

LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS 2026



Georgia Association of
Water Professionals

2026 GAWP LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PARTICIPANTS

Participants in the Leadership Academy learn insights about themselves, leadership skills, and water industry news as well as having the opportunity to network with other leaders in the industry – not only those in their class but the class facilitators and mentors as well. We're excited to see so much leadership potential being developed in our industry to provide for the future of water management in Georgia.

MEET THE CLASS





ANDREW ACOSTA

Henry County Water Authority

Andrew Acosta has been with Henry County Water Authority for 8 years. Andrew was initially hired for ground's maintenance and quickly advanced to a water plant operator at the Towaliga Water Treatment Plant. He holds a certified Class 1 Water license as well as a Class 3 Wastewater license. He enjoys serving with several public outreach and community events that the water authority holds. Andrew has served on the GAWP Plant of the Year committee for the past three years. Last year he had the opportunity to attend the internal leadership program that HCWA has created. Additionally, Andrew is also pursuing an associate's degree in Environmental Science and Water Resource Technology that he is scheduled to complete this spring. Outside of work, Andrew likes to spend time with his family outdoors.

PAUL ADAMS

Macon Water Authority

Paul Adams is a supervisor for the Macon Water Authority and has been here for the past 5 years. Paul came in as a Tech II, operating Street Sweepers, Dump trucks, and other types of equipment. Paul is now over street sweepers and helps assist other crews when other supervisors are out. Paul came from Macon Bibb Public Works, where he worked for 12 years.



MISTY ADAMS

Bartow County Water

Misty Adams has been employed at Bartow County Water for more than 13 years. She began her career in Customer Service before transitioning to the Maintenance department, where she currently serves as the Maintenance Administrator. Additionally, she holds the position of Co-chair at the local UCC meetings. Over the course of her tenure, Misty has acquired valuable insights into the operations of the water and sewer industry. Outside of work, she enjoys quality time with her family and embarking on vacations.

ASHTON AUSTIN

Gresham Smith



Ashton Austin is a Professional Engineer in Gresham Smith's Alpharetta office with over 7 years of specialized experience in water and wastewater design. He holds degrees in Civil Engineering and Building Construction from the Georgia Institute of Technology. Ashton is dedicated to understanding each client's unique needs and delivering solutions that exceed industry standards with a focus on accuracy and quality. As an integral member of the Water + Environment team, he provides comprehensive design solutions that address complex water infrastructure challenges.

He currently works with public agencies to facilitate plan review and permitting for various water and sewer projects within Georgia Department of Transportation right-of-ways. His efficient management has contributed to the expedited approval of private developments, supporting significant regional growth.

Ashton's experience also includes the design of conveyance systems such as pump stations, detention basins, new gravity sewers, and extensive rehabilitation of sanitary sewer systems, equipping him with a well-rounded perspective on sustainable water resource management.



PATRICK BAILEY

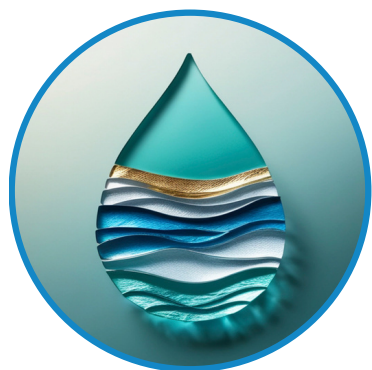
Kimley-Horn

Patrick Bailey is a seasoned stormwater engineer with over 11 years of experience specializing in projects across Georgia and the Carolinas. Patrick is passionate about working alongside communities to provide innovative stormwater solutions targeted at providing flood control, water quality benefits, and improving the ecosystems of the community. Outside of his professional life, Patrick enjoys running, reading, and relaxing by a body of water.

DENISE BALLARD

Henry County Water Authority

Denise Ballard has been a dedicated member of the Henry County Water Authority for over 27 years, making significant contributions across various departments. She began her career as a Customer Service Representative and advanced to the position of Billing Manager. Throughout her tenure, Denise has held numerous roles, including Billing Analyst, Customer Service Assistant Supervisor, Customer Service Supervisor, Revenue Accountant, Billing Supervisor, and Billing Manager. Her passion for leadership was cultivated during her studies at Mercer University, where she earned a Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Leadership. Denise also has a passion for cooking, with Thanksgiving being her favorite holiday, as it allows her to spend the day in the kitchen preparing meals for her family.



KIAN BANIASSAD

DeKalb County

Senior Engineer/Project Manager

EDDY BASILIO

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Eddy Basilio has worked at the Georgia Environmental Protection Division since July 2021 and is an Environmental Compliance Specialist in the Municipal Compliance Unit, handling municipal wastewater compliance and enforcement. She also helps manage EPD's GEOS Spill E-Reporting system. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Johns Hopkins University and is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Environmental Policy and Management at the University of Denver, with an anticipated graduation of August 2026.





RYAN BOUMA

Bartow County Water

As a Project Manager for Bartow County Water Department, Ryan Bouma oversees the design, procurement, construction, and payment of water and sewer projects throughout the county. He has worked for local governments in Canada since 2016, prior to coming to Bartow County in early 2025. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Alberta and obtained his Georgia engineering license last summer. Ryan has worked on many linear infrastructure projects such as water and wastewater pipelines, as well as construction of a water treatment plant, and overseeing the regulatory water permits held by a city. With 20 years of experience, Ryan's experience has covered water, wastewater, geotechnical, asset management, road infrastructure, and director of a public works department. He is excited about water in the state of Georgia, advancing water projects for the public, and upgrading infrastructure.

SAM BRODER

BenchMark

Sam Broder currently works at BenchMark as Director of Engineering for Linear Infrastructure specializing in design and construction support of water, and sewer collections systems. With 10 years of experience at BenchMark, Sam has extensive experience with large infrastructure projects primarily in the Greater Atlanta Metro Area. He has been the lead design engineer for water transmission and distribution mains, sanitary sewer and combined sewer collection systems, and stormwater networks including stormwater modeling. Sam is a registered Professional Engineer in the state of GA and received both B.S. and M.S. degrees from Auburn University.





BARRY BROWN

Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority

Barry Brown is an accomplished water industry professional serving as an Assistant Division Manager at the James E. Quarles Treatment Division, Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority. He has more than 24 years of experience in drinking water treatment and utility operations. Throughout his career, Barry has built a reputation for operational excellence, regulatory compliance, and a steadfast commitment to public health and environmental stewardship. Barry helps oversee daily operations, supports capital improvement initiatives, and mentors operators and technical staff. He is known for fostering a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement, ensuring that teams are well-trained, engaged, and prepared to meet evolving regulatory and operational demands. Barry holds Class 1 Water and Industrial Wastewater licenses in the state of Ga. Barry's love for water extends past his professional role, as he enjoys maintaining his pool at home for entertaining, and riding the ocean on his many cruise adventures with family and friends. For Barry, Water is life!

JEREMY BROWN

Kamstrup



Jeremy Brown is an operations-minded sales leader whose career began in manufacturing, where he learned the importance of clarity, consistency, and supporting the people closest to the work. His years in production leadership taught him how to improve processes by listening to teams, understanding their challenges, and creating environments where they could succeed. The discipline and accountability he developed in the United States Marine Corps continue to guide his approach to leadership today. Those early experiences shaped his belief that strong outcomes come from strong teams and that improvement is a continuous, shared effort. Transitioning into sales allowed Jeremy to use that same mindset to support customers and partners. He brings practical operational insight and a genuine, people-first approach to his role as a Regional Distribution Sales Manager, focusing on building trust, solving real problems, and helping organizations achieve meaningful, lasting progress.



DENITA BURTON

City of Atlanta

A proven and well-rounded leader, Denita Burton is deeply committed to serving the constituents of the City of Atlanta and making a meaningful impact in the community. With a collaborative leadership style, Denita fosters strong relationships and open communication, ensuring alignment and progress across all areas of engagement.

Denita is a seasoned executive with over 12 years of experience in the water treatment industry. As a leader at the City of Atlanta, she oversees critical functions including Budget Management, New Meter Purchases and Installation, Construction Projects, the AMI Project, and Utility Revenue Management (URM). Her role encompasses driving financial strategy, operational efficiency, and organizational growth.

Denita is recognized for her ability to build strong partnerships across the city, ensuring projects progress seamlessly. Her strategic vision, leadership in transformation, and expertise in risk management have been instrumental in advancing major initiatives. Notably, she spearheaded the FIFA World Cup Project, ensuring sufficient water availability throughout Atlanta and maintaining accurate water meter registration and clean water supply. Additionally, she led the URM project to maximize savings and optimize revenue for the Department of Watershed Management, implementing innovative solutions that delivered measurable results.

TRELL CAREY
Macon Water Authority

Waterline Maintenance Supervisor



**CLAY COCHRAN****ARDURRA**

Clay Cochran has worked as a project manager and engineering consultant for the past 9 years at Ardurra. He has 18 years of experience in the water industry including construction, operations, design, and management. His work encompasses all facets of water from inside the fence processes at water, wastewater, and reuse facilities to liner distribution and collection systems. He is a registered Professional Engineer in Georgia and other Southeastern states, and holds certifications as a Project Management Professional, Drinking Water Treatment Operator, Distribution System Operator, Wastewater Treatment Operator, and Subsurface Disposal Operator. He previously served as an Engineering Officer with the US Army Corps of Engineers and graduated with a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Tennessee Technological University.

AMANDA CODY
Brown and Caldwell

Amanda Cody, PE is a process mechanical engineer at Brown and Caldwell with over eight years of experience supporting municipal drinking water infrastructure projects across the United States. Her experience includes bench and pilot scale treatability studies, planning, hydraulic modeling and design of water treatment, storage, and conveyance systems. The breadth of her work spans all phases of the project life cycle, from planning and feasibility studies through detailed design and construction. As a project engineer, she has coordinated with multidisciplinary teams including civil, structural, architectural, electrical, and instrumentation and controls personnel. Amanda holds a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Wisconsin and is a licensed Professional Engineer and Class 3 Water Operator in the State of Georgia.





CHARLES COFIELD

Hazen and Sawyer

Charles Cofield is a process-mechanical engineer with Hazen and Sawyer who has spent 9 of his 12-year career in the water space. Charles primarily acts as a project manager and lead process mechanical engineer for water treatment and pump station design projects. Prior to Hazen, Charles worked as a designer with Wolverton and Associates (now CHA). He obtained his Bachelor of Science in Biological Engineering from North Carolina State University and his Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He resides in Chamblee, GA with his wife and three kids.

RYAN COOVER

Cobb County Water

Ryan Coover is the Water System Maintenance Assistant Manager for the Cobb County Water System. Currently, Ryan assists in managing and overseeing the Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection system operations and staff for Cobb County. With certifications in water distribution and wastewater collection, he brings strong technical expertise and operational insight to the utility. Ryan is known for his focus on accountability, safety, and continuous improvement. He has played an integral role in advancing safety culture and reducing preventable incidents while increasing overall driver and fleet performance across the system. Through strategic foresight, operational discipline, and a service-first mindset, Ryan continues to strengthen infrastructure reliability while supporting the professionals who keep the system running every day. Ryan has been with Cobb County Water System for almost 20 years, working in various roles.





NICHOLAS CUMMINGS
Columbus Water Works

Nicholas Cummings serves as Superintendent of Managed Maintenance and Security at Columbus Water Works and has spent more than 25 years working in the water and wastewater industry. He started out in hands-on roles and worked his way through positions in fleet maintenance, GIS, information systems, and operations leadership, giving him a practical, boots-on-the-ground perspective on what it takes to keep utility services running every day. Today, he leads teams responsible for maintenance, security, facilities, and fleet operations, with a focus on teamwork, problem-solving, and making sure the job gets done right for the community they serve. Outside of work, Nick enjoys music, spending time at church, and being with his wife and their three boys — who keep life busy and fun beyond the workplace.

NGOZI DARAMOLA
Fulton County Public Works

Ngozi Daramola is the Industrial Pretreatment Manager for the Fulton County Government Public Works Department. She leads the County's Industrial Pretreatment Program, overseeing industrial compliance, permitting, inspections, and enforcement to protect the sewer system and local waterways. She holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from University of West Georgia. Outside of work, she enjoys meaningful time with family and friends, traveling, and learning anything related to finance.





SHANNON DAVIS

Newton County Water and Sewerage System

Shannon Davis serves as the Billing Supervisor for the Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority (NCWSA) in Covington. She is a dedicated professional with over 13 years of experience in the water and wastewater industry, committed to providing accurate, timely, and dependable, utility billing services that contribute positively to the community.

Shannon earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from Georgia College and State University in 1996. Prior to joining NCWSA, she gained valuable experience in the banking industry, where she worked in customer service as a loan processor. This experience strengthened her organizational, financial, and customer service abilities — skills that continue to support growth and effectiveness as a leader.

She joined NCWSA in May 2013 as a Billing Specialist and demonstrated consistent performance and the desire to pursue a leadership role, leading to her promotion to Billing Supervisor in November 2021. Shannon remains eager to expand her knowledge and continues to pursue professional growth, reinforcing her commitment to efficiency, accuracy, and meaningful community impact.

NANI D'ETTORRE

EcoTech, Inc

Nani d'Ettorre is a licensed Professional Engineer in the state of Georgia with a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She serves on the Bid Team at Eco-Tech, Inc., where she supports both traditional design-bid-build and progressive design-build pursuits.

Nani leads proposal coordination efforts, performs detailed technical reviews, and contributes to cross-functional strategy development to ensure competitive, high-quality submissions. Her prior experience with both a general contractor and an engineering consulting firm provides her with a well-rounded understanding of project delivery and strengthens her ability to support complex infrastructure initiatives.

Outside of work, Nani is an avid mountain biker and outdoor enthusiast. She coaches a local high school mountain bike team and mentors elementary school-aged girls who are interested in learning the sport. She also enjoys traveling to her home country of Italy with her 16-year-old son and cheering him on at his soccer events, or going together to professional soccer matches.





BRANDON DUBBS

Henry County Water Authority

Brandon Dubbs is a Water Treatment Specialist at Henry County Water Authority, where he ensures safe, reliable drinking water for the entire community. Holding Georgia's highest Class 1 license, he manages surface and groundwater treatment while meeting every state and federal standard. With twenty years on the team, Brandon's steady expertise has become a cornerstone of the Authority. Outside work, he loves family time and tackling home remodels—usually with a tool belt and a good playlist.

MICHELLE EDWARDS

Douglasville- Douglas County Water Sewer Authoritys

Michelle Edwards has been a dedicated professional in the wastewater industry since beginning her career in 2001. She started as a Wastewater Operator in Training in the mountains of North Carolina and steadily advanced through roles in both municipal and industrial operations. Over the years, she has also served as a laboratory analyst in environmental commercial and municipal laboratories, building a strong technical foundation across multiple disciplines within the field. Michelle currently serves as one of two Wastewater Treatment Operations Superintendents for the Douglasville-Douglas County Water & Sewer Authority. During her 16 years with the Authority, she has held several key positions, including Operator, Laboratory Analyst, Industrial Pretreatment Inspector, Laboratory Supervisor, and Chief Plant Operator. Her diverse experience reflects both her leadership capability and her comprehensive understanding of wastewater treatment operations. She holds a Georgia Class I Wastewater Operator license and a Georgia Laboratory Analyst license and is also a certified Georgia Qualified Water Loss Auditor. Outside of her professional responsibilities, Michelle enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and family.





DOUG EMERICK

Templeton & Associates

I began my career in 1998 with Kiewit Construction as a Field Engineer, working on water and wastewater treatment facilities across Southern California and spending a year on a major project in Alaska. Those early years gave me firsthand experience in large-scale infrastructure and the demands of construction life. Before entering the industry full-time, I worked as a tile and stone installer and operated my own small business while in college—an experience that gave me a strong foundation in hands-on construction and entrepreneurship.

After several years on the contractor side, I transitioned into engineering consulting to build long-term stability for my growing family. My wife, Stacy, and I married in 2001 and relocated to Golden, Colorado, where I joined JVA, Inc. in Boulder. There, I further developed my technical and client-facing skills within the engineering and consulting space.

In 2011, our family moved to Georgia to be closer to Stacy's family. I joined AdEdge Water Technologies as a Project Manager and later transitioned into a sales role, where I discovered a passion for building client relationships and delivering solutions that align engineering expertise with business goals.

Today, with more than 25 years in the water and wastewater industry, I bring a unique blend of field experience, engineering knowledge, and business development expertise to my role at Templeton & Associates.

CYPRES FERRAN

City of Rome

Cypres joined the City of Rome in 2023, beginning her service as a Water Operator before advancing into her current role as a Lab Analyst. She is a graduate of St. Augustine's Flagler College, where she earned her Bachelor's degree in Coastal Environmental Science in 2018.

Driven by a deep commitment to environmental stewardship, resource sustainability, and community engagement, Cypres has built a career rooted in service and science. Before entering the water industry, she contributed to a range of environmental research initiatives and community education programs. She later transitioned to the Sea Turtle Conservancy (STC), where she managed project GIS data, provided public outreach, and coordinated conservation grants in partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) across the state of Florida.

Her work reflects her belief that protecting natural resources is both a scientific responsibility and a community calling.





MARK FOX

City of Calhoun

Mark Fox is the project manager/general foreman for the City of Calhoun water distribution department. Mark's responsibilities is overseeing all water department crews, scheduling projects, and water outages. Mark also uses GPS on all new installs for the city's field maps. Mark started has a water treatment operator. He then moved to the sewer collections, and transferred to the water department as an equipment operator, then he was promoted to crew foreman. Mark was later then promoted to locate technician/general foreman. Mark now holds the position project manager/general foreman. Mark holds a water distribution license and a sewer collection license. Mark has been with the City of Calhoun water and sewer department for 33 years.

SCOTT FRAZIER

City of Gainesville

Scott Frazier currently serves as a Maintenance Technician for the City of Gainesville, Department of Water Resources where he services and repairs the City's lift stations. He has been working for the DWR since 2024 when he began his second career after retirement. Scott had spent 30 years working for the State Department of Natural Resources as a wildlife biologist after graduating from Auburn University.



Scott is currently a resident of Gainesville Georgia where he has lived for over 20 years. He is married to his wife of 30 plus years. They have two daughters, both of whom attended UGA in Athens. When not working, they enjoy gardening at home and travelling.



TREY GOBLE

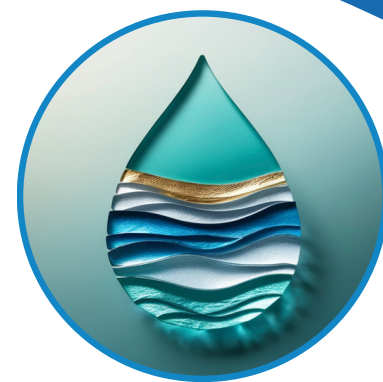
City of Rome

Trey Goble is currently the WRF Operations Supervisor for the City of Rome, where he coordinates treatment operations for the Rome (18MGD) and Coosa (2MGD) Water Reclamation Facilities. He has worked with the City of Rome since 2022, and in municipal water and wastewater since 2020. Trey currently holds a Georgia Wastewater Operator Class 1, Georgia Water Operator Class 1, and an Associate of Science in Business Administration. Prior to entering the wastewater field Trey has 13 years experience working in information technology.

DAVID GREEN JR

Jackson County Water Authority

Wastewater Operator



ALLISON GRIESE

HDR

Allison Griese is a Water Resources Engineer at HDR. For four years, she worked in civil site development where she learned skills like hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, stormwater management, grading, pipe network design, and permitting. At the start of 2025, she shifted gears into the water industry, and since then, her work has revolved around drinking water treatment, water reclamation, and stormwater management. She holds a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering from University of Georgia and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Georgia and South Carolina.



CHANCE GRZESIK COX

Georgia Power

Chance Grzesik studied at University of West Georgia, receiving a degree in Biology and studied at Georgia State University, receiving a master's degree in Geoscience. He joined Georgia Power in 2024 as part of the Environmental Affairs Water Programs team. His role entails supporting facilities in permitting and compliance in the areas of wastewater, water withdrawals, and groundwater. Throughout his time working in environmental compliance Chance has engaged with municipal and industrial wastewater, construction and industrial stormwater, drinking water, and hazardous site remediation. In his free time, Chance enjoys hiking and camping with his wife and appreciating various shows, books, and movies.





CATRINA GUNN

Stantec Consulting Services

Catrina Gunn is a multi-state P.E. with over 20 years of experience in water and wastewater design and operations. She is currently serving as an Operations Task Manager where she consults with utilities to identify areas to improve operational efficiency and works with plant operators and distribution/collection crews to complete and train on updates to various operating procedures and compliance plans. Catrina has an MS in Environmental Engineering and is a certified wastewater operator.

With her unique blend of engineering design and operations experience, Catrina can assist water and wastewater plants and facilities with designing more “operator friendly”, while still being exceptionally functional and efficient. She likes to work with the motto that open and honest communications must be the start and foundation for any successful project. In her free time, Catrina enjoys travelling with friends, and spending time with her nephews and 2 dogs.

WEBB HANSARD

City of Cumming

Webb Hansard is the Capital Projects Manager for the City of Cumming Utilities Department, where he has served for over 12 years working in various roles within the department, and serving in his current role for 3 years. He has an engineering background graduating with a degree in Civil Engineering from Southern Polytechnic State University in 2012. In his current position, he manages the financial, contractual, and operational aspects of the city's water, wastewater, and stormwater capital projects. He enjoys collaborating with his utility team and outside engineers/contractor's to create and complete projects that benefit the public and city by improving overall water and wastewater quality. Outside of his professional life, Webb enjoys watching movies & sports, spending time outdoors, and spending time with his wife and their two children.





CHAD HENDRIX
Augusta Utilities

Chad Hendrix is a civil engineer with 28 years of experience in the water resources sector, with a career dedicated to public service in the water and wastewater industry. He has broad experience in infrastructure design and construction, supporting both reliable drinking water service and environmental stewardship. For over a decade, Chad has served the citizens of Augusta-Richmond County where his current role is the Assistant Director of the Utilities Department's Engineering and Construction Division, leading the planning, design, and construction of critical water and wastewater projects. He earned his civil engineering degree, with a minor in environmental engineering, from Clemson University. Outside of work, Chad enjoys camping, hiking, boating, and fishing the local waterways, sharing his love of the outdoors with his supportive wife and two children.

COURTNEY HESLOP
Fayette County Water

Courtney Heslop serves as the AMI Customer Response Supervisor for the Fayette County Water System. Since joining the department in January 2025 as a Customer Service Representative, Courtney has transitioned into leadership, now overseeing the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) operations. In this role, she manages field technician workflows, monitors system data for anomalies like constant water consumption, and spearheads process improvements to enhance service delivery. Courtney is dedicated to technical excellence and team development, ensuring the Fayette County community receives reliable, data-driven utility support.





CRAIG HINTON

Forsyth County

Craig Hinton is the Assistant Manager of Water and Wastewater Plants for Forsyth County, where he began serving in May 2025. He brings more than two decades of experience in the water and wastewater industry, having worked in collection systems, treatment operations, and project management roles across multiple utilities in Georgia.

Craig began his career with Clayton County in the Collection System Department, where he spent a year clearing easements, inspecting manholes, and later working on a sewer televising truck. He was then promoted to Water Treatment Plant Operator at the Hicks Water Treatment Plant, where he earned his Class III Water Treatment Plant Operator license. After relocating to North Georgia, Craig joined the Cobb County–Marietta Water Authority and worked at the Quarles Water Treatment Plant for ten years. During his time there, he earned both his Class II and Class I Water Treatment Plant Operator licenses. Following another move to Cumming, Georgia, Craig joined Inframark (formerly ESG Operations) at the Antioch Water Treatment Plant in Forsyth County. He later spent a short period with Gwinnett County before returning to Inframark, where he was promoted to Project Manager for a new water and wastewater project in Jasper, Georgia. During this time, he obtained his Class III Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator license.

Craig is currently pursuing a degree in Organizational Leadership with a concentration in Public Service at Georgia Highlands College.

Outside of work and school, Craig enjoys spending time with his family, taking naps with his dog, and delivering dad jokes to his wife and son. He and his family enjoy traveling when possible and encouraging their son to try new experiences. Craig looks forward to using the principles gained from the Georgia Association of Water Professionals Leadership Program to grow as a leader and better serve his community.

JAMES HOLLIE

Turnipseed Engineers

James Hollie, is a certified professional engineer who grew up in Vancouver, Washington, and earned his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from Washington State University. He began his career in water treatment for the semiconductor industry before relocating to Georgia and joining Turnipseed Engineers in 2020. At Turnipseed, James has contributed to a wide range of municipal and environmental projects, including the design of lift stations, water and sewer system upgrades, water pollution control plants, hydraulic modeling, water audit certifications, funding applications, permitting, watershed assessments, and construction inspection.





ARIC JACKSON

Columbus Water Works

Aric Jackson serves in an executive leadership role at Columbus Water Works as Deputy Chief of Employee Services, Environmental Services, and Risk Management. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia, where he earned a degree in Political Science and Governmental Affairs. He brings more than a decade of experience working with governmental entities across the State of Georgia, with expertise in human resources, litigation support, claims management, insurance, and environmental health and safety.

Aric holds certifications from the State of Georgia as both a Wastewater System Collection Operator and a Water Distribution System Operator. He is also a SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) through the Society for Human Resource Management and has earned his certification in Human Resource Management from the University of Georgia.

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Aric is deeply committed to community service. He serves as Chairman of the Board of Enrichment Services Program, Inc., a Community Action Agency serving the West Georgia (Chattahoochee Valley) region. He also serves as a Board Member of the Chattahoochee River Conservancy, an organization dedicated to the stewardship and preservation of the Chattahoochee River.

MARIA JAMES-ABDULGHANI

Fulton County Public Works

Maria James-Abdulghani is a Development Site Inspector Supervisor with extensive experience in the planning and development field. Through her work with various municipalities across the Atlanta area, she has gained valuable insight into community initiatives and regulatory processes. Maria is passionate about continuous learning and welcomes new challenges that allow her to grow both professionally and personally.

Outside of her career, Maria enjoys traveling and exploring museums and historical landmarks, reflecting her deep appreciation for the past and the evolving stories of people and cultures. She also loves sharing her Caribbean cuisine with friends and family—recipes and traditions lovingly passed down from her grandmother and aunts.





RAM JEEDIGUNTA

Cobb County Water

Ram Jeedigunta currently serves as the Deputy Director for the Cobb County Water System, where he oversees the Engineering and Customer Service divisions. A registered Professional Engineer with more than 20 years of experience, he previously managed program services focusing on massive tunnel systems and green infrastructure. Ram holds a Master's degree in Civil Engineering and is a member of the American Water Works Association and GAWP committees.

CHLOE JENNERMAN

Jacobs

Chloe Jennerman joined Jacobs in 2017 as part of the water and wastewater treatment team. In her role at Jacobs, Chloe is responsible for supporting municipalities through project management, developing operations guidelines, asset management, engineering design, and hydraulic engineering. She is a registered Professional Engineer in Georgia and with 10 years of experience in the water and wastewater industries, has a proven ability to build long-term client relationships, turning them into successful projects that address critical water and wastewater treatment as well as pumping challenges. She holds a Bachelor and Masters of Science in Environmental Engineering from Georgia Tech. In her spare time, she enjoys volunteering at her church, Christ Covenant, serving on short-term mission trips overseas, and hiking with her husband.





JORDAN JOHNS

Garver

Jordan is a Projects Administrator on Garver's Atlanta Water team, where she supports project delivery through pre-bid coordination, grant application assistance, budget review, and monthly billing and invoicing. She leads the Lead & Copper project for Paulding County and manages the team's two-week deliverable tracking system to keep projects running smoothly. Passionate about delivering high-quality work on time, Jordan is committed to excellence and continuously expanding her knowledge in the water industry. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Visual Communications with a minor in Psychology from Berry College and a Master in Management from Shorter University. Beyond her professional work, Jordan enjoys spending time with her husband, family, and friends, coaching volleyball for the next generation, and traveling to new places.

ASHLEY KINSEY

Hazen and Sawyer

Ashley Kinsey is a seasoned water resources engineer with Hazen & Sawyer with 8+ years of experience working on projects within the Atlanta Metro area and throughout the United States. Her expertise spans across stormwater infrastructure design (traditional & green), applied fluvial geomorphology, ecosystem and floodplain restoration, strategic watershed planning and management, permitting on a local, state, and federal level, and project management. She holds a bachelor's degree in Biosystems Engineering from Auburn University and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Georgia, Alabama and North Carolina. She is the current Secretary of the GAWP Stormwater Committee, where she enjoys connecting with and learning from her fellow stormwater peers. Outside of work, Ashley enjoys playing soccer, skiing, cooking, reading, and spending time outdoors.





NATHEN KULLING

Archer Western

Nathen Kulling is a Preconstruction Director focused on Collaborative Delivery Projects (CMAR, PDB, FPDB) in the Water and Wastewater Market for a leading national contractor. He started as an intern in 2007 for a heavy civil general contractor in Atlanta, where he was first indoctrinated into the world of water. In 2008 he graduated from Southern Polytechnic State University with a BS in Construction Management. The initial reason for moving to Atlanta was to pursue Architecture, however after one semester he quickly realized Architecture was too subjective and grandiose for his liking which was a stark contrast to the rational and down-to-earth Construction Management classes he was also taking that first semester. After graduating he became a full time Estimator focused on the Water market. Along with Estimating for many years, he also managed field operations for several water projects (water, wastewater, storm). As collaborative delivery projects continue to become Utility Owners' preferred choice over traditional design-bid-build, he started leading the preconstruction phase of these projects in the Southeast. He enjoys collaborative delivery projects due to the relationships that are built out of respect and trust, partnering that occurs to solve challenges and do what is best for the project, and being able to provide substantive value to the client that lasts decades. Nathen has been married for almost 14 years and has two children.

YASAH LAVALA

Dekalb County Department of Watershed Management

Yasah Lavala is a Project Coordinator at the Dekalb County Department of Watershed Management supporting the planning, execution, and delivery of water infrastructure, treatment, and distribution projects. Her job function involves coordinating cross-functional teams, managing project documentation, tracking budgets and timelines, and ensuring compliance with environmental and regulatory standards.

She is a dedicated and forward-thinking professional with a passion for growth, innovation, and meaningful impact. With a foundation in project management, she is focus on delivering high-quality results while continuously learning and evolving. She thrives in collaborative environments, value integrity and creativity, and enjoy turning ideas into action. Whether working independently or as part of a team, Yasah brings focus, adaptability, and a solutions-oriented mindset to everything she does.





AARON LOHMAN

Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority

Aaron Lohman serves as the Maintenance Planner/Scheduler for the Maintenance Division of the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority. He joined the organization in 2021, beginning his career in the water industry and quickly establishing himself as a key contributor to project management, fleet management, and asset management across the authority.

Mr. Lohman brings extensive maintenance experience from his six years of service in the United States Air Force, where he worked as a Maintenance Hydraulics Craftsman. During his tenure, he developed strong expertise in maintenance programs, procedures, and multiple computerized maintenance management systems (CMMS), and advanced into a leadership role prior to his separation.

His combined military background and professional experience with CCMWA have equipped him with the technical, organizational, and leadership skills that support his success in his current role as Maintenance Planner/Scheduler.

BEN MARTIN

Fayette County Water

Ben Martin is a drinking water operations leader specializing in plant maintenance and infrastructure management. His experience spans regulatory compliance, field inspections, and utility operations, giving him a comprehensive understanding of water systems from source to tap. Ben is passionate about people and believes strong relationships are at the heart of effective leadership. He strives to listen first, seek understanding, and build strong teams committed to protecting public health. Through the Leadership Academy with Georgia Association of Water Professionals, he looks forward to growing alongside fellow water professionals and strengthening his ability to serve his community with integrity and purpose.





HEATH MARTIN

City of Cumming

Heath Martin is the Utilities Development Manager for the City of Cumming, bringing more than 24 years of service to the organization. He began his career with five years in the City’s Street Department before transitioning to the Department of Utilities, where he has served for the past 19 years.

Heath has a diverse technical background developed throughout his tenure with the City, including extensive experience in GIS, before stepping into a leadership role over the past five years. In his current position, he

oversees a wide range of functions within the Utilities Department, including asset management, GIS data, inspections, project management, capital improvement planning (CIP), master planning, and engineering coordination.

Over the course of his career, Heath has played a key role in major system expansions and infrastructure upgrades for the City of Cumming’s water and sewer systems. His experience includes work on water and wastewater treatment plant upgrades, sewer pump stations, water booster stations, elevated water storage tanks, and major distribution and collection line improvements.

Outside of his professional responsibilities, Heath enjoys coaching his children in sports and spending time with family and friends.

He holds a diploma in drafting from Lanier Technical College, along with Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection licenses. He has also earned a Certificate in Public Works Management from the University of Georgia’s Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

GABY MCMULLAN

Georgia Association of Water Professionals

Office Administrator





DAVID MCWHORTER

City of Gainesville

David McWhorter is a Project Manager at the City of Gainesville Department of Water Resources. David holds a B.S. in Geology from the College of Charleston and has completed Masters coursework at the University of Georgia in Geophysics. Previously an air traffic controller for the United States Air Force, David left the service as a technical training instructor, achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant. Upon completion of his degree work, he served as a Natural Resource Specialist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He accepted a position as the Operation's Officer at TESA Communications LLC, a cell tower construction company, where he gained 7 years of business and construction management experience at the executive level. He currently oversees numerous water, wastewater, and stormwater projects for the City of Gainesville and holds state licenses for Water Distribution and Wastewater Collections. He serves on the GAWP Legislative Committee and is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Sigma Gamma Epsilon National Honor Society for the Earth Sciences. In his free time, he hunts invasive feral hogs and nuisance coyotes and practices Brazilian Jui Jitsu at Team Doan in Gainesville.

JARION MOORE

Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority

Jarion Moore is a dedicated Process Control Analyst with the Cobb County-Marietta Water Authority, where he has proudly served for the past four years. In his role, Jarion helps ensure the reliability and efficiency of vital water systems that support his community, bringing precision and a strong work ethic to everything he does.

Outside of work, Jarion enjoys spending time outdoors hunting and fishing, and he never misses an opportunity to fire up the grill for a good BBQ. He is also a committed volunteer, serving as a coordinator at Lifeline Outreach Ministries Food Pantry, where he helps support families in need and give back to the community.

A loyal fan of Alabama Crimson Tide football, Jarion proudly cheers on his team every season (ROLLTIDE!!!). Whether at work, in the community, or enjoying the outdoors, he's dedicated to all that he does.





BRYAN MUÑOZ

Stratus

Bryan Muñoz is a design engineer at ESI – Stratus, where he designs water and wastewater systems for local and surrounding water authorities. He graduated from Auburn University in August 2025 with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Since joining ESI – Stratus in September 2025, he has been learning something new every day about the water/wastewater industry. He usually works with Civil 3D on the job but has also been involved in some site visits. Bryan is committed to learning and improving his career skills and hopes to make an impact to others with his work.

RUSSELL NIX

Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Russell Nix is a 20-year veteran of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD), where he has built a career rooted in environmental protection and public service. He earned his B.S. in Biology from the University of West Georgia and began his professional journey through the Governor's Co-op program, traveling across the state to collect wastewater, surface water, and groundwater samples.

After two years working as an aquatic ecologist conducting fish population assessments and managing invasive vegetation with a private lake management company, Russell joined EPD in 2005 as an Environmental Specialist overseeing compliance and enforcement of drinking water, wastewater, solid waste, and erosion control programs. In 2015, he became Manager of the Recovered Materials Unit, leading scrap tire cleanups and administering Solid Waste Trust Fund projects. In 2024, he became the manager of the Regional Water Planning Unit, supporting Georgia's regional water planning councils.

Known for his "can-do" attitude, Russell enjoys kayaking, fishing, cooking outdoors, and traveling in his vintage GMC motorhome.





JASON PERRY

Thomas & Hutton

Jason is an Environmental Team Project Manager at Thomas & Hutton with a degree from Georgia Tech. His 20 years of experience includes private development, municipal utility, and mission critical design. Jason worked at the City of Gainesville for 11 years planning, managing, designing and construction managing capital improvement projects. The time at Gainesville provided Jason extensive experience in all areas of being a municipal utility provider. Over the last 5 years, Jason has performed utility design and construction management in the mission critical industry. This project management includes design of onsite and off-site water & sewer systems as well as coordinating all on site utilities. The mission critical work includes site assessment, utility provider coordination, master planning, regional utility route assessments and planning, municipal capacity assessments, and municipal point of contact. Jason's professional experience has covered the broad range of experience to include hands-on construction, construction management, municipal provider, owner representative, public and private developments, and regional assessments.

ERIC POCHYNOK

Gwinnett County

Eric Pochynok is an Engineer IV based in Atlanta, GA. With a background in civil/environmental engineering, he specializes in wastewater conveyance design and asset management.

Currently, Eric works at Gwinnett County's Department of Water Resources, where he contributes to the near-term and long-term strategic planning of the County's pump stations and force mains. He is known for inter-disciplinary collaboration, leveraging system data towards making critical decisions, and a drive to learn about new concepts emerging in the water/wastewater profession. In addition to civil engineering, Eric is passionate about playing the bass guitar and reading science fiction. He aims to continue improving his analytical skills as well as his ability to develop the skills of his team members and peers.

Eric holds a MS degree in Civil Engineering from Kennesaw State University and is committed to lifelong learning and spreading awareness of the importance of resilient water management policies that ensure safe drinking water for generations to come.





TONY REA

Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority

Tony Rea is the Billing and Customer Service Manager at the Douglasville-Douglas County Water and Sewer Authority in Georgia, where he leads customer service and meter services operations. With more 35 years of utility industry experience, Tony previously spent over three decades at Florida Power & Light Company, holding progressive leadership roles in customer care, operations management, smart grid deployment, and contractor administration.

Throughout his career, he has led large-scale operational teams, driven performance improvements, supported technology modernization initiatives, and strengthened customer experience strategies in highly regulated utility environments. His expertise spans customer care operations, smart grid implementation, vendor management, performance management, and organizational leadership.

He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Florida International University and is passionate about building high-performing teams, streamlining processes, and delivering reliable, customer-focused utility services.

RAVEN S. REESE

Clayton County Water Authority

Raven S. Reese is a Senior Communications Specialist at the Clayton County Water Authority (CCWA) with over seven years of experience in the water industry. Since beginning her career in 2018, she has grown into a communications professional dedicated to strengthening public trust and deepening community relationships. In her current role, she publishes annual regulatory reports and oversees CCWA's community outreach initiatives, helping translate complex information into clear, accessible messaging for diverse audiences.

A native of Albany, Georgia, Raven relocated to the Metro Atlanta area to attend Clayton State University, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in Communications & Media Studies. She is passionate about community engagement, organizational storytelling, and building meaningful connections between CCWA and the community it serves. As a young professional committed to continuous learning and professional development, she strives to grow as a leader while making a lasting, positive impact.





MAX RHODES

Forsyth County

Max Rhodes is a 33-year-old father who finds his greatest joy outdoors, whether casting for trout in a quiet stream, paddling across calm or rough water in his kayak, or cheering on the Atlanta Braves during baseball season. Trout fishing and kayaking aren't just hobbies—they're how he recharges, reflects, and stays connected to nature. Whether it's an early morning on the water, a family adventure outside, or a summer evening following the Braves, he values the balance these passions bring to his life. Professionally, he brings a strong background in surveying and mapping, paired with experience in asset management for local government. His work is grounded in precision, planning, and long-term stewardship—helping communities maintain and manage critical infrastructure effectively. Detail-oriented and dependable, he takes pride in supporting sustainable growth while keeping both feet firmly planted in the field he knows best.

ALEX RIES

Barge Design Solutions

Alex Ries is a Senior Project Engineer at Barge Design Solutions with 12 years of experience as an engineering consultant in the Water / Wastewater and Natural Gas industries. The bulk of his past experience was centered within the Energy sector, with over 10 years working on linear natural gas pipeline projects, pipeline routing feasibility studies, design of horizontal directional drills, utility conflict analyses, and regulatory / permitting compliance. Since joining Barge in August 2025, Alex has shifted his focus back to the Water / Wastewater industry with the goal of leaning on past linear pipeline design experience to further broaden his capabilities and gain new skills in the utility sector. Alex obtained a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Georgia Southern University in 2014 and is a registered Professional Engineer in two states.





CHRISSY RUBEL

Gwinnett County Water Resources

Chrissy Rubel has spent almost a decade in the water industry, specializing in water conservation, water quality, and infrastructure education. She began her career at Cobb County Water System as an environmental program specialist, where she taught elementary school students about the importance of developing good water habits at a young age. Chrissy currently works as a program coordinator for Gwinnett Water Resources, where she manages the utility's conservation and education programming. She currently serves as a member of the Public Education and Model Tower committees. In previous years, she chaired the workforce development committee, H2Opportunity, where she developed a passion for recruiting the next generation of water professionals. Since joining Gwinnett County, Chrissy has become a member of 5S and was awarded the Hugh A. Wycoff Award.

CHEZ SHAW

City of Atlanta



Chez Shaw is a faith-driven professional who believes strong leadership begins with clarity, integrity, and purpose. Chez looks forward to meeting the 10-year milestone in the Fall of 2026 in government administration with the City of Atlanta. In her senior administrative role supporting the Watershed Management Commissioner and c-suite executive leadership, Chez operates at the intersection of organizational strategy, employing a thoughtful and solutions oriented approach to advancing key initiatives and guiding planning execution. Chez's work style is characterized by a commitment to continuous growth and development with a passion for strengthening her capacity to lead with wisdom and create a lasting impact through the power of service. As a participant in the GAWP Leadership Academy, Chez is dedicated to sharpening her diverse skillset and broadening her strategic perspective. She is determined to expand her influence as a leader, build meaningful connections with fellow emerging leaders within communities, and enhance her project management proficiencies. Chez holds a Master of Public Administration degree along with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication degree. Chez is deeply devoted to trusting the process, embracing the responsibility of stewarding a vision, and inspiring progress into live action and positive outcomes. Outside of the office, Chez enjoys spending quality time with her family in New Jersey, rooting for the Philadelphia Eagles, listening to good music, and being a fun Dog Mom to her peek-a-poo "Cypher".



CAMERON SHEA

CDM Smith

Camren Shea is an Environmental Engineer at CDM Smith with nearly 7 years of experience spanning watershed master planning, state water planning, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, asset management, construction administration, and the design of wastewater conveyance and treatment systems. Mr Shea has received his BS from Clemson University and his MS from NC State University, both in Environmental Engineering. After spending most of his career in North Carolina, he is now excited to call Georgia his home.

ROBERT SHERROD

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, ARC

Robert Sherrod serves as Wastewater Principal Planner for the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District, he leads critical regional policy efforts and provides technical support to local communities to ensure long-term urban resilience. With over 12 years of experience, including key roles at the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, Robert brings a data-driven, GIS-informed approach to complex planning challenges. Originally from Los Angeles, he holds a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of West Georgia and a bachelor's from Morehouse College. A certified PMP and CMIT, Robert excels at aligning the interests of government, engineering, and environmental stakeholders to shape a more resilient, sustainable metropolitan landscape.



SALLY ANNE SHORT

Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority

Sally Anne Short is a retired educator now serving as the water conservation manager for the Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority. She is committed to raising awareness about the importance of water conservation for all ages. An avid reader and relationship-builder, Sally Anne believes in the power of connection whether it's with people or the natural resources that sustain us.

GRAHAM SIZEMORE

GMC



I graduated from Clemson University with a BS in Environmental Engineering and began working for an architecture and engineering consulting firm, Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC), in the summer of 2018 designing water and wastewater treatment plants. I began my career with GMC in Augusta and moved to our Atlanta office just over 4 years ago. I am currently a design coordinator for projects in Georgia and Tennessee and project engineer specializing in water and wastewater treatment projects for various municipalities, government agencies, and private corporations across the Southeast. I have a PE license in Georgia and South Carolina, with a Level II Certified Design Professional license in Georgia through GSWCC. I assist primarily in design and development of bid documents including plans and specifications. I have a Class I Biological Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator license in Georgia, with the equivalent licenses in Alabama and South Carolina as well. After graduating Clemson, I attended Augusta Technical College and completed an Instrumentation, Automation, and Control Academy. I have also completed the ISA Developing and Applying Standard Instrumentation and Control Documentation course based on ISA 5.1 (2009) Process and Instrumentation Diagram standards. I plan to pursue a BCEE license this summer once I have completed the required 8 years of experience.



CASEY STALLER

Kimley-Horn

Casey Staller is a Water/Wastewater Engineer at Kimley-Horn with 6 years of industry experience. She has worked on projects across Florida, Texas, and Georgia. Casey holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Louisiana Tech and holds Professional Engineering licenses in both Texas and Georgia. She has contributed to a wide range of infrastructure projects, including lift stations, pump stations, elevated and ground storage tanks, and linear pipelines. Her primary focus is water and wastewater master planning, and she enjoys leveraging modeling software such as WaterCAD and her overall knowledge of water systems to develop efficient and sustainable solutions for Cities and Municipalities.



MICAH TAYLOR

Freese and Nichols

Micah Taylor is a professional engineer and project manager who leads water and wastewater infrastructure projects for municipalities throughout metro Atlanta. Her experience includes the design of water transmission mains, gravity sewers, force mains, pump stations, and ground storage tanks, as well as specialized work in front-end contract documents and Envision sustainability verification. In addition to her project work, she serves as Team Manager for Freese and Nichols' Atlanta-based Transmission & Utilities team. Micah earned her Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.

TAYLOR THOMAS

BenchMark Management

Taylor Thomas is a civil engineer at BenchMark Management with 8 years of experience. Taylor first graduated from Georgia Tech with a bachelor's degree in environmental engineering. Since then, Taylor has gained design experience through a wide variety of water resource projects including water/waste treatment plants, water distribution, sewer collection and conveyance, pump stations, and more. Recently, Taylor has specialized in delivering trunk sewer capacity relief projects in accordance with the City of Atlanta's Second Amended Consent Decree that utilize the design-build delivery method where he has acted as the design project manager and permitting lead.





ERIC VAN DEVENTER

ARCADIS

Eric Van Deventer is a civil engineer with more than 10 years of experience in water and wastewater engineering. He began his career in operations as a wastewater treatment plant operator with Athens-Clarke County and has also served as a Water Treatment Plant contract operator. He holds an Associate of Applied Science in Environmental Engineering from Athens Technical College and a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Georgia. As a construction engineer and design engineer, he has contributed to projects including water and sewer main relocations and upgrades, sanitary sewer pump station improvements, construction of greenfield water and industrial pretreatment plants, expansions and upgrades to water and wastewater treatment facilities, and chemical feed system improvements. Drawing on experience as an operator, construction representative, designer, and engineer, Eric is committed to delivering high-quality projects that prioritize operational simplicity, constructability, and efficiency.

JULIE WEST

Fayette County Water System

Customer Support Specialist





JOHN WILSON

Archer Western Construction

John Wilson is a Senior Project Manager with Archer Western Construction, where he has spent the past 15 years leading teams to deliver large and complex water and wastewater treatment plant projects throughout Metro Atlanta. With 24 years of industry experience, he has collaborated closely with clients, consultants, and trade partners on a wide range of projects across Georgia. Originally from North Georgia, John now lives in Cumming with his wife and two sons.

BRIAN WOODHAM

Georgia Environmental Finance Authority

Brian Woodham is a project manager based in Atlanta. Currently, Brian works at Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) where he manages loans and ensures compliance for state and federal water and wastewater projects. He is known for his strong communication and training skills. In addition to project management, Brian is passionate about nature and veterinary medicine.



SHEN ZHOU

Wade Trim

Shen Zhou is a civil engineering professional with 20 years of experience in design and project management for linear infrastructure and site development. His expertise includes water transmission, stormwater management, combined sewer overflow (CSO) control, sewer force main projects, site development, and permitting within the Metro Atlanta area. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing.

