

Water Summit 2022: Rethinking Water in the West

October 27, 2022

Speaker Biographies

Jennifer Bowles

Jenn Bowles was named Executive Director of the Water Education Foundation in March 2014. A veteran journalist, Jenn worked as a reporter and editor at *The Associated Press* in the Los Angeles bureau for 10 years. She later became the environmental reporter at *The Press-Enterprise*, garnering awards for her coverage of water issues in California during a nine-year stint. She joined Best Best & Krieger LLP in 2009 where she worked as a writer and communications strategist with some of the state's leading water law attorneys. Jenn has a bachelor's degree in journalism and history from the University of Southern California and completed a year-long Scripps Fellowship in Environmental Journalism at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Nick Gray

Nick Gray is Programs Director for the Water Education Foundation. He manages many of our workshops, conferences and tours of key water regions across California and the Southwest, bringing attendees up close to dams and other water infrastructure, wildlife areas, farms and other sites involved in water. Before joining the Foundation in the summer of 2018, Nick spent 15 years involved in formal and informal science education as a science teacher in the classroom and as the education director of a science museum. Since coming to the Sacramento area several years ago, he has also been involved with regional science communication organizations, including Capital Science Communicators. Nick has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of Dayton.

Opening Keynote: *Hydrologic Extremes: Water Management in a Changing Climate*

Mike Anderson

Michael Anderson is the State Climatologist for California, a collaborative position between the state and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration to provide climate data services for the state. He participates in interagency climate change work team activities; develops climate program content in the area of extreme events, sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasting and adapting to climate change; interacts with the research community and supports Department of Water Resources (DWR) personnel on a range of projects. Michael began working in the DWR Division of Flood Management River Forecasting Section in July 2005. He came to DWR after extensive graduate and post-graduate work at the University of California, Davis in the area of hydroclimate system modeling, monitoring, and evaluation. He received his Ph.D. in 1998 and Master of Science in 1993 in Civil and Environmental Engineering from U.C. Davis. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Colorado State University in 1991.

Rethinking Water Rights in Light of Drought & Climate Change

Erik Ekdahl

Erik Ekdahl is the Deputy Director for the State Water Resources Control Board's Division of Water Rights. The Division is responsible for establishing and maintaining a stable system of water rights to develop, conserve and use the water resources of the state while protecting vested rights, water quality and the environment. Erik joined the State Water Board in 2008, where he focused on nitrate and groundwater contamination. He has worked in the Board's Division of Financial Assistance, Division of Water Quality, and as Director for the Board's Office of Research, Planning and Performance, which is responsible for developing and implementing the Board's requirements under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Erik is a licensed engineering geologist with a Ph.D in Geology from the University of Michigan.

Elizabeth Salomone

Elizabeth Salomone has served as the General Manager of the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation Improvement District since 2019, after five years at the district and seven years at the Local Agency Formation Commission. She also serves on the Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) Region 1 Board. Elizabeth is recognized as an open-minded, collaborative water leader in Mendocino County and the Russian River watershed to help creatively unravel some of the most pressing water issues facing this predominately rural and disadvantaged area. She sits on numerous stakeholder committees and represents the region on local, state and federal platforms. From innovative project solutions to thoughtful relationship building, Elizabeth provides a unique new face in California's water industry. She elevates building relationships and coalitions of support to improve resiliency and adaptive responses to environmental and social evolution.

Jennifer Harder

Jennifer L. Harder is an Associate Professor at University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, where she teaches courses in water, environmental and public agency law. From 1999-2008, Harder was an attorney and partner in the water practice group at Downey Brand LLP, in Sacramento, where she practiced water rights and environmental compliance, and served as general counsel to local public agencies. She previously clerked at the California Department of Water Resources and the Alaska Supreme Court. Harder is a graduate of the Water Leaders program at the Water Education Foundation, a member of the steering committee for the Anne J. Schneider Memorial Lecture Series Fund and coauthor of the water law textbook, *Cases and Materials on Water Law*, 9th ed. (West American Casebook Series, 2014). Her research focuses on integration of classic water rights principles into contemporary regulatory systems, water and growth and issues of water justice.

Cannon Michael

Cannon Michael is the President/CEO of Bowles Farming Company. He is the 6th generation of his family to work in the family farming business. A graduate of the University of California at Berkeley, Cannon joined the company in 1998. Cannon became the President and CEO in 2014. Cannon is an advocate for California agriculture and intelligent water policy. Environmental stewardship, ethical treatment of workers and sustainable production are core values for Cannon and the Bowles Farming Company team. The farm grows 20+ crops and employs both conventional and organic farming practices. In addition to running the family farm, Cannon is actively engaged in California water issues. He holds leadership positions with the San Luis & Delta Mendota Water Authority, San Luis Canal Company, Henry Miller Reclamation District, Public Policy Institute of California's Water Policy Center, Environmental Defense Fund's Ecosystems Committee, American Farmland Trust Board, Family Farm Alliance, Exchange Contractors PAC, California Cotton Growers Association. He also is a member of the Water Education Foundation Board of Directors.

Lunch Keynote: *Thriving in an Age of Drought & Deluge*

Erica Gies

Erica Gies is an award-winning independent journalist who writes about water, climate change, plants and critters for Scientific American, The New York Times, Nature, The Atlantic, The Guardian, National Geographic, The Economist, Washington Post, bioGraphic, Wired and more. Her stories hail from North America, especially California and British Columbia, and the wider world. Her book, *Water Always Wins: Thriving in an Age of Drought and Deluge*, is about what she calls “Slow Water” innovations that are helping us adapt to the increasing floods and droughts brought by climate change. Erica is a National Geographic Explorer, served as a staff editor at various publications, and cofounded and edited two environmental news startups, Climate Confidential and This Week in Earth. She studied journalism and holds a master’s degree in literature, with a focus in eco-criticism, which is an actual thing. Growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area, she spent childhood vacations camping and hiking in state and national parks and swimming in any body of water she came across. She remains an ardent fan of critters, plants, hydrology, wilderness, and hiking.

Rethinking a Resilient Delta Watershed for a Changing Climate

Jennifer Persike

Jennifer Persike is the president and founder of Jennifer Persike & Company, a consulting firm focused on innovative management and strategic communications. She has more than 30 years experience leading and working with California water and energy organizations, statewide associations, nonprofits and corporations in addition to local, state and federal entities. Previously, she served as the executive director of Leadership California, a network of more than 1,600 accomplished women dedicated to advancing the leadership role of women in business, communities and public policy. For much of her career, Jennifer worked at the Association of California Water Agencies, where she was the Deputy Executive Director of External Affairs. In that role, she was in charge of the association's teams that worked to advance ACWA's image/brand, issues, policies and delivery of service to members. She has driven numerous high-profile, successful external and internal initiatives, including the creation and management of the original Save Our Water public outreach program and the award-winning California’s Water Series on Public Television with Huell Howser. She earned her bachelor’s degree in journalism and political science from California State University, Chico. She is a member of the Water Education Foundation Board of Directors.

Sandi Matsumoto

Sandi Matsumoto is Director for the California Water Program at the Nature Conservancy, a position she has held since 2020. Previously, she was Associate Director from 2015 to 2020 and Project Director from 2004 to 2015. She was Project Manager at the Los Angeles Community Design Center from 2003 to 2004 and a Project Analyst at Mintz Levin from 1997 to 1999. She is an advisor to the Public Policy Institute of California’s Water Policy Center and a board member of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy. In June, she was appointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom to the California Water Commission. Matsumoto earned a Master of Business Administration degree in finance from the University of California, Los Angeles Anderson School of Management. She is a board member of the Water Education Foundation.

Laurel Larsen

Dr. Laurel Larsen is an Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley with appointments in the Departments of Geography and Civil and Environmental Engineering. For 2020-2023, she is on leave to serve as the Delta Lead Scientist, a U.S. Geological Service position housed within the Delta Stewardship Council in Sacramento. Dr. Larsen runs the Environmental Systems Dynamics Laboratory at Berkeley, which has a focus on understanding the interactions and feedbacks among the physical, biological and social variables constituting ecosystems, and to apply that understanding to restoration and management challenges. Dr. Larsen has a bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis, with dual majors in Systems Science and Mathematics and Environmental Studies, a master's degree from Washington University in Earth and Planetary Sciences, and a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado Boulder in Civil and Environmental Engineering. She has worked in the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, coastal Louisiana, and most recently, the Sacramento--San Joaquin Delta.

Campbell Ingram

Campbell Ingram became the first Executive Officer of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy in March of 2011. The Conservancy is tasked with being a lead agency for ecosystem restoration in the Delta and supporting efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents. Previously, Campbell was an associate director of The Nature Conservancy's California Water Program where he participated in the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan effort as a steering committee member. Campbell previously worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where he was responsible for implementing several Central Valley Project Improvement Act restoration programs and the CALFED Environmental Water Program; and prior to that was employed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation working directly for the CALFED Ecosystem Restoration Program. Campbell received a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural Resource Planning from Humboldt State University in 1991.

Alex Wilson

Alex Wilson is a sixth-generation farmer in the Sacramento Delta. For as long as he can remember, Alex has been in and around the family's farming operation, representing the two entities Rivermaid Trading Company, and Kay Dix Ranch. The family owns and manages 4,000 acres and operates 80,000 square feet of packing facilities. Alex graduated in 2017 from California State University, Stanislaus, with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics. Following graduation, Alex felt it was a clear decision to join the family business. During the rainy season, Alex can be found patrolling the levees of his family's Island, Dead Horse Island (RD 2111), to ensure the structural integrity of the levee system and make quick repairs to prevent a catastrophic failure. This responsibility has given Alex a valuable glimpse into the complex task of land management in the Delta, ranging from annual flooding in the winter to irrigation and water management in the summer. Alex, and his family participated in the 2021-2022 Delta Drought Pilot program where they planted a non-irrigated crop on Dead Horse Island, which was safflower. Alex's life and interests are firmly planted in the Delta and plans on seeing it continue for the next generation.

Louise Conrad

Louise Conrad joined the California Department of Water Resources as its Lead Scientist in July 2022. As Lead Scientist, she provides science leadership for the agency by ensuring and advancing best practices and capacity for conducting science, by tracking and prioritizing scientific initiatives and direction, and by providing science-related policy guidance to the DWR Directorate. Previously, Conrad was the Deputy Executive Officer for Science at the Delta Stewardship Council, where she focused on science funding processes, science communication and coordination of scientific initiatives to inform decision-making for Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. She worked for DWR from 2010 to 2019 within the Division of Integrated Science and Engineering where she conducted research in floodplain ecology, impacts of drought on the Delta ecosystem, control of invasive aquatic weeds, and worked closely with the Interagency Ecological Program to advance synthesis of long-term environmental monitoring datasets. Prior to working in the Delta system, Conrad worked for the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission in the Russian River watershed of California, co-managing a captive broodstock and reintroduction program for endangered coho salmon. Conrad is a fisheries biologist by training and earned her Ph.D. in Animal Behavior from the University of California, Davis in 2008.

Update on our Rethinking of Groundwater in California**Paul Gosselin**

Paul Gosselin is Deputy Director for Sustainable Groundwater Management at the California Department of Water Resources. Gosselin oversees the Sustainable Groundwater Management Office, which includes statewide groundwater management activities and the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Gosselin has extensive experience in local groundwater management and environmental regulations and leadership. Gosselin joined DWR after serving 13 years as Butte County's Director of Water and Resource Conservation. He managed Butte County's State Water Project Table A allocation, investigated and reported on groundwater conditions, implemented the Groundwater Management Plan, fostered regional partnerships through the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management and other water resource activities. He oversaw development of three Groundwater Sustainability Plans and was administrator of two Groundwater Sustainability Agencies. Prior to Butte County, Gosselin was Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of Pesticide Regulation from 1999 to 2007 and was Assistant Director for Enforcement, Environmental Monitoring and Data Management from 1993 to 1999. From 1989 to 1993, he was the Director of Regulatory Services for the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture. Gosselin received a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry and a Master of Science degree in chemistry from the University of Massachusetts.

Rethinking Water Management in a Drought-Driven West**Nancy Vogel**

Nancy Vogel joined the Natural Resources Agency as director of the Governor's Water Portfolio Program in May 2019 and was named deputy secretary for water two years later. Before her appointment, Nancy had been director of communications at the Resources Legacy Fund since 2017. She was deputy secretary for communications at the California Natural Resources Agency from 2015 to 2017 and assistant director for communications at the Department of Water Resources from 2012 to 2015. Nancy was a principal consultant for the Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes from 2008 to 2012. She was a staff writer for the Los Angeles Times from 2000 to 2008 and for The Sacramento Bee from 1991 to 2000. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Conservation and Resource Studies and a Master of Arts degree in journalism, both from the University of California, Berkeley.

Andy Fecko

Andy Fecko is General Manager of the Placer County Water Agency, the largest water purveyor in Placer County. Hired in 2006 as a Resource Planning Administrator, Andy has led a number of high-priority projects for the agency, including the relicensing of PCWA's Middle Fork American River Project. In 2013 he assumed the position of Director of Resource Development where he was responsible for operational and environmental management of the agency's hydroelectric assets, including state and federal regulatory compliance, and energy marketing and sales. In 2017, he was named Director of Strategic Affairs, a position he held until he was named General Manager in 2020. In July, 2022, Andy was named to the newly established Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed by President Joe Biden in 2021. He is a graduate of the University of California, Davis, and worked for Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the State Water Resources Control Board and the California Department of Water Resources before joining Placer County Water Agency.

Felicia Marcus

Felicia Marcus, former chair of California's State Water Resources Control Board, is the Landreth Visiting Fellow at Stanford University's Water in the West Program. She is an elected Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and is an attorney who has served in leadership and management positions in government and nonprofit sectors. Felicia previously served as Regional Administrator of the U.S. EPA Region IX and as head of the Los Angeles Department of Public Works in addition to senior leadership in national nongovernmental organizations (Natural Resources Defense Council and Trust for Public Land). She has worked on issues across the West spanning water supply, water rights, and water quality in addition to experience in other sectors like energy, toxics and land use. She is also a member of the Water Policy Group, an international network of former and current high level water officials dedicated to assisting developing nations, a board member of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council, which oversees the bulk electricity transmission grid for the Western U.S. and parts of Canada and Mexico, and is one of three U.S. members of the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation.

Willie Whittlesey

General Manager Willie Whittlesey oversees all aspects of Yuba Water Agency's operations and management, including flood risk reduction, hydropower generation, energy sales, water rights, water supply and more. Having grown up in the Sierra Nevada foothills, Whittlesey is also passionate about using his role at Yuba Water to help accelerate the pace and scale of forest management and is leading the agency's efforts to protect the Yuba River watershed from catastrophic fire through innovative partnerships, programs and projects. Prior to joining Yuba Water, Whittlesey spent 13 years with Pacific Gas & Electric's land and hydro generation departments and six years in private forest management. Whittlesey graduated from Humboldt State University with a bachelor's degree in forestry and is a registered professional forester in California. He is a graduate of the Water Education Foundation's Water Leaders program.