

2025 Water Leaders Class Bios and Photos

Adam Prior – Chief Engineer/Deputy Director, City of Greeley

Adam Prior is the Chief Engineer of the Water and Sewer Department for the City of Greeley and is responsible for managing a team of engineers that completes capital and rehabilitation projects across the different water and wastewater systems. Mr. Prior has managed this team as the chief engineer for nine years and has performed or managed engineering and projects for the City's infrastructures that include six raw water reservoirs, three treatment plants, 643 miles of water mains, 365 miles of collection lines, 10 sewer lift stations, three potable storage facilities, and two water pump stations.



Mr. Prior holds a bachelor's degree in physics from Doane University, a bachelor's and master's degree in civil engineering from Colorado State University, and a professional engineering license, which primarily focused on different aspects of water & wastewater design, construction, and management. With 22 years of diverse engineering experience, Mr. Prior's expertise spans private industrial engineering and operations management, consulting engineering, public sector construction management, and facility construction. These experiences enable Mr. Prior to research, plan, innovate, and implement projects in a timely, accurate, economic, and detailed manner for the benefit of the community.

Amanda Hill – Senior Program Officer, Gates Family Foundation

Amanda Hill is a Senior Program Officer for Natural Resources at Gates Family Foundation. Her other conservation experience includes serving as the manager of the Land Trust Alliance's Southwest and California programs, for the Open Space Program for Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), and at Palmer Land Conservancy, where she was a Colorado Conservation Trust Future Conservation Leaders Fellow. Amanda has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Science from Colorado College, a Master of Science in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Montana School of Law.



Annie Berlemann – Fountain Creek Watershed Project Manager, Colorado Springs Utilities

Annie is the Fountain Creek Watershed Project Manager in Watershed Planning at Colorado Springs Utilities. She has been with the Utilities for 18 years, with 12 of those years working in the water laboratory in microbiology and general chemistry performing environmental and water quality analysis. In her current role, Annie works to safeguard watershed health and resiliency in Colorado Springs Utilities' home watershed. She is responsible for managing and overseeing the projects and programs that protect regional green infrastructure and watershed health, along with their respective budgets, contracts and schedules. These include a regional water quality monitoring program on Monument and Fountain Creeks that consists of 68 sample sites with 60 water quality parameters and supports permit compliance and reporting and provides information for data driven management decisions. Annie excels at communicating complicated technical information for internal and external stakeholders to increase understanding of the condition of water sources. She is committed to building relationships across the basin to undertake challenging water issues with efficiency and actionable results. Annie has a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a Master of Science in Applied Natural Science. In her free time, she enjoys riding her horses across the Colorado countryside, beekeeping, raising quail, and spending time with her family.



Dan Graeve – Research Analyst, Legislative Council Staff

Dan was born in Denver and currently lives in Wheat Ridge. He graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in Political Science in 2005 and earned a Master in Public Administration from CU Denver in 2020. Dan spent a decade working in food systems and agriculture, including working for an organic farm in Oregon's Willamette Valley, an organic produce distributor in Denver, and owning and operating an urban farm in Wheat Ridge and Arvada. Dan was active in advocacy roles with the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union and National Young Farmers Coalition during his time as a vegetable producer. Dan began a career in public service for the State of Colorado in 2015, working for the Colorado Department of Law as legal support and in public engagement before joining Legislative Council Staff, a nonpartisan research and staffing agency for the Colorado Legislature, in December of 2022. He currently provides staff support for the House Committee on Transportation, Housing & Local Government, the Joint Technology Committee, and the Water Resources and Agriculture Review Committee. Dan is an active volunteer in his community including currently serving as a Wheat Ridge Planning Commissioner and a Director on the Board of Localworks, a community nonprofit advancing local economic development and community engagement. In his free time, Dan enjoys playing music, gardening, and most of all spending time with his wife, Christa, and two children, August and Mira, ages 6 and 8.



David Schiowitz – Senior Scientist I/Durango Water Resources Team Lead, SGM

David Schiowitz is the SGM Durango Water Resources Team Leader and a licensed Professional Geologist with over 15 years of experience in hydrogeology and water resources consulting. He holds a B.S. in Geology from Fort Lewis College (2008) and specializes in groundwater supply development, water supply adequacy assessments, and water rights support. David's expertise includes well siting and design, aquifer performance testing, spring and infiltration gallery development, hydrogeological evaluations, and water quality analysis. He has assessed water supply for proposed developments, evaluated legal and physical yield of water rights, and supported



change cases and augmentation plans through modeling, analysis, and regulatory coordination.

Diane Roher – Principal Engineer, Hazen and Sawyer

Diane Roher is a water resources engineer in Hazen's Denver office, developing integrated solutions for utilities and government agencies. Diane specializes in water resources management strategies, including water supply planning and modeling, source water quality and modeling, and watershed management approaches. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from the Colorado School of Mines and an M.S. from the University of California, Berkeley.



Fern Beetle-Moorcroft – Project Manager/Hydroecologist, HRS Water Consultants

Fern Beetle Moorcroft is a project manager hydrologist with HRS Water Consultants, Inc in Lakewood, CO. She specializes in providing project management and technical oversight on groundwater resources, water rights, and contaminant fate and transport projects. She holds a B.A in Geology from Haverford College, an M.S. in Hydrology from Colorado School of Mines, and is a licensed Professional Geologist in Wyoming and New York. In her free time, she enjoys playing ultimate frisbee and enjoying the outdoors with her partner and dog.



Jared Heath – Senior Watershed Specialist, City of Fort Collins Utilities

Jared Heath grew up exploring Colorado's watersheds, fostering a passion for water and the natural environment at a young age. After working as a "professional" ski bum and rafting guide, he earned a master's in Watershed Science from Colorado State University. With over 15 years of experience in watershed management, Jared has worked in academia, consulting, and local government. As a Senior Watershed Specialist for the City of Fort Collins Utilities, he currently leads efforts to monitor and protect the city's water sources and source watersheds. In his free time, you can find him skiing, rafting, hiking, or biking in the Poudre River watershed, usually accompanied by his wife, son, and dog.



Jen Stephenson – Water Quality Department Manager, Northern Water

With over 20 years of experience in the water sector, Jen currently serves as Northern Water's Water Quality Department Manager. In this role, she oversees all aspects of Northern Water's water quality initiatives and long-term monitoring efforts, ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal regulations while safeguarding the quality and reliability of system water supplies. Jen is passionate about working in the complex and dynamic world of water. She strives to contribute meaningfully to a variety of initiatives and collaborations with the goal of protecting and improving Colorado's water supply and aquatic habitats. Her work spans both sides of the Continental Divide focusing on the Upper Colorado River Basin on the West Slope and the South Platte River Basin on the East Slope.



Jen is a Colorado native, spending much of her childhood living in North Park. Growing up surrounded by wide open spaces and nature, she developed a connection to the great outdoors. Today, she calls Loveland home, where she lives with her husband, teenage daughter, and several fur babies. In her free time, Jen enjoys traveling to new places, gardening, cooking, and embracing Colorado's natural beauty through camping and hiking.

Kayla Ranney – Colorado Water Supply Management Business Class Lead, HDR

Kayla Ranney is a water resources engineer with over 10 years of experience in long-term water supply planning, hydrologic analysis, and hydraulic modeling. She currently serves as Colorado's Water Supply Management practice lead for HDR. In this role, she is responsible for a programming and leading multidisciplinary programs spanning multiple engineering and environmental disciplines. She fosters close collaboration between disciplines at all stages of project development, is an effective facilitator, and has broad experience in working with both local and federal clients.



Kayla holds a B.S in Civil Engineering (Environmental Emphasis) from Iowa State University, a M.S. in Civil Engineering (Hydrology and Water Resources) from Colorado State University, and an MBA from Colorado State University. When not working, Kayla enjoys being outside with her husband, 2-year-old, and dog.

Lindsay DeFrates – Deputy Director of Public Relations, Colorado River District

Lindsay DeFrates is the Deputy Director of Public Relations for the Colorado River District. For over two decades, she has lived on the western slope of Colorado, and she and her husband are busy raising three kids in Glenwood Springs where she also serves on the Roaring Fork School District Board of Directors. A former middle school English teacher, freelance writer, and raft guide, Lindsay's love of words and rivers pairs perfectly with the challenge of clearly communicating the complex issues surrounding water resources and policy across the River District's fifteen counties, the state of Colorado, and the Colorado River Basin. With a focus on media relations, event planning and stakeholder engagement, her four years with the Colorado River District have provided her with tremendous opportunities to connect with a variety of passionate and diverse voices.



Matt Stockton – Water Resources Administrator, City of Thornton

Matt has been with the city of Thornton since September 2009. He loves problem solving and lending a helping hand whenever possible. As the lead of the Future Water Supply Team, Matt helps oversee and implement projects associated with Thornton's Northern Project to ensure that the city will be ready to deliver this water when the time comes. He also works closely with the city's attorneys and consulting engineers through water court to protect Thornton water rights.

Matt graduated from CSU with a Bachelor's Degree in Watershed Science.

Matt enjoys all things outdoors, whether it be snowmobiling, off-roading, or camping.



Mickey O'Hara – Freshwater Project Director Southwest Colorado, The Nature Conservancy

Mickey is the Southwest Colorado Freshwater Project Director for The Nature Conservancy in Colorado, based in Ridgway. Through his work at The Nature Conservancy and prior roles with the Colorado Water Trust, he has been working with water users and partners in the Colorado River Basin for over a decade to develop and implement streamflow and river restoration projects that support both conservation outcomes and local community priorities. Mickey holds a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from Colorado School of Mines and has built significant expertise in water resources engineering and environmental water transactions. Away from work, Mickey is an avid backcountry skier, trail runner, and aspiring kayaker – and can often be found out enjoying the rivers and mountains of the southwest with his family.



Michael Lawlor – Urban Water Quality Program Coordinator, City of Boulder

Michael Lawlor is an environmental scientist with over a decade of experience in watershed management, water quality, and environmental policy. His past work has ranged from conducting stream geomorphic assessments to strengthen community resilience in New England to evaluating the water quality of mountain lakes and municipal water supplies in Washington. Michael holds a B.S. in Environmental Science and Conservation Biology from the University of Vermont and an M.S. in Environmental Science and Freshwater Ecology from Western Washington University.



For the past five years, Michael has served as the Urban Water Quality Program Coordinator for the City of Boulder's Utilities Department. In this role, he leads efforts to protect and improve the health of Boulder's surface waters while ensuring compliance with the city's stormwater and wastewater discharge permits. When he's not working or advocating for local waterways, you'll find Michael enjoying time with his family and exploring Colorado's great outdoors – often with a paddle in hand or skis on his feet.

Nathan Phelps – Associate Engineer, Schnabel Engineering

Nathan Phelps is an Associate Engineer and project manager at Schnabel Engineering in Longmont, Colorado and serves as the Water Rights Practice Lead for the Longmont office. He has over 15 years of experience in the field of civil engineering with an expertise in water rights and water resources. Nathan is passionate about his work in helping to secure sustainable water supplies with consideration toward Colorado's unique water laws, interstate compacts, increasing or variable demand patterns, and changing hydrology. He has been involved in water projects across the state of Colorado for a variety of clients including agricultural, commercial, municipal, governmental, and private water users. Outside of work, Nathan enjoys hiking and camping trips in the nearby mountains, running half-marathons, cruising and international travel, and spending time with his wife and three children.



Nate Pearson - Assistant Director for Water Policy and Policy Advisor to Governor Polis, Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Nate grew up in New England and moved to Colorado in 2009 to attend Colorado College, where he earned a degree in Environmental Policy. Nate has worked for the State of Colorado for over a decade and has held multiple roles advising on natural resources and environmental policy and finance. He currently serves as Assistant Director for Water Policy at the Colorado Department of Natural Resources and Policy Advisor to Governor Jared Polis. In the winter and spring, Nate spends his free time snowboarding, splitboarding, and skate skiing. When there isn't snow on the ground, Nate is a passionate hiker, backpacker, runner, and native plant enthusiast.



Ryan Dalton - Water Resources Analyst I, Pueblo Water

Ryan is a Water Resources Analyst for Pueblo Water providing technical and analytical assistance in the collection, storage, and beneficial use of Pueblo Water's raw water supplies. He also administers Pueblo Water's Water Conservation Plan and performs water loss audits. Ryan has served in many capacities within Pueblo Water including meter services, distribution, and customer service. When not at work Ryan enjoys spending time with his wife and daughters doing anything outdoors, especially hunting.



Taylor Winchell – Climate Adaptation Program Lead, Denver Water

Taylor Winchell manages the climate change adaptation program at Denver Water, where he focuses on translating climate change threats to on-the-ground adaptation efforts. Taylor's work incorporates many areas of water resource planning, including climate and drought planning, water supply analysis, and long-range integrated resource planning. He received his MS in water resource engineering from the University of Colorado, Boulder, and his BS in environmental engineering science from the University of California, Berkeley.



Tracy Emmanuel – Colorado Water and Natural Resources Business Unit Lead, Otak

Tracy is a senior project manager and fluvial geomorphologist with over 20 years in the science and engineering consulting industry. She has spent more than 10 years at Otak, where she has been leading the water and natural resources practice in Colorado for the past 5 years. Tracy manages a variety of projects, currently focusing on channel/floodplain restoration, diversion/fish passage design, and geomorphic assessments across Colorado, Washington, and Oregon. Outside of work she enjoys playing in the outdoors with her family (husband, two kids, and a rowdy dog), skiing in the winter and mountain biking in the summer.



Tyler Gilman – Operations Manager, Mount Werner Water & Sanitation District

Tyler has called Steamboat home since graduating from the University of Vermont with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources in 2011. Drawn by the western lifestyle and his love of skiing, biking and all things outdoors, Steamboat has provided the perfect work/life balance. Tyler began his tenure with Mount Werner Water in 2018 and has since gained certifications as a Class A Water Treatment Operator, Class 4 Water Distribution Operator and Class 4 Wastewater Collections Operator. Tyler currently holds the position as Operations Manager and Operator in Responsible Charge for the District.

When he is not at work, you can find him exploring the backcountry on skis, bike or hiking with wife Alex, daughter Finley, son Beckett and trusty dog Skip.

