

Water Summit 2021:

Pivoting Today's Pain into Tomorrow's Gain

Oct. 28, 2021

37th Annual Water Summit
“Pivoting Today's Pain into Tomorrow's Gain”
October 28, 2021
A Virtual Forum

Speaker Biographies (In order of appearance)

Jenn Bowles, Executive Director, Water Education Foundation

Jenn Bowles was named executive director of the Water Education Foundation in March 2014. A veteran journalist, she started her career 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. Jenn 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. She 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.

Faith Kearns, Author, “Getting to the Heart of Science Communication”

Faith Kearns is a scientist and science communication practitioner who focuses primarily on water, wildfire, and climate change in the western United States. Her work has been published in *New Republic*, *On Being*, *Bay Nature*, and more. Faith has been working in the science communication field for more than 25 years, starting with the Ecological Society of America and going on to serve as an AAAS Science and Policy Fellow at the U.S. Department of State, manage a wildfire research and outreach center at the University of California, Berkeley, and bridge science and policy advocacy efforts at the Pew Charitable Trusts. She currently works with the California Institute for Water Resources. Faith holds an undergraduate environmental science degree from Northern Arizona University and a doctorate in environmental science, policy and management from the University of California, Berkeley.

Nick Gray, Programs Director, Water Education Foundation

Nick Gray is programs director for the Water Education Foundation, where he manages workshops, conferences and tours of key water regions and topics across California and the Southwest. 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. He has also been involved with regional science communication organizations, including Capital Science Communicators. Nick has a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Dayton in Ohio.

Karla Nemeth, Director, California Department of Water Resources

Karla Nemeth was appointed director of the California Department of Water Resources by Gov. Jerry Brown in 2018 and was reappointed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in 2019. Karla oversees the department whose mission is to manage and protect California's water resources. In cooperation with other agencies, DWR manages California's water resources to benefit the state's people, and to protect, restore and enhance the natural and human environments. Karla focuses on preparing the department and state to adapt to more extreme weather as a result of climate change by investing in aging and green infrastructure, better management of groundwater supplies and various programs to improve local water resilience. Prior to joining DWR, Karla was the project manager for the Bay Delta Conservation Plan and Gov. Brown's deputy secretary and senior advisor for water policy at the California Natural Resources Agency. Karla received a bachelor's degree in political science and Latin American studies from the University of California, San Diego and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Washington.

Rick L. Callender, CEO, Valley Water

Rick L. Callender has been Chief Executive Officer of Valley Water since May 2020. Rick oversees an integrated water resources system that includes the supply of clean, safe water, flood protection and environmental stewardship of waterways for Santa Clara County's 1.9 million residents. Rick has worked for Valley Water since 1996, serving most recently as chief of external affairs. In this position he led Valley Water's efforts in strategic external communications, overseeing all government relations efforts and public policies that directly affected Valley Water. Prior to joining the district, Rick worked as a special assistant to former San Jose Mayor Susan Hammer, as a field campaign organizer for the California Democratic Party, as a Congressional Fellow for the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Energy, and as a Congressional Fellow to Congressman Ronald V. Dellums. He serves on the national NAACP Board of Directors and is president of the California/Hawaii State Conferences of the NAACP. Rick earned his bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and technology from California State University, Chico, and a juris doctor from Northwestern California University School of Law. He is a member of the California State Bar.

Susana De Anda, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Community Water Center

Susana De Anda is co-founder and executive director of Community Water Center, which advocates for access to clean water on behalf of rural communities. She is a seasoned community organizer and has received numerous awards and recognitions. Susana's experience includes planning and organizing positions at the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment; the County of Merced Planning Department; the Santa Barbara County Water Agency; and the Santa Barbara nonprofit Community Environmental Council. She served for the past few years on the Community Funding Board of the Grassroots Fund through the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, Tulare County Water Commission and on the board of directors of the Tulare County United Way. Susana currently serves on the advisory council for the Water Solutions Network and is a steering committee member on the Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus. She is also a co-founder and member of the board of Water Education for Latino Leaders (WELL). Susana earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Sandi Matsumoto, Director, The Nature Conservancy's California Water Program

Sandi Matsumoto is The Nature Conservancy's director of the California Water Program. She leads a multi-disciplinary team focused on securing a sustainable and resilient water future for California. The Water Program is working to secure the wintering grounds of the Pacific Flyway, to revive healthy rivers to sustain salmon and to advance sustainable groundwater management that ensures drinking water for people and supports nature. During her 17 years with TNC, Sandi has worked at the nexus of water, agriculture and the environment across the state through launching BirdReturns and TNC's efforts to implement the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. In 2017, she was appointed by Gov. Jerry Brown to serve as a board member on the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy. Sandi is a graduate of the Water Education Foundation's Water Leaders program, was a member of the first cohort of the Water Solutions Network, serves on the advisory council to the Public Policy Institute of California's Water Policy Center and serves as an advisor to the emerging Environmental Leadership Initiative. A Central Valley native, Sandi earned her bachelor's degree from Yale University and master's of business administration from the Anderson School at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Chris Scheuring, Managing Counsel, California Farm Bureau Federation

Chris Scheuring is a senior counsel at the California Farm Bureau. He represents the organization and its member farmers and ranchers throughout California, primarily in the field of water resources law and policy. He has been serving in that capacity for more than 15 years. Prior to that, Chris was in private practice in Sacramento, representing clients in the same field of law. He also teaches a course on agricultural and food law and policy at the University of California, Davis' School of Law. In addition, Chris is a family farmer in Yolo County, where his family grows tree crops and others. He is a graduate of the Water Education Foundation's Water Leaders program. Chris holds both juris doctor and bachelor's degrees from the University of California, Davis.

Anecita Agustinez, Tribal Policy Advisor, Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Anecita Agustinez was appointed as tribal policy advisory by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) in August 2013. The Office of the Tribal Policy Advisor coordinates communication and outreach with other state agencies and facilitates government-to-government consultation between the Department of Water Resources and California's Native American Tribes and Tribal governments. Her primary responsibilities are to provide policy support and recommendations regarding tribal issues to Director Karla Nemeth and Lead Deputy Director Cindy Messer. Anecita has been actively engaged with DWR's various divisions assisting in Tribal consultation and in the development of DWR's Tribal consultation policy. Her experience includes developing and conducting training in tribal consultation, cultural competency, environmental justice, social justice issues and legislative advocacy on behalf of California's Tribal governments. Before joining the department, she served as the Native American liaison, and manager of the Office of Legislative and External Affairs, and the Office of Health Access at the Department of Health Care Services. Anecita previously was the assistant director of the Office of Native American Affairs at the Department of Justice in the Office of the Attorney General. Anecita is an enrolled citizen of the Navajo Nation. She is born to the Tó dích'íinii (Bitter Water Clan) and born for the Ilocano Clan.

Jim Peifer, Executive Director, Regional Water Authority and Sacramento Groundwater Authority

Jim Peifer is executive director of the Regional Water Authority (RWA) and the Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA). Jim has 27 years of experience in water supply matters and is a registered civil engineer. The RWA is a joint powers authority of 20 water purveyors within the Sacramento region with the mission to serve the interests of regional water providers and stakeholders for the purpose of improving water supply reliability, availability, quality and affordability. The Sacramento Groundwater Authority is the groundwater sustainability agency in north Sacramento County. Jim holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from University of California, Davis.

Ann Hayden, Associate Vice President, Environmental Defense Fund's Climate Resilient Water Systems Program

Ann Hayden is associate vice president of Environmental Defense Fund's Climate Resilient Water Systems Program and oversees the California water program. She focuses on advancing incentive-based approaches that ensure adequate water for ecosystems, improve agriculture's resilience to climate change and address the water needs of disadvantaged communities. Ann leads EDF's initiatives to help the agricultural sector transition to a future with less water in ways that minimize economic impacts, while considering the needs of disadvantaged communities and ecosystems. For more than 19 years, she has built broad coalitions to advance pragmatic solutions that benefit both people and the environment. Ann is an expert in the development and implementation of well-designed markets that strike the right balance between ecosystem protection and the prosperity of communities. She earned a bachelor's degree in marine biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz and a master's degree in environmental science and management from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Joe Mouawad, General Manager, Eastern Municipal Water District

Joe Mouawad was selected as Eastern Municipal Water District's general manager in April of 2021. EMWD's general manager is responsible for overseeing daily operations of the organization and is responsible for providing high quality and reliable water, wastewater and recycled water service to nearly 1 million people in western Riverside County. Joe began his career at EMWD in August 2006 as director of engineering and became assistant general manager, where he oversaw seven different departments ranging from engineering and water resources to environmental compliance and conservation. Joe has first-hand experience managing EMWD's capital improvement program, including the significant expansion of its groundwater desalination program, its Perris North Groundwater Program, the growth of its recycled water program and its Purified Water Replenishment program. Prior to EMWD, Joe worked at Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District and in the private sector. He received his bachelor's degree in civil engineering from California Polytechnic State University, Pomona and a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of California, Los Angeles. He is a former adjunct professor of engineering at California Polytechnic State University, Pomona and a registered civil engineer.

Alvar Escriva-Bou, Senior Fellow, Public Policy Institute of California Water Policy Center

Alvar Escriva-Bou is a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California Water Policy Center. His research explores integrated water, energy and environmental resources management. Since joining PPIC in 2015, Alvar's research has explored the options and consequences of transitioning to groundwater sustainability in the San Joaquin Valley, analyzed California's water accounting system, studied urban drought resilience and investigated energy and climate policies related to water use, among others. Previously, Alvar worked as a civil engineer where he managed and developed large infrastructure projects for local and regional governments and consulting firms in Spain. He holds a doctorate and master's degree in water and environmental engineering and a master's degree in civil engineering from the Polytechnic University of Valencia in Spain, as well as a master's degree in agricultural and resource economics from the University of California, Davis.