance. Identify and categorize indicators of an effective safety and health management system. Evaluate and Choose which program may benefit them the most. Compare and Measure results of a self-sustaining SHMS.
		Mr. Hurliman has an occupational background that includes work as a dairy farmer, self-employed commercial fisherman, construction worker, logger, and mill worker. He has worked at Oregon OSHA since 1990, as a Compliance Officer and a Safety Consultant, and has managed the VPP and SHARP programs for Oregon OSHA for nearly two decades. Mark is recognized by the Institute for Safety and Health Management as a Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM). He has developed and presented a variety of training presentations on SHARP, VPP and a wide variety of safety and health management related topics. His presentations, workshops and classes have been presented throughout Oregon as well as at Regional and National safety and health conferences.
#16	10:20-11:20am	Leadership at Every Level: Guiding Your Career in Water
		Kimberly Gupta, Manager III <i>City of Portland - PWB</i>
		Leadership is not confined to titles or positions—it is a skill and mindset that can be practiced at every stage of your career. In the dynamic world of water utilities, where challenges are constant and public trust is critical, strong leadership at all levels is essential. This session explores how professionals—from front-line operators to seasoned managers—can develop and demonstrate leadership in their daily work. Participants will learn how to lead without formal authority, cultivate influence, support team success, and prepare for future leadership opportunities. Kimberly joined the Water Bureau in 2010 as a member of the Water Quality Group, where she worked on projects related to nitrification, corrosion control, and unidirectional flushing before becoming the Water Supply and Treatment Manager in 2017. Prior to joining the Water Bureau, she was an engineer at the East Bay Municipal Utility District for over eight years. In addition to her professional duties, Kim is very active in the volunteer community. She volunteered for Engineers Without Borders for over five years, where she led a team that designed and built safe and reliable drinking water systems for three villages in Fiji after a typhoid outbreak. She is also an active member of the American Water Works Association, having served as the chair of the Inorganic Contaminants Committee. Kim is currently a commissioner on the National Blue-Ribbon Commission for Onsite Non-Potable Water Systems. Kim has a master's degree in civil and environmental engineering from the University of Nevada, Reno, and is a registered professional civil engineer in both Oregon and California. She is also a certified water distribution and treatment operator in Oregon and serves as the bureau's direct responsible charge.
		Bull Run Filtration Project
		Lyda S. Hakes, PE <i>City of Portland - PWB</i>
		To remove cryptosporidium and to comply with a Bilateral Compliance Agreement with the Oregon Health Authority, the Portland Water Bureau is constructing a 135-mgd filtration facility. This presentation will share the 10+ year start-to-finish process of planning, designing, and construction a conventional filtration facility and includes insights on how level-of-service goals, safety, sustainability, and operability were used to guide the design. Real-time construction updates and photos will be shared as well as insight to the commissioning and start-up plans.

#17	11:25-12:25pm	Ms. Hakes joined the Water Bureau in 2019 as the project manager for the Filtration Facility design and moved into Operations in 2023 as the Bull Run Supply & Treatment Manager; her work groups include Treatment & Process Engineering, Conduits/Dams Operations, Operational Analysis, and Cross Connection Control. Prior to joining the Water Bureau, Ms. Hakes worked as a consultant for six years and as a process engineer for Alameda County Water District for nine. She has a PE (Civil Engineering) and holds T3, D2, and Cross Connection Control Specialist certifications.
#18	1:10-2:10pm	The Willamette Partnership
		Patrick Barr, Water Treatment Plant Supervisor <i>City of Hillsboro</i>
		This presentation will cover why the partnership chose the Willamette River for a source of drinking water, the partners in the Willamette Partnership, the different stages of the project, an overview of the treatment process, Where the project is today, when they plan to be online, Patrick has been in the industry since 2014 where he started in waste water, year later went to Public Works (storm/sewer) then he saw the greener pastures in Water Treatment and have been here ever since 2016.
#19	2:15-3:15pm	1) Accelerated Project Delivery for New Groundwater Supply and 2) Impacts of Siting Water Infrastructure in Flood-Prone Areas: A Case Study of the Willamette Valley
		Corey Kipp, PE (w/DeEtta Fosbury, co-presenter) <i>Carollo Engineers (Summit Water)</i>
		1) When confronted with a threat to its surface water source, a Willamette Valley water provider executed a project to expand groundwater capacity in under two years, from concept to full operation. This presentation will highlight the critical decisions, risk management strategies, and workflows that enabled accelerated project delivery by the water provider and consulting team 2) Critical water infrastructure that has reliably served communities for centuries is increasingly becoming a liability across the United States, as once-in-a-lifetime flood events are now occurring with far greater frequency due to changing climatic conditions. The siting of water infrastructure in flood-prone areas can have severe—both anticipated and unintended—consequences. This presentation will summarize key considerations for siting water infrastructure in flood-prone areas, discuss mitigation measures to reduce flood risk, and evaluate case studies illustrating floodplain siting consequences within the Willamette Valley system. Bio of DeEtta: DeEtta has 15 years of consulting experience conducting hydrogeologic and groundwater resource evaluations for clients throughout the Pacific Northwest. She is an experienced project manager who specializes in planning and implementing multifaceted municipal groundwater supply and managed aquifer recharge (MAR) projects, including aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) and artificial groundwater recharge (AR). Her expertise includes water system master plans, hydrogeologic investigations, and production well design, construction, and testing. Bio of Corey: Corey is a water treatment engineer at Carollo Engineers, supporting projects related to the treatment process, overall water sources, and project delivery within the drinking water industry. Corey also has a background in industrial water treatment where he focused on process and technology selection.
		Sniffing Out Sources of Stormwater Pollution – Using Canine-Assisted Screening to Find PCB Sources
		Julianne Ubigau & Jasper <i>Field Lab</i>
		Join Julianne Ubigau, Jasper as they introduce canine detection as an innovative approach for tracking down sources of a persistent stormwater pollutant, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Learn how local agencies are supplementing traditional stormwater source tracing practices by integrating this fast and friendly screening tool into their toolbox. For his grand finale, Jasper will perform a live demonstration, followed by a meet and greet for all dog-loving audience members.

#20	3:30-4:30pm	Julianne Ubigau began her career in environmental canine detection work in 2006, as a handler for the Conservation Canine Program at the University of Washington. Today, Julianne and Jasper are the co-founders of FieldLab, where playful rescue dogs are trained to sniff out solutions for the environment. Together, they assist scientists and local agencies to locate hard-to-find ecological data by using the canine super-power of scent detection. Their current work includes various wildlife monitoring projects and PCB source detection. When not in the field, you can find them in the classroom, sharing their interest in science with students and the community. Diversified and highly experienced as a dog-handler team, FieldLab specializes in pilot studies that push the boundaries of traditional canine detection work and conservation research.
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Session Description and Speaker Biographies

Track B: Water Operations

DAY ONE		Tuesday, July 28, 2026	Track B: Water Operations
#1	9:00-10:00am	Get Inspired: Create a plan for personal and organizational success	
		Wade Hawthorn, Ph.D.	
		<i>Sunrise Water Authority</i>	
		The greatest asset in any public agency or water service related industry are the people within the organization. Empowering and constructing individual success is a key component in creating positive outcomes. The main ingredients include a combination of skill-development and desire. This presentation will examine those ideas and look to inspire personal growth and development through stories and experience over the past 25-years.	
		Dr. Hathhorn has more than 30 years of experience in the public water business. He started his professional career as a civil engineering professor at Washington State, specializing in fluid mechanics and hydrology. He left WSU to enter the private sector where he spent 13 years as a professional consultant, including roles as president and senior executive in several local, national and international engineering consulting firms. Today, he serves as the General Manager of the Sunrise Water Authority and the North Clackamas County Water Commission. He is a recognized expert in the management and operation of public water utilities. Dr. Hathhorn was recently honored by the Special Districts Association of Oregon as the 2025 General Manager of the Year.	
#2	10:20-11:20am	Process Intensification	
		Mario Benisch, PE	
		<i>HDR</i>	
		Process intensification offers to do more within the confines of existing facilities by adding capacity or capability without more concrete. Intensification can have a lower cost compared to expanding with more of the same but adding new technology to intensify a process is not plug and play. Intensifying a process may increase flow, oxygen demand, mixing requirements, hydraulic losses, require better influent screening and/or grit removal, and add to the daily O&M workload. The repercussions of failure or issues associated with intensified process are also, and not surprisingly, intensified. This class will review the fundamental approaches to intensification, its limitations and constraints and review the prevailing intensification technologies on the market today.	
		Mario Benisch, a senior process engineer with HDR graduated from the University of Stuttgart, Germany in 1998 with a MS in environmental engineering. For the past 28 years, Mr. Benisch has been with HDR in Portland, OR and his experience spans across five time zones hundreds of projects from process mechanical design, process design, facility planning, optimization, and data management and analysis.	
		The Evaluation and Designation of Confined Spaces	
		Frank Ray	
		<i>EJCO</i>	

#3	11:25-12:25pm	The Confined Space presentation shows how to evaluate and designate confined spaces. We will also discuss how today's hatches are how providing fall protection, ladder safety and correct clearance placement.
		Frank Ray is a Factory Sales Representative at EJ, a 5th-generation family-owned global manufacturer and distributor of high-quality infrastructure access solutions RocketReach. Based in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area, he has been with EJ since at least 2012, bringing a background in sales, customer service, and operations
#4	1:10-2:10pm	Factors Impacting Dewatering
		Mario Benisch, PE
		<i>HDR</i>
		Dewatering results are, in practice, primarily a function of dewaterability of the feed sludge and to a lesser degree the machine itself. This class will review the main factors impacting dewaterability, many of which are not even inside the dewatering building, such as the liquid process design, sludge conditioning (polymer, coagulants, lysis), influent composition and external substrates as well as environmental factors. On the machine side factors like machine load and polymer dose control are included. Finally approaches to optimization and troubleshooting will be reviewed in conjunction with methods to measure the dewatering efficacy.
		Mario Benisch, a senior process engineer with HDR graduated from the University of Stuttgart, Germany in 1998 with a MS in environmental engineering. For the past 28 years, Mr. Benisch has been with HDR in Portland, OR and his experience spans across five time zones hundreds of projects from process mechanical design, process design, facility planning, optimization, and data management and analysis.
#5	2:15-3:15pm	7 Pillars of Safety — Water Utility Training Session
		Taylor Maynard
		<i>Milwaukee Tool</i>
		This training applies Milwaukee's 7 Pillars of Safety framework to the unique hazards water utility crews face daily — from silica exposure during pipe cutting and excavation work, to ergonomic strain from valve operation and confined-space tasks to visibility challenges in trenches, roadside work zones, and underground environments. Using the S.A.F.E. method (Situational Awareness, Access, Familiarize, Eliminate), participants will walk through each pillar with real-world scenarios, injury data, and targeted tool and PPE solutions to reduce risk and support OSHA compliance in the field.
		Taylor Maynard is a Territory Manager with Milwaukee Tool supporting utility customers across Oregon and Alaska. Taylor's job is to be a hands-on resource for crews—providing on-site support, tool and safety demos, and practical guidance crews can actually use in the field. Taylor has been with Milwaukee Tool for five years and works closely with municipal water, wastewater, and public works teams to help improve jobsite safety and productivity.
#6	3:30-4:30pm	Planning Consideration for Data Management and Visualization
		Mario Benisch, PE
		<i>HDR</i>
		The arrival of new digital tools, data storage and visualization software has brought the need for utility centralized data management into focus. The lack of central data management and meaningful data visualization represents a barrier for new digital tools or just effective troubleshooting. Removing these barriers are neither cheap nor simple endeavors and like anything else, this requires resources. This class will review basic data management elements at a planning level beginning with who will use it and for what purpose, what can or should be included; from water quality and process control to, administration, benchmarking and assets.
		Mario Benisch, a senior process engineer with HDR graduated from the University of Stuttgart, Germany in 1998 with a MS in environmental engineering. For the past 28 years, Mr. Benisch has been with HDR in Portland, OR and his experience spans across five time zones hundreds of projects from process mechanical design, process design, facility planning, optimization, and data management and analysis.
DAY TWO		
Tool Box Water Operations		

DAY TWO		Wednesday, July 29, 2026	Track B: Water Operations
#7	8:00-9:00am	Confined Space	
		Greg McDonald	
		<i>Ritz Safety</i>	
		This class will cover the following information: Oregon's Confined Space Rule OAR 437-002-0146, Characteristics of Confined Spaces, Hazards and Managing of Hazards, Difference between Permit & Alternate Entry Spaces. Duties and Responsibilities of Entrants, Attendants, and Entry Supervisors, The Use of Equipment, Care, and Maintenance Requirements, Rescue, and Personal Protective Equipment.	
		Greg McDonald-39th year in Safety Industry. Past Founder and Owner of Public Works Supply.	
#8	9:05-10:05am	VENDOR DISPLAY-Gregory Forum	
#9	10:20-11:20am	Linking GIS With Other Real-Time Data for Operational Decision-Making	
		Peter Boone, PE, PLS	
		<i>Tualatin Valley Water District</i>	
		TVWD recently implemented the ESRI GIS Utility Network and it has provided many ways to display real-time information in a map-based setting to support operational decision making. TVWD has fostered a culture of empowering their staff to make decisions and strives to provide them with the best possible tools and information. Operators can see SCADA data, water quality information, vehicle GPS locations, and work orders on their water system maps. They can also edit map information from the field if they find corrections that need to be made. This session will highlight some of these tools and show how they are used in daily operations as well as emergency response.	
		Pete Boone is the Chief Operating Officer at Tualatin Valley Water District where he leads the District's Engineering and Operations Department. TVWD serves 227,000 people and businesses in Washington County through 61,000 service connections. Pete is a Registered Professional Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor with degrees in Civil Engineering and Forest Engineering from Oregon State University. Outside of work, Pete is a volunteer Lieutenant with the Gaston Rural Fire District.	
		A Practical Guide to Utility Locating	
#10	11:25-12:25pm	Brian Moss	
		<i>RJM Company</i>	
		Understanding the causes and solutions of errors when locating utilities with a focus on waterlines. Choosing the best frequencies, antennas, and ground rod locations for accuracy. How to locate non-metallic water and sewer pipes.	
		Civil Engineering BS from Washington State University, Nearly 24 years experience training, locating, and supporting utility locators.	
#11	1:10-2:10pm	Clackamas Community College Tunnel Tour: Backflow/Cross Connections and Distribution Systems	
		Jim Nurmi, Ph.D.	
		<i>Clackamas Community College</i>	
		Take a tour of Clackamas Community College's underground pipe gallery and tunnels. Learn the history of the campuses water distribution system, cross-connections, and backflow assemblies and how it has changed over time. Limited to 12 people/tour.	
		Clackamas Community College offers backflow assesmbly tester and cross connection specialist certification training workshops.	
		Safety Committees: To Compliance and Beyond **Part 1**	
		Mark Hurliman, CSHM VPP/SHARP Program Coordinator	
		<i>Oregon OSHA</i>	
		This session covers the Oregon Safety Committee Rules then takes a deep dive into how to help your safety committee perform to its fullest potential. Attendees will understand and be able to: describe and apply the Oregon Safety Committee Regulations & Guidelines; Recognize and Identify Indicators of a Strong Safety Culture; Model effective incident analysis principles; and compare and measure effective hazard prevention techniques.	

#12	2:15-3:15pm	Mr. Hurliman has an occupational background that includes work as a dairy farmer, self-employed commercial fisherman, construction worker, logger, and mill worker. He has worked at Oregon OSHA since 1990, as a Compliance Officer and a Safety Consultant, and has managed the VPP and SHARP programs for Oregon OSHA for nearly two decades. Mark is recognized by the Institute for Safety and Health Management as a Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM). He has developed and presented a variety of training presentations on SHARP, VPP and a wide variety of safety and health management related topics. His presentations, workshops and classes have been presented throughout Oregon as well as at Regional and National safety and health conferences.
#13	3:30-4:30pm	Safety Committees: To Compliance and Beyond **Part 2**
		Mark Hurliman, CSHM VPP/SHARP Program Coordinator
		<i>Oregon OSHA</i>
		This session covers the Oregon Safety Committee Rules then takes a deep dive into how to help your safety committee perform to its fullest potential. Attendees will understand and be able to: describe and apply the Oregon Safety Committee Regulations & Guidelines; Recognize and Identify Indicators of a Strong Safety Culture; Model effective incident analysis principles; and compare and measure effective hazard prevention techniques.
		Mr. Hurliman has an occupational background that includes work as a dairy farmer, self-employed commercial fisherman, construction worker, logger, and mill worker. He has worked at Oregon OSHA since 1990, as a Compliance Officer and a Safety Consultant, and has managed the VPP and SHARP programs for Oregon OSHA for nearly two decades. Mark is recognized by the Institute for Safety and Health Management as a Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM). He has developed and presented a variety of training presentations on SHARP, VPP and a wide variety of safety and health management related topics. His presentations, workshops and classes have been presented throughout Oregon as well as at Regional and National safety and health conferences.
DAY THREE		Wednesday, July 29, 2026
		Track B: Water Operations
#14	8:00-9:00am	Control Valve Function
		Ray Velasquez, CPSC
		<i>Cimco-GC Systems</i>
		This class will include the following: basic hydraulics, valve function, pilot system function, valve components, pressure reducing and relief valves, troubleshooting of common valves. With this foundational knowledge operators will be able to set, troubleshoot, and maintain their system more effectively. This class serves as a prerequisite of sorts for more in-depth control valve education and is designed for those new to the industry, new to control valves themselves, or those who would like a review on the topic.
		Ray Velasquez has recently transitioned from 10 years in the military to the waterworks and irrigation industry. Ray helps consult engineers and water operators on new projects and has spent extensive time in the field with Cimco-GC System's service team working on water systems across the Pacific Northwest.
		The Future Impact of Technology: Advantages, Hazards and the Unknown
		<i>Dr. Wade Hathhorn</i>
		<i>Sunrise Water</i>
		This presentation will examine the possible future impacts of technology on the water industry. We will examine present and future trends, what to expect from artificial intelligence, threats from cyber attack, and general technology changes in the water industry. We will also explore the advantages and challenges affecting daily utility operations.

#15	9:05-10:05am	Dr. Hathhorn has more than 30 years of experience in the public water business. He started his professional career as a civil engineering professor at Washington State, specializing in fluid mechanics and hydrology. He left WSU to enter the private sector where he spent 13 years as a professional consultant, including roles as president and senior executive in several local, national and international engineering consulting firms. Today, he serves as the General Manager of the Sunrise Water Authority and the North Clackamas County Water Commission. He is a recognized expert in the management and operation of public water utilities. Dr. Hathhorn was recently honored by the Special Districts Association of Oregon as the 2025 General Manager of the Year.
#16	10:20-11:20am	Specialty Valves Explained
		Ray Velasquez, CPSC
		<i>Cimco-GC Systems</i>
		This course focuses on three critical valve categories essential for water operators: Check Valves for preventing backflow and protecting system components, various Air Valves necessary for managing pipeline air to ensure efficient flow and prevent damage, and Quarter-Turn Valves prized for their quick on/off functionality and sealing characteristics. Water operators will gain practical knowledge in the application, design and sizing of these valves to maintain system integrity and reliability. Understanding the operation of these specific valves is vital for ensuring optimal performance in modern water treatment and distribution systems.
		Ray Velasquez has recently transitioned from 10 years in the military to the waterworks and irrigation industry. Ray helps consult engineers and water operators on new projects and has spent extensive time in the field with Cimco-GC System's service team working on water systems across the Pacific Northwest.
#17	11:25-12:25pm	PLC operations, instrumentation, and SCADA interaction for operators
		Dennis S. Clinefelter
		<i>Carollo Engineers</i>
		This session will provide an in-depth look at Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs), instrumentation, and SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) systems, with a focus on their critical roles in water utility operations
		I started into the controls world 38 years ago with relay based motor controllers while on submarines in the US Navy. More recently I spent 27 years at Intel where the last 12 years were in operations and design of PLC based controls systems for the facilities at the manufacturing sites worldwide. I am now with Carollo Engineers where I support the instrumentation and controls for our private sector clients. When I am not at work, you will find me in a fencing club where I am training for the next competition.
#18	1:10-2:10pm	Sound Strategies: Pipe Condition Assessment and Water Loss Prevention Techniques
		Ray Velasquez, CPSC
		<i>Cimco-GC Systems</i>
		This presentation covers the use of acoustic leak detection and pipe condition assessment technologies in water utilities to identify leaks, evaluate pipeline health, and prioritize repairs. Certified operators will learn how these tools help reduce water loss, improve system reliability, and protect public health by detecting leaks that are not visible on the surface. The session also highlights how acoustic methods support proactive asset management and discusses the potential integration of managed monitoring technologies to enhance ongoing system performance and maintenance. This information equips operators with practical strategies to optimize water supply and infrastructure management.
		Ray Velasquez has recently transitioned from 10 years in the military to the waterworks and irrigation industry. Ray helps consult engineers and water operators on new projects and has spent extensive time in the field with Cimco-GC System's service team working on water systems across the Pacific Northwest.
		LAKE OSWEGO PLANT TOUR (2 Hr)
		Austin Peters
		<i>Carollo Engineers</i>
		We will be touring the Lake Oswego Plant. Participants will be asked to drive their own vehicle.

#19	2:15-3:15pm	Austin Peters is an Associate Vice President and Project Manager specializing in Water Treatment. He has more than 16 years in the water industry. In his free time, Austin is a musician and motorcycle mechanic.
#20	3:30-4:30pm	LAKE OSWEGO PLANT TOUR (2 Hr)
		Austin Peters
		<i>Carollo Engineers</i>
		We will be touring the Lake Oswego Plant. Participants will be asked to drive their own vehicle.
		Austin Peters is an Associate Vice President and Project Manager specializing in Water Treatment. He has more than 16 years in the water industry. In his free time, Austin is a musician and motorcycle mechanic.

Session Description and Speaker Biographies

Track C: Water Quality & Treatment

DAY ONE		Tuesday, July 28, 2026	Track C: Water Quality & Treatment
#1	9:00-10:00am	Get Inspired: Create a plan for personal and organizational success	
		Wade Hathhorn	
		<i>Sunrise Water Authority</i>	
		The greatest asset in any public agency or water service related industry are the people within the organization. Empowering and constructing individual success is a key component in creating positive outcomes. The main ingredients include a combination of skill-development and desire. This presentation will examine those ideas and look to inspire personal growth and development through stories and experience over the past 25-years.	
		Dr. Hathhorn has more than 30 years of experience in the public water business. He started his professional career as a civil engineering professor at Washington State, specializing in fluid mechanics and hydrology. He left WSU to enter the private sector where he spent 13 years as a professional consultant, including roles as president and senior executive in several local, national and international engineering consulting firms. Today, he serves as the General Manager of the Sunrise Water Authority and the North Clackamas County Water Commission. He is a recognized expert in the management and operation of public water utilities. Dr. Hathhorn was recently honored by the Special Districts Association of Oregon as the 2025 General Manager of the Year.	
#2	10:20-11:20am	New Tools for Treatment Use	
		Evan Hofeld	
		<i>OHA</i>	
		This presentation will go over a new turbidity graphing feature added to the Oregon Health Authority's website as well as new materials to assist operators optimize treatment.	
		Evan Hofeld is a regional engineer with the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Services program since 2002 and the Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) Coordinator since 2010. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from Oregon State University and is a registered civil engineer in Oregon. Evan has been a contributor and technical review of several references including the 5th Edition of AWWA/ASCE's Water Treatment Plant Design (2012), AWWA/Partnership for Safe Water's Self-Assessment for Water Treatment Plant Optimization (2015), NSF/ANSI Standard 419-18 Public Drinking Water Equipment Performance – Filtration (2018), USEPA Area Wide Optimization Program's Water Quality Goals and Operational Criteria for Optimization of Slow Sand Filtration (2024) and Water Quality Goals and Operational Criteria for Optimization of Low-Pressure Membrane Filtration (2025).	
		Corrective Actions: Identifying, Investigating & Resolving Field Sampling Nonconformities	
		Thomas Krause	

#3	11:25-12:25pm	<i>City of Portland Water Bureau</i>		
		Economic decisions are based upon environmental data, but the quality of the decision can only be as good as the quality of the sample collected. This presentation discusses how field sampling groups can use corrective actions to implement permanent fixes to procedural problems and improve the reliability of their field data. In addition to discussing steps for implementing effective corrective actions, this presentation will present a corrective action case study and its effects on water quality monitoring in the Portland Water Bureau distribution system		
		Thomas Krause is an Environmental Specialist with the Portland Water Bureau, bringing over ten years of experience in drinking water quality field operations, and applied treatment research. He leads technical field activities and workforce development efforts and has played a central role in major pilot treatment studies addressing filtration, corrosion control, and wildfire-related water quality challenges. Thomas has co-authored multiple technical reports, contributed to regional research initiatives, and presented findings at AWWA Pacific Northwest Section conferences. He holds professional certifications in water distribution, water treatment, and hydrologic technology. His work focuses on advancing resilient drinking water systems and supporting the next generation of environmental professionals		
#4	1:10-2:10pm	Oregon Drinking Water Program Status Overview & Regulatory Updates		
		Kari Salis, Acting Section Manager		
		<i>OHA-Drinking Water Services</i>		
		Kari will present updates about federal rules and funding, as well as state plans for rule revisions. She will also cover drinking water issues in Oregon and review some program priorities and useful reminders for operators.		
		Kari has worked for the Oregon Drinking Water Program for over 30 years. The first half was as a regional engineer conducting inspections, reviewing plans for new infrastructure, and providing regulatory and technical assistance. For the last 15 years she has managed the Technical services team that conducts this work statewide		
#5	2:15-3:15pm	Fire Drill for Filtration: Building Treatment Resilience to Wildfires through Conventional Filtration Piloting		
		Mac Gifford		
		<i>Portland Water Bureau</i>		
		Kari will present updates about federal rules and funding, as well as state plans for rule revisions. She will also cover drinking water issues in Oregon and review some program priorities and useful reminders for operators.		
		Mac Gifford is a Water Quality Engineer at the Portland Water Bureau, overseeing the Bureau's pilot filtration project aimed at mitigating the effects of wildfire ash and sediment on the city's drinking water. Mac has been a key figure in the development and testing of advanced filtration systems designed to safeguard Portland's water supply. His work is central to ensuring that the Bull Run watershed continues to provide clean, safe water for the city's residents, even in the face of increasingly extreme wildfires.		
#6	3:30-4:30pm	PFAS 101 - Treatment history, current state of technologies and analyses, and next steps		
		Andrew Nishihara		
		<i>Stantec</i>		
		Inform attendees about the treatment history of per-and polyfluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS), current status of regulations, and new and upcoming analytical and treatment technologies. Will also touch on drinking water implementation capital and O&M costs.		
		Over his 17-year career, Andrew has had the opportunity to work with over 50 communities throughout the Section on various water projects from planning, treatment piloting, design, and construction. A self-proclaimed life long learner, a recent focus has been on mentoring, sharing information, and providing runway for the next generation of water professionals who will solve our biggest challenges.		
DAY TWO		Wednesday, July 29, 2026	Track C: Water Quality & Treatment	
		Intermediate Ozone in Water Treatment		
		Kim Reid		

#7	8:00-9:00am	<i>Veolia</i>
		Veolia has operated and maintained the Willamette River Water Treatment Plant in Wilsonville, Oregon, since start-up in April, 2002. The plant was designed with ozone treatment before filtration in order to reduce taste and odor compounds. But ozone also improves filtration and provides disinfection. We will cover ozone generation and application system basics, costs to run the system, regulatory implications, and contrast the new with old.
		Kim Reid is currently the Plant Manager - Project Leader at the 17 MGD, surface water treatment plant serving the communities of Wilsonville and Sherwood south of Portland. She has a Master's of Environmental Engineering degree from Georgia Tech and class 4 water treatment operator certification from the Oregon Health Authority. Shifting gears several times over her career, she has served in the EPA's technology transfer program, as a design engineer for site and stormwater development, and as a homeschool educator working with teenagers in STEAM programs.
#8	9:05-10:05am	Mobile Treatment Plants for Emergency Use
		Evan Hofeld
		<i>OHA</i>
		This presentation will review things to consider when deciding to deploy emergency mobile treatment plants and will introduce a new mobile treatment plant developed as a collaboration between USEPA and the non-profit organization WaterStep. Information on water hauling guidelines and things to consider when providing water at community points of distribution (POD) sites will also be presented
		Evan Hofeld is a regional engineer with the Oregon Health Authority's Drinking Water Services program since 2002 and the Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) Coordinator since 2010. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from Oregon State University and is a registered civil engineer in Oregon. Evan has been a contributor and technical review of several references including the 5th Edition of AWWA/ASCE's Water Treatment Plant Design (2012), AWWA/Partnership for Safe Water's Self-Assessment for Water Treatment Plant Optimization (2015), NSF/ANSI Standard 419-18 Public Drinking Water Equipment Performance – Filtration (2018), USEPA Area Wide Optimization Program's Water Quality Goals and Operational Criteria for Optimization of Slow Sand Filtration (2024) and Water Quality Goals and Operational Criteria for Optimization of Low-Pressure Membrane Filtration (2025).
#9	10:20-11:20am	Sandy Water: Chloramines vs Free Chlorine
		Bart Stepp and Natalie Lyons
		<i>Conсор</i>
		Once the Portland Water Bureau Water Treatment Plant (WTP) is complete, the City of Sandy, Oregon water system will receive filtered, chloraminated water from the WTP to meet peak demands in the summer. Sandy's other sources use free chlorine as their disinfectant residual. This presentation covers the design and operational parameters for the Revenue Reservoir Breakpoint Chlorination System which will convert the chloraminated water to free chlorine water. The presentation will cover the decision points from predesign through design concerning chlorine dosage, mixing options, how the water will blend with existing water sources, appropriate monitoring, and the final design of the treatment system.
#10	11:25-12:25pm	Stepp and Lyons are Conсор engineers with practical and theoretical experience dealing with the mixing of chloramines and free residual chlorine.
		VENDOR DISPLAY-Gregory Forum
		Let's play hide and seek – in the Laboratory – can you find the hazards?
		Brandi S. Davis, MS, CIH, CSP
		<i>Oregon OSHA</i>

#11	1:10-2:10pm	The presentation addresses health hazards commonly encountered in laboratory settings by walking through the Oregon OSHA compliance regulations and addressing hazards associated with employees obtaining samples while working in the field. Brandi attended Oregon State University where she completed her Bachelors degree in Chemistry with a minor in Spanish. Brandi then moved to sunny southern California for graduate school and obtained her Masters degree in Environmental, Occupational Health with an emphasis in Industrial Hygiene. During her graduate studies, Brandi worked full time as an intern with the Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Department at the Los Angeles Anheuser-Busch brewery. Upon graduating, Brandi worked for US Borax (mining and chemical manufacturer) as the EHS engineer. Wanting to return to her roots in Oregon, Brandi moved to Portland and worked for a pneumatic throttle manufacturer as the EHS manager. Brandi was a health compliance officer with Oregon OSHA for 19 years and Brandi is currently the Portland Operations, Health Enforcement Manager with Oregon OSHA. Brandi's hobbies include rock hounding, SCUBA diving, underwater photography, mountain biking, skiing and kayaking/paddle boarding.
#12	2:15-3:15pm	PFAS Drinking Water Rule Overview Gregg Baird <i>OHA</i> This presentation will provide an overview of the new PFAS drinking water regulations that were finalized April 2024. Topics covered include the new drinking water PFAS maximum contaminant levels (MCLs), monitoring requirements, compliance determinations, treatment options, implementation timelines, and funding available to address PFAS and other emerging contaminants. Gregg Baird has worked for the Oregon Health Authority, Drinking Water Services for 17 years in the Technical Services Unit. Since November 2018, he has been the Emerging Contaminants Specialist for the program. Prior to working for the state, he was employed for 8 years by the Clackamas County Environmental Health Department. Gregg is a graduate of Oregon State University and has a B.S. in Soil Science ('95). He has been a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) in the state of Oregon since 2000.
#13	3:30-4:30pm	PFAS Treatment Selection: Not Just About Cost & Performance Andrew Nishihara <i>Stantec</i> The City of Vancouver (City), Washington is in the process of adding PFAS treatment at multiple groundwater production stations throughout its system that serves over 270,000 customers. Piloting showed similar performance for anion exchange resins (AER) and granular activated carbon (GAC), giving the City flexibility to implement either depending on site conditions and constraints. This presentation focuses on the City's Water Station 4 project where NPV analysis showed similar costs for AER and GAC, and the decision-making process that was used to make final treatment selection. It highlights ancillary features that need to be addressed in most PFAS projects including – well pump upgrades, pretreatment impacts, and residuals handling. Over his 17-year career, Andrew has had the opportunity to work with over 50 communities throughout the Section on various water projects from planning, treatment piloting, design, and construction. A self-proclaimed life long learner, a recent focus has been on mentoring, sharing information, and providing runway for the next generation of water professionals who will solve our biggest challenges.
DAY THREE		
Thursday, July 30, 2026		Track C: Water Quality & Treatment
		PFAS in Fish Tissues: Columbia Slough and other Surface Water Impacts Sean Payne <i>USGS</i>

#14	8:00-9:00am	This talk will focus on toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) detected in fish tissues sampled from the Columbia Slough. Fish samples were collected from three reaches of the Columbia Slough, located near Portland International Airport, that are affected by multiple PFAS sources, including aqueous film-forming foams (AFFF), a major source PFAS used in firefighting and training at airports and military installations. The primary source of PFAS contamination to the Columbia Slough is attributed to AFFF discharges to unlined pits and ground surface during historical fire training and spills.
		Sean Payne began his career as a Hydrologist with the USGS Oregon Water Science Center in May, 2016, working on various National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) projects including water-quality sampling in both surface-water and ground-water. Current research interests and projects include assessing contaminants in surface water, studying contaminant concentrations in aquatic species, and applying statistical analysis to help better understand contaminant and water-quality trends.
#15	9:05-10:05am	Chlorine Source Selection – Key Considerations for Pacific Northwest Utilities
		Kate Bandettini
		<i>Carollo Engineers</i>
		This presentation provides a practical overview of common chlorine options used by Northwest water utilities (chlorine gas, bulk sodium hypochlorite, and on-site hypochlorite generation) and the key factors that influence source selection. Given the significant increase in chlorine gas costs over the past five years and its decreasing commercial availability, what do the economics and resiliency trade-offs look like? The discussion then focuses on on-site hypochlorite generation (OSHG) as a resiliency strategy, including how it can reduce supply-chain vulnerability, enhance operational flexibility, and sustain chlorine disinfection during emergencies. The presentation highlights recent Pacific Northwest evaluations, including general observations on capital and life-cycle costs, as well as ancillary considerations that shape overall source selection.
#16	10:20-11:20am	Kate Bandettini is a process design engineer at Carollo in Portland, and has 2 years of experience working on water treatment plant design and optimization projects.
		Learn about Chloramines!
		Anna Vosa
		<i>City of Portland Water Bureau</i>
#17	11:25-12:25pm	Portland is one of few chloraminated water systems in the Pacific Northwest. As regulations are updated and become stricter on maintaining distribution system water quality, systems may be more interested in the benefits and trade-offs of using chloramines. This presentation will provide a history of regulatory drivers for distribution system disinfection, overview of the chemistry of chloramines, and discuss the benefits and trade-offs compared with free chlorine.
		Anna Vosa has worked in the Pacific Northwest over the past 19 years as a consulting engineer, regulator, and most recently, water quality engineer at the Portland Water Bureau. Her experience includes planning and design of water treatment facilities, conducting treatability and pilot testing evaluations, designing and coordinating water quality monitoring programs, and performing regulatory compliance reviews
		Water Main Flushing: Benefits and Tips for a Successful Program
		Pierre Kwan, PE
#17	11:25-12:25pm	<i>HDR</i>
		Flushing water mains is a key tool for water systems to provide a multi-barrier approach in providing safe, clean drinking water to customers. This presentation provides water system operators and managers an understanding of the benefits for implementing a flushing program and tips to maximize the benefits of such a program.
		Pierre Kwan is HDR's Water Treatment Technical Director. He has 26 years of experience in drinking water treatment and water quality maintenance throughout the Northwest. He has a Bachelor's and Master's in Civil Engineering and is a registered professional engineer in both Oregon and Washington. He is based in Seattle.
		PFAS Mitigation in the PNW – Considerations for Design and Operation of PFAS Treatment Facilities
		Brandon Nakamura

#18	1:10-2:10pm	<i>Carollo Engineers</i>
		This session will discuss the growing topic of PFAS in the PNW, and bring insights from recent projects to showcase topics and solutions operations staff may consider if their utility undergoes PFAS mitigation. It will discuss PFAS treatment drivers, technology selection (IX vs. GAC), and O&M considerations, as well as broader considerations for utility collaboration in the PNW for mitigation of PFAS. This session will highlight operational consideration for PFAS treatment. It will detail advantages and disadvantages associated with different treatment technologies from an O&M perspective, and allow operations staff to be armed with key information such that they can advocate for themselves during the design stage of a drinking water PFAS project. This includes topics such as site safety, level of automation, sampling procedures, media changeouts, post-treatment water quality and corrosion control parameters, and day-to-day operations. Operations staff can utilize this information to become more confident in the O&M topics associated with PFAS treatment in drinking water, and know what to look out for if their utility undergoes a PFAS treatment project. Brandon Nakamura works for Carollo Engineers out of the Portland, Oregon office. He has 3 years of experience in the water industry, with projects ranging from distribution system master planning, PFAS treatment design, and surface water treatment.
#19	2:15-3:15pm	Adaptive Strategies for Unforeseen Drinking Water Contaminants
		Kevin Sheehan
		<i>Clear Creek</i>
		Drinking water treatment systems increasingly face unforeseen variables, including emerging per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), arsenic mobilization, nitrate fluctuations from runoff, and other chemicals of concern. These evolve due to climate shifts, industrial changes, and geogenic factors, threatening regulatory compliance and public health in regions like the Pacific Northwest. Kevin Sheehan, Regional Project Coordinator at Clear Creek Systems, has over 20 years of experience in water quality management and remediation system design. His work focuses on advanced treatment technologies for emerging contaminants, with expertise in PFAS removal using adsorption, ion exchange, and hybrid processes. He also addresses a range of drinking water contaminants—including arsenic, nitrate, iron/manganese, and other chemicals of concern—through tailored solutions. As Pacific Northwest technical lead for PFAS mitigation, Sheehan develops site-specific strategies via detailed characterization, pilot testing, and process optimization for complex hydrochemical conditions.
#20	3:30-4:30pm	I Love Math! Math Review for Water Ops I-II
		James T. Nurmi, Ph.D.
		<i>Clackamas Community College</i>
		Come and freshen up your math skills. Learn how to solve math problems without “knowing” the correct equations. We will focus on water works math problems and solutions for the level I certification tests. Dr. Nurmi, Faculty in the Water & Environmental Technology Program at CCC, has been teaching Water Operations for over 15 years and has a background in groundwater remediation. His teaching encompasses water treatment, distribution, wastewater treatment and collections and also cross-connection specialist courses.