



2025 Utility Leadership Conference & 55th Annual Meeting Making the Business Case for Clean Water: Solutions for Uncertain Times

July 22 - 25 | Cheyenne Mountain Resort | Colorado Springs, CO

All meetings are on the Conference level unless otherwise noted.

Δ Board of Directors Committee

As of July 24, 2025

Tuesday, July 22

Morning

9:00 – 1:00

White River Ballroom

Women's Water Network Forum *(Optional - Separate Registration Required)*

11:45 – 1:45

Shoshoni Room

Executive Committee Meeting and Lunch Δ

Afternoon

2:00 – 4:30

*Conference Level
Foyer*

Registration

2:30 – 5:00

Colorado Ballroom

Committee Discussion Sessions

All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee meetings, whether or not they are members of the committee.

2:30 – 3:30

Colorado Ballroom

Water Quality Committee

As the new Administration makes its mark at EPA, the Committee will explore key water quality challenges across the country, including areas where NACWA members might be able to move the needle with the shift in federal leadership. The Committee will discuss the current PFAS landscape and recently proposed but not finalized water quality standards, nutrient management, bacteria, the role of integrated planning and more.

Committee Leaders

Martin Griffin, *Co-Chair, Water Quality Committee*

Director of Ecosystem Services

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District | Madison, WI

Jamie Heisig-Mitchell, *Co-Chair, Water Quality Committee*

Chief of Water Quality

Hampton Roads Sanitation District | Virginia Beach, VA

Speaker

Trent Stober, Senior Vice President

HDR Engineering, Inc. | Columbia, MO

3:30 – 4:00

Networking Break

4:00 – 5:00

Colorado Ballroom

Legal Affairs Committee

From federal grant cancellations and PFAS liability to new digital accessibility requirements, Supreme Court rulings, and everything in between, clean water utility lawyers have a lot on their plates. The Legal Affairs Committee will be discussing some of the most pressing issues facing utilities today and sharing insights on what you – and NACWA – can be doing to tackle them!

Committee Leaders

Devon Goodrich, *Co-Chair, Legal Affairs Committee*

Senior Counsel, Environmental Law Division

New York City Department of Law | New York, NY

Emily Jackson, *Co-Chair, Legal Affairs Committee*

Chief Legal Officer

Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

Speaker

Jeff Kray, Partner

Marten Law LLP | Seattle, WA

Evening

5:00 – 6:00

Grand Rivers Ballroom

Registration

5:30 – 6:30

Grand Rivers Ballroom

Welcoming Happy Hour

Kick off the *Conference* by joining us at the Welcoming Happy Hour. Connect with fellow attendees, reconnect with familiar faces, and network in a relaxed atmosphere. Happy Hour is open to all so enjoy a quick bite and meet us there!

Wednesday, July 23

Morning

7:30 – 9:00

Shoshoni Room

Award Committee Meeting and Breakfast Δ

9:00 – 11:30

*Conference Level
Foyer*

Registration

9:00 – 10:00

*Remington I,
Main Level*

Spouse & Guest Lounge

9:00 – 5:00

*Remington II,
Main Level*

NACWA Networking Lounge

The lounge provides an opportunity to connect with your peers during the conference.

9:30 – 12:00

Colorado Ballroom

Committee Discussion Sessions

All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee meetings, whether or not they are members of the committee.

9:30 – 10:30

Colorado Ballroom

Biosolids Management Committee

The Committee will discuss recent federal actions and how delays on the PFAS front at the national level are continuing to give states the "green light" to develop their own policies, whether practical or not. The Committee will provide updates on NACWA's conversations with the Administration on EPA's draft biosolids risk assessment and the Association's development of a "choose your own adventure" legislative playbook for utilities to use at the state level.

Committee Leaders

Kurt Fremont, *Co-Chair, Biosolids Management Committee*
Division Manager, Business Operations
City of Tacoma, Environmental Services Department | Tacoma, WA

Brent Herring, *Co-Chair, Biosolids Management Committee*
Deputy Director
KC Water | Kansas City, MO

Speaker

Amanda Berger, National PFAS Lead
Arcadis | Cary, NC

10:30 – 11:00

Networking Break

11:00 – 12:00

Colorado Ballroom

Communication & Public Affairs Committee

Join us for a focused and energizing Committee meeting as we reflect on key takeaways from this year's Strategic Communications: H2O Workshop. Also, learn more about NACWA's national communications initiative aimed at elevating the visibility and influence of and trust in public clean water utilities.

Committee Leaders

Bess McCoy, *Co-Chair, Communications & Public Affairs Committee*
Manager of Public Affairs
Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District | St. Louis, MO

Jeannie Smith, *Co-Chair, Communications & Public Affairs Committee*
Director of Administration & External Affairs
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District | Cleveland, OH

Speaker

Mack Bradley, President
StandPoint Public Affairs | St. Louis, MO

Afternoon

12:00 – 2:30

Lunch on Your Own

12:15 – 2:00

White River Ballroom

**Optional Lunch – Hosted by the Water Collaborative Delivery Association:
*Better Projects, Together: Organizational Readiness for
Collaborative Delivery Success* (Free; Separate RSVP Required)**

Is your utility ready to deliver a successful collaborative delivery project? Similar to other types of water sector innovation, utilities are at various levels of maturity with respect to their experience with collaborative delivery and successful project implementation. Recent research to identify and address critical utility readiness factors driving collaborative delivery implementation success found that readiness factors can be grouped into the three categories of people, processes, and tools. Join the Water Collaborative Delivery Association for a free lunch session to learn more about how utilities can prepare, assess, and align to address readiness gaps for successful collaborative delivery project implementation. All attendees will receive a copy of WCDA's *Water and Wastewater Collaborative Delivery Handbook, 6th Edition*.

Please complete [this form](#) by **July 14** to RSVP for this event.

2:00 – 4:30

Conference Level

Registration

Foyer

2:30 – 5:00

Colorado Ballroom

Committee Discussion Sessions

All Conference attendees are welcome to attend the committee meetings, whether or not they are members of the committee.

2:30 – 3:30

Colorado Ballroom

Environmental Justice Committee Discussion

Amidst the federal rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and growing political resistance to DEI and environmental justice (EJ) programs, the clean water community is facing a pivotal moment regarding its engagement on EJ. The Committee will explore how utilities are upholding their EJ commitments as anchor institutions who provide triple bottom benefits to their communities given the current pushback and diminishment or elimination of funding sources.

Committee Leaders

Sharise Horne, Co-Chair, Environmental Justice Committee

Chief of Equity & Community Partnerships

Louisville & Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District | Louisville, KY

Emanuel Briggs, Co-Chair, Environmental Justice Committee

Director, Community Affairs

DC Water | Washington, DC

Speakers

Tony Parrott, NACWA Board Member

Executive Director

Louisville & Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District | Louisville, KY

Kamuron Gurol, NACWA Board Member

Division Director

King County Wastewater Treatment Division | Seattle, WA

Judith Ibarra-Bianchetta, Vice President

Tetra Tech, Inc. | Pasadena, CA

3:30 – 4:00

Networking Break

4:00 – 5:00

Colorado Ballroom

Utility & Resource Management Committee Discussion

Join us for an in-depth conversation on the status of federal funding, including the State Revolving Funds, WIFIA, and earmarks, and how utilities are navigating this uncertainty amid all the management and budget pressures they face.

Committee Leader

Nathan Qualls, Co-Chair, Utility & Resource Management Committee

Executive Director

NEW Water | Green Bay, WI

Speakers

Andrew Sawyers, Director, Office of Wastewater Management

US Environmental Protection Agency | Washington, DC

Anthony Kane, President and Chief Executive Officer

Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure | Washington, DC

Evening

6:00 – 7:30

Awards Ceremony & Reception

Centennial Ballroom,
Main Level

Join us for a celebratory evening honoring exceptional NACWA utility facilities for their outstanding achievements in compliance, and individuals for their unmeasured service to NACWA. Following the Ceremony, we invite you to join your colleagues in celebrating the evening's honorees at the Awards Reception.

Thursday, July 24

Morning

8:30 – 11:30

Conference Level
Foyer

Registration

9:00 – 10:00

Remington I,
Main Level

Spouse & Guest Lounge

9:00 – 5:00

Remington II,
Main Level

NACWA Networking Lounge

The lounge provides an opportunity to connect with your peers during the conference.

9:00 – 11:40

Colorado Ballroom

Plenary Session I

9:00 – 9:15

Opening Remarks

Mickey Conway, NACWA President
Chief Executive Officer
Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

Welcoming Remarks

Somer Mese, Chief Operations Officer
Colorado Springs Utilities | Colorado Springs, CO

9:15 – 10:15

Keynote

From Complexity to Clarity: Setting the Standard for Systems Thinking Practice and Science

Explore the science of Systems Thinking and how our minds naturally organize information in ways that mirror systems found in nature. Discover how human cognition functions not in isolation, but as part of the natural world. Recognized by the World Economic Forum as a top future job skill and by Forbes as a vital leadership competency, Systems Thinking is and will be essential for navigating complex challenges today and in the future.

Introductory Remarks

Leisa Thompson, NACWA Board Member
General Manager
Metropolitan Council Environmental Services | Saint Paul, MN

Keynote Speaker

Laura Cabrera, Professor
Cornell University | Ithaca, NY

10:15 – 10:30

Networking Break

10:30 – 11:30

Success in Uncertainty: Leadership, Systems Thinking, and the Future-Ready Utility

Uncertainty is becoming the new normal for clean water utilities who are on the front lines delivering exceptional environmental and public health protection 24/7/365. Whether it's shifting regulations, workforce changes, extreme weather or emerging contaminants, with the right mindset and tools, these challenges can become opportunities for leaders to re-think how the work gets done. Through real-world examples and candid discussion, speakers will share how they are turning uncertainty into opportunity, building more resilient organizations, and delivering lasting improvements for the communities they serve.

Moderator

Pam Elardo, Vice President of Strategic Services
Brown and Caldwell | Seattle, WA

Panelists

Leisa Thompson, NACWA Board Member

Heidi Dexheimer, Deputy Director
City of Henderson | Henderson, NV

Tim Ruggaber, Founder and Principal
HydroDigital | South Bend, IN

Laura Cabrera, Cornell University

11:30 – 11:45

Closing Keynote

Top Priorities from the US EPA Office of Water

Hear key priorities from US EPA's Office of Water and the direction this Administration is taking that will have impacts on the clean water community in the years ahead.

Peggy Browne, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Water
US Environmental Protection Agency | Washington, DC

11:45 – 12:00

Colorado Ballroom

Annual Association Business Meeting

- Report of the President
- Report of the Treasurer
- Proposed *Bylaws* Amendment
- Election of Directors
- Report of the Chief Executive Officer

Afternoon

12:00 – 3:00

Lunch on Your Own

12:15 – 2:45

*Centennial Ballroom,
Main Level*

Board of Directors Meeting Δ

2:30 – 4:30

*Conference Level
Foyer*

Registration

3:00 – 5:15

Colorado Ballroom

Plenary Session II

3:00 – 3:02

Opening Remarks

Calvin Farr, Jr., NACWA Secretary 2025-2026
General Manager/Chief Executive Officer
Prince William Water | Woodbridge, VA

3:02 – 3:15

Stronger Together: Managing Costs, Protecting Funding, and Building Smarter

How is the private sector stepping up to tackle rising costs faced by the clean water community? Discover why a unified public-private front isn't just helpful but essential to navigating today's toughest infrastructure and affordability challenges.

Featured Speaker

John McCarthy, President, Water Business Line
Arcadis | New York, NY

3:15 – 4:15

Smarter Together: Rethinking Governance for Utility Success

Behind every successful clean water utility is a governance model that works. Yet politics and infrastructure are interlinked – and the way clean water utilities are governed often reflects competing priorities, unclear authorities, and shifting public expectations. This panel will explore candidly how governance structures – the good and the bad – empower or inhibit progress for communities.

Panelists

Bill Teichmiller, Chief Executive Officer
EJ Water Cooperative, Inc. | Dieteric, IL

George Hawkins, Founder and President
Moonshot Missions | Bethesda, MD

Andrew Sawyers, US Environmental Protection Agency

4:15 – 5:15

Taking Care of the Heart, Brain & Engine of Our Utility: Investing in Our People

Public wastewater utilities are at a critical juncture with close to half of the workforce eligible for retirement in the next decade. Hiring qualified staff before losing institutional knowledge is paramount and it is past time to think outside the box on how we attract, retain, and cultivate our next generation of leaders. Panelists will share real world examples and practical tactics they are using now to help future proof their workforce and sustain their utility's mission for decades to come.

Discussion Leader

Beate Wright, Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Wright for You, LLC | Conifer, CO

Panelists

David Persinger, General Manager
Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility | Anchorage, AK

Eddie Abisaab, Chief Operating Officer
Hampton Roads Sanitation District | Virginia Beach, VA

Kevin Shafer, Executive Director
Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District | Milwaukee, WI

5:15

Closing Remarks

Calvin Farr, Jr., NACWA Secretary 2025-2026

Evening

6:00 – 7:00

Centennial Ballroom,
Main Level

President's Luau Reception

Please join us at the outdoor Beach Pavilion to celebrate President Mickey Conway! Step into the island spirit with your favorite Hawaiian-inspired attire and help us celebrate during this tropical-themed luau reception.

Friday, July 25

Morning

9:00 – 10:30

*Conference Level
Foyer*

Registration

9:30 – 11:30

Colorado Ballroom

Plenary Session III

9:30 – 9:32

Opening Remarks

Laura Briefer, *NACWA Treasurer 2025-2026*

Director of Public Utilities

Salt Lake City Corporation | Salt Lake City, UT

9:32 – 10:30

When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Get Going: Making the Business Case for Clean Water

This year's conference theme hits home – with shrinking federal budgets, infrastructure that is aging, increasing regulatory requirements, and experienced workers who are exiting, we are definitely in uncertain times. So how do you make the business case that clean water solutions aren't just necessary, but more than worth the investment? This panel brings together private sector leaders to share how they are helping utilities stay resilient by making a strong, clear business case for clean water.

Moderator

Laura Briefer, *NACWA Treasurer 2025-2026*

Panelists

Beverley Stinson, Executive Vice President, Global Water Business Line Leader
AECOM | Chelmsford, MA

Susan Moio, Senior Vice President and Global Water Director
Jacobs | Aurora, IN

Daven Oswalt, Executive Vice President and Executive Director, Water
GFT, Inc. | San Diego, CA

Hampik Dekermenjian, Vice President
Hazen and Sawyer | Los Angeles, CA

10:30 – 11:25

Tech It to the Limit: From Innovation to Impact

Technology is supposed to make things easier, but it often takes time, adaptation, and grit to get there. With today's realities, clean water utility leaders are under extreme pressure to make smart decisions and do so with less. But how do utility leaders know what technologies are best? This session dives into how forward-thinking utilities and partners are pushing past those barriers and putting new technology to work to make lasting impacts in their communities.

Moderator

Tim Braun, Founder

BluTerra, LLC | Cassopolis, MI

Speakers

Cristina Ahmadpour, President
Isle Utilities | San Diego, CA

Liam Cavanaugh, Deputy Chief Executive Officer/Chief Operating Officer
Metro Water Recovery | Denver, CO

Mahesh Lunani, Founder and Chief Executive Officer
AquaSight | Troy, MI

Pieter Van Ry, *NACWA Board Member*
Director
South Platte Renew | Englewood, CO

11:25 – 11:30

Closing Remarks

Mickey Conway, *NACWA President*