

OCTOBER 29



WATER EDUCATION
FOUNDATION

WATER SUMMIT 2026

Water Education Foundation's 42nd Annual Water Summit ~Stewarding a New Era in Western Water~

The Sawyer Hotel | 500 J St., Sacramento

AGENDA

9:00 Check-In

9:30 Welcome & Opening Remarks

Nick Gray | *Deputy Director ~ Programs, Water Education Foundation*

Jenn Bowles | *Executive Director, Water Education Foundation*

9:45 Opening Keynote Address

Tom Gibson | *Director, California Department of Water Resources*

10:15 NETWORKING BREAK

10:45 Modernizing the California Water Plan

Moderator: Jenn Bowles | *Executive Director, Water Education Foundation*

Sandi Matsumoto | *California Water Program Director, The Nature Conservancy*

Joel Metzger | *Dep. Director ~ Statewide Water Resources Planning, California Dept. of Water Resources*

Cannon Michael | *President, Bowles Farming*

Craig Miller | *General Manager, Western Municipal Water District*

12:00 2026 William R. Gianelli Water Leaders Cohort Introductions

Jenn Bowles | *Executive Director, Water Education Foundation*

12:15 NETWORKING LUNCH

1:00 2026 Rita Schmidt Sudman Award for Excellence in Water Journalism

Jenn Bowles | *Executive Director, Water Education Foundation*

1:15 Unraveling the Risks & Rewards of AI

Moderator: Nick Gray | *Deputy Director ~ Programs, Water Education Foundation*

Annalise Blum | *Research Fellow, Public Policy Institute of California*

Aaron Baker | *CEO-Designate/Chief Operating Officer ~ Water Utility, Valley Water*

Jim Ollerton | *Senior Director of Information Systems, Eastern Municipal Water District*

2:30 NETWORKING BREAK

3:00 Deciphering the Future of DeSal

Moderator: Brenda Burman | *General Manager, Central Arizona Project*

Jeremy Crutchfield | *Water Resources Manager, San Diego County Water Authority*

Peter Fiske | *Engagement & Technology Transitions Manager, National Alliance for Water Innovation*

Vineetha Kartha | *Director of Water Policy, Central Arizona Project*

Dave Pedersen | *General Manager, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District*

4:15 What Does a Record Strength El Niño Mean for California?

Daniel Swain | *Climate Scientist, University of California Agriculture & Natural Resources*

5:00 NETWORKING RECEPTION