# **URBAN WATER INSTITUTE**

A FORUM FOR WESTERN WATER ISSUES



## **SPRING 2024 WATER CONFERENCE**

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2024 | HILTON PALM SPRINGS

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# **PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

Wednesday, February 21, 2024



TIME	ACTIVITIES					
12:00 - 1:00PM	REGISTRATION, NETWORKING & EXHIBITS HORIZON FOYER					
1:00 - 1:15PM	WELCOME TO THE CONFERENCE Andree Lee, UWI Board Chair, EKI Water & Environment					
1:15-1:30PM	WELCOME TO PALM SPRINGS  Jeffrey Bernstein, Mayor of Palm Springs					
1:30 - 2:45PM	SYSTEM CHANGES					
	Our Legal System - Water in the Courts  Justice Ronald Robie, California Court of Appeal, 3rd Appellate Dist.  Introduction by Greg Newmark, Meyers Nave Riback Silver & Wilson					
	Regulations – PFAS – Risk vs. Regulatory Risk Conversation with Dr. Bruce Macler, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Retired) & Darcy M. Burke, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, US EPA Local Government Advisory Committee					
	15 minute audience Q&A					
2:45 - 3:15PM	30 MINUTE BREAK: MEET THE SPEAKERS, Q&A					
3:15 - 4:45PM	LOAVES & FISHES  The Importance of CA Agriculture, Panel Moderator Karen Ross, Secretary of the CA Dept. of Food & Agriculture  Groundwater Overdrafting in the San Joaquin Valley Chris White, San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority  Water Blueprint for the San Joaquin Valley Charles Gardner, Hallmark Group; SJV Water Blueprint  15 minute audience Q&A					
4:45 - 5:15PM	30 MINUTE BREAK: MEET THE SPEAKERS, Q&A					
5:30 -6:30PM	WELCOME RECEPTION CELEBRATING OUR SPONSORS POOLSIDE					





TIME	ACTIVITIES
7:45 - 8:15AM	REGISTRATION, NETWORKING & BUFFET BREAKFAST HORIZON FOYER
8:15 - 9:30AM	SCIENCE MATTERS
	Panel Moderator David Drake, ACWA/JPIA; Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District  Global Solutions for Climate Change
	Dr. David Sedlak, University of California, Berkeley
	Affordability of Water  Dr. Mehdi Nemati, University of California, Riverside
	15 minute audience Q&A
9:30 -10:00AM	30 MINUTE BREAK: MEET THE SPEAKERS, Q&A
10:00 - 11:45AM	WATER COMMUNICATIONS
10:00 - 11:45AM	WATER COMMUNICATIONS  Panel Moderator  Darcy M. Burke, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, US EPA Local Government Advisory Committee
10:00 - 11:45AM	Panel Moderator  Darcy M. Burke, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, US EPA Local
10:00 - 11:45AM	Panel Moderator Darcy M. Burke, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, US EPA Local Government Advisory Committee  Value of Water
10:00 - 11:45AM	Panel Moderator Darcy M. Burke, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, US EPA Local Government Advisory Committee  Value of Water Greg Kail, American Water Works Association  Communicating Tough Messages
10:00 - 11:45AM	Panel Moderator Darcy M. Burke, Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District, US EPA Local Government Advisory Committee  Value of Water Greg Kail, American Water Works Association  Communicating Tough Messages Dr. Renee Fraser, Fraser Communications  Neighborhood Communications – It Started with a Water Dispenser Program

# **PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

Thursday, February 22, 2024



TIME	ACTIVITIES					
12:15 - 1:15PM	PLATED LUNCH / HORIZON 2 BALLROOM					
1:30 - 2:45PM	FACING THE UNKNOWN  Panel Moderator John Zhao, Las Virgenes Municipal Water District  Al in Communications – What Works, What Doesn't, and What Your Customers Really Think Justin Wallin, Wallin Opinion Research  On-the-Ground Al Demonstration Jason Assouline, WateReuse Association & Carollo Engineers  Workforce Challenges – Needed Al Skills & Talents Anona Dutton, EKI Environment & Water: Board Chair, Director of Water Resources & Engineering  15 minute audience Q&A					
2:45 - 3:15PM	ICE CREAM SUNDAE BREAK: MEET THE SPEAKERS					
3:15 - 4:30PM	SIZE, LOCATION MATTERS  California Small Water Systems, Panel Moderator Dan DeMoss, California Rural Water Association  Smaller Agency Challenges David Youngblood, East Orange County Water District  State Water Project Dependent Agencies' Challenges Christiana Daisy, Inland Empire Utilities Agency  15 minute audience Q&A					
4:30 - 5:00PM	30 MINUTE BREAK: MEET THE SPEAKERS, Q&A					
5:30 - 6:30PM	BOARD CHAIR'S RECEPTION / PLAZA BALLROOM					





TIME	ACTIVITIES
7:30 - 8:15AM	REGISTRATION, NETWORKING & BUFFET BREAKFAST HORIZON FOYER
8:15 - 9:30AM	JEFF KIGHTLINGER UNPLUGGED  Panel Moderator Lisa Ohlund, UWI Treasurer, Ohlund Management & Technical Services  Keynote Speaker Jeffrey Kightlinger, Former General Manager of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  15 minute audience Q&A
9:30 - 10:00AM	30 MINUTE BREAK: MEET THE SPEAKERS, Q&A
10:00 - 11:00AM	GROUP ACTIVITY: NAME THAT TUNE! with Prizes

## PLEASE BE SURE TO VISIT **OUR EXHIBITORS:**

The Climate Registry Jennifer Persike (Book Signing) Dr. David David Sedlak (Book Signing)

### SPEAKER BIOS



#### **JASON ASSOULINE**

Jason Assouline has 20 years of experience and serves as Carollo's water reuse chief engineer. He has delivered drinking water and reuse projects spanning planning studies, applied research, pilot systems design and operation, full scale design and operation, and construction. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in civil/ environmental engineering from the University of Iowa.i



#### **JEFFREY BERNSTEIN**

Jeffrey Bernstein is the current Mayor of Palm Springs, California. He is the founder and managing partner of Destination PSP, a successful retail business in downtown Palm Springs, established in 2012. Prior to that Bernstein owned and operated a restaurant and nightclub, had an e-commerce business and a media consulting business. Most of Bernstein's career was spent in domestic and international pay television business development, marketing, and programming. During that period Bernstein also launched Cable Positive, a national AIDS awareness non-profit.



#### **DARCY BURKE**

Darcy M. Burke was elected to the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District in 2018 and re-elected in 2022, serving Division One. In 2023, she was appointed to the US EPA's Local Government Advisory Committee where she serves on the Water Subcommittee, PFAS Risk Communication Subcommittee, and the Climate Adaptation Subcommittee. Since 2015, she has served as President, Chief Executive Officer of Watermark Associates, a comprehensive business consulting firm. Ms. Burke received her bachelor's degree from Mount St. Mary's University, Los Angeles, in International Economics & Marketing as well as her master's in business administration with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership.



#### **CHRISTIANA DAISY**

Christiana Daisy is the Deputy General Manager for the Inland Empire Utilities Agency. With a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering and an Executive MBA from Loyola Marymount University, Christiana has over three decades of education and experience in engineering, water resources management, construction, and operations and maintenance. As Deputy General Manager, Christiana plays a pivotal role in IEUA's success. Her responsibilities span across various critical areas, including overseeing Operations & Maintenance, Engineering, Construction, Laboratory, Asset Management, and Planning functions to ensure they effectively serve the Agency's mission.



#### **DAN DEMOSS**

Dan DeMoss has been a part of California Rural Water Association since 2002. He first started out as a Federal Programs Director/EPA Training Specialist and was then promoted to Executive Director. Dan is a certified operator and has served as a Public Works Director, Utility Manager, and Treatment and Distribution systems operator. Dan currently heads up the Association's fee-for-services program and the CRWA operators and managers' training program. Dan established the CRWA training calendar which offers 200-300 days of formal in-person trainings as well as the CRWA water & wastewater operators apprenticeship program.





#### MARICE DEPASQUALE

Marice H. DePasquale, a more than 20-year resident of Costa Mesa, was appointed to the Mesa Water District Board of Directors in 2017 and elected in 2018. Director DePasquale currently serves as Mesa Water's Vice President and represents Division 3. Vice President DePasquale has decades of experience in public relations and is Principal of MConsensus, an award-winning public affairs firm specializing in land use entitlement, government and community relations, and grassroots lobbying.



#### DAVID DRAKE

David Drake was appointed to the Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District Board of Directors in January of 2006. He currently serves on the ACWA Energy Committee and the ACWA/JPIA Executive Committee. Mr. Drake has served in engineering and management roles since 1974. He was a Member of the Technical Staff at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Manager of Engineering at Oak Industries, Software Unit Manager at Digital Equipment Corporation, CIO and VP at Mitchell International, Internet Service Architect at SAIC, and Co-founder and Enterprise Architect of SmartCover Systems in Escondido, CA. He holds 14 US and five foreign patents.



#### **ANONA DUTTON**

Anona Dutton leads EKI's Water Resources and Engineering Team. She has more than 20 years of experience supporting public and private sector clients with water resources solutions related to demand estimation and reduction, groundwater supply development and management, water transfers, SGMA compliance, and basin adjudications. Anona is involved in Urban Water Management Planning statewide and has led drought response and conservation planning using innovative approaches, technologies and tools. She is a professional geologist, a registered hydrogeologist, and serves as the Chair of the Board at EKI.



#### **DR. RENEE FRASER**

Renee White Fraser, Ph.D., is the CEO of Fraser Communications in Los Angeles, and the host of Why Women radio show on KABC 790AM and podcast. Fraser Communications is a \$35 million ad agency with clients including Lexus, Hyundai, State of CA, several water agencies, LADWP and the Los Angeles Dept of Public Health. As a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, Renee has been recognized as one of the Top 50 Influential Women in LA, received the SBA CEO of the Year award, and has been awarded the Women Leading the Way award from the LABJ, Women of Impact award from LA Magazine.



#### **GREG KAIL**

Greg Kail has served as the Director of Communications for the American Water Works Association for 20 years, overseeing public affairs, media relations, consumer campaigns. His department manages the annual Drinking Water Week and Source Water Protection Week observances among other outreach activities. He has worked within the news media in a variety of editorial roles over his career, serving as editor for the Vail Daily newspaper and as a reporter, contributor and columnist for several other newspapers and magazines. Greg holds a Master's Degree in Digital Media Studies from the University of Denver and a Bachelor's Degree in Communications, Journalism and the Performing Arts from Marquette University.

## SPEAKER BIOS



#### **JEFF KIGHLTINGER**

Jeffrey Kightlinger was the Chief Executive Officer for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California from 2006 to 2021. He was the longest serving CEO in the history of Metropolitan. As CEO, he oversaw Metropolitan's \$1.8 billion annual budget and 1,800 employees, and was the lead on numerous landmark agreements and programs in western water development over the last fifteen years. Currently, Mr. Kightlinger is the owner of Acequia Consulting, LLC working with clients providing strategic advice on Colorado River issues, natural resources, water, and energy issues. Mr. Kightlinger has an undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley and a law degree from Santa Clara University.



#### **ANDREE LEE**

Andree Johnson Lee is a Vice President and One Water Practice Leader for EKI Environment & Water. She has over sixteen years of public and private sector experience performing and managing water resources projects. Her specialty is facilitating collaborative solutions to complex water management challenges among agencies and stakeholders. She has led regional and countywide water planning and water supply development efforts for public and private sector clients across the western US. Ms. Lee holds a BA in Geography/Environmental Studies from UCLA.



#### DR. BRUCE MACLER

Bruce Macler retired in 2020 from the US EPA after three decades as the Pacific Southwest Region's drinking water toxicologist. During that time, he helped develop several drinking water regulations and oversaw EPA-sponsored water research projects. After 9/11, he assumed the Region's water bioterrorism and emergency response lead. He remains professionally active, primarily with the American Water Works Association. Current research interests include the safety of recycled and alternative water sources, microbial contamination of premise plumbing, and water treatment for small systems. He has a PhD in biochemistry from UC Berkeley and has authored over 70 professional publications.



#### DR. MEHDI NEMATI

Dr. Mehdi Nemati is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Economics and Policy at the School of Public Policy, University of California, Riverside. With a strong focus on applied econometric methods and big data analysis, Dr. Nemati's policy-oriented research centered around economic issues associated with water management. He actively collaborates with government agencies and industry leaders in California and beyond to tackle pressing water policy challenges. Dr. Nemati earned his Ph.D. and master's in agricultural economics from the University of Kentucky. He currently leads the Water Dialogue lab at UC Riverside.



#### **LISA OHLUND**

Ms. Ohlund has 40 years of experience in the wastewater, water and recycled water fields, with more than 23 years in the public sector and 17 years in the private sector. She has worked with over 40 water and wastewater agencies throughout California, including large and small cities and special districts. In December 2020, she retired as the General Manager of the East Orange County Water District and continues to provide consulting services through Ohlund Management & Technical Services. She is a Board Member and past Chair of the Urban Water Institute.





#### **KAREN ROSS**

Karen Ross was appointed Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture on January 9, 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom. In re-appointing Secretary Ross, Governor Newsom cited her unmatched leadership experience in agricultural issues nationally, internationally, and here in California; including environmental stewardship, climate change adaptation, and trade. Secretary Ross was initially appointed by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. in 2011.



#### DR. DAVID SEDLAK

David Sedlak is a Vice Chair for Graduate Studies and Plato Malozemoff Professor of Environmental Engineering at UC Berkeley. Sedlak's research focuses on chemical contaminants, with the long-term goal of developing cost-effective, safe, and sustainable systems to manage water resources. He is particularly interested in the development of local sources of water. Sedlak's research has addressed water reuse as well as the treatment and use of urban runoff to contaminated groundwater from contaminated industrial sites as water supplies.



#### **JUSTIN WALLIN**

Justin Wallin is a "marketing concept" strategist, with over fifteen years of experience helping to develop communications strategy through opinion research. Wallin delivers strategic direction to Fortune 500 firms, the United States Government, state, city and municipal governments, political candidates and campaigns, organizations and non-profit organizations, entrepreneurial ventures and other entities. He is a recognized expert in accurately measuring public opinion, forecasting outcomes and identifying the most effective ways to influence thoughts and behaviors.



#### **CHRIS WHITE**

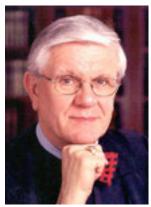
Chris White has served as the Executive Director for the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority since 2018. As Executive Director, Chris is responsible for representing at the local, state and federal level in protecting some of the most senior water rights in California. Previously, Chris was District Engineer with the Central California Irrigation District (CCID), developing and implementing the District's ambitious Water Conservation Plan. He became CCID's General Manager in 2000, responsible for implementing Board policy direction and remained in that position until July 24, 2019.



#### **JOHN ZHAO**

John Zhao is a registered professional Civil Engineer with over 30 years of services in the water, wastewater and solid waste utilities for City, County and special districts. He played a pivotal role in many essential utility infrastructural projects and their upgrades. Retiring in 2023 from the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, John Zhao is currently serving as a Project Manager for several multi-agency projects, such as diversion of dry weather runoff to sewer, sub-ocean desalt project, and utilization of Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning in water, wastewater and Pure Water infrastructures and their operations.

## SPEAKER BIOS



#### JUSTICE RONALD ROBIE

Bar Admission: Admitted to California Bar, 1967; Supreme Court of the United States, 1981

Education: University of California, Berkeley, B.A., 1958 (with Honors); M.J., 1960; McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, J.D., 1967 (with Highest Honors)

Judicial Service: Judge, Municipal Court, Sacramento Judicial District, 1983-1986; Judge, Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento, 1986-2002 (Civil and Criminal Trials, Civil Law and Motion, Family Law, Presiding Judge, 1994-1995, Judge, Appellate Department, 1989-90); Associate Justice Pro Tem, Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, 1984-1985; Associate Justice Pro Tem, California Supreme Court, 1986, 2003, 2010, 2014, 2018, 2022, 2023; Associate Justice, Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, 2002-. Acting Presiding Justice, June 1, 2022-July 10, 2023.

Professional Background: Legislative Intern, Assembly, California Legislature, 1960-1961; Staff Director, Assembly, California Legislature, 1961-1969; Attorney Member and Vice Chair, State Water Resources Control Board, 1969-1975; Director, California Department of Water Resources 1975-1983

Professional Activities/Associations/Affiliations: Chair, Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions, 2010-present; Convener, Dividing the Waters (Water Judges Organization), 2004-present; Member, California Commission on Access to Justice, 2004-2014 (Chair-2010-2014); Member, Governing Committee, California Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) 2003-2015 (Vice Chair, 2005-2006, Chair 2007-2012, 2015); Member, Academic Committee, International Organization for Judicial Training (IOJT), 2013-2016; Member, Board of Directors, National Center for State Courts, 2005-2011; Member and Task Force Chair, Commission for Impartial Courts, 2007-2010; Member, Judicial Council of California, 1999-2002 (Chair Rules and Projects Committee, 2002; Vice Chair, Executive Committee, 2001; Chair Litigation Management Committee, 2001); Member, Appellate Advisory Committee, 2002-2008; Member, California Constitution Revision Commission, 1996; Member, Federal-State Judicial Council, 1998-1999; Special Master, Commission on Judicial Performance, 1991, 1997, 1999; Member, California Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Judicial Disability, 2000-2003; Member, California Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Lawyer Regulation, 2002-2006; Member, Sacramento County Criminal Justice Cabinet, 1993-2002 (Chair 1994-1995); Master of the Bench, Anthony M. Kennedy, American Inn of Court, 1995-present; American Bar Association, (Chair, Water Law Committee, 1975); Sacramento County Bar Association, (Chair, Environmental Law Section, 2001-2002); Member, California Judges Association; (Member Executive Board, 1990-1993; Chair, Technology Committee, 1990-1993; Chair, Disability and Discipline Committee, 1997; Member, Ethics Committee, 1993-1996); Member, California Commission to Review California Water Rights Law, 1978-80.

Educational/Professional Honors and Awards: Phi Beta Kappa, 1958; Sacramento County Bar Association, "Judge of the Year," 2002; Capitol City Trial Lawyers Association, "Judge of the Year," 1994; Judicial Council: " Ronald M. George Award for Judicial Excellence", 2011; National Center for State Courts: "Distinguished Service Award" 2014; University of the Pacific Alumni Association, "Distinguished Public Service Award" 2016; California Judges Association "Justice Bernard Jefferson Award for Excellence in Judicial Education", 2017; California Lawyers Association, Environmental Law Section, Lifetime Achievement Award, 2020.

Professional Teaching/Educational Activities: Co-author, "Environmental Litigation, California Civil Practice" (Thompson-West) 1993-2023; California Reporter, Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, Water Law Newsletter 1974-2019; Adjunct Professor of Law, McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, 1970-2013; Member, Board of Directors, Water Education Foundation, 2007-present; Member, Judicial Administration Institute of California Committee, 1998-1999; Member, Planning Committee, California Judicial Administration Conference, 1995, 1996, 2002; Chair, California Center for Judicial Education and Research (CJER) Computer Planning Committee, 1995-1999; Faculty Member, B.N. Witkin Judicial College of California, 1990-1993; Faculty Member, CJER Computer Classes, 1990-2001; Faculty Member, CJER Institutes, 1990-2020; Faculty Member, Continuing Judicial Studies Program, 2002, 2004-2008, 2011; Faculty Member, numerous California Judges Association Annual and Mid-Year Meetings.

Community Activities: Member, Board of Directors, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Northern California Chapter (formerly Mountain Valley California Chapter), 1985-2005 (Chair, 1996-2001)

Personal: Married Lynn DeForest (1935-2019) 8/30/58; Children: Todd Ronald, Melissa Lynn.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



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ANDREE LEE, EKI Environment & Water

**1ST VICE CHAIR:** 

DAVE PEDERSEN, Las Virgenes Municipal WD

2ND VICE CHAIR:

RICH NAGEL, Jacobs

TREASURER:

LISA OHLUND, Ohlund Management &

**Technical Services** 

SECRETARY.

JASON PHILLIPS, Friant Water Authority

**FOUNDER:** 

WAYNE CLARK (1928-2018)

FOUNDING TREASURER:

JOHN THORNTON (1946-2024)

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** 

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Michael Engelbrecht

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Mark Pestrella

Los Angeles Department of Public Works

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Los Angeles Department of Water & Power

**Brian Probolsky** 

Moulton Niguel Water District

Greg Quist

Rincon del Diablo Municipal Water District

**Bob Siemak** 

RCS Consulting Group

Matt Stone

Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency

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Irvine Ranch Water District

Ray Tremblay

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Jessica Ouwerkerk, UWI Marketing &

Administration Director

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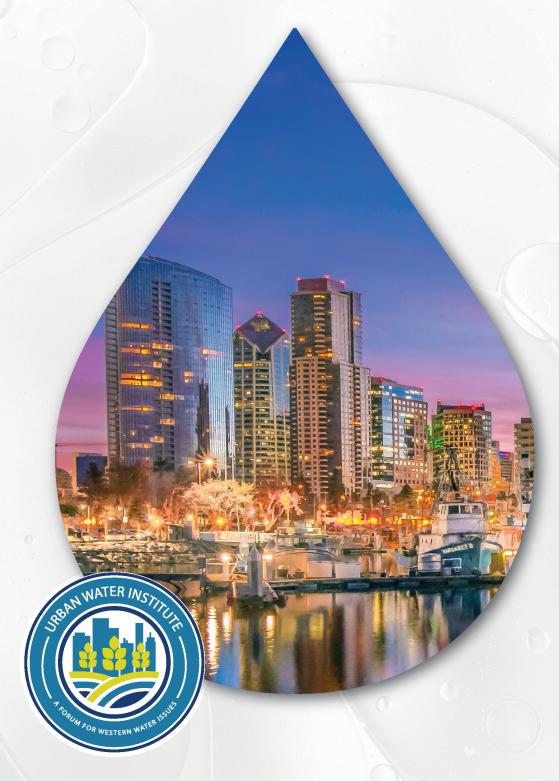


## **CONFERENCE WIFI**

Network: Hilton Meeting

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# SAVE THE DATE!



# **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**AUGUST 21-23, 2024** | **SAN DIEGO, CA** 

## PROGRAM ADDENDUM



#### **SPEAKER BIOS**



#### **CHARLES GARDNER**

For the past 15 years, Chuck Gardner has led the Hallmark team in overseeing significant projects involving extensive partnerships, conveyance systems, infrastructure development, and restoration expansions. Some notable endeavors include the Water Blueprint for San Joaquin Valley, California WaterFix, B.F Sisk Reservoir, and Los Vagueros Reservoir.



#### DAVID YOUNGBLOOD, P.E.

David Youngblood has 28 years of experience in the planning, design, construction, operation and management of water, wastewater and recycled water systems. This experience includes 10 years of private consulting and 18 years of experience managing public agencies throughout Orange County. David holds a B.S. in Environmental Engineering from University of California, Riverside and is a licensed civil engineer with the state of California. David is past president of Orange County Water Association (OCWA) and is an active member in the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE). David has held the position of General Manager at East Orange County Water District since December 2020.

### **PROGRAM CHANGES**

LOAVES & FISHES - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 @ 3:15-4:45PM Groundwater Overdrafting in the San Joaquin Valley

Chris White currently serves as the Executive Director of the San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority.