

# THE CONDUIT

FALL 2022

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE VIRGINIA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.



## *Celebrates 75 Years*



## WaterJAM 2022 *Recap*

### INSIDE

- VWEA 2022-2023 Board of Directors
- New Approach to Increase Operator Engagement
- 2022 VWEA Scholarships



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### VWEA 75th Anniversary

The Virginia Water Environment Association takes readers on a journey through 75 years of its existence.

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Hurricane season is here and all of us need to be prepared should disaster strike by ensuring that our organization's Emergency Response Plans are up to date.

### WaterJAM 2022 Recap

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The Virginia Water Environment Association and Virginia Section of the American Water Works Association came together again in person at WaterJAM with 2,055 registrants, 249 individual exhibitors, and 211 exhibit companies. for a time of learning, reconnecting, and outreach in and around the Virginia Beach Convention Center.



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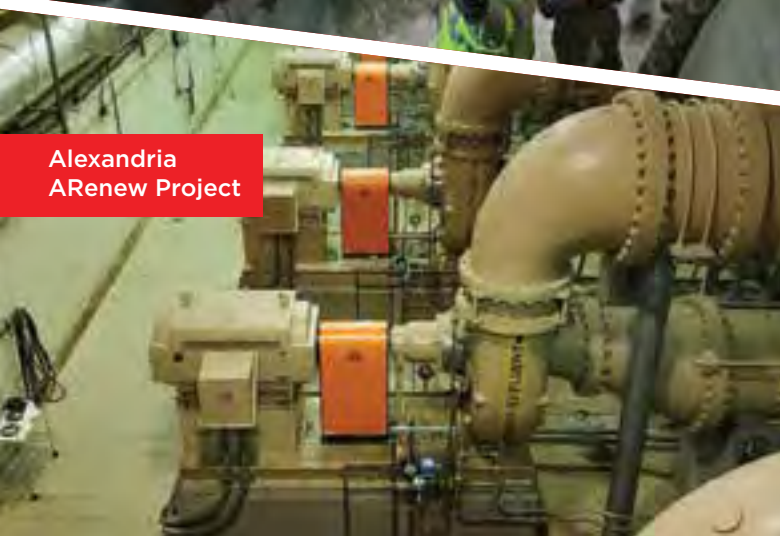
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Matt Harrison,  
VWEA President

# Participation Is the Key to Success

There couldn't be a more appropriate way to begin as your VWEA President than by saying, THANK YOU! I am truly humbled to have been given this opportunity, and wouldn't be serving in this capacity without the mentorship and guidance from our past presidents, our Board, association managers, and most importantly, OUR MEMBERS.

We strive for excellence in all that we do, and I look forward to collaborating with all our leaders as we face any challenges and develop our goals towards a successful year.

WE'RE BACK BABY! These were the words spoken by our Past President, Evan Bowles, to kick off our VWEA Membership Luncheon at WaterJAM 2022. This was the perfect way to describe the excitement that had Virginia Beach buzzing with industry professionals at our annual conference. From a record 2,055 registrants, 249 individual exhibitors, and 211 exhibit companies, to a SOLD-OUT Women Impacting Water breakfast, followed by an impactful keynote address by Dr. Janice Underwood, I can honestly say it was history in the making. A joint DE&I panel discussion was held to engage in creating diversity, equity, and inclusion in the communities where we live, work and volunteer.

For the very first time, we hosted a group of InFLOW (Introducing Future Leaders to Opportunities in Water) students. The program focuses on identifying promising students and young professionals from underrepresented groups who are interested in careers in the water industry. Can you feel the energy! With these just being a few of the highlights, we cannot forget to acknowledge our WaterJAM Committee and all the volunteers. Their tireless efforts are truly appreciated. When does registration open for 2023?!

As we close the chapter to a fantastic 75th anniversary, we will look to carry that momentum into the upcoming year. One of the key components that allows us to continue to build onto our foundation is the strategic plan and a revision to this plan every five years. With our members being the core of the association, we will need your input and feedback to allow us to shape the future of VWEA. Look for this outreach throughout the year.

Have you heard that our membership is at an all-time high? This is a testament to the enthusiasm that we as an association put forth through our committees, educational opportunities, and networking events. A growing association supplies our committees with added resources to hold more events throughout the year. We are engaging with all committees to produce some fresh ideas which we can offer to our members. This will all kick off with our Joint Leadership retreat with VA AWWA Section where our guest speaker will focus on building a high-functioning volunteer leadership culture and increasing authentic engagement. I can't wait to hear it!

In closing, I am thrilled to carry this positive vibe into my term as your President. I encourage all of our members to stay active and involved. Take on a new role in a committee, help plan an event, motivate a co-worker to join VWEA. Your participation is key to our success as an association, and success in return promotes the growth of our future leaders. Until next time, cheers! ☺



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# VWEA 2022-2023 Board of Directors



Each year at WaterJAM, members vote on a slate of officers to serve on VWEA's Board of Directors. The 2022-2023 Board of Directors took office on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at the conclusion of the VWEA Business Meeting.

## 2022-2023 Board of Directors

**President:** Matt Harrison, Sherwood Logan Associates  
**President Elect:** Sarah Lothman, Burns & McDonnell  
**Vice President:** Ryan Hendrix, Pepper's Ferry Regional Wastewater Authority  
**Past President:** Evan Bowles, Hazen and Sawyer  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Eddie Abisaab, HRSD  
**Senior WEF Delegate:** Lauren Zuravnsky, HRSD  
**Junior WEF Delegate:** Chris Tabor, Hazen and Sawyer  
**Young Professional Representative:** Sara Ferrance, Fairfax County  
**PWO Representative:** Lacy Burnette, Western VA Water Authority  
**Association Representative:** Kimberlee Stubbs, Henrico County

Three new members joined the Board this year:



**Chris Tabor**, Hazen and Sawyer, will serve as WEF Delegate from 2022-2025. Chris is an Associate Vice President with Hazen and Sawyer in their Richmond office. Chris has been an active member of VWEA for many years having served on the Board from 2009-2012 and was VWEA President in 2010-2011. Prior to his involvement in the Board of Directors, Chris was active on the WaterJAM Committee and served as Chair in 2008. As a WEF Delegate, Chris will serve in the House of Delegates, which advises the Board of Trustees on matters of strategic direction and public policy development.



**Sara Ferrance**, Fairfax County, is the new Young Professional Representative on the Board of Directors. The term for the YP Representative is one year with the option to renew for up to three years. Sara has been extremely active in VWEA since entering the industry. She has chaired both the VWEA Communications and the Collection System Committees. She has also served on the WaterJAM Committee assisting with social media

communications. As the YP Representative on the Board, Sara will work with the YP, Student Activities and Scholarship Committees. Sara is a Senior Engineer III in the Wastewater Collection Division with Fairfax County.



**Lacy Burnette**, Western VA Water Authority, assumes the remaining two years of the professional wastewater operators representative term, left vacant with the election of Ryan Hendrix as Vice President. Lacy is the Wastewater Operations Manager at WWA. He is a 2021 graduate of the VWEA/VA AWWA Leadership Academy, and has been selected twice as a recipient of the VWEA Wastewater Operator Short School Scholarship. He has been active in a number of committees including Industrial Waste and Pretreatment and Operations. Lacy participated in the Operations Challenge Team, The Blue Ridge Brawlers, which won Division II National Championship in 2020 and Division I National Championship in 2016. Lacy was also selected to represent WEF in the World Water Skills competition at IFAT 2018 in Munich, Germany. In his role as PWO Rep, Lacy will work with the Operations, WARN, Collection Systems, and Safety Committees.

Visit the VWEA website at <https://www.vwea.org/page/BoardofDirectorsandStaff> to contact a board member.

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VWEA's *The Straight Flush* podcast, which launched in July 2021, has now released 19 episodes. The podcast focuses on Virginia wastewater and stormwater trends, initiatives, and individuals' contributions to the industry.

*The Straight Flush* is available on all major podcast platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts,

Spotify, Amazon Music, and more.

Members can help and participate in this exciting new platform by sending ideas for episodes at [podcast@vwea.org](mailto:podcast@vwea.org). Alternatively, you can contact the podcast co-producers, Evan Bowles ([ebowles@hazenandsawyer.com](mailto:ebowles@hazenandsawyer.com)) or Ryan Hendrix ([rhendrix@pfrwta.com](mailto:rhendrix@pfrwta.com)).

## The latest podcast releases:

- Ep. 16** – Operations Series: A Little Bit of Everything with Sarita Adkins-Moore
- Ep. 17** – One Water Series: One Water Survey Results and Insights
- Ep. 18** – Women Impacting Water Series: A Fresh Perspective with Rusty Carvajal-Nigro
- Ep. 19** – DE&I Series: Collaborating for Culture Change
- Ep. 20** – DE&I Series: Virginia's CSO Communities Series: History of Combined Sewer Systems in Virginia



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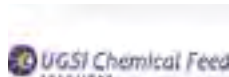
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# Collection Systems Committee Activities

## Stress Importance of Communication

What an amazing time it has been for the Collection Systems Committee (CSC) for the last two years! Under the leadership of Sara Ferrance (CSC Past Chair), and with the input of our many active committee members, we have successfully relaunched our Spring Seminar, developed a bi-monthly Educational Series Speaking Opportunity, and had two sponsored workshops at WaterJAM 2022.

Our committee is grateful for Sara's leadership, and is looking forward to the new ideas that Danny Maas (CSC Chair) and Jeff Scarano (CSC Vice-Chair) will bring to their new roles to keep the momentum going. The goal of the committee is to improve the quality of the operations and maintenance of wastewater collection and interceptor systems by improving professionalism, providing training, and by encouraging the exchange of information and ideas among collection systems personnel.

For the June WVEA Operations Conference, the CSC has historically put together a technical track of presentations geared around operating a collection system. This past conference, the CSC took a different approach and put together a workshop on the importance of operations staff being involved in the design of facilities and pipelines early in the design process.



The workshop, which was titled, "Beginning with the End: Designing with Operations in Mind" featured three speakers (Phil Hubbard P.E. HRSD, Jeff Scarano P.E. HRSD and CSC Vice Chair and Charlie Logue P.E. Retired) who collectively discussed the importance of proper documentation for designs, operational and maintenance procedures and communication throughout the lifecycle of an asset. Our workshop also included two breakout sessions which helped to reinforce what each speaker discussed.

The first session was a demonstration of how virtual reality can be used in the design process to streamline reviews and get more input from operators about how things may or

may not work well in the design environment before it is sent to construction. During the workshop, it was reiterated that a general description of the typical relationship between Engineers and Operators is that: *engineers design it and operators make it work.*

In our second session, the committee took things a step further to really hone in on the communication aspect with attendees participating in a role-playing exercise where they were either an engineer, operator, owner or contractor. Participants were presented with a theoretical project with tight deadlines and a supply chain issue that needed to be resolved in the best way possible so that all sides were fairly represented, and an agreeable solution was reached.

Feedback on this workshop was outstanding. We were also accepted and presented at WaterJAM 2022 and are looking at submitting to WEFTC 2023 to continue to share our message on the importance of designing with operations in mind!

We are not only an extremely technically sound committee, we also like to have fun and got to do just that for our WaterJAM 2022 committee meeting at Croc's in happy hour style that saw over 30 people attend on a rotating basis. A big thank you to Woolpert who sponsored this event, we look forward to doing it again next year at WaterJAM 2023!

If you are interested in joining the CSC or being a speaker at one of our meetings, please contact Danny Maas ([Danny.Maas@Woolpert.com](mailto:Danny.Maas@Woolpert.com)). We are always looking for folks to help plan our events and provide input on the topics our committee discusses and presents. You can also find out more information by going to our webpage at <https://www.vwea.org/page/CollectionSystems>. ☺





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# A Successful Year

The Laboratory Practice Committee (LPC) is a joint VWEA/ VA AWWA committee that addresses current issues faced by the laboratory community via the promotion of education, professionalism, and the exchange of ideas. These goals are accomplished through various means, including meetings and conferences.

LPC meetings are an opportunity to address standard practices and changing regulations, technological and methodology advances and the ever-changing workplace dynamics. The meetings are in a hybrid virtual/in person format. Meetings typically consist of a subcommittee meeting, followed by a full committee meeting and ending with a technical presentation showing some of the latest innovations in the environmental laboratory field. Membership represents a wide diversity of interests including municipal wastewater and drinking water laboratories, commercial laboratories, regulatory agencies and vendors.

The LPC has held two successful events this year. The 28th annual Good Laboratory Practice Committee (GLPC) meeting was held in Charlottesville this past July. The conference took place over two days with multiple speakers covering a diverse array of issues facing the laboratory community. The first day consisted of workshops, which included topics such as ethics and data integrity, laboratory calculations, and PFAS. This day concluded with a vendor exhibit showcasing the latest equipment and innovations. The second day started with keynote speakers, who covered topics such as implicit bias and regulatory updates from VELAP and the NELAC Institute. The conference then broke out into three different sessions focusing on drinking water, wastewater, and management. Each session had several different speakers. The conference focused on providing the latest information on major issues such as method updates, laboratory accreditation and new technologies.

On Monday, during WaterJAM, the LPC held a workshop entitled Laboratory Management of the Future with a focus on

“None of this would be possible without the dedication of our community.”

management topics targeting drinking water and wastewater laboratory professionals. The topics included the activities and updates of the NELAC institute, updates on the SWIFT program as it goes into full-scale implementation, mobility and broadband programs focused on employee retention and development and a focus on the Lead and Copper Rule.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our community. I would first like to thank the outgoing chair Kerri Williams for all of her hard work and effort put in over the

past year. I would also like to thank all of our committee leads for their effort in organizing our committee and putting together the conferences. The conferences could not have been done without the support of the speakers and vendors. Finally, I would like to thank all of the committee for their part in making the LPC successful. For more information on our committee please contact Tamera at [Tamera.F.schlitt@hii-nns.com](mailto:Tamera.F.schlitt@hii-nns.com). We are currently requesting a call for papers for anyone interested in presenting at our next conference. ☺

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# CVRAC Summer Activities

This summer, the Central Virginia Regional Activities Committee (CVRAC) continued to bring members of the VWEA community together. On June 24, VWEA/CVRAC held a family night with the Flying Squirrels at the Diamond in Richmond, Virginia. Nearly 100 friends and family of VWEA attended to watch the Richmond Flying Squirrels take on the Portland Sea Dogs. Things got a bit “nutsy” in the final stretch, but the Flying Squirrels came out victorious with an 8-6 win! Thanks to everyone that could come out and support the Flying Squirrels.

In addition, on August 30, VWEA/CVRAC held the 8th annual Scorcher Golf Tournament

at the Viniterra Golf Course in New Kent County. The tournament held true to its name – it was extremely hot and humid! Even with the heat, all in attendance had a great time. Sure, our scores weren’t as low as we would have liked, but it was enjoyable nonetheless to see consultants, municipalities, suppliers, and contractors in the water and sewer industry come together for a day out on the links. Thank you to Viniterra and all those that made this golf outing such a great success! I hope that more consider attending next year’s Scorcher!

In September, Committee volunteers coordinated a project tour at the City

of Richmond that was followed by an afterhours at Triple Crossing Brewery. Attendees learned about the construction progress on Richmond’s WWTP’s brand new Screenings and Grit Facility that broke ground in 2021. As part of the City’s LTCP, once complete the facility will be able to remove grit and debris for wet weather flows up to 140 MGD. Attendees enjoyed networking following the event at Triple Crossing.

As we enter the final quarter of the year, please be on the lookout for more afterhours events and the Ugly Sweater Holiday Party. The more the merrier!! ☺



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# Get Involved in the WaterJAM Committee!

**WaterJAM** is recognized as a premier water professional conference on the East Coast. Our 2022 event had record-breaking attendance of 2,055 registrants, 249 individual exhibitors, and 211 exhibit companies. WaterJAM is a conference that offers 10 concurrent technical sessions on water, wastewater, stormwater, and management topics – something for everyone. It also offers

many social and networking events and activities to keep it fun, all of which takes a lot of work and volunteers to make a successful WaterJAM happen.

Like the saying a teacher's work is never done, the same can be said for the WaterJAM committee. We are already working on planning WaterJAM 2023 and are looking for new volunteers to join our committee. Are you a person who likes to

plan events, a creative artist, or someone keen on details? The WaterJAM Committee has a number of volunteer positions and tasks that need someone to take charge.

If you are interested in joining the WaterJAM Committee, or would like more information, please contact Sherry Williams (757-234-6723, [swilliam@nnva.gov](mailto:swilliam@nnva.gov)) or Chris Willson (757-518-2404, [cwilson@brwncaid.com](mailto:cwilson@brwncaid.com)). ©

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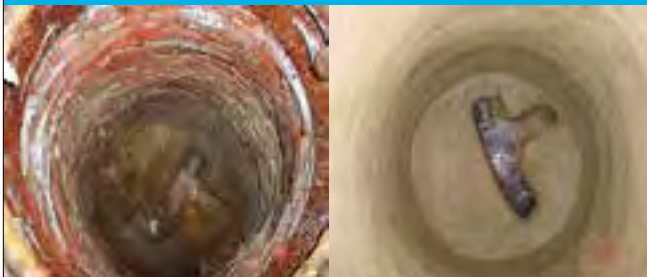
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# 2022 VWEA SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

*By Allison Lee, PE, Center for Watershed Protection, Scholarship Committee Chair*

One of the most important missions for VWEA is education – both for our members and for our industry. We have all heard about how encouraging the next generation of operators, laboratory scientists, and engineers will ensure we have the best-trained professionals to continue the important work of providing clean and safe water to our communities. VWEA is committed to this very important mission.

The VWEA Scholarship Committee offers scholarships to professionals and students. We offer five scholarships, including the Operator Short School, Rising Freshman, Undergraduate, Sonny Roden Graduate, and Member Dependent.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING WINNERS OF THE WASTEWATER SHORT SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP:

Adam Bailey, Town of Purcellville  
Aly Suebert, Town of Purcellville  
Wilson Coles, City of Covington  
Hunter Fridley, City of Covington

## WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT THE 2022 VWEA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

**Rising Freshman:** Katherine Bachman, University of Virginia

**Undergraduate:** David Kibbie, Old Dominion University

**Sonny Roden Graduate:** Xueyao Zhang, Virginia Tech

**Sonny Roden Graduate:** Lauren Koban, George Mason University

**Member Dependent:** Ujala Yousaf, George Mason University

Congratulations to our 2022 awardees! We are incredibly thankful to be able to contribute to their education, and cannot wait to see their continued success and contributions to water and the environment.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who volunteered this year to score scholarship applications. Your contribution allows this program to continue to grow and be successful every year.

If you are interested in volunteering as an application scorer for next year, or if you have any questions about the scholarship program, please reach out to me at [avl@cwpa.org](mailto:avl@cwpa.org). Scholarship applications for 2023 will be available on the Scholarships site around February 2023 <https://www.vwea.org/page/Scholarships>. ☺



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## OPERATIONS COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES

# New Approach to Increase Operator Engagement

In June, the VWEA Operations Committee hosted the 10th Annual Operations Conference. The two-day event featured operations and maintenance education sessions, a workshop by the Collections Committee, safety education sessions, an Operations Challenge Workshop, and a social and networking event on the Exhibit Hall floor. The conference was a great success and drew over 100 attendees from across the Commonwealth and Washington, D.C. as well as 10 Exhibit Hall vendors!

Some highlights from this year's conference included:

- A mini Operations Challenge competition at the social and networking event where operators from several utilities competed against each other in pipe-cutting contests.
- A virtual reality demonstration showing how 3D visualization tools can assist operator review of engineering projects and optimize the design review process.
- Full-scale grinders and pumps on site with a hands-on operator education demonstrations component.

Over the past year, using the assistance of an Operations Taskforce from the VWEA Board of Directors, we have been researching opportunities to enhance Operator-focused events. Through the work of this taskforce, and using input from multiple vested stakeholders, the Operations Committee is excited to announce that it will be taking a new approach to both Operator engagement and the Operations Challenge Competition. This new approach is being implemented to improve Operator accessibility, enrich training opportunities, and strengthen Virginia's Operations Challenge Competition.

Subsequently, next year VWEA is planning to offer two, single-day operations and maintenance education events. In 2023, these educational events are being planned to occur in southwest Virginia and in central Virginia. The Committee is also planning to host a separate feature event to highlight the competition and provide an opportunity for members to explore the benefits of this exciting event.

Stay tuned for more information. We hope to see everyone in 2023!

Operations Committee details are available at <https://www.vwea.org/page/Operations>. ☺



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## for Weather-Related Emergencies

By Gary Booth, Lynchburg Water Resources Safety Manager

**H**urricane season is here and all of us need to be prepared should disaster strike. Weather-related emergencies could produce flooding, power outages, property damage and major clean-up efforts at work and home.

In order to be prepared for weather-related emergencies, be sure that your organization's Emergency Response Plans are up to date and that staff are trained and ready to respond to all types of emergencies. In order to be prepared, you should have practice table-top exercises with your local emergency agencies, and discuss how you would handle different situations.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that everyone should have a basic emergency supply kit with the following items:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Multi-day supply of medications that you may be taking
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place
- Moist towelettes, toilet paper, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Local maps
- Rain jacket
- Heavy-duty shoes or work boots to wear in a debris-filled area to protect your feet
- Blanket or sleeping bag
- Multi-tool with a knife and can opener
- Waterproof matches



To learn more about things you should have in your emergency supply kit, please visit the following website:  
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# How It All Started...

## A Walk Down Memory Lane of VWEA's Origins

By Kathy Rabalais

### Our Beginnings

The Virginia Industrial Waste and Sewage Works Association had its organizational meeting at the Hotel Roanoke on March 4, 1947. The name was changed to Virginia Water Pollution Control Association at the Annual Meeting in Hampton in 1961. Although the conception and organization of this Association are not attributed to any one person, some early members, including Hedgepeth, Messer, Enslow, Wisely, Paessler, Miller, Roetman, Royer, and Ruehl, should be given special recognition for their imagination and determination to make the Association successful.

The Interim Secretary, Al Paessler, prepared and submitted the proposed bylaws and constitution, which were approved by W.H. Wisely at the Federation, and adopted unanimously by the charter members present at the initial meeting on March 4, 1947. A total of 63 registered at the first meeting, of whom 38 became charter members. Our parent organization, the Water Pollution Control Federation, had been formed in 1928. Prior to our 1947 organization, a few Virginians were connected either directly with the Federation, or the American Water Works Association.



### The First Annual Meeting

The first annual meeting of any organization is of particular importance. Information covering this meeting was contained in the Association's newsletter of September 15, 1947, which read as follows:

*"Final details of the Association's first Annual Meeting were completed by a joint session of the Executive, Program, and Local Arrangements Committees in Richmond today. The secretary-treasurer was authorized to issue the following formal notification to members as required by the constitution: 'All members of VJW & SWA are hereby notified that its 1947 annual meeting will be held in Ocean View (Norfolk), Virginia, at the Hotel Nansemond on October 16-17.' 'Occasion for holding the meeting at Ocean View is opening of Hampton Roads Sanitation District Commission's new Army Base Sewage Treatment Plant. Though the Commission has planned or has under construction several plants in the Norfolk area, this one is nearest to completion. Members attending the meeting will have an opportunity not only to see the plant, but to gather a lot of first-hand information on the effort that goes into providing for the abatement of pollution in an area of the size over which the Commission has jurisdiction.'"*





## 'The Conduit'

The history of *The Conduit* dates back to 1947, the year of the Association's birth. The founders of our organization quickly perceived the need for a medium of communication within the membership, some means of disseminating necessary information and news pertinent to the Association's activities. The first publication dated September 15, 1947, under the byline of "Newsletter to Continue" defined its purpose by stating:

*"With this issue of The Newsletter the Association launches itself in the publishing field. It will continue at intervals from now on, but not for the present, on a regular schedule. The Newsletter can serve as an excellent medium for the exchange of ideas and news items, in addition to its primary function as official organ of the Association."*

The October 1950 issue carried a short notice of a Publications Committee, consisting of Paessler, Talcott, and DuVal, with the task of "planning changes to this publication." *The Newsletter*, under its new name *The Conduit*, was first published in March 1951. It is interesting to read the item of this issue covering the Publications Committee's report which stated in part:

*"The name was chosen following almost a page-by-page perusal of the Glossary of Water & Sewage Control Engineering, the joint publication of APHA, ASCE, AWWA, and FSWA. We tried to pick out a name which would connote a connection with the Association and its objectives. The definition in the Glossary of Conduit is: 'An open or closed duct, usually of masonry, for conveying relatively large volumes of liquid.' When we saw that, we stopped. The Conduit will be the official 'open or closed duct' for conveying the Association's 'relatively large volumes' of wordage to its members. We hope you don't get deluged."*







## Past Presidents

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**1953-1954** – Sam Evans

**1954-1955** – Frank H. Miller

**1955-1956** – W.R. McCann

**1956-1957** – J.J. Corbalis, Jr.

**1957-1958** – J.P. Kavanagh

**1958-1959** – Edward H. Ruehl

**1959-1960** – A.H. Paessler

**1960-1961** – Harry L. Hale

**1961-1962** – Chalkley DuVal

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**1976-1977** – Clifford W. Randall

**1977-1978** – Ernest M. Jennelle

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**1981-1982** – James L. Van de Riet

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**1983-1984** – Beth Turner

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**1986-1987** – Kenneth F. Spear

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**1990-1991** – Patricia A. Jackson

**1991-1992** – James T. Canaday

**1992-1993** – James C. Pyne

**1993-1994** – Liliana M. Maldonado

**1994-1995** – Robert A. Sciacchitano

**1995-1996** – Anthony P. Izzo

**1996-1997** – John J. Petchul

**1997-1998** – William S. M'Coy

**1998-1999** – James C. Chastain

**1999-2000** – Mark W. Prentice

**2000-2001** – Jeanie Grandstaff

**2001-2002** – Carol Isenhour

**2002-2003** – Andy Landrum

**2003-2004** – Bob Steidel

**2004-2005** – Steve Johnson

**2005-2006** – Kevin Wood

**2006-2007** – Erika Bailey

**2007-2008** – Greg Everhart

**2008-2009** – Karen Pallansch

**2009-2010** – Abha Sharma

**2010-2011** – Chris Tabor

**2011-2012** – Grace LeRose

**2012-2013** – Clarke Wallcraft

**2013-2014** – Stacie Crandall

**2014-2015** – Martin Malone

**2015-2016** – John McGettigan

**2016-2017** – Eddie Abisaab

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## How WaterJAM Got Its Start

**T**he creation of WaterJAM, the Joint Annual Meeting of VWEA and the Virginia Section of AWWA, is one of the most significant events in VWEA's history. As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, we thought it fitting to speak with the two individuals who were integral to its creation.

Jim Chastain, Heyward Incorporated, and Sherry Williams, Newport News Waterworks, served as the first co-chairs of WaterJAM in 2002. They were instrumental in the agreement that was developed for the formation of WaterJAM. We asked them to share their thoughts on the experience.

### What spurred the start of WaterJAM?

*Jim:* Several regular exhibitors attending both the VWEA and VA AWWA annual conferences were concerned about the increasing expense in time and money to attend two different state conferences each year that had largely the same group of attendees with related technology interests (clean water). They suggested to the then-section leaders that there could be possible financial benefits to the exhibitors and both organizations by merging the conferences into a single annual event – A RADICAL IDEA! The concept of a joint annual meeting (JAM) would provide exhibitors a more cost-effective and efficient way to reach their customers and offer attendees a comprehensive conference that required less time and money investment from their organizations. It also created the opportunity to proportionately reduce the cost of services to host an annual meeting since it would be shared by both organizations resulting in an increased profit. At the time, the concept was also being discussed at the national level between AWWA and WEF, and joint meetings between several WEF and AWWA state associations were being planned as a beta-test.



*Sherry:* As President and Chair, Jim and I had recognized the advantages of combining our resources (members, topics, finances) in joint committees which were already established. Jim had knowledge of other WEF member associations and AWWA Sections, like Texas, which had held combined annual meetings with great success. We believed that this was the next step for Virginia. Since Jim and I were proponents of the merger and were also ending our terms as President and Chair, we took on the Co-Chair positions for the first WaterJAM, knowing that if it failed, we would take the blame. The knowledge that many of the exhibitors attended both organizations' annual conferences, and that there was an overlap in our memberships, we thought, was a risk worth taking.

### Why join forces for an annual meeting?

*Jim:* The idea of shared costs for common services with the potential of increased net revenues and profits for each organization was a driver. We felt that by providing a more comprehensive educational program, we could increase attendance at the conference. We also recognized the potential for committee collaboration in areas of common interest

to achieve greater reach and to better serve the memberships. The potential for improved collaboration by the organizations would assist with improved education of our members and the community at large, and better protect water resources and the water environment in Virginia.

### What were the bigger challenges with joining forces?

*Jim:* Getting two very different organizations to see the benefits of working together and developing a framework for collaboration that would be mutually acceptable. Time had to be invested in convincing key leaders in both organizations to give up some control and work together for their mutual long-term benefit. After making the case to both boards, a joint committee was appointed to investigate what would be required to successfully host a joint annual meeting. The committee was required to consider the legal and financial framework, shared services, risks, schedule, and budget. The group then had to report to both boards with their evaluation and recommendations. After much investigation and deliberation, the committee found many potential benefits and very manageable risks



of moving forward. Based on the committee's recommendations, both boards approved a three-year trial agreement for WaterJAM, which began in 2002.

*Sherry:* Not necessarily a challenge but a goal to provide a balanced technical program with water and wastewater topics.

#### Did the 1st WaterJAM meet your expectations?

*Jim:* The first WaterJAM was held in Virginia Beach at the old convention center from September 10-13, 2002. Opening day was on the one-year anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The anniversary created concern related to attendance, security, and finances. Roy Covington, Chesterfield County, was Chair of VA AWWA and Carol Isenhour, Henrico County, was President of VWEA, and both served as emcee partners at the Opening Session and Joint Awards Dinner, providing entertainment while warmly embracing this first WaterJAM. The future of the collaboration depended on the success of the inaugural meeting, and fortunately, attendance exceeded expectations and both organizations made twice the estimated net revenue and notably more than prior separate annual meetings. The WaterJAM experiment was a huge success, with many lessons learned to improve the organization and production of subsequent WaterJAMs. One of the key components to success was reflected in the collaboration framework, which respected the identity and sovereignty of each organization and allowed for separate meetings and events particular to each association. This was very important to the board members of both organizations at the time to gain support for proceeding with a joint meeting. As a byproduct of the success of WaterJAM, this concept was relaxed over the years to allow for collaborative joint committees focused on common interests of the two organizations, which have proven to be very successful.


*Sherry:* The first WaterJAM exceeded our expectations! We had 980 total attendees, including 125 exhibitors, and final financial proceeds which exceeded \$100,000.

#### What was your biggest takeaway from collaborating on such a big event?


*Jim:* 2+2=5 The synergy achieved through collaboration and sharing of resources from the two organizations, resulted in a better meeting for everyone: A joint meeting led to higher attendance, more exhibitors, increased revenue, a larger technical program, more social interaction, better quality, greater value, and more FUN!

#### Please share anything you would like about WaterJAM and working together.

*Jim:* WaterJAM has grown to be a premier annual event, and through the work of dedicated staff and amazing volunteer leaders, it has consistently improved year after year, providing unmatched value to members of VA AWWA and VWEA, and to Virginia's Clean Water stakeholders and the greater water environment community.



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### AGREEMENT

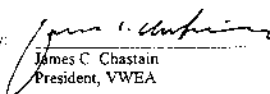
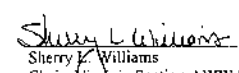
#### Virginia Water Environment Association Virginia Section American Water Works Association 2002 Joint Annual Meeting

WHEREAS, the Virginia Section AWWA and VWEA are collaborating on joint activities and committees in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding dated April 1998.

And, WHEREAS, VWEA and Virginia Section AWWA recognize the mutual benefit of collaborating on a Joint Annual Meeting.

BE IT RESOLVED, that The Board of Directors of VWEA and The Board of Trustees of VA Section AWWA agree that they will hold the first Joint VA Section AWWA/VWEA Annual Meeting in 2002, and an ad-hoc committee will be appointed to plan this event.

Agreed upon by:

Virginia Water Environment Association	Virginia Section American Water Works Association
By:  James C. Chastain President, VWEA	By:  Sherry L. Williams Chair, Virginia Section AWWA
Date: <u>May 4, 1999</u>	Date: <u>May 4, 1999</u>

Working jointly to meet the education and training needs  
of Virginia's water and wastewater industry



## Nicole Dean

### How long have you been a VWEA Member?

I have been a member for two years.

### How did you get involved?

My mentor at Dewberry, current member of the Board of Directors and past president of VWEA, Kevin

Wood, introduced me to the organization and all of the opportunities within it. From there, I joined two committees, the Sustainable Utilities Committee (of which I am now vice chair) and the Young Professionals Committee (I am currently the vice chair of the YP WaterJAM Subcommittee).

### What is your best memory of VWEA?

My best memory of VWEA was my first WaterJAM. It was awesome to be a part of the conference by helping put together the Young Professionals Workshop.

### What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?

There are so many benefits that it's hard to choose just one! I'd say the biggest benefit is the networking. Through VWEA, I've had the chance to meet many people in many different parts of the industry, which has greatly broadened my understanding of the industry.

### How has VWEA changed during your involvement?

I think the two biggest changes since I've joined is the creation of the VWEA podcast, and the new DE&I initiatives. Both of these changes have greatly strengthened the value of being a part of this organization.

### From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?

I'd say becoming the go-to organization in the industry in Virginia for technical information and for opportunities in networking and leadership. I also think VWEA has accomplished much in engaging younger professionals, especially with its addition of the Young Professionals representative to the Board of Directors – thanks to Kevin Wood! Furthermore, VWEA winning the WEF Member Association Achievement Award in 2021 shows how it continues to excel and adapt to provide its members the greatest professional value.

### Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.

To me, VWEA means opportunity, friendship, and advancement.

### How has the industry evolved over the years?

Although I am new to the industry, I see it evolve every day. I see VWEA offer so many **great webinars**, workshops and conferences that continuously provide **insight** to new **technologies and techniques** emerging in our industry. Through my involvement as the Vice Chair of the Sustainable Utilities Committee, I get to learn first-hand of the **new sustainable methods** that are emerging in this industry, from ENVISION and BRICC to water reuse! I think our industry becomes more **resilient** every day.

### What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?

VWEA should address sustainability and accessibility. I think VWEA should stay on top of these emerging practices and be a resource for water reuse. Also, while I love the DE&I efforts, I have seen the new acronym, IDEA, emerge, which includes accessibility! I think accessibility is something that should always be brought to the table as well. I think VWEA will be able to tackle anything that comes up and that it has a bright future ahead. Here's to 75 years!





## Bob Forgione

### How long have you been a VWEA member?

I've been a VWEA member for 26 years. I transferred membership to VWEA when I moved to Virginia in late 1995.

### How did you get involved?

I was active in NYWEA's Long Island Section before moving to Virginia. I became active in VWEA committees several years later when Nicolle Boulay asked if I knew anyone at UOSA interested in being NVRAC Vice-Chair when she became Chair (Cheryl St. Amant was then the Chair). I volunteered, and have been involved in VWEA since. I retired from UOSA in early 2021, but remain active on several committees.

### What is your best memory of VWEA?

I don't have a single best memory. My best memories are enjoying the annual VWEA conferences (now WaterJAM), and meeting many good people.

### What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?

I believe the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA has been networking – the ability to learn from and help other water sector professionals.

### How has VWEA changed during your involvement?

During my time with VWEA, the main change I've seen is a closer, sustained relationship with VA AWWA. With all the similarities between the water and wastewater industries, it's beneficial to have this close relationship.

### From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?

I believe that VWEA's greatest accomplishment is its **flexibility** in **responding to evolving technical and social needs**. I see this in newly formed committees and in **new directions** for existing committees. Recruiting **committed** Association **leadership** is another of VWEA's greatest accomplishments.

### Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.

VWEA means camaraderie with like-minded professionals and meeting people who care about our profession.

### How has the industry evolved over the years?

The evolution I have seen in our industry is a move to treat pollutants and newly identified pollutants to a greater degree, and to operate more complex equipment and processes more efficiently.

### What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?

VWEA should encourage regional training programs for tradespeople. No matter how well we design, build and operate our facilities, we must keep equipment and facilities well-maintained.



## Jay Gopal

### How long have you been a VWEA Member?

I have been a member for three years.

### How did you get involved?

I became a part of the organization when I first moved to Richmond, VA and it gave me an opportunity to

fraternize with colleagues in the industry. My active involvement with the organization began earlier this year when I became a part of the newly formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Committee.

### What is your best memory of VWEA?

My involvement with the DE&I Committee has been a rewarding experience. It is exciting to band together with other professionals from diverse backgrounds in the industry as a collective to steward a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have thoroughly enjoyed the thought-provoking conversations, exchange of ideas, and lively banter among committee members.

### What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?

Networking. Much of my involvement in the organization has been through the global pandemic when connecting with other professionals has been particularly challenging, especially for an introvert like me!

### How has VWEA changed during your involvement?

Although I haven't been a member of the organization for too long, VWEA seems to have a culture of championing change. The DE&I Committee, which has hit the ground running since its conception earlier this year is testament to its dedicated and hard-working membership base.

### From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?

The organization continues to provide an **inclusive**, engaging platform to connect and **exchange ideas** with industry leaders, and serves as a resource to keep up with current industry trends. From hosting WaterJAM, a **well-crafted annual event**, to supporting college students by providing a number of scholarships, VWEA has continued to inform the present and **invest in the future**, and be a **leader in stewarding** the cause of water and environment.

### Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.

VWEA has served as a platform to connect with and a means of promoting inclusivity within the industry.

### How has the industry evolved over the years?

Changing economic and climate conditions have exposed the industry to challenges which are hard to quantify and address. In the face of such challenges, several sectors of the industry seem to be embracing the concept of proactively adopting a sustainable, resilient, and multidisciplinary approach to maintaining infrastructure.

### What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?

Bringing awareness regarding current challenges and associated solutions to the larger community served by the industry, and providing exposure about career opportunities available within the industry.



## Holly Anne Matel

### How long have you been a VWEA Member?

I have been a member for 12 years.

### How did you get involved?

When I was a student at ODU, one of my classmates had started the Environmental Engineering Student

Association, which was a joint VA AWWA/VWEA student chapter. I started regularly attending primarily because of the free lunch, but I found that I enjoyed the speakers and camaraderie with other students. It was a great opportunity to get to know upperclassmen and graduate students with whom I typically did not interact. As a student member, I participated in the Student Water Challenge and the Student Design Competition.



**What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?**

Through the VWEA, I've met so many people and created a network that is not only professional, but many folks have become long-time friends.

**What is your best memory of VWEA?**

**Student competitions** are always a lot of **fun**. I love the **excitement** of the middle schoolers at the Model Water Tower Competition and **hearing new ideas** from our college students competing in the Student Design Competition.

**Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.**

A place to form new relationships and share ideas.

**What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?**

From my perspective, where I currently focus on student engagement, we need a more concerted effort across VWEA to reach out to HBCUs and women's colleges. We tend to have alumni networks where we recruit and reach out to institutions where a large portion of our membership already derives from. We need to be doing a much better job at reaching all Virginia colleges and universities.



## Lizzy Merin

**How long have you been a VWEA Member?**

I became a member during my grad school studies at Virginia Tech in 2018.

**How did you get involved?**

The Virginia Tech Chapter leaders and our professors encouraged my cohort of graduate students in the Environmental Engineering and Water Resources graduate programs to join the chapter and compete in the student competition during WaterJAM in the fall of 2018. We didn't end up getting to go due to a hurricane.

**What is your best memory of VWEA?**

I enjoyed presenting at WaterJAM in 2021 on my gravity sewer project at the McLean Metro Station, as well as organizing the Young Professionals Service event in 2021 where we partnered with the City of VA Beach Parks & Recreation to assist with the MS4 Program with storm drain marking.

**What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?**

Recruiting a **diverse workforce** of **emerging professionals** and students, and getting more people involved in the water industry. We also need to **capture** and **pass down** the **vast knowledge** and experience from senior professionals who are retiring.

**What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?**

I love getting to meet and connect with other folks in the industry and learning from them about their experiences. I love learning about how we all contribute to the water industry.

**How has VWEA changed during your involvement?**

We have weathered a hurricane, produced a virtual conference, and returned to an in-person conference, all while dealing with the pandemic. During the last four years, we've successfully managed many challenges. I'm looking forward to seeing what we do next.

**From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?**

Holding an in-person conference in September 2021 with the pandemic safety measures in place that let us have the event while preserving health and safety.

**Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.**

Making connections and mentors in the water industry.

**How has the industry evolved over the years?**

As a young female engineer, I'm pleased to observe that there are many women in leadership positions in the industry who can serve as role models and mentors. I think the water industry has made great strides since my mom's time as a consultant, and it's important to celebrate how much progress has been made in our industry.



## Ali Nemati

### How long have you been a VWEA member?

I have been a member for six years.

### How did you get involved?

The main reason I initially joined VWEA was because of my former supervisor, Kevin Wood encouraged me to explore

opportunities to engage with professional organizations such as VWEA. I started my journey with the WaterJAM's YP Committee, and had the privilege to work with amazing groups of YPs as a volunteer for the Fresh Ideas Poster Contest, YP Workshop, YP WaterJAM Committee Vice Chair, and then the YP WaterJAM Committee Chair. After that, I joined the VWEA Board, where I served as the YP representative for about two years, and had the opportunity to work with some of the brightest minds in our industry.

### What is your best memory of VWEA?

It's been a wonderful journey. I think just volunteering and working on a common goal teaches you valuable skills along the way, or can help you build upon the ones you already have.

### What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?

The most obvious benefit is having the opportunity to connect with other industry professionals.

### How has VWEA changed during your involvement?

Not much has changed and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

Sometimes you want to see stability, particularly in a professional organization. It provides members with a sense of confidence and optimism. It's easy to criticize, but hard to create (and maintain) something successful.

### From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?

Creating a platform for networking opportunities and professional development.

### Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.

A **successful organization** that **gives** us the **opportunity** to **make lasting ties** with other professionals.

### How has the industry evolved over the years?

There have been significant improvements in team collaboration via various file-sharing and communication platforms. There was also the introduction of BIM, which allows designers to clearly communicate intent to stakeholders.

### What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?

Advancement in machine learning and artificial intelligence can have significant impacts on the water and wastewater markets.



## Scott Shirley

### How long have you been a VWEA Member?

I joined in 1998/1999.

### How did you get involved?

My initial involvement included attendance at the VWEA Annual Conference and additional VWEA-

sponsored training opportunities.

### What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?

In the end, success in most careers and industries involve community/relationships. VWEA fostered avenues for creating a personal peer network, which has been a tremendous resource over my career.

### How has VWEA changed during your involvement?

The Association has grown substantially. I have been impressed by the Association's drive to impart value to members. With each step of growth, there was a corresponding jump in value and services back to the membership. I think we have all seen other organizations lose member focus with growth, and while VWEA has grown, that member value and support have remained part of the core mission.

### From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?

Establishing the Joint Annual Conference with VA AWWA has to be recognized as one of the major turning points for the Association, but beyond the incredible success of WaterJAM, the ability to sustain other important annual training events is also a significant accomplishment.



### What is your best memory of VWEA?

For the length of time that I have been involved, it really has been **amazing** to watch the **evolution** and **growth** of the organization. I was able to see the first joint conference with AWWA, the addition of permanent full-time staff for the Association, the evolution of *The Conduit* and many other changes. With each step, the Association has been **focused on building** an organization to **serve subsequent generations**. Today, I can look back and see the **vision** and work so many of the **early volunteers** imparted to the organization that influenced what VWEA has become today.

### Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.

A facilitator of professional training, growth, and peer networking in a complex and evolving industry.

### How has the industry evolved over the years?

The industry continues to become more complex and the level of change/challenges for operations are occurring at a faster pace.

### What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?

The development of on-demand training opportunities, expand awards to recognize broader operational areas of utilities similar to the NACWA Peak Performance Awards, identify other critical areas of utilities that may be underrepresented in the Association, consider discussions on how the Association can engage/support these areas, consider combining some existing events into a larger event in the spring.



## Phill Yi

### How long have you been a VWEA member?

I have been a VWEA member for 14 years.

### How did you get involved?

I first got involved when I was at VMI and participated in the Student Design Competition

### What is your best memory of VWEA?

One of my best memories is attending my first WaterJAM in 2009 as a student. I recall Stacie Crandall, Lora Reed, Barbara Jackson, and Jewel Minor welcoming me and getting me engaged in the scavenger hunt, touring the Exhibit Hall, and attending networking receptions. I felt welcomed and part of the One Water community.

### What do you feel has been the biggest benefit of engagement with VWEA?

I feel the **biggest benefit** has been the **networking** and **learning** opportunities available to me. I've been able to **grow professionally** and **build strong friendships** within our industry as well as **expand** my **knowledge** and understanding.

### How has VWEA changed during your involvement?

VWEA continues to build on the strong legacy on which it was founded. VWEA is intentional in the way it tries to engage its members. We're provided with great and diverse options for learning and networking, while innovating to adapt to the times. For example, the creation of *The Straight Flush* podcast, DE&I Committee, and Virtual Trivia Nights during the pandemic, etc.

### From your perspective, what would you say are VWEA's greatest accomplishments over the years?

I think VWEA's greatest accomplishments are the establishment of the scholarships and new member engagement approaches, maintaining a culture of collaboration, and focusing on member needs.

### Describe what VWEA means to you, on a personal level, in 15 words or less.

A strong community of friends and colleagues to last a lifetime.

### How has the industry evolved over the years?

The industry continues to innovate and is more accepting of innovative technologies and solutions. It also continues to progress towards providing more digitally accessible information/applications.

### What are some key focus areas you feel VWEA should address in the future?

Continuing education, networking, and member engagement.



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# 75 Years of the VWEA in Photos





# 75 Years of the VWEA in Photos





# 75 Years of the VWEA in Photos





## *75 Years* of the VWEA in Photos





# 75 Years of the VWEA in Photos



## Two Generations of VWEA Volunteers

I first got exposed to VWEA (then still called VWPCA until it changed when I was president) when I was at VA Tech. One afternoon, while I was in a class, Cliff Randall came in and said there was a van outside going to the VWPCA Annual Meeting in Roanoke and that if I was serious about wastewater, I should be on it. I actually joined the association in the spring of 1979 at the annual meeting in VA Beach, I think. I served as chairman of our first Safety Committee, and we established our protocol for the George Burke Award and the VWPCA Safety Award.

Later on, Dave Waltrip stopped by my office and said, "Get in the car, you're going to an annual committee meeting."

The rest, as they say, is history. I served as president from 1992-1993. After that, I got involved at the WEF level on the Small Communities Committee (SCC) and also chaired that committee. I'm still active on the VWEA/VA AWWA Utility Management Committee SC Focus Group, as well as the WEF SCC.

I'm very proud of Christene (Bene). Her career is advancing by leaps and bounds, no small result of her involvement in VWEA.

– **Jim Pyne**, ODU & HRSD (Retired)

I have fond memories of being invited to the annual "wastewater professionals" conference (before there was WaterJAM) as a guest of my dad when I was in college. At that point in my life, I had no intention of working as a water/wastewater engineer, but Dad thought the conference would be good exposure for me. I couldn't agree more! This event showed me the value and joys of being engaged outside of work with those in your profession. I appreciated seeing the camaraderie and shared pride among attendees – day and night. Dad also made it a point to show me how important the event was to his continued education. Not only did he have me join some technical sessions, but he walked me around the Exhibit Hall and let me know that talking to vendors is a great way to learn how things work and the new technologies that are available.

When I finally realized (with help from my dad) that working in the water/wastewater industry was my passion, I changed jobs and joined North Carolina's WEF/AWWA member associations. As I expected, the opportunity to engage with water/wastewater professionals outside of my workplace truly helped to propel my career. I can honestly say I got my first supervisory role as a division manager using my people managing experience as an NCWEA-AWWA Committee leader. I told the interview panel, "I motivate volunteers to take on extra work, so I am confident I can motivate people to do their jobs."



While I love being in Virginia and being a part of what I believe is the best member association, VWEA, I am glad I started in North Carolina. I am not sure I would have been confident enough early in my career to jump on committee meeting calls with my dad (who, by no surprise, is interested in the same committees as I am) and hear "Hi Bene!" Expecting other committee members may be thrown for a loop that I was being called a "bean" by another member, I knew early on I had to make sure to respond "Hey Dad!" to provide some context. I can't tell you how many times people would reach out to me after a call and ask, "Is Jim Pyne really your dad?" And I proudly say "Yes, he is."

– **Christene Mitchell**, AECOM





WaterJAM 2022

# Our Water, Our Future!

September 12 - 15, 2022 | Virginia Beach, VA

## Recap





This year's WaterJAM theme, *Our Water, Our Future*, provided our attendees with a space to learn, reconnect and network with our water colleagues in and around the Virginia Beach Convention Center. The Virginia water community gathered together in-person and broke all previous JAM records with 2,055 registrants, 249 individual exhibitors, and 211 exhibit companies. For many attendees, this was their first time back at WaterJAM since 2019, and we were all so happy to have you here in Virginia Beach.

**A**lthough the Conference officially started on Monday, we held our annual Water Taste Test on Sunday afternoon on the Boardwalk near Neptune's Park. While Sunday's thunderstorms may have limited the number of taste testers, Virginia Beach's tap water won the day over bottled water. In addition to tap water winning the taste test, this event helped to demonstrate the value of the services our industry provides to the public every day of every year.

## MONDAY

Monday offered numerous opportunities for education, networking and outreach. The morning kicked off with two WaterJAM classics: the Golf Outing and Clay Shoot. This year's 16th Annual Golf Outing saw 130 golfers tee off at the Cypress Point Country Club in Virginia Beach to raise money for Water For People. The Clay Shoot was held at Old Forge Sporting Clays in Providence Forge with 64 shooters participating in the event. WaterJAM Committee Members Greg Everhart and Bryce Carter took home top scores.

The Young Professionals Sponsored Service Project was held on the streets



Golf Tournament attendees

surrounding the Convention Center. Volunteers assisted Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation staff with storm drain marking. We also hosted three workshops – Laboratory Management of the Future from the Lab Practices Committee, Modelpalooza: Understand the Best Modeling Approach to Meet your Needs from the WVEA Collection Systems Committee, and Project WET Workshop from the VA AWWA Water Awareness and Education Committee. Also on Monday, 19 participants of the second class of the Leadership Academy graduated following a year of leadership training.

A record number of colleagues reunited on Monday evening for the Meet and Greet, held at the Hilton Oceanfront. The event provided food, futuristic-themed decor, and plenty of laughs to the sounds of local musician, Jesse Chong.

## TUESDAY

Tuesday morning kicked off early with our annual Water For People 5K Fun Run/Walk. Participants enjoyed a brisk run along the Boardwalk starting at the King Neptune statue, while watching the sun rise over the Atlantic Ocean.

Two breakfasts were held on Tuesday morning, the Orientation Breakfast for first-time attendees, and the second annual Women Impacting Water Breakfast. The Orientation Breakfast helped newcomers become more acquainted with all the opportunities WaterJAM has to offer with a game-show style activity to start the day off with some fun! The Women Impacting Water Breakfast was sold out early with 88 women and their industry supporters in attendance. The breakfast provided a fun and welcoming atmosphere for relationship building and encouragement, including a water-themed game of "BalderSPLASH".

The Tuesday morning events were followed up with an engaging Opening Session. The session started with an address and proclamation of Virginia Beach Water Week by the Mayor of Virginia Beach, Bobby Dyer.



Noelle Crowley and Ronnie Baker

The keynote speaker, Dr. Janice Underwood, is a national expert in diversity leadership and strategic planning, and is currently working with the Biden-Harris Administration in the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Dr. Underwood was engaging with the audience and challenged us all to keep DEI principals at the core of our organizations.



WEA President Matt Harrison speaks to first-time WaterJAM attendees during the WaterJAM Orientation Breakfast.



Virginia Beach Mayor, Bobby Dyer



Conference attendees descend on the Exhibit Hall after the opening session.





2022 WaterJAM Committee



Attendees enjoy the Fun Night event on the dance floor.

The keynote speaker was followed up with national activity and initiative updates by the national WEF and AWWA representatives, Keith Hobson and T.J. Stroebl, respectively.

Following the keynote session, The DE&I Committees of VWEA and VA AWWA held a panel discussion and an interactive workshop with utility leaders, DE&I officers and advocates in the water sector. The session provided attendees with an opportunity to engage in dialogue around best practices, triumphs and lessons learned in creating diversity, equity, and inclusion in the communities where we live, work and volunteer.

The Opening Session concluded with an invitation to the Exhibit Hall Grand Opening, where the first 150 attendees to enter the hall were given a special gift. The Exhibit Hall provided a lively atmosphere for visiting the 211 unique companies exhibiting cutting-edge products and services which help drive innovation in our industry. The Exhibit Hall also included a number of networking and educational events to provide diverse offerings throughout the conference, such as Mobile Sessions, and a scavenger hunt using the WaterJAM app.

Cornhole and water pong tables hosted by the Young Professionals called for a measure of skill to the Exhibit Hall activities. Tuesday marked the end of the wildly successful Water Reach Silent Auction where an online bidding format allowed attendees to bid on a diverse collection of donated and handmade items from the convenience of their mobile devices. The auction raised over \$1,500 for the Water Reach Committee.

Tuesday also brought the first group of WaterJAM InFLOW (Introducing Future Leaders to Opportunities in Water) participants to the Convention Center. Five student scholars from underrepresented minority groups currently pursuing a degree in a STEM field were introduced to the water

industry. The participants attended events to help build their knowledge and network in the water community.

We are excited about the enthusiasm and interest these students showed, and we are looking to expand the program in 2023!

### WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY

Just like Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday included a multitude of educational opportunities for students, young professionals, operators, and water professionals alike, the technical sessions provided a venue for our presenters to share valuable educational information on forward-thinking and practical topics such as Design-Build project delivery, PFAS removal in biosolids and water treatment, resilient stormwater solutions, and the use of AI in sewer system asset management. Students and Young Professionals presented an excellent Poster Session and Student Water Challenge enabling engagement with water professionals, while sharing knowledge of cutting-edge research and

practices. Technical sessions, workshops, demonstrations, and facility tours made for a full day of learning on Thursday.

Wednesday culminated with the Awards Banquet and Fun Night. These events are always a good time, but were enhanced this year by a futuristic photo booth and plenty of dancing on the neon mirror dance floor. As always, there was good food, recognition of our outstanding peers, and games into the night.

We hope you enjoyed your time at WaterJAM and Virginia Beach this year. On behalf of the entire WaterJAM Committee, we'd like to thank all attendees for making and joining us for *Our Water, Our Future!* We look forward to seeing everyone in 2023 for *The Power of Water* in Virginia Beach!

**Noelle Crowley**

*WaterJAM 2022 Co-Chairs*

*Noelle Crowley and Ronnie Baker*

**Ronnie Baker**

**Power of Water**  
**Call for Abstracts**

**WaterJAM 2023**  
September 11 - 14, 2023  
Virginia Beach, VA

Submission Dates:  
**November 14, 2022 - January 6, 2023**

To view guidelines and submit, visit  
[www.waterjam.org](http://www.waterjam.org)



## VIRGINIA BEACH TAP WATER WINS WATER TASTE TEST

Can you tell the difference between tap water and bottled water? On Sunday, September 11, Virginia Beach Public Utilities participated in the WaterJAM Taste Test\*, where visitors to the Virginia Beach Boardwalk put their taste buds to the test to determine which

they preferred. In the final results, 21 people preferred tap water, 20 people preferred bottled water, and 1 person had no preference between the two. While the participation may seem low (tap water reined in the votes, but the weather rained out the

event), we were thrilled to see the results favor Virginia Beach's great-tasting water! There is a HUGE difference between tap water and bottled water when it comes to cost and trash impact, so we encourage our citizens to CHOOSE TAP!



*\*The WaterJAM Taste Test is a kick-off event to the Joint Annual Meeting of the Virginia Section of the American Water Works Association and the Virginia Water Environment Association. Each year, WaterJAM provides numerous professional growth opportunities for hundreds of water industry professionals from the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond.*

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## 5K RUN RAISES FUNDS FOR WATER FOR PEOPLE

We are happy to announce that the WaterJAM 5K Fun Run raised over \$1,500 this year. We loved seeing all the runners in person this year and appreciated the enthusiasm. Thank you to all who volunteered and participated! We're already looking forward to next year's event.





## WATERJAM 2022 CLAY SHOOT: TIMMONS GROUP SCORES A HAT TRICK

Seventy VWEA and VA AWWA members participated in the WaterJAM 2022 Clay Shoot held at Old Forge Sporting Clays in Providence Forge on Monday, September 12. This is one of the finest sporting clay facilities in Virginia and we were once again treated to 100 challenging targets, delicious food, and an overall great time together.

The weather reports all week ahead of the shoot were not promising, but the rain held off until late in the afternoon. We were fortunate to have 25 shooters with us for the first time, and we hope this will be the new trend for the future.

Team champion honors were once again grabbed by Timmons Group's Scott Harvey, Wes Hunnius, David Saunders, and Bruce Strickland in a not-very-close contest. We are going to figure out some way to handicap these guys as this is at least the third year in a row they have claimed the top position.

Combs & Associates, Inc.'s Bryce Carter, Greg Everhart, Sergio Gomez, and Brian Rogers claimed 2nd-place honors by a very slim margin, while Southern Corrosion's Tom Delbridge, Mark Estes, Dennis Jones, and Brett Woodruff were our 3rd-place finishers.



*Team Grand Prize Winner – Hazen and Sawyer  
from left to right: Bill Boston, Ryan O'Banion,  
Tad Rogers, Howard Glenn*



*Team Champions – Timmons Group  
from left to right: Bruce Strickland, Wes Hunnius,  
Scott Harvey*

Bryce Carter and Greg Everhart tied for Shoot Champion with a score of 80. Wes Hunnius claimed 2nd place with a score of 78, and 3rd place was shared by Tom Delbridge and Mark Estes, both breaking 77 of 100 targets.

Everyone enjoyed a fine lunch followed by the awards ceremony. Longtime supporter Roger Cronin was our grand prize drawing winner, taking home a large RTIC Cooler. We also had a team grand prize drawing this year, and Hazen and Sawyer's Roger Arnold, Bill Boston, Howard Glenn, and Tad Rogers each received a gallon-sized RTIC jug. As always, each shooter selected a door prize for participating.

Thank you to our participants and sponsors for a successful and safe event. We are already making plans for WaterJAM 2023, and hope you can join us for another great day of shooting.



*Grand Prize Winner – Roger Cronin*



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## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2021-2022 GRADUATES!

By Karlyn Owens

Congratulations to the 25 members of the 2021-2022 AWWA/VWEA Leadership Academy who celebrated their graduation Monday, September 12 at WaterJAM.

Thank you for your participation in the program and dedication to developing your leadership skills!

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CLASS OF 2022!

- Amanda Albright, Hampton Roads Sanitation District
- Chelsea Bajek, TetraTech
- Joel Bostic, Western Virginia Water Authority
- Cathy Cogswell, Loudon Water
- Ha Doa, CHA Consulting
- Emily Dugger, City of Lynchburg
- Wendy Eikenberry, Augusta County Service Authority
- Tiffany Elson, HRSD



- Merritt Ford, Western Virginia Water Authority
- Andrew Freitas, Carollo Engineers
- Mike Hutchinson, Pepper's Ferry Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority
- David Jarrell, Rapidan Service Authority
- Christopher Johnson, City of Virginia Beach Department of Public Utilities
- Anna Kazasi, Virginia American Water
- Terry Kowalskyj, Brown and Caldwell
- Marybeth Leongini, Virginia American Water
- Terri Love, Western Virginia Water Authority
- Justin Manzie, Newport News Waterworks
- Elijah Merat, City of Lynchburg Department of Water Resources
- Jamie Morris, Western Virginia Water Authority
- Liz Scheessele, Hampton Roads Stormwater Group
- Savita Schlesinger, Loudoun Water
- Baljit Sidhu, Hazen and Sawyer
- Joe Weaver, Crowder Construction Co.
- Brian Whitenack, Western Virginia Water Authority

## 2022-2023 VA AWWA/VWEA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY CLASS KICKS OFF AT WATERJAM

By Jonette Barley and Karlyn Owens

On Wednesday, September 14, the new Leadership Academy cohort came together during WaterJAM to celebrate the kick-off of the 2022-2023 AWWA/VWEA Leadership Academy. The morning was filled with icebreakers, games, laughs, sharing views on leadership and hearing from a recent graduate of the Leadership Academy. During the next six months, the class will participate in its first two full-day training sessions and take a deep dive into the book *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High*, Third Edition by Joseph Grenny and Kerry Patterson.

At the end of the kickoff, the group was tasked with writing a letter to their future selves, reflecting their thoughts on where they will be one year after completing the academy. Stay tuned for more from this cohort and follow them on this journey of leadership!

The new Leadership Academy class consists of 30 participants from all over Virginia with individuals representing different organizations, job functions, experience levels, and backgrounds. Leadership training over the next year will include all-day workshops, several virtual sessions, self-assessments, and active participation in a VA AWWA, VWEA, or joint committee. The 2022-2023 Leadership Academy will conclude with a graduation ceremony at next year's WaterJAM.

The Leadership Academy training and events are planned by the Leadership Academy Committee, a group of approximately 10 members, many of whom are graduates of previous Leadership Academy classes.

For more information on the Leadership Academy program or committee, contact Karlyn Owens, committee chair ([karlyn.owens@jcsava.gov](mailto:karlyn.owens@jcsava.gov)).





## YP-SPONSORED SERVICE PROJECT:

# YPs TEAM UP WITH VIRGINIA BEACH PARKS & RECREATION FOR STORM DRAIN CLEAN UP

The Young Professional Service Committee had a successful second year partnering with Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation to lend assistance to their MS4 program with storm drain marking. About 20 attendees came together to help VA Beach protect their coastal environment and increase

community awareness to put “only rain down the drain”.

VA Beach is using storm drain decals that let residents know where outlets drain with the goal of informing the public about their local watershed.

YP Volunteers assisted VA Beach by

using caulk guns to adhere medallions in over three neighborhoods, and were able to cover about 250 storm drain inlets before running out of supplies.

It was a great day volunteering in the sunshine with VA Beach Parks & Recreation and fun was had by all!



## YP WORKSHOP LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

The Young Professionals (YP) WaterJAM Committee was pleased to have held a successful VWEA/VA AWWA workshop on Wednesday, September 13 at the WaterJAM 2022. The theme of the workshop followed the WaterJAM 2022 theme – *Our Water, Our Future* – as it explored what the future of the water/wastewater industry will look like.

Speakers with design, consulting, regulatory and operation/maintenance experience in the industry shared their perspectives on the future of our industry. Common themes that surfaced throughout the workshop regarding the future of the industry included collaboration, sustainability, knowledge documentation and transfer, the criticality of education/branding to help obtain necessary funding, and, of course,

the young professionals who will be the future of the industry! The workshop sparked insightful discussion and questions, and the YP Committee hopes that it left young professionals feeling inspired to take on the future of the industry.

For more information about how you can get involved in planning YP events for next year's WaterJAM, please contact Nicole Dean at [ndean1@arlingtonva.us](mailto:ndean1@arlingtonva.us).





## WOMEN'S BREAKFAST LEAVES ATTENDEES WITH FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The 2nd Annual Women Impacting Water breakfast was successfully held on Tuesday, September 13, bringing together over 88 women and women supporters to inspire and make connections in the water industry, all while having fun!

Attendees were provided with a ticket upon entry containing historical facts leading each attendee to their "Famous Women in Water" table. Once seated, each attendee received a special gift containing a variety of Women Impacting Water items.

A buffet breakfast was served while a slideshow played in the background featuring WaterJAM 2022 women speakers offering their thoughts on what the future of water would look like. Opening remarks welcomed special guests from the Keynote and DEI sessions.

All attendees were then asked to ponder the famous women who have impacted water and consider what they could do to leave a mark as a woman who currently works in the water industry.

The main event of the breakfast was the "BalderSPLASH!", which followed opening remarks. Each table was asked to develop



made-up but believable definitions to water-themed terminology. Everyone should now know what a manometer is!

Closing remarks challenged attendees to consider the questions: "How do I fit into this conversation today?" and "How can I continue this conversation in the future?"

Another great time was had by all, and we are all looking forward to next year's breakfast. Thank you to all who attended and supported this year's Women Impacting Water Breakfast. We hope you continue to inspire and connect with one another, as you all are the future of water.





CHARTING A NEW COURSE FOR ALL...

## **WATER AND WASTEWATER PROFESSIONALS EMBRACE THE VISION: 'OUR WATER, OUR FUTURE'**

*Everyone is seen, heard, and included.*

*By Jerry Griffin Jr. and Kaya Sanon*

WaterJAM 2022 started with a captivating keynote speech by Dr. Janice Underwood, Office of Personnel Management's Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access, which is an essential component of the Biden-Harris administration. Her address to the leaders of our sector outlined how every agency can capitalize on the superpower of diversity, and how access will foster greater equity in our society.

We realize the current contemporary workplace is more complicated than any before it, with multiple generations of workers from different backgrounds working alongside one another each day. So often we fail to recognize how the interpersonal issues that result from those differences can cause problems in talent retention and recruitment for an organization. Historically, many believed that individuals had to be internally motivated to have an inclusive view in every interaction to develop that self-awareness. We now know there is another way. A way

that will enable us to move toward sustainable changes by utilizing established frameworks which are ready for use at the federal and state levels. "Government-Wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce" and the "One Virginia Plan" are both tangible options for implementing comprehensive change in your organization.

### **IMPACT OF ONE'S EXPERIENCES**

Dr. Underwood shared these items because she knows they work – no matter the scale or uniqueness of your organization. This can move our sector forward and actively increase efficiency, creating a more inclusive environment while maintaining stability.

Following the keynote address was an interactive panel session titled "The Importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for Our Water, Our Future" moderated by Donnell Duncan. Our panel featured esteemed women, who, throughout their careers, have

placed equity and inclusion at the forefront of their works: Dr. Janice Underwood, Lisa Stone, and Maria D. Burgos. The panelists led an intimate discussion on the importance of DEI in the workplace and the community as a whole.

Burgos notably opened the discussion in both Spanish and English highlighting the importance of her heritage and its impact on her experiences both in the workplace and as a citizen of the world. Stone also shared a very personal story about her early childhood experiences during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and the ways both gender and ethnicity have affected her career path. She spoke at length about the importance of legacy and the ways generational trauma can impact an individual within a company, but also the company as a whole. Dr. Underwood, the DEI keynote speaker for the conference, was able to expand on her keynote speech with real-world examples of how her work and the work of others like her have impacted





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not only women of color, but people from all walks of life. This workshop also included audience participation and offered a safe space for individuals to speak out about the ways micro-aggressions, discrimination, and other non-inclusive behaviors and actions have affected their work relationships and the way they relate to their work. One audience member, a college student – and hopefully a future leader in the water industry – gave a touching speech about how life experiences have impacted their work, and why workshops like this one are so important to the future leaders of the water industry.

### IMMERSIVE WORKSHOP

The day concluded with an immersive design thinking workshop actualizing many of the components gained throughout the day, enabling utility leaders, consulting companies, and student members of VA AWWA and the Virginia Water Environment Association to put their lessons into action. The room was then split into a several groups with each group being tasked with formulating a DEI plan of action that would stand as an outline for an organization to create a more equitable workspace. Each team created a mission statement that prioritized equity in an organization through a series of support systems, identified potential challenges, and developed an implementation process. Despite the differences within each group, each had similar comments and goals for the betterment of the company. Those key notions are policies, education, and a commitment to change. Keeping these goals paramount is key for moving forward in incorporating DEI into their organization's DNA.

Water JAM 2022 was designed with intentionality to be a catalyst for action and accountability. We are grateful to Dr. Janice Underwood, Ph.D., Maria D. Burgos, Lisa Stone, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, and Donnell Duncan, PE, S.E. for curating high-quality dialogue. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are important parts of any organization to ensure every individual feels seen, heard, and respected.

Join us as we flow forward to fulfill our purpose to lead and empower diversity and inclusion in our community by creating opportunity and cultivating belonging so all can thrive; acting in a way that is equitable, sustainable, and intentional.

*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.  
VA AWWA and VWEA*



## DE&I COMMITTEE LAUNCHES INFLOW PROGRAM TO WATERJAM

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Committee kicked off VWEA's inaugural InFLOW (Introducing Future Leaders to Opportunities in Water) program at this year's WaterJAM. InFLOW was designed to introduce underrepresented groups to professional careers in the water sector.

The program allowed five Virginia students to attend WaterJAM with the objectives of educating them about career opportunities in the water industry, providing networking opportunities with water professionals, and solidifying their interest in working in the water sector. Student scholars were also paired with a mentor from the graduating Leadership Academy class to provide them with a resource as they move forward in their career journey.

The scholars, Geneva Miles-Williams, Matthew Lawson, Aariana Tucker and Khonstance Taylor of Norfolk State, and Mackenzie Rickard of Old Dominion University, were fully immersed in the WaterJAM experience. Their first day kicked off with an orientation lunch with Dorissa Pitts-Paige, Vice Chair of the



VWEA DE&I Committee where they learned more about WaterJAM, their schedules over the two days of their attendance, and met with their mentors. The group had the opportunity to network with members of both VWEA and VA AWWA during Opening Night's Meet and Greet. On Tuesday, they attended the keynote session and the DE&I panel discussion. During the VWEA Awards luncheon, the group was recognized as InFLOW scholars and learned more about VWEA and its initiatives. Day three included technical sessions, attending presentations for VWEA's Student Design

Competition, and an opportunity to network with water industry leaders at the Young Professionals and Student Reception.

At the conclusion of WaterJAM, the scholars met with DE&I Committee members for a final wrap-up. The participants shared that the inaugural InFLOW program experience exceeded their expectations.

In the coming year, the DE&I Committee plans to continue its engagement with underrepresented groups in the water industry and also to expand the program for WaterJAM 2023.

## YPs, STUDENTS SHOWCASE THEIR WORK AT THE DKC

The *YP Digital Knowledge Competition* took place again this year and received submissions from both young professionals and students. Presentations were submitted in video format and showcased recent or ongoing research, or innovative ideas related to the fields of water and wastewater.

A monitor was placed outside the Exhibit Hall which displayed participants' videos on a loop, where conference goers could watch these informative and creative presentations. The 1st place YP winners were Kayla Rutherford and Jae Yoon, while the 2nd place YP winners were Andrew Cockram,

Beata Lienhard, and Skyler Medina. Among the students, Camila Renjel Herbes took 1st place.

Thank you to all our participants and judges for their efforts in putting together another successful Digital Knowledge Competition!



**1st Place YP Winner:** *Feed-Backward Total Phosphorus TMDL Evaluation with Finite Segment Modeling Framework* by Kayla Rutherford and Jae Yoon



**2nd Place YP Winner:** *PWCSA Vertical Asset Management* by Andrew Cockram, Elizabeata Lienhard, and Skyler Medina



**1st Place Student Winner:** *Ecuador Water Distribution Project Phase I-III* by Stephanie Thomson, Sylvia McLain, and Camila Renjel



## VWEA RECOGNIZES AWARD WINNERS AT WATERJAM 2022

VWEA recognized our 2022 Award recipients during WaterJAM. The recipients represent individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the water environment profession and to the federation and its member associations.

### ENSLOW-HEDGEPEATH AWARD

**Matt Doyle, Fairfax County and  
George Mason University**

The award is presented to an Association member who, during the past year or recent years, has made outstanding contributions to the VWEA through services to the Association, made outstanding technical or other contributions to the field of wastewater treatment or water pollution control, or made a major contribution in the improvement or control of water quality or the environment.



### 5-S (SELECT SOCIETY OF SANITARY SLUDGE SHOVELERS)

**James Grandstaff,  
Henrico County WRF**

**Sara Ferrance, Fairfax County**

As an honorary society, individuals are nominated and selected by society members for significant and repeated effort toward making VWEA a better association. Activities may include technical presentations, serving as instructors at various workshops, serving as officer or as the chair of a productive committee, or as an active committee member, and putting time and effort into VWEA, which in the opinion of the Selection Committee, are worth recognition.

### VWEA/VA AWWA OUTSTANDING YOUNG PROFESSIONAL

**Brandon Cooper, Greeley and Hansen**

The Outstanding Young Professional Award recognizes a VWEA or Virginia Section AWWA young professional, 35 years old or younger at the time of nomination, who, through individual effort, has made significant contributions to VWEA or the Virginia Section in the form of activities including: volunteer work, committee work, leadership activities and/or conference paper presentations.



### WEF LABORATORY ANALYST AWARD

**Ashley Roberts, HRSD**

The WEF Laboratory Analyst Award recognizes an individual for outstanding performance, professionalism, and contributions to the water quality analysis profession.



### WEF WILLIAM D. HATFIELD AWARD

**Erica Duncan, Henrico County Water  
Reclamation Facility**

The WEF Hatfield Award recognizes operators of wastewater treatment plants for outstanding performance and professionalism.



### A.H. PAESSLER ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

**Marcia Degen,  
Virginia Department of Health**

The award recognizes a government employee's service to the water environment field and to the association.





#### **GOLDEN MANHOLE AWARD**

**Sara Ferrance, Fairfax County**

The award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of wastewater collection systems, including design, education, training, certification, construction, operations, maintenance, and management.



#### **STORMWATER SPLASH AWARD**

**Doug Beisch, Stantec**

The award recognizes dedication and service to the Stormwater Management field.



#### **WEF ARTHUR SIDNEY BEDELL AWARD**

**Scott Shirley, Western VA Water Authority**

The award acknowledges extraordinary personal service to a member association.

#### **VWEA FACILITY SAFETY AWARD**

**Virginia American Water  
Section 8 WWTP**

The award recognizes a municipal or industrial wastewater facility for its efforts in establishing and maintaining an active and effective safety program.



#### **VWEA FACILITY MAINTENANCE AWARD**

**Prince William County Service  
Authority H.L. Mooney AWRP**

The award recognizes outstanding performance, professionalism, and dedication specific to the maintenance of wastewater treatment equipment and processes.



#### **VWEA PUBLIC OFFICIAL**

**David Paylor**

The award recognizes an elected or appointed public official that has made significant contributions in the area of clean water legislation.



#### **WEF GEORGE W. BURKE, JR. SAFETY AWARD**

**Henrico County Water  
Reclamation Facility**

The award recognizes a municipal or industrial wastewater facility for establishing and maintaining an active and effective safety program.



***Congratulations  
to all of the awardees!***



## SUSTAINABLE UTILITIES COMMITTEE: A YEAR IN REVIEW

By Nicole Dean (incoming Committee Chair), Bob Krallinger (Outgoing Committee Chair), Laura Kirkwood (Committee Member)

The WVEA/VA AWWA Sustainable Utilities Committee (SUC) is excited to report another productive year! The Committee is going on two years with the former Water Reuse Committee under its umbrella. Water reuse is an important aspect of sustainability at utilities and the joining of the committees has allowed for increased collaboration, a more diverse membership, and greater engagement among professional networks. The SUC has dedicated focus groups to break some of the committee's grand goals into bite-sized initiatives and Water Reuse is one of those focus groups. Our other focus groups include WaterJAM Conference Sustainability Support, Earth Day Celebration, Communications & Activities, and our newest, Sustainable Practices for Municipal Utilities, a forum for members and guests to share experiences in the implementation of sustainable business practices within their organizations.

One of the goals of the SUC is to foster the transfer of knowledge and information related to sustainability topics within the water industry. In support of this goal, the committee hosted a variety of technical webinars over the last year. In late 2021, the committee hosted a Successful Water Reuse in Virginia webinar, which shared projects from Loudon Water, HRSD and Fairfax County. In April 2022, a webinar on Harvested Rainwater in Virginia focused on proposed regulations on rainwater harvesting for potable use, existing plumbing codes for non-potable water systems, including plumbing systems for harvested rainwater, designs of some existing rainwater harvesting systems, as well as perspectives and insight from a system owner/operator. And in May 2022, the committee hosted a webinar on the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program that not only provided a grant program overview, but also an overview of how entities can customize their applications to project/program eligibility.

In addition to hosting webinars, the committee authored several articles over the past year. An article summarizing one of the water reuse projects discussed during the Successful Water Reuse in Virginia webinar, titled "Reclaimed Water Used to Manufacture Pet Care Products," is included in the Winter 2022 editions of *The Conduit* and *Tap into Virginia*.



Tidy Otter Logo

An article discussing the Envision Rating System as it applies to our industry, titled "The Impact of the Envision Rating System for Sustainable Infrastructure," is featured in the Spring 2022 edition of *The Conduit*.

### FINDING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE

The SUC also increased member engagement efforts this year by incorporating ice-breakers into monthly committee meetings and hosting two in-person meetings. An in-person meeting was held in Richmond at the Hardywood Park Craft Brewery in April 2022, which was followed by a sustainable brewery tour! Our annual happy hour was also held during the WaterJAM 2022 conference.

To everyone's delight, WaterJAM was an in-person conference again with record-breaking attendance and the WaterJAM Conference Planning Committee, the SUC and many exhibitors led by example with their sustainable conference planning practices. WaterJAM 2022 was



Whitman, Requardt & Associates has been participating in the Tidy Otter Program for five-plus years!



Wood Equipment Company receives the Tidy Otter Award from SUC Member, Laura Kirkwood



Ulliman Schutte receives the Tidy Otter Award from SUC Member, Matthias Wittenberg



a certified Virginia Green event for the seventh year in a row! And if you were not aware, there is a great sustainable event planning tool on the committee's page – the Sustainable Event Planning Strategy and Tracking Register – which is a tool for events as large as WaterJAM, or as small as a committee gathering. This year, WaterJAM also had a record number of Tidy Otters, an award given to exhibitors at the conference who use and encourage sustainable practices. Thank you to the organizations below for participating in the Tidy Otter program and being sustainable leaders in the industry, particularly those who have been participating for over five years\*\*!

- American Engineering
- Bowman Consulting Group, Ltd.
- Burns & McDonnell
- Bynry, Inc.
- Carotek, Inc.
- Control Equipment Company
- Energy Equipment, Inc.
- GAGE, LLC
- Garney Construction
- Hydra-Stop
- Infrastructure Solutions Group
- Johnson Controls
- Short-Elliott-Hendrickson, Inc. (SEH)
- SUEZ Smart & Environmental Solutions
- Ulliman Schutte Construction, LLC

- Wendel\*\*
- Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP\*\*
- Wood Equipment Company

The Sustainable Utilities Committee continues to support the development of sustainable practices within the water industry thanks to our dedicated members. Through volunteer events, webinars, and sustainable initiatives at WaterJAM, committee members showed their commitment to and passion for educating and developing sustainable practices to overcome today's water challenges.

If you're interested in joining the committee or learning more, please visit our committee page at the VWEA or VA AWWA websites, or contact Nicole Dean (2022-23 Committee Chair, [ndean1@arlingtonva.us](mailto:ndean1@arlingtonva.us)).



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## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



It is always a pleasure to hear directly from our friends at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). This year, the Public and Government Affairs Session at WaterJAM 2022 included presentations from Scott Morris, Chief Deputy, Melanie Davenport, Director of Water Permitting, Jutta Schneider, Director of Water Planning, Jeff Steers, Director of Central Operations, and Michael Crocker, Regional Team Manager. All DEQ staff presentations have been uploaded to the WaterJAM website and attendees can access via the link sent on September 30.



### SCOTT MORRIS - TRANSFORMATIONAL VISION AND PERSPECTIVES

Scott Morris' presentation was titled, "Transformational Vision and Perspectives" (building on our strong foundation to move forward). Morris shared DEQ's mission and vision statements, as well as DEQ's "7 Cs" –

commitment, collaboration, consistency, customer service, communication, certainty and closure. These serve as the foundation in communicating DEQ values. With respect to a transformative future, Morris shared DEQ's vision to leverage technology, best management practices, and advanced communication tools to drive four initiatives:

- 1) "OneDEQ";
- 2) Permitting Enhancement and Evaluation Platform (PEEP);
- 3) (Establish) one stormwater, BMP and ESC manual; and,
- 4) Commodity trading platform for mitigation

With respect to PEEP, the Agency is moving quickly to establish a more informative, user-friendly experience to better understand and follow (in real time) all permitting activities. Look for PEEP (<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/>) to launch by the end of the year. Members were excited to hear about these initiatives, especially the initiative to develop one stormwater, BMP and ESC manual and reduce permit turnaround times.

The DEQ Water Permitting Division has been busy this year with legislative initiatives, regulatory requirements, scheduled General Permit reopeners, and work to revise guidance documents to ensure consistency.



### MELANIE DAVENPORT - OUTCOME OF CHAPTER 356

As usual, Melanie Davenport did a great job of conveying a lot of information in a short period of time. Melanie summarized the outcome of Chapter 356 – 2022 Acts of the Assembly (SB 657), limiting the authority of the State Water Control Board (SWCB) to the issuance of regulations (effective July 1, 2022). The regulation prescribes some changes to the permit issuance process, however, the criteria for requesting and granting a public hearing remains the same.

Melanie provided an update on the multi-phased implementation of the new Water Quality Criteria for ammonia (9VAC25-260). Phase 1, municipal facilities  $\geq 5$  MGD and major industrial facilities was effective

October 8, 2021. Phase 2 (0.5 – 4.99 MGD facilities) and Phase 3 ( $< 0.5$  MGD facilities) will be effective October 8, 2022, and October 8, 2023, respectively. Publication of final guidance for the implementation of more restrictive ammonia limits is expected in fall of 2022.

Melanie also provided updates/status of various General Permits and provided further details regarding status of regulatory actions around the Erosion & Sediment Control Regulations (9VAC25-840), the Virginia Storm Water Management Program (9VAC25-870), Certification of Nonpoint Source Nutrient Credits (9VAC25-900), and the Virginia Erosion & Stormwater Management Program (implements Chapters 68 and 758 of 2016 Acts Assembly, Special Session 1; and work to consolidate the ESC and SWM Programs).

Melanie closed by providing an update on the "E-Reporting – Federal Rule" (Two Phases). Phase 1 included the "MyDEQPortal" (successfully) launched August 2, 2022, to be followed in 2023 with launch of the "NPDES Noncompliance Report (NNCR)". Phase 2 will include General Permit Program reports (deadline extended to December 2025) and NNCR's release to the public (no later than December 2026).

### JUTTA SCHNEIDER - 2021 TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF THE VIRGINIA WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

Jutta Schneider provided an update regarding the 2021 Triennial Review of the Virginia Water Quality Standards. The *Clean Water Act* and State Law require a review and update of water quality standards every three years. The process includes a Regulatory Advisor Panel (RAP), public hearings and Notice of Public Comment (ended March 18, 2022). The SWCB approved DEQ's proposed water quality standards regulatory amendments in August 2022, the amendments are currently in the administrative review process which includes a cost/benefit analysis, prior to submittal to Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources. After clearing the administrative review process, the amendments go to EPA Region 3 for approval. Only after EPA approval do the standards become effective for VPDES permitting – we expect that to occur no earlier than mid-2023.

Numerous written comments were received during the process with most interest around the proposed amendments to the Copper "Biotic Ligan Model" (BLM) derived criteria and the Shenandoah Algae Criteria. With respect to the amendments currently under administrative review, the membership was happy to hear the familiar hardness-based equation, modified at the election of the permittee by a Water Effects Ratio (WER), remains an option. The amendments also provide permittees with the with BLM option. With respect to the Shenandoah Algae Criteria, the amendments include impairment thresholds for specific segments of the North and South Forks of the Shenandoah River based mass of attached filamentous algae for a given area – expressed in  $\text{mg}/\text{m}^2$  for both a two-month median ( $150 \text{ mg}/\text{m}^2$ ) and a seasonal median ( $100 \text{ mg}/\text{m}^2$ ).

Jutta also provided updates for revised Human Health Criteria (9VAC25-260-140) amendments for 10 pollutants using EPA's most recent recommendations for body weight, daily fish consumption rates and daily drinking water intake; an amendment adding aluminum (acute and chronic) criteria for protection of aquatic life (expressed as



total recoverable); nutrient criteria for lakes (special standards), adding Lake Mooney to the list of reservoirs to which nutrient criteria apply (9VAC25-260-187) due to its proposed Public Water Supply designation.



#### **JEFF STEERS - STATUS OF PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES RESPONSE PLAN AND INVESTIGATIONS**

Jeff Steers' presentation was titled, "Status of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Response Plan and Investigations". Jeff summarized possible sources of the

contaminants of concern, which include wastewater and stormwater dischargers, biosolids, air sources, solid waste landfills, military facilities, federal facilities and firefighting training facilities. The DEQ response plan includes work to proactively identify of possible sources – this includes ambient monitoring of surface and groundwater as well outreach to potential sources. In the spring of 2022, the DEQ partnered with USGS to perform surface water monitoring and is scheduled to perform ambient groundwater monitoring in 2023. When sources are identified, the DEQ works with local, state and federal partners to identify potential responsible parties. However, Jeff noted, given the lack of approved analytical methods and criteria or standards to treat to, the best approach – in terms of "treating" or remediation is not well understood at this time. Jeff shared there are currently 31 federal facilities in various stages of site inspections. These are being performed in accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act which requires Site Inspection Reports and notification to owners of agricultural lands.

Jeff shared an interesting case study in Henrico County around the Richmond International Airport where elevated levels of PFAS were found in the Chickahominy River and subsequently in soils, surface waters and ground water (including residential wells) at and around the Airport. The DEQ coordinated their response and on-going investigation with Henrico County and the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). A communications plan has been developed and a PFAS Dashboard has been developed to communicate the status of the investigation in as near real time as possible (including test results to date). In summary, Jeff noted additional funding, guidance etc. are needed and emphasized the importance of making science driven decisions. Here is a link to find more information about PFAS in general and the Middle Chickahominy River investigation: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/news/elevated-pfas-levels-found-in-the-chickahominy-river-watershed/>

#### **MICHAEL CROCKER - CLEAN WATER FINANCING AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The final speaker was Michael Crocker. Michael's presentation shared status and information about the DEQ's "Clean Water Financing and Assistance Program". The Program includes the:

- Virginia Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (VCWRLF aka CWSRF),
- Water Quality Improvement Fund (WQIF),
- Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF),
- America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and the
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) aka Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Michael briefly summarized the status of several WQIF projects – noting that current needs appear to be outpacing available funding. on the number of WQIF projects. He then provided an explanation

and update regarding the IIJA/BIL program which provides additional funding through the CWSRF over a five-year period and noted that 49% of the additional funding must be applied as principal forgiveness to disadvantaged borrowers (that meet the affordability criteria). He also noted, IIJA/BIL funds may be provided for projects that address emerging contaminants. Total federal funding for BIL is estimated to be \$328,361,800 over FY 22 – FY 26. He then provided a summary of how funds will be allocated between CAP Grant, BIL Supplement (largest portion) and Emerging Contaminants (the smallest portion).

Next topic was ARPA funding for the Sewer Collection System Program. Approximately \$65M was provided statewide. Projects must address sewer collection system repair, replacement and upgrades. Funds may also be used for abandoning septic and straight pipe discharges (must connect). The application period is October 15, 2022 – December 15, 2022. Expenditures prior to March 3, 2021 are not eligible. Grants must be executed by December 31, 2024, and the project must be completed by December 31, 2026. ARPA funds will also be used to address Combined Sewer systems in Alexandria, Lynchburg and Richmond. ARPA funds will also be used for several projects ("Special Appropriation Program") around the Commonwealth. The list includes several sewer, wastewater and storm water improvement projects that will result in water quality improvements in our communities. For more information about funding and grants, please go to the DEQ website (<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/>) and search for "funding and grants".

*This article was written by the Public and Government Affairs Committee.*



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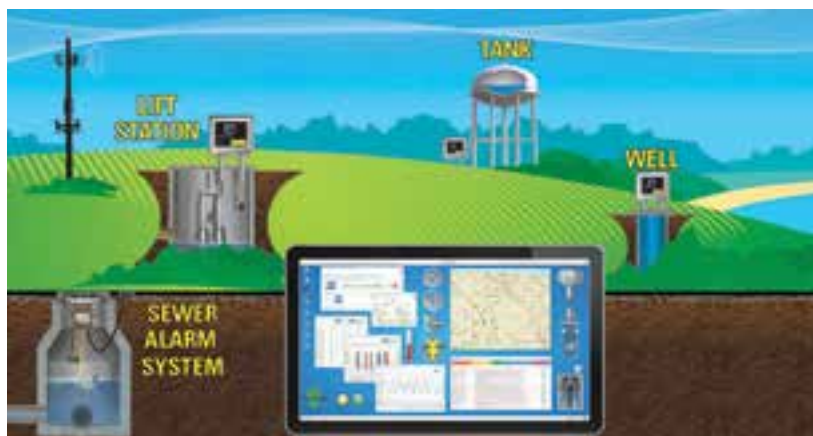
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