



IMAGINE OUR FUTURE NORTH BAY

April 19, 2024
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
EVENT/STUDENT CENTER
1801 East Cotati Avenue Rohnert Park

Resilient Watersheds and Thriving Communities

Bios

Introductions



Andy Rodgers
NBWA Executive
Director

Andy Rodgers is a consulting geologist, environmental scientist, and serial volunteer. He has lived and worked in the North Bay for 30+ years and has focused his career on public agency projects and programs. Before becoming the Executive Director of the NBWA, he participated as a volunteer for years representing business and local NGOs. His North Bay collaboration inspired his involvement with the Russian River Watershed Association and other watershed and basin-defined organizations, such as the Sonoma County Groundwater Sustainability Agencies.

Welcome Address



**U.S. Congressman
Jared Huffman**
California's 2nd District

Rep. Huffman represents California's 2nd Congressional District which spans from the Golden Gate Bridge north to the Oregon border, and includes Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, Trinity, and Del Norte Counties. He was first elected to Congress in November of 2012, and currently serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Huffman Chairs the Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife. Recognizing his environmental leadership, Speaker Nancy Pelosi appointed Jared to serve on the Select Committee on Climate Change in February of 2019.

Session 1: Resilient, Equitable, and Interdependent Water Future



Romain Maendly
Executive Advisor,
Climate Change and Integrated
Watershed Management, CA
Department of Water Resources
(DWR)

Romain Maendly is the Climate Action Coordinator for the Integrated Watershed Management Programs. Over the last fourteen years at DWR, he has led, assisted, and collaborated on many plans and studies related to integrated water management. Romain has been leading DWR's Climate Action Plan Phase II, aiming to improve the consistency and scientific rigor of DWR's approaches for analyzing the potential impacts of climate change and strategies to adapt our water management sectors.

Romain originated from Switzerland, where he earned a technical certificate in Land Surveying. He came to the United States to play college basketball. Instead, he completed a B.Sc. in Environmental Engineering Science from UC Berkeley and an M.Sc. in Civil and Environmental Engineering with a specialization in Water Resources at UC Davis.



Lewis Moeller
CA Water Plan Section Manager,
DWR

Lewis Moeller, currently manager of the California Water Plan section within the Division of Planning with the Department of Water Resources. Additionally, Lewis worked for almost 20 years with the State Water Board in a variety of roles associated with both water rights and water quality. He served as an adjunct instructor in the Science Department at American River College for over 12 years.



Eric Tsai
Acting Manager,
Division of Planning,
DWR

Eric Tsai is Acting Division Manager for the Division of Planning within the California Department of Water Resources. He joined the Department in 2013 and supported the development of the 2017 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and basin-wide feasibility studies in the San Joaquin River Basin and Sacramento River Basin. More recently, he supported the development of the California Water Plan Update 2023, which was released this month. Before coming to DWR, he worked on various water resources planning projects as an engineer with MWH Global, now Stantec. He holds a Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from the University of Minnesota and a Master's in Environmental Engineering from Stanford University.



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Session 2: Funding Our Future



Lynn von Koch-Liebert
Executive Director,
California Strategic
Growth Council
(CSGC)

Lynn von Koch-Liebert is the Executive Director of the Strategic Growth Council. The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) is a 10-member council comprised of seven state agencies and three public members with the mission to build healthy, thriving, and resilient communities for all. Funded through California's Cap and Trade system and the California General Fund, SGC's grant programs, strategic initiatives, and interagency coordination focus on multi-benefit and community-centric solutions at the nexus of climate and equity. Since 2008, SGC has invested over \$3.5 billion in projects strengthening communities and addressing climate change.

Prior to joining SGC, Lynn was the Deputy Secretary for Housing at the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency. In this role she worked to coordinate the housing finance system during the largest increase in funding in California's affordable housing history; led the housing response during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic; led the implementation of California COVID-19 Rent Relief program; and created the Outsmart Disaster Campaign.



Aatisha Singh
Connecting
Communities Analyst,
CSGC

Aatisha Singh (she/her/hers) is an Analyst for SGC's new Connecting Communities Program. In this role, she helps SGC grantees and applicants access federal and other funding to accelerate community-led climate projects statewide. With over a decade of experience in nonprofit fund development, she has adeptly cultivated transformative relationships with institutional funders serving California and the nation.



Angie Hacker
CEO, Prosper Sustainably
and Statewide Best
Practices Coordinator, CA
Climate and Energy
Collaborative

Angie Hacker is the CEO of Prosper Sustainably. She has over 20 years of experience designing and leading community climate and energy initiatives in private, nonprofit and public roles spanning local, state, federal, and tribal government. Consulting projects currently include serving as Statewide Best Practices Coordinator for the California Climate and Energy Collaborative (CCEC) under CivicWell, lead consultant for the federally funded Tribal Climate Health Project, and consultant for many other local and tribal climate initiatives and advisory bodies. Angie believes a key to tackling the climate crisis and protecting people is to make it easier for communities to access funding, data, input, technical assistance, collaborations, best practices, and knowledge. She is a member of the American Society of Adaptation Professionals and has a Bachelor of Science from Cal Poly SLO and a Master of Public Administration from NYU.



Kevin Eastman
Vice President,
PACE Government Relations

Kevin Eastman is Vice President of PACE Government Relations, a bipartisan federal advocacy firm based on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C..

Kevin brings twenty years of experience in impacting federal and state policy to the PACE team, having served in senior roles in the House of Representatives and the California legislature prior to joining PACE in 2018. He works closely with Tribal and local governments, trade associations, nonprofits, and other clients to ensure their views are appropriately considered by Congress and federal agencies. Recent successes include passage of significant Colorado River water legislation, regulatory changes strengthening tax-exempt bonding authority, and an array of congressional earmarks supporting client infrastructure projects.



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Session 3: Positioning Us for the Future: Watershed Shoreline, Lands, Infrastructure, and Partnerships



Jeremy Lowe
Senior Environmental
Scientist, San Francisco
Estuary Institute

Jeremy Lowe is a Coastal Geomorphologist at SFEI. He has over 35 years of experience in tidal wetland restoration and sea-level rise adaptation planning on the Pacific West Coast and Europe. Jeremy is the author of tidal wetland design guidelines for San Francisco Bay, Puget Sound, and the Lower Columbia Estuary. He is working with the Regional Board, USACE, and USEPA to develop a science-based approach to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of natural and nature-based climate adaptation strategies in the Bay. For MTC, he has led working groups providing scientific input to engineering design alternatives for adapting Highway 37 to sea-level rise. Jeremy is part of the project teams that have developed long-term landscape visions of Novato Creek, Walnut Creek, Sonoma Creek, and the Petaluma River, incorporating wetland restoration, fluvial floodplains, and transportation and wastewater infrastructure.



Ali Blodorn, Ph.D.
Principal Program
Manager, Forestry,
Napa RCD

Ali Blodorn is the Principal Program Manager of Napa RCD's Forest Health Program, which focuses on improving forest health and wildfire resilience in Napa County and the region more broadly. Ali manages Napa RCD's partnerships with a range of organizations (local, state, federal), leads project and grant management, and supervises a growing team of technical staff. Ali received a Ph.D. in Social Psychology from Tulane University and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of California Santa Barbara.



Brenley McKenna
Managing Director,
WateReuse California

Brenley McKenna has over 15 years of experience in the water sector, holding a bachelor's degree in environmental science from UC Davis and a master's degree in environmental engineering from the Colorado School of Mines. With roles at two Colorado water utilities, she managed recycled water systems and led efforts to expand water reuse regulations. For seven years at The Water Research Foundation, Brenley facilitated subscriber engagement and connected utilities to research resources. Currently, as Managing Director for WateReuse California, she champions responsible stewardship of water resources, maximizing the safe use of recycled water and supporting the WateReuse Association's initiatives.



Chris Halle, Ph.D.
Program Developer,
Center for Environmental Inquiry,
Sonoma State University

Chris Halle has been working on various aspects of earth observing systems for the last 35 years, for both academia and industry. His interests include quantifying "typical" and "extreme" environmental conditions, scientific computer programming, and environmental description. He is particularly interested in quantifying uncertainty, especially as it relates to risk management. He currently serves as Program Developer for the Center for Environmental Inquiry, where he helps to break down barriers between traditional academia and the outside world, assisting faculty and students in working on real-world regional issues. He firmly believes that involving students of all disciplines in working on complex problems can benefit both the students and local communities.



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Session 4: The Next Generation: Resiliency Workforce Development



Steven Currie
Workforce
Development
Program Manager,
DEI Division,
Contra Costa Water
District; and Vice
President, BAYWORK

Steven Currie is the Workforce Development Program Manager at Contra Costa Water District and Vice President of Baywork, a partnership of more than forty Bay Area Water/Wastewater utilities dedicated to ensuring a reliable workforce for our industry. Steven has over 20 years of workforce development experience in the Bay Area, over half of which has been focused in water/wastewater. He has led workforce development, community development, and organizational development efforts throughout his career including in previous positions with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMIUD) and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Steven has an undergraduate degree in Public Health (Stockton University) and a Master's in Public Administration (San Francisco State University). Steven is an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the industry and is co-leading Baywork cross-agency mentorship, stackable internship, and cross-sector partnership-building efforts.



Jordan Damerel
Assistant General
Manager and District
Engineer, Fairfield-
Suisun Sewer District

Jordan Damerel is the Assistant General Manager/District Engineer of the Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District, where he oversees the Operations, Maintenance, Engineering, and Environmental Services departments. His experience is in planning, design, construction, and operation of wastewater treatment and conveyance facilities. Jordan enjoys sharing his passion for the wastewater industry with others. He is an Adjunct Instructor in the Water/Wastewater Technology program at Solano Community College in Fairfield, CA; serves as the Chair of the Bay Area Consortium for Water/Wastewater Education, and is on the Board of Directors of BAYWORK, a water/wastewater workforce reliability collaborative. Jordan has a BS in Civil Engineering from the University of California, Berkeley; a MS in Environmental Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and is a registered professional civil engineer in California.



Elizabeth Toups
Manager, BAYWORK/JVS

Elizabeth Toups brings over 30 years of experience in leading workforce education and training strategies across varied industry sectors, with expertise in public utilities and healthcare industries. Much of her work has centered on assessing industry demand pain points, building consensus in a labor/management environment, prioritizing training models that lead to high quality jobs, and ensuring equity of opportunity for workers from underrepresented communities.

Two projects that Elizabeth contributed to significantly include the 2023 California Workforce Needs in the Water/Wastewater Industry report from the Water Energy Education Alliance and the Centers of Excellence and the 2017 Water and Wastewater Career Pathways report from BAYWORK, JVS, and the Centers of Excellence. Both reports documented the approaching crisis point in workforce reliability in the water/wastewater industry, across the state of California and more specifically, in the San Francisco Bay Area. These reports highlight the rare workforce development opportunity to help struggling job seekers acquire the training, experience and connections they need to access family-sustaining employment.

Elizabeth holds a B.S. from the University of Kentucky and a Masters degree in Public Administration from Golden Gate University.