

2020 Water Leaders Class Bios and Photos

Andrew Straub-Heidke- Water Resources Administrator II, City of Greeley

Andrew is currently the Water Resources Administrator for the City of Greeley, where he assists with water resources operations and provides analysis of water rights for the protection, planning and conservation of Greeley's water supplies. Previously with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Andrew managed the water rights portfolio and advocated for the Tribe throughout the Colorado River Basin for improved collaboration and innovative decision making. Accomplishments with the Tribe include completion of the Ten Tribes-Tribal Water Study, development of a Southern Ute-Water Resources Management Plan and formulation of a Drought Management Plan. Prior to joining the Tribe, he worked 7 years for the San Juan National Forest where he was responsible for filing federal reserved water rights cases, instream flow applications and water quality sampling and analysis. He graduated from the University of Colorado in 2010 with degrees in Environmental Science and Geography. When not at work, you can find Andrew and his family outside hiking, backpacking or mountain biking in Colorado's high country (especially anywhere on the Colorado Trail) or Utah's desert.



Bethany Howell- Executive Director, Rio Grande Watershed Conservation & Education Initiative



Bethany has led education programs, created collaborative projects, and worked with natural resource management agencies, non-profits, and farmers since 2016. Bethany moved to the San Luis Valley with her family in 2013. Having grown up on her family's heritage ranch in Marble Falls, she came full circle back to Colorado, since she was actually born in Hugo. In her previous Texas life, Bethany spent her professional career working in communications in higher education. She holds two degrees in English from Hardin-Simmons University and is never so grateful for them as she is when writing grant applications. As a Rio Grande Roundtable member, mom of two Del Norte Tigers (daughter Aden, 15 and son Morgan, 10), and wife of an outdoor stewardship

educator, Bethany loves communicating and teaching about her community's water and agriculture, especially the diversity of water uses. When she's not reading or writing about natural resources, she's thinking about them while running with her Siberian husky, Mischa, on the trails near Del Norte.

Carrie Padgett, Principal Engineer, Harris Water Engineer, Inc.

Carrie Padgett was born and raised on a 40-acre farm outside of Durango. Growing up in southwestern Colorado has given her great respect for Colorado's precious resources and the beautiful landscape she calls home. Carrie received a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Colorado State University and is a licensed professional engineer. On staff at Harris Water Engineering since 2008, she has worked on a variety of water-related projects ranging from potable drinking water systems, reservoir operations, water rights cases, the Southwest Basin Implementation Plan, recovery programs, and state-wide workgroups. Beyond her engineering services, she has volunteered on the San Juan Resource Conservation and Development Council since 2015, both as a staff member and council member since 2015. In her free time, Carrie enjoys reading, all types of crafting, and hiking with her dog. With her husband, Carrie golfs regularly and travels any chance she gets to the beach.



Dan Omasta, Grassroots Coordinator, Colorado Trout Unlimited



A Colorado native, Dan grew up in Arapahoe County and graduated from the University of Colorado with a political science degree focused on land management and environmental policy. After school, he lived in the Gunnison Valley and worked in various areas of the ski industry, as a fishing and rafting guide, and property manager. Dan founded his own non-profit organization in 2013, River Restoration Adventures for Tomorrow (RRAFT)- a small river outfitter dedicated to protecting critical watersheds through community engagement and hands-on restoration work. Dan started working with Colorado Trout Unlimited in February of 2017, where he engages chapters in various conservation projects and capacity development initiatives, as well as supports statewide water management plans and native trout restoration.

Fay Hartman, Conservation Director, Colorado River Basin, American Rivers

Fay connects communities in Colorado and the Colorado River Basin to their local rivers. She strives to raise the profile of rivers and demonstrate the values and benefits they have for our communities and the environment. In her role with American Rivers, she works on innovative policy, program, and project solutions to conserve water in the urban, agricultural, and energy sectors to ensure that the rivers and streams in the region are healthy for local and regional economies, sustainable agriculture, and world-class recreation. You can often find Fay outside adventuring and exploring Colorado and its rivers with her dog Henry and her husband Peter. She has a bachelor's degree in Agriculture and Applied Economics and Environmental Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Colorado-Boulder.



She joined American Rivers in 2010. Prior to that she interned with Wisconsin State Representative Cory Mason, and was the Economic Research Assistant for Clean Wisconsin's water program.

Jeff Stahla, Public Information Officer, Northern Water



Jeff Stahla is the Public Information Officer for Northern Water, based in Berthoud. A native of Greeley, Stahla earned a bachelor's degree in technical journalism from Colorado State University and worked in regional media, culminating with a tenure as the managing editor of the Loveland Reporter-Herald. He joined Northern Water in 2017 to continue his calling to inform the public about the intersection of regional history, public policy and natural resources management. He lives in Loveland with his wife, Susan Harelson, and two children.

Jojo La, Endangered Species Policy Specialist, Colorado Water Conservation Board

Jojo is the Endangered Species Policy Specialist and manages the CWCB's participation in interstate and federal endangered species recovery programs. She is the CWCB's representative to the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program, Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program, and the San Juan River Recovery Program. In this role, she has focused on congressional authorizations, funding, water management, and technical aspects of the programs. Other duties include recovery and preventing the listing of endangered, threatened, or candidate species and Wild and Scenic Rivers matters.



Jordan Parman, Water Quality Scientist, Metro Wastewater Reclamation District



Jordan Parman is a water quality scientist at the Metro Wastewater Reclamation District. In this role, he designs and manages water quality assessment programs along the urban South Platte River to determine the effects of the District's discharge on aquatic life. He also participates in various other regional and statewide stakeholder groups to provide a scientific basis for regulatory development and promote public access to water quality data. He earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and Government and Legal Studies from Bowdoin College and a Master of Geography degree from the University of Colorado. Jordan lives in Denver with his wife and two daughters and he enjoys playing soccer and spending time in and near water with his family hiking, skipping stones, gold panning, canoeing, and looking under rocks for bugs.

Kate Ryan, Staff Attorney, Colorado Water Trust

Kate Ryan joined the Colorado Water Trust as its Staff Attorney in 2019. Her work includes legal representation of the Water Trust and project development. She leads streamflow restoration projects in partnership with water users, including farmers, ranchers, municipalities and the Colorado Water Conservation Board. Prior to joining the Water Trust, Kate worked in private practice and with the Colorado Attorney General's Office. Her practice included trial work and argument before the Colorado Supreme Court. She also clerked for Justice Gregory Hobbs of the Colorado Supreme Court. Before becoming a lawyer, Kate obtained a master's degree in geography at the University of Colorado and worked in climatology and snow hydrology at the National Snow and Ice Data Center.



Kate just completed several years on the City of Boulder's Water Resources Advisory Board and is happy to reclaim an ounce of spare time. Kate enjoys reading and outdoor adventures—the longer and wilder the better. She has a husband and two grade school children who she loves to the moon and back.

Katie Helm, Conservation and Sustainability Program Manager, City of Fountain



Katie Helm was born from a line of great warrior women Helms. She is many things: a lover of mountains, a UCCS/DU college graduate and a secret chef. She resides in Colorado Springs with her best friend Ferguson the corgi and three cats: She is an avid runner, reader, writer and when she's not at work she skates with the Pikes Peak Derby Dames.

Marina Kopytkovskiy, Project Manager, Parker Water and Sanitation District

Marina Kopytkovskiy is a very enthusiastic Project Manager at Parker Water and Sanitation District, where she is able to lead water resources and utility infrastructure planning and construct capital projects. She loves her job because it is a diverse playground of challenges solved through the collaboration of individual departments, and because their work is a direct and tangible contribution to the communities served by the District. When she is not commuting, Marina loves to stay active through the plethora of options typically available in Colorado... and to work off her self-described connoisseurship of donuts! She is very excited to contribute to the 2020 Water Leaders class!



Morgan Lynch, PE, CFM, Project Manager, Mile High Flood District

Morgan Lynch, a Colorado native, graduated in 2003 from Colorado State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering. Morgan's career has been focused in the



water resources industry, specializing in hydrology and hydraulics. For the last two years, Morgan has worked at the Mile High Flood District and CH2M (Jacobs) prior to her employment at MHFD. At MHFD, Morgan leads and manages design, construction and planning projects in the Sand Creek Watershed, as well as routine and maintenance projects in the City and County of Denver. Morgan is currently Chair of the Colorado Association of Stormwater and Floodplain Managers, a member of the

Colorado Riparian Association, and serves on the South Platte River Metro Round Table. In her spare time, you can find her camping or fishing with her husband (Patrick) and five-year-old daughter (Clare) in one of Colorado's various river basins.

Neil Stewart, Water Resources Engineer, Stantec Consulting

Neil is a water resources engineer at Stantec whose interest in Colorado water began in college when he realized that traditional engineering design didn't have enough room for debate, but Colorado water offered plenty of that. After starting out at Colorado Springs Utilities where he focused on long-term planning, he was hired at Stantec (then MWH) in 2013. He has since helped water providers both in Colorado and nationally conduct their water supply planning through modeling and data visualization. A cliché Coloradan, he enjoys skiing, hiking, and any activity in a cool climate.



Noah Greenberg- Water Team Lead, SWCA Environmental

Consultant's Denver and Fort Collins offices. Noah has 20 years of combined academic and professional environmental science experience, most of which is focused on aquatic and riparian systems. Noah's project management experience includes helping clients navigate Clean Water Act compliance for construction and industrial activities, developing watershed and water resource management plans, designing and implementing drainage way enhancement projects, and assisting with water supply plans, to name a few. Noah has a passion for helping clients achieve their goals in ways that promote water resources conservation and protection. Noah is a certified wetland scientist and holds a master's degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a bachelor's degree from Colorado College. He grew up in Vermont on a gentleman's sheep farm and developed an early passion for water while spending summers at a family lake cabin in the Connecticut River Valley. In his spare time, Noah enjoys exploring the woods on foot, skis or bike with his two children and wife; gardening at his home in Boulder; and cooking.



Sarah Wheeler- Manager, Environmental Protection Specialist IV, Colorado Department of Health and Environment

Sarah Wheeler thought she was the luckiest person in the world when she was hired straight out of college to sample lakes and streams throughout Colorado. She knew at the time that she had her dream job but thought it was a short term opportunity before she would land a job in an office someday. Little did she know that 20 years later, she would still be playing in lakes and streams and getting paid for it! Sarah earned a master’s degree in natural resources from the University of Vermont and now works as the manager of the Environmental Data Unit with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. She is grateful every day that she has a job that allows her to supervise talented staff who sample lakes and streams, analyze water quality data and work on water policy and regulations to ultimately protect water resources in Colorado. Outside of work, Sarah can be found camping, skiing and playing in streams near Louisville, Colorado where she lives with her wife, twin daughters and puppy named Hobbes.



Scott Griebing, Senior Water Resources Engineer, Headwaters Corporation

Scott grew up backpacking into remote Colorado lakes and canoeing and rafting down Colorado rivers. His love for water led him to get his BS in civil engineering at CU Boulder with a focus on environmental and water resources engineering. After spending time working in the Pacific Northwest in river restoration and doing international humanitarian work in water and sanitation, he returned to CU Boulder to get a MS in water resources engineering. He currently works for the Headwaters Corporation focusing on endangered species recovery in the Platte Basin. He focuses on integrated hydrologic modeling, groundwater modeling, data analysis, and hydrologic systems monitoring. Scott has developed expertise in the collection and analysis of hydrologic data to support water resources planning and the implementation and evaluation of natural resources management activities. Much of his recent work focuses on the hydrologic connection between surface water and groundwater in riparian corridors.

