

2024 Water Leaders Class Bios and Photos

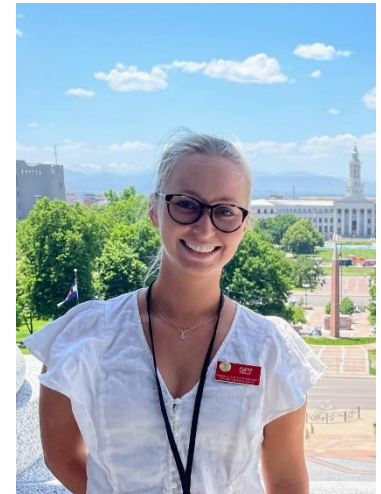
Adam Kremers - Supervising Engineer/Rocky Mountain Region Water Rights Leader - Brown and Caldwell

Adam is a registered professional engineer in the states of Colorado and Arizona. He has extensive experience working on water resources engineering issues in the Colorado River Basin. Adam is a recognized water rights expert who provides engineering services to support litigation while leading cross-functional teams and has achieved successful outcomes over the years. Adam is passionate about navigating and solving complex water resource issues that address environmental, water supply, and regulatory challenges. As a leader at BC, he is dedicated to mentorship and enjoys helping his clients achieve their objectives while also supporting his employees in advancing their careers. Adam lives in Lakewood and enjoys spending time on his bike and exploring Colorado's mountains.



Alexa Kelly - Research Analyst - Colorado Legislative Council Staff

Alexa has been in Colorado for six years now after moving here from Raleigh upon completing her undergraduate degree in Environmental Science at NC State University. Here she worked on various ranches, sparking her passion for agriculture, and eventually agricultural policy. She earned her Masters of Public Policy at the University of Denver and was able to quickly start her role at Legislative Council Staff (LCS) in 2020 where her focus on agriculture naturally extended to Colorado's water policies. She's currently in her fourth legislative session as a research analyst at LCS as the head staff for both the House Agriculture, Water, and Natural Resources and the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committees. She specializes in policy areas such as water, agriculture, natural resources, and parks and wildlife. Her role allows her to be a nonpartisan source of information for all legislators and the people of Colorado. When she's not spending time under the golden dome, she camps with her dogs, travels often, and reads as much as she can.



Austin Krcmarik – Water Efficiency Lead – Denver Water

For over 20 years, Austin Krcmarik has been a dedicated advocate for conserving and using Colorado's water resources wisely. His expertise spans the entire water journey, from pristine mountain headwaters to Denver Water's complex urban system. Driven by a deep understanding of Colorado's water challenges, Austin champions practical solutions for water efficiency and conservation. His work has ranged from developing programs for individual users to creating large scale water efficient landscapes.

As Denver Water's Water Efficiency Lead, Austin has spearheaded successful water conservation initiatives, authored key plans, and participated in several land use and water-related task forces. Currently, his focus is on implementing water-saving policies across the 18 local governments in the Denver Water service area through policies and regulations that affect building, zoning, and landscape codes.

Austin has an undergraduate degree in Natural Resource Management and Watershed Science accompanied by a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning. He believes everyone in Colorado has a role to play in protecting our precious water resources.



Blake Mamich – Water Resources Specialist – Colorado Water Trust

Blake was born and raised in Greeley and is currently based in Ignacio, Colorado. After earning undergraduate degrees in Natural Resources Management and Natural Resources/Agricultural Economics from Colorado State University, he moved to Ignacio in Southwest Colorado to work in water resources for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Blake managed the Tribe's water rights portfolio and worked to protect, conserve, and develop the Tribe's water resources. In school and later while working for the Tribe and Colorado Water Trust, Blake has developed a strong conservation ethic, a respect for Colorado's agricultural heritage and sincere interest in complex, western water issues. He has been with the Colorado Water Trust since early 2022 and his work is focused on intake and initial analysis of potential streamflow restoration projects. He also manages the Water Trust's reservoir release program on the Yampa River. In his free time, he can be found enjoying the outdoors in Southwest Colorado, trail running, hunting, cross country skiing and moonlighting as a ranch hand.



David Heintz – Project Manager – BBA Water Consultants, Inc.

David Heintz is a Project Manager at BBA Water Consultants where he leads BBA staff in providing technical expertise for surface and groundwater related projects and works closely with clients to assist them in successfully navigating the complex world of Colorado water rights. He has spent over 14 years working in the world of Colorado water resources and his time as a consultant has given him the opportunity to work on a multitude of different projects with a wide variety of clients including large municipalities, water districts, commercial and industrial water users, water user groups, water providers, ditch and reservoir companies, governmental agencies, environmental groups, and private landowners, all in pursuit of collaborative solutions which meet the needs of all involved. David is a registered professional engineer and a graduate of Colorado State University with a degree in Civil Engineering.



Born to two ski bums, David grew up enjoying the Colorado outdoors and currently lives in Littleton with his wife and three daughters. They can be found hiking, biking, or skiing in the beautiful foothills and mountains of CO in their free time.

Deb Hummel – River Program Manager – The Watershed Center

Deb is passionate about building resilience in Front Range watersheds and is delighted to work with diverse interest groups across the region. She holds Master's in Fisheries Biology and Management and Bachelor's in Biology. Deb has worked in aquatics and resource management since 2013 and joined The Watershed Center in 2018. As River Program Director, Deb works collaboratively with land and water managers, interest groups, community members, and technical experts across the region to identify, plan, and implement innovative and multi-benefit river restoration and water resource projects. She brings curiosity, collaboration, and science to her position and enjoys working with the challenges and complexities of water in the west.



Elizabeth Schoder - Water Supply Planning Section Lead - GIS, Environment, & Engagement - Colorado Water Conservation Board

Elizabeth Schoder serves as the Water Supply Planning Section Lead for GIS, Environment and Engagement for the Colorado Water Conservation Board. She leads water planning efforts related to watershed health, data visualization, community engagement, education and equity initiatives that advance the goals of the Colorado Water Plan through developing accessible tools, messaging, and educational programming that supports greater understanding of complex water issues. Elizabeth served as the representative for the Department of Natural Resources on the state's Environmental Justice Action Task Force. She worked for the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment on their regional vaccine equity team, helping expand immunization access across Southwestern Colorado, and on the Western Slope as the Education & Outreach Manager for the Eagle River Watershed Council. She received her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Policy from Colorado College. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Water Education Colorado and the City of Denver's Sustainability Advisory Council on the Community Adaption & Resiliency Committee. In her free time, she can be found trail running, skiing, baking, reading, and recreating on Colorado's rivers and lakes.



Jackie Fisher - District Manager - Orchard Mesa Irrigation District

Jackie Fisher, a Grand Junction native, brings experience and a fervent commitment to positive change to her new role as District Manager at Orchard Mesa Irrigation District. Having served as Office Manager since 2011, she has demonstrated dedication and a deep connection to the agricultural water community. Throughout her career, Jackie prioritized collaboration and meaningful change, leading by example and empowering others to reach their full potential. Eager to further refine her skills, learn from experienced mentors, and connect with like-minded individuals who share her passion for positive engagements providing opportunity in creating and making positive impacts, Jackie is excited to participate in this Water Leaders program. Along with passing these qualities on to and through her two children to continue in their lives and the impacts they create, she looks forward to nothing more than spending time with her family and friends hiking, camping, and recreating on the water.



James Dilzell - Executive Director - Eagle River Watershed Council

James Dilzell is the Executive Director of Eagle River Coalition, a small river advocacy nonprofit in the headwaters of the Colorado River. James grew up in Cleveland, OH, a city nestled along a Great Lake. He took a Field Ecology class his freshman year of high school that impacted the course of his life more than he thought. Fast forward a few years, he received a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from The University of Alabama in 2017 and spent summers working in Montana as a trail crew lead. Rather than attending graduation, he packed up his station wagon and drove west to Colorado. He began his career in water as the education and outreach coordinator for the organization in 2019, connecting the local community to the Eagle River Watershed and important water topics. Now as the Executive Director, he works to strategically lead a staff of four to implement our Stream Management Plan and ultimately, protect our local rivers. He lives in Eagle, and while not talking about water, he can be found cooking, biking, skiing, camping and drinking as much (decaf) coffee as he can.



Jessica Mills - Admin Assistant & Educational Outreach - Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District

Jessica Mills works for the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District (LAVWCD) and is responsible for their Educational Outreach Program while also attending to administrative duties. She currently sits on several boards representing LAVWCD including the Arkansas River Basin Water Forum board and the Fountain Creek Watershed Flood Control and Greenway District (FCWD) Board, while also serving on the Otero County Farm Bureau board and FCWD Citizen's Advisory Group to promote and represent the agricultural community. Jessica currently serves as the vice-chair of the FCWD and is also an active member of the Colorado Farm Bureau's Young Farmers and Ranchers Program. Her professional goal is to always make sure that agriculture has a voice and strives to adequately represent the farming community when it comes to their most valuable resource, their water.



Jessica was born and raised in Fowler, Colorado on her dad's farm and currently enjoys helping her husband, Wyatt, with his farming operation between Manzanola and Fowler where they grow alfalfa, corn, and sorghum sudan grass under the Rocky Ford High Line and Catlin Canal systems. She and Wyatt have 3 kids they are actively raising to appreciate the agricultural community and its values. Jessica enjoys her garden, reading,

crotchet, and has dedicated her life to her family and farming. Jessica holds a Bachelor of Fine Art degree for photography and graphic design along with a Master of Arts degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education.

Jonathan Villines - Innovation Manager - Mile High Flood District

Jon Villines, a civil engineer and urban planner with a focus on stream and watershed management, has been with the Mile High Flood District for over five years. He is currently the Innovation Manager for the Flood District, and prior to that he was the South Watershed Manager. Before MHFD, Jon was a Design and Project Engineer for Aurora Water for over six years, and prior to that he was the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the City of Louisville, Kentucky. Jon got his B.A. in Urban Studies from Brown University and his M.S. in Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering with a Graduate Certificate in Stream and Watershed Science from the University of Kentucky. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Colorado. He lives in Littleton with his wife Emily, who also works in the stormwater engineering field, and his two children, Gregory (5) and Juniper (1).



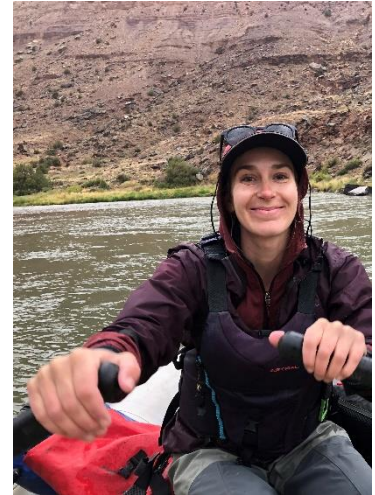
Kaitlyn Beekman - Communications & Special Projects Unit Manager - Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Water Quality Control Division

Kaitlyn Beekman is the Communications & Special Projects Unit Manager at the Water Quality Control Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. She's worked at the Water Quality Control Division for 12 years in a variety of capacities, including training drinking water staff, developing and managing a grant program for small drinking water systems, helping refugee and immigrant communities learn about their tap water, and running compliance on public drinking water systems. She recently completed a graduate degree in Strategic and Risk Communications from the University of Colorado Denver and has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Denison University in Ohio. She lives in Dillon, Colorado, with her three-year-old son, her husband, and two very energetic and loud cattle dogs, Olive and Ivy.



Katie Birch – Instream Flow Program Coordinator – Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Katie Birch has served as the Instream Flow Program Coordinator for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) since 2018. She holds a degree in Environmental Engineering with a focus on Water Resources from University of Colorado Boulder. Prior to CPW, Katie lived and worked in 6 different states across the Intermountain West, gaining diverse experience working for non-profits, federal and state government, and in private water rights consulting. Katie works statewide in protection of watersheds across Colorado. Based out of Montrose, her work is focused on securing instream flow protections for fish species ranging from high-elevation Colorado River cutthroat trout to native desert-adapted warm-water fishes. Katie lives in Ridgway and in her free time can be found exploring rivers, trail running, mountain biking, or backcountry skiing in southwest Colorado.



Katie Garrett – Engineer III, Team Lead – Colorado Springs Utilities

Katie is a water resources engineer at Colorado Springs Utilities with 7 years' experience in the industry. Her day to day work encompasses a variety of water related projects, but water rights administration and protection is where she spends the most time. Katie was born and raised in Colorado Springs and considers herself fortunate to work in the same watersheds where she grew up recreating. She has witnessed firsthand the growth along the front range and realizes the necessity of developing water supply projects that are sustainable for all uses and interests. In 2023, she began serving on the Board of Directors for the Colorado Canal & Lake Meredith Reservoir Company, the Lake Henry Reservoir Company, and the Twin Lakes Reservoir and Canal Company. She graduated from Colorado School of Mines in 2015 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Engineering and received her PE license last year. She lives in Castle Rock with her husband, James, their two cats, English Setter and horse. Her time outside of work is spent training dressage, cooking, fly fishing, birding, or simply enjoying the outdoors.



Kerry Major – Water Quality Lab Manager – City of Golden

Kerry Major is a Colorado native, growing up in the mountain communities of Gilpin County and Nederland, CO. Kerry received her bachelor's degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and her master's degree from the Colorado School of Mines in Environmental Engineering Science. She is the Water Quality Lab Manager for the City of Golden and has been with the city for 9 years. Kerry manages Golden's state certified lab, drinking water compliance program, and source water protection program. Through her position with the city, Kerry became a founder/chair for the Clear Creek Watershed & Forest Health Partnership when she helped kick-start the organization in October 2020. Kerry is particularly focused and passionate about making communities within and downstream of the Clear Creek watershed more resilient to catastrophic wildfire and believes the collaborative structure of the Clear Creek Partnership is the way to do that. Kerry currently lives in Littleton with her husband and two-year-old daughter and they love introducing their daughter to all the beautiful places and outdoor activities Colorado has to offer.



Laila Parker – Water Resources Senior Project Manager – City of Boulder

Laila Parker supports operations of Boulder's source water system, including use of Boulder's water rights, protection of instream flows, long- and short-term planning, and coordination with ditch companies. She previously managed the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game's Flow Restoration Program and as a consultant, helped Washington state and local government agencies and tribes with water and natural resource planning. Laila holds M.S. degrees in Water Resource Engineering and Water Resource Policy and Management from Oregon State University and studied biology and geology at Carleton College.



Leah Hubbard – Water Resources Operations Manager – City of Greeley

Leah Hubbard was born and raised in Glenwood Springs near the confluence of the Roaring Fork and Colorado Rivers. Leah found her passion for water studying Watershed Science at Colorado State University, and eventually found herself working in Arizona water management where she received her Master of Legal Studies in Environmental Law. The headwater state called Leah back when the City of Greeley hired her in 2019. She is now the Water Resource Operations Manager and loves every aspect of the job. Leah has a chaotic household with two little kids and two puppies who love to walk the Poudre River trail.



Lindsey Marlow – Executive Director – Friends of the Yampa

Lindsey Marlow is the Executive Director of Friends of the Yampa (FOTY). She has a background in environmental regulation as a 15-year veteran of the Coast Guard and 4 years as an Environmental Technician for the City of Loveland. She has an eclectic background in her studies with a B.A. in Cinematic Arts and Technology at CalState Monterey Bay, studies in ecology, and finally graduate courses in Watershed Science at Colorado State University. Originally from San Diego, CA, Lindsey has lived in five states, and now calls the Yampa Valley her home. She has led the growth of FOTY from one person (herself) to a current staff of seven in a four-year period, which has included a lot of growth in environmental and recreational programming. In her spare time she enjoys taking her family on river trips, mountain biking, creating, playing guitar, and a wide variety of eclectic interests. Through her advocacy and personal commitment, Lindsey continues to be a driving force in her ongoing mission to preserve our planet's water resources and habitats, and foster a deeper connection between people and the environment.



Lisa Brown – Project Manager – Wilson Water Group

Lisa Brown is a Project Manager with Wilson Water Group and has over 10 years of experience as a water resources engineer. Her focus is on long-range basin planning efforts in Colorado, grounded in engineering analyses using consumptive use and water rights allocation models. Lisa's analyses are used by her clients for a wide variety of planning efforts, ranging from due diligence Water Court filings to modeling streamflows for environmental purposes. Lisa provides her clients with data-driven information in user-friendly formats, including large group workshops, one-on-one training, concise technical memos, and comprehensive reports.



Lisa earned her undergraduate degree in Hydrology and Water Resources from the University of Arizona in 2009 and her master's degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Colorado, Boulder in 2012. Her research offered two new applications of statistical methods for tree-ring reconstruction of streamflow in the Lower Colorado River and the Gila River. She is a registered Professional Engineer in Colorado and serves as the American Water Resources Association – Colorado Chapter Membership Committee Co-Chair. Lisa enjoys hiking with her husband and can't wait to teach their daughter how to ski.

Ryan Van Pelt – Engineer II – City of Loveland Water & Power

Ryan Van Pelt was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico and grew up in Roswell near the Pecos River. He completed his undergraduate in Civil Engineering with an emphasis in Environmental Engineering and a minor in Waste Management from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. Most of his work experience is in California and Colorado. After getting married and living for another year in the San Francisco Bay Area, Ryan moved to Fort Collins in 2005 to get his Master's in Civil Engineering at Colorado State University. He has lived in Fort Collins since and enjoys pretty much all excursions that surround him with mountains, wilderness, and fresh alpine air. He has climbed Long's Peak several times, but really enjoys hiking up less traveled thirteeners so he can reflect more on the natural splendor of God's creation. Although not as enthusiastic about long hikes as him, he looks forward to taking both indoor and outdoor adventures with his wife and four kids. Ryan is a registered Professional Engineer and works for the City of Loveland Water and Power. His main job focus is managing and protecting the City's raw water supplies and water rights. He also has a part time job as an independent water resource consultant, but this is a low stress job and most of the earnings go to support his hobbies.

