

# GO with THE FLOW

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ATLANTIC CANADA WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION



## 2025 ACWWA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS & AWARDS

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### INSIDE:

- NextWave 2026
- PFAS in Atlantic Canada
- 2026 Call for Presentations



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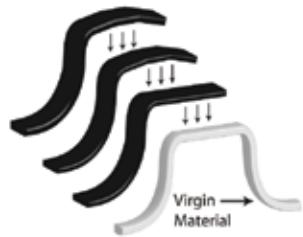


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*On the cover:*

Lighthouse and an old fishing boat on the south shore of Prince Edward Island. Dreamstime.com



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## Building a legacy together

**D**ear ACWWA members, colleagues, and friends, I would like to start off by thanking the ACWWA Board for nominating me to be the ACWWA Chair for 2025–26.

During its time, ACWWA has been a vital force in the Atlantic Canadian water sector. From the early days of informal training to today's structured programs and strategic planning, the Association has evolved to meet the challenges of technological change, environmental stewardship, and public engagement. Our history is rich with innovation and resilience, and it continues to inspire our path forward.

The 2025 ACWWA Annual Conference in St. John's was a huge success with the highest participation numbers in ACWWA history! I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined us – whether as a delegate, presenter, sponsor, exhibitor, or volunteer. This year's theme, "Charting the Course," truly captured our collective journey in the Atlantic Canadian water and wastewater industry as we chart new courses in areas like climate change adaptation to droughts and floods, planning for growing populations, strengthening existing and building new partnerships, and digital transformation of our industry.

Over three days, we reconnected with old friends, forged new partnerships, and shared knowledge through technical tours, engaging sessions, and lively networking events. From exploring the Bay Bulls Big Pond and Riverhead facilities, to the spirited Meet and Greet and Think Tank Trivia, to the inspiring keynote by Stephen Sanders, every moment reflected our commitment to excellence and innovation.

Special thanks to our Emerging Leaders, who brought fresh ideas and energy to the conference, and to all who participated in the Water Taste Test, Tradeshow, and the unforgettable Down East Feast. Your enthusiasm and expertise made this event a true celebration of our industry and our region.

As we wrap up 2025, I am proud to share the momentum and vision guiding our Association. This year's business plan reflects our commitment to member engagement, leadership in water policy, organizational stewardship and knowledge creation – pillars that have defined ACWWA's legacy for over half a century.

**Member engagement:** We're focused on strengthening outreach to emerging professionals and academic institutions across Atlantic Canada through student memberships, networking events, and career talks led by past chairs. These initiatives foster a vibrant, inclusive community across generations.

**Water policy & leadership:** We're enhancing communications to deliver timely technical and regulatory updates. Our social media and committee strategies aim to keep members informed and elevate ACWWA's voice in policy discussions.

**Organizational stewardship:** We're refining volunteer alignment, updating committee terms of reference, and promoting involvement with WEF and AWWA to ensure our operations reflect the professionalism of our members.

**Knowledge creation:** We will continue to provide and explore new education opportunities that benefit our members, while also exploring opportunities to better connect members online to share knowledge and experience.

On behalf of the ACWWA Board, thank you for your dedication and support. Let's continue to chart our course together – advancing water quality, sustainability, and community well-being across Atlantic Canada.

As Chair, I am deeply grateful for the energy and expertise each of you brings to our community. Let's continue to build on our legacy – together.

We will see you next year in Moncton, where we will explore Flowing Forward – from scarcity to sustainability! 

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## Connections that count

**A**s I enter my final year as AWWA Director for the Atlantic Canada Section and AWWA Vice President, I can look back and reflect on what an amazing opportunity this has been. I have made so many new connections and learned so much about both the tangible and intangible benefits of belonging to AWWA. 2025 also marked my 25th year of membership with AWWA. My message for everyone is to get involved in one way or another. There is so much to do and the connections that you will make are invaluable. Plus you are making our industry stronger.

**"My message for everyone is to get involved in one way or another... the connections that you will make are invaluable."**

I am pleased to announce that Jason Phillips from the City of St. John's has been chosen to succeed me as AWWA Director for the Atlantic Canada Section. His three-year term will begin at ACE26 in Washington, DC in June 2026. I know that Jason will represent Atlantic Canada well.

Amid all of the geopolitical uncertainty, during the panel session at our Annual Conference, it was

refreshing to hear the perspective that both AWWA and WEF are important professional organizations for our industry that happen to be headquartered in the United States. This should not impact our ability to continue work together across borders for the greater good of the water industry. Utilities across Canada and the United States are all facing the same challenges and AWWA provides the venue for water professionals to come together to solve these problems and learn from our successes. Having attended my first AWWA Council Summit in Denver, I was able to get a peek behind the scenes of the amazing work that so many dedicated volunteers do to further the mission of AWWA and make the water industry better.

I would like to extend a big congratulations to this year's conference organizing committee for putting on a record breaking conference in St. John's in October. It was great to see so many familiar faces in attendance. The Technical Sessions were strong, the Trade Show was huge, and the entertainment and social events top notch.

Following that, I attended the Nebraska AWWA Section conference in November as the visiting representative. This will be my first one as Vice President. In January I will be attending the AWWA Winter Board Meeting in Vancouver and in April I will be travelling to New York state as the visiting representative for the New York AWWA Section's annual conference. 

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## Committee activities continue

With the 2025 ACWWA conference recently successfully completed, a number of other events followed prior to the end of the year. The St. John's conference was a great event for technical development, networking, and all sorts of fun. The Government Affairs Committee was delivered a presentation on the PFAS update for Atlantic Canada and took advantage of having many of the members in one location to have an in-person meeting to discuss upcoming initiatives. The meeting was very informative and included special guests Robert Haller and

Michelle Grenier, the executive directors of CWWA and OWWA, respectively. Items we are currently keeping an eye on are the upcoming changes to the New Brunswick Drinking Water Program and potential MAC reduction for arsenic that is currently under consultation. I would like to draw your attention to the article on PFAS in this magazine (page 25) as an example of some of the work the Committee is doing to keep membership informed.

Next was the CWWA National Water and Wastewater Conference (NWWC) and a meeting of the Canadian Affairs Committee (CAC)



Full house at the PFAS Party

of the AWWA. These events took place in early November at the NWWC conference in Victoria, BC. The Victoria conference was expected to be the largest NWWC event ever. With normal attendance in the range of 400–450 delegates, the current expectation has grown to 600 this year with so many Canadian water leaders choosing to spend their conference budgets at home. The program is excellent and has grown to six simultaneous sessions.

The Canadian Affairs Committee of AWWA met just following the formal conference program on November 5. These meetings help to coordinate the efforts of the Canadian AWWA sections as they relate to government affairs at a national level. This committee has been particularly active this year reacting to the impacts that the current American administration has inadvertently had on the Canadian sections of AWWA. Continuing discussions and updates on the current status of programs related to these impacts are expected, as well as some further information of the NextWave Conference, a national conference with AWWA support which OWWA is hosting in Niagara Falls, next spring. 



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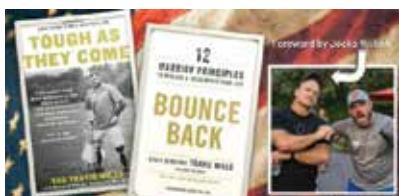
## WEFTEC and beyond

first want to congratulate Keith Hobson, the 2025–26 WEF President. Keith has been part of the Board of Trustees for the past few years and when I first met Keith in 2019, he was the Speaker of the House of Delegates. Keith visited our ACWWA PEI Conference in 2023. Our ACWWA 2025 Conference WEF Dignitary,



Christine Volkay-Hilditch, joined us for a selfie at Keith's WEF President's Reception at WEFTEC in Chicago.

I was very fortunate to meet the WEFTEC 2025 Opening General Session Keynote Speaker, Staff Seargent Travis Mills. Truly inspirational how he survived an IED explosion in Afghanistan becoming a quadruple amputee and how he is a best selling author, motivational speaker, and runs a foundation for other injured veterans. You can watch and listen to the O.G.S. and to Travis at this link: [www.wef.org/events--education/conferences/live-stream-weftec-opening-general-session](http://www.wef.org/events--education/conferences/live-stream-weftec-opening-general-session).



"I trust everyone will have a wonderful holiday season with family and friends and I wish you all the best in the New Year."



We also held our WEF CAC "Canadian Affairs Council" meeting at WEFTEC. The gavel was handed over by Yvan Breault (Reseau) Quebec to the new CAC Chair for 2025–26, Mike Gosselin from the BCWWA.



Congratulations to Debbie Smith (AKA The Water Witch) who received WEF Arthur Sidney Bedell Award – presented by Christine Volkay-Hilditch (WEF Board of Trustees Treasurer).

HAPPY  
*Holidays*



ACWWA's 2025 WEF 5S "Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovellers" Recipients. (L-R) Stephen Sanders, WEF BOT; Michele Grenier, OWWA Executive Director; Debbie Smith, City of St. John's, NL; Rebecca Venot, AWWA VP; Christine Volkay-Hilditch, WEF Treasurer; and Dave Galbraith.



It was great being able to meet up with and sit in on Amina Stoddart's (Dalhousie University) technical presentation on "UV LED Innovation in Wastewater Disinfection for a Mercury-Free Future" featuring the Aquisense LED UV pilot at Halifax Water's Eastern Passage WWTF.

## Join the WEF Community

Finally, have you ever wondered how you can get more involved with WEF? The Water Environment Federation Committees are also known as Communities. There is an extensive list of communities you can apply to join. These can be located at [www.wef.org/membership--community-communities/communities](http://www.wef.org/membership--community-communities/communities).

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I trust everyone will have a wonderful holiday season with family and friends and I wish you all the best in the New Year. 



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## Thank you for an outstanding year

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all our members for being part of the Association and for your continued dedication and engagement. This year has been an outstanding one. We saw record attendance at the ACWWA Conference, strong participation in our education courses, and another successful photo contest, among many other achievements.

We hope you enjoy the 2026 ACWWA calendar, and we extend our congratulations to all of this year's photo contest winners!

### 2025 ACWWA Photo Contest Winners

water-focused and could include family, pets, or a scenery taken within Atlantic Canada



1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up  
Derek Arsenault  
City of Dieppe, NB



Top Prize  
Noah Brace  
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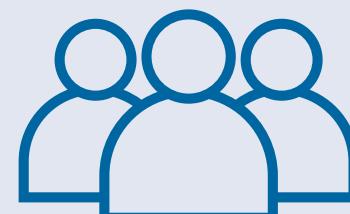


2<sup>nd</sup> Runner Up  
Maria Knowles  
City of Moncton, NB



### Welcome to the following new members:

Name	Organization	Membership
Anita Larbi	Dalhousie University	WEF
Stephen Wright	City of Saint John	AWWA
Michael Gudino	Veolia Water Moncton	AWWA
Stephen Barbour	Nova Consultants Inc.	AWWA
Devin Lake	Town of Wolfville	AWWA
Mark Holden	NS Public Works	AWWA



As of October 22, 2025

Total AWWA active members: 410

Total active WEF members: 97

Don't forget to refer a member and have a chance to win \$100 gift card of choice.

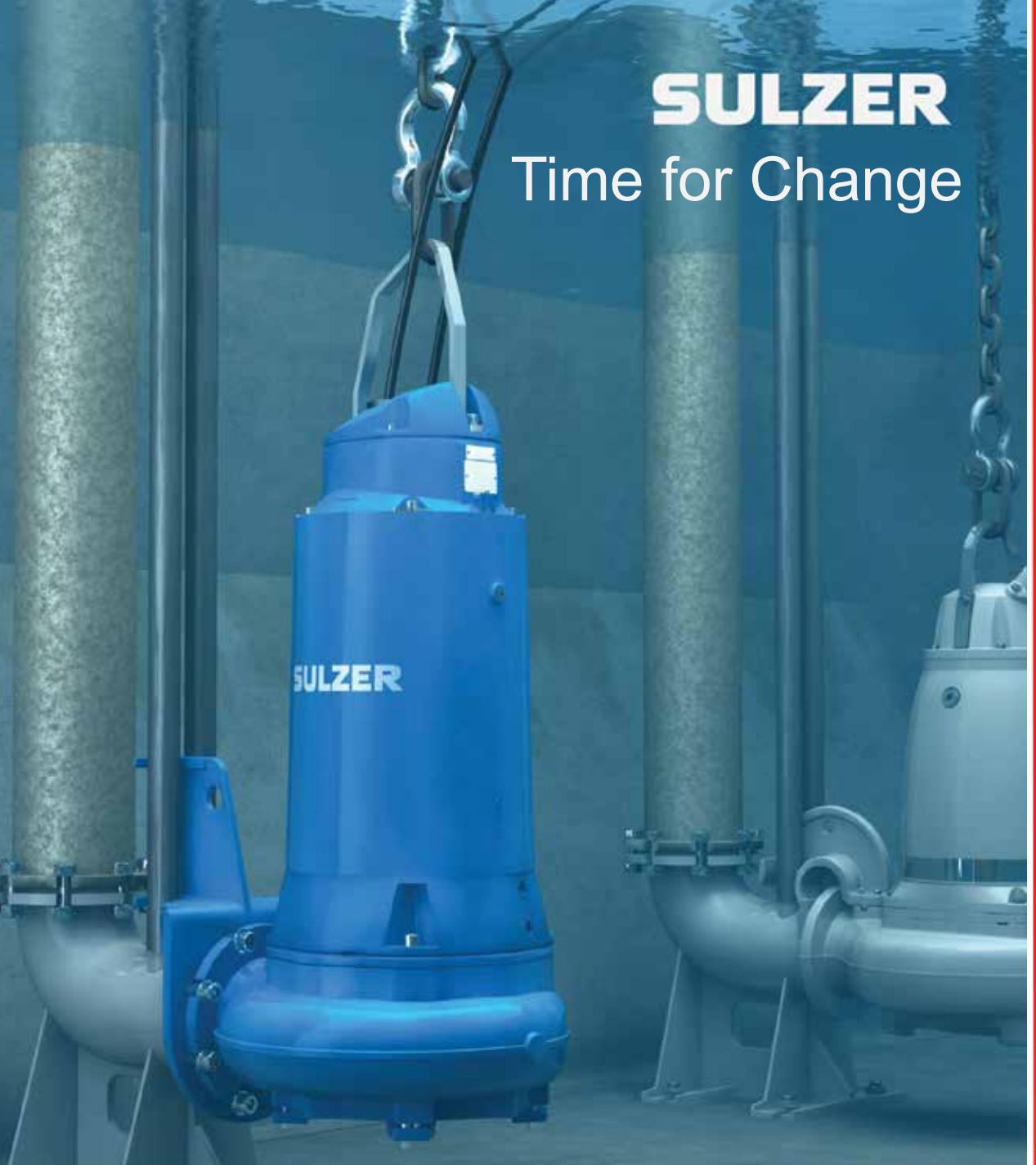


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# Thank you!

Thank you to the ABEA Members who, through membership, allow us to continue providing premiere events as part of the ACWWA Annual Conference, as well as the four \$1,000 scholarships available annually, and contributions to our communities-at-large.

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Liam McCallum – Grant McCallum – City of Fredericton  
Lindsay Rodgers – Jeff Rodgers – Geatario



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Sec./Treasurer – Kyle Gracie – EMCO (NS)  
Director-at-large – Catherine Cameron – Aqua Data/Scotia Tech

This year the ABEA donated \$5,000 to the Salvation Army – Ches Penney Centre of Hope. Major Rhonda Smith was on hand to accept.

Thank you to all 108 participants in the Annual Golf Tournament – we had a great day. It was crisp, blowing a gale – but everyone survived and had a smile at the end.

Thank you to both the vendors and attendees for making the Trade Show the great success it was. We were SOLD OUT with 111 booths!



food/drink was bountiful. What a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the company of both old and new friends.

The 2025 ACWWA Conference is behind us, and the planning is already underway for 2026 – to be held in Moncton, NB, October 4–6.

Education is an ongoing process, and our membership continue to find ways to assist their customers with creative delivery methods to keep them informed of changes in the industry. If you have a need, please feel free to reach out. We are certain that we have something to meet your needs on an individual basis, or we can create a program in conjunction with the ACWWA Education Team. 

Monday evening, we had great attendance at the ABEA Hospitality event held at O'Reilly's, where we were entertained by two traditional groups of musicians, and the



## NextWave 2026 Gathers Momentum as Canada's Premier Water Conference

With excitement still fresh from the announcement featured in this magazine's last issue, NextWave 2026 is quickly emerging as one of the most anticipated water and wastewater events in the country. Anyone delaying registration may risk missing out on one of the sector's key national gatherings.

Exhibitor interest is exceptionally strong; suppliers from across Canada are securing placements to connect with attendees. This year is especially significant, as all Canadian AWWA Sections will come together under one roof. It's a long-awaited moment of unity that will bring the full breadth of Canada's water community into a single event.

Delegate registration is now open, and early bird pricing is available until February 13, 2026. Numbers are already rising, fuelled by returning attendees and new delegates from across the sector. The conference continues to draw strong interest from utilities, operators, consultants, manufacturers, suppliers, academics, and regulators, highlighting its relevance to every corner of the water community. Utility Members can also look forward to exclusive offers that will be announced soon, adding extra value for participating utilities.

The preliminary technical program will be released soon, following a record number of abstract submissions representing diverse perspectives, innovations, and technical expertise from across Canada. Organizers

expect this to be one of the most comprehensive and forward-looking programs the conference has delivered.

Competitive energy will also be part of the experience. Hydrant, meter, and pipe tapping competitions are planned; anyone interested in competing is encouraged to contact us at [conference@owwa.ca](mailto:conference@owwa.ca). Additional information about the Operator Competitions can be found at <https://ace.awwa.org/competitions-rules-faq>.

Sponsorship opportunities are being claimed quickly, with several well-known companies already committed. Their early support underscores the conference's growing profile as a key gathering point for water professionals across the country.

For anyone working in water and wastewater, one message is clear. NextWave 2026 is shaping up to be the Canadian water event of the year, and those who miss it may miss the conversations, innovations, and connections that will define the sector's future.

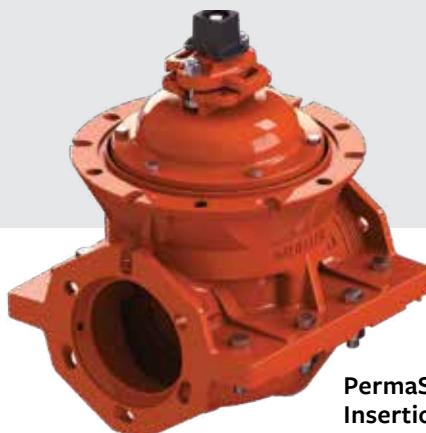


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# Thank You for Making the 2025 ACWWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE A SUCCESS!

The 2025 ACWWA Annual Conference brought together almost 600 delegates, exhibitors, and sponsors from across Canada and the United States for an outstanding few days of learning, networking, and collaboration.

This year's program featured engaging technical and education sessions, and a bustling tradeshow filled with the latest innovations from across the industry. Attendees also enjoyed plenty of opportunities to connect and unwind through networking events, local tours, great food and refreshments, and a little friendly competition on the golf course.

We extend a sincere thank-you to our sponsors for their generous support – your contributions play a vital role in making events like this possible. To our attendees, exhibitors, and speakers – thank you for helping make this year's conference such a memorable event.

Finally, a special thank-you to the Conference Committee, the ACWWA Executive Director, and the ACWWA Board for their hard work and dedication behind the scenes. Your efforts ensure the continued success of our annual conference and the strength of our association.

We look forward to seeing everyone next year in **Moncton, New Brunswick**, for another great ACWWA Annual Conference!



## 2025 ACWWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS & AWARDS

### ACWWA AWARD WINNERS

The ACWWA Conference wasn't just about technical sessions and networking – it was also a chance to celebrate the incredible people who keep our water and wastewater systems running smoothly. This year's award winners, announced during the conference opening session and AGM, and presented by the AWWA and WEF Dignitaries, include the following.

**IRA P. MCNAB AWARD** – presented annually to a member of the ACWWA for outstanding service to the association.



**Julie Stokes** –  
City of Moncton, ACWWA  
Membership Director

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**BEDELL AWARD** – presented to a member of ACWWA to acknowledge extraordinary service to a WEF Member Association.



**Deborah (Debbie) Smith** –  
City of St. John's

**SILENT HERO AWARD** – presented annually to recognize outstanding contributions of water and wastewater operators in each of the four Atlantic Canada provinces.



**Andrew Houlihan** –  
Halifax Water



**Jack Campbell** –  
Saint John Water



**Scott West** –  
Town of Clarenville

**EMERGING LEADER AWARD** – presented annually to recognize an Emerging Professional with ACWWA for outstanding contributions to the water and wastewater industry and the ACWWA Emerging Professionals' committee.



**Helena Steeves** –  
Halifax Water,  
Emerging  
Professionals Co-Chair

**CONTRIBUTION AWARD** – awarded annually to recognize outstanding contributions by an individual or group of individual volunteers to ACWWA programs and/or the water industry throughout Atlantic Canada.



**Melissa Fraser** –  
CBCL, ACWWA  
Communications  
Director

#### PROJECT OF THE YEAR – SMALL UTILITY



**GFL Environmental Services** –  
QEII Halifax Infirmary  
Environmental  
Services

#### PROJECT OF THE YEAR – MEDIUM UTILITY



**City of Saint John and CBCL** –  
Emergency Watershed  
Pumping and  
Watershed Yield  
Assessment

#### PROJECT OF THE YEAR – LARGE UTILITY



**City of St. John's** –  
ISC/IEC17025  
Accreditation



**City of Fredericton and CBCL** –  
City of Fredericton  
City Wide Flood  
Risk Profile

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**WINNERS!**

**5S SHOVEL** – The 5S shovel is a WEF member specific award to honour those who have made a particular contribution to the water and wastewater industry in their Member Association.



**Michele Grenier** – OWWA dignitary  
**Rebecca Venot** – AWWA dignitary  
**Stephen Sanders** – Keynote Speaker  
**Christine Volkay-Hilditch** – WEF dignitary  
**Deborah (Debbie) Smith** – City of St. John's



## 2025 ACWWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS & AWARDS

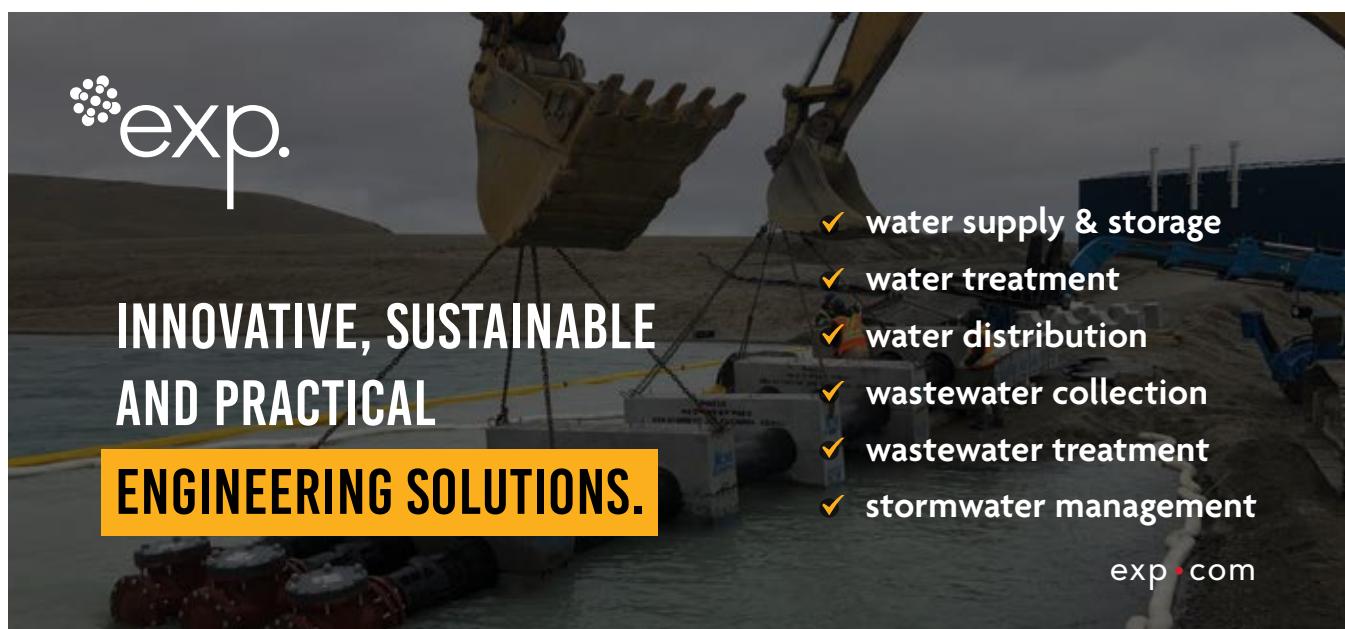
### EMERGING LEADERS at the 2025 ACWWA Conference

The ACWWA Emerging Leaders Committee was thrilled to host a vibrant lineup of events at this year's conference in beautiful St. John's, Newfoundland. From networking to fundraising to fitness, our activities brought together professionals from across Atlantic Canada and beyond in meaningful and memorable ways.

We kicked off the conference on Sunday evening with our annual networking event, welcoming attendees to the heart of downtown St. John's. The evening was filled with introductions, laughter, and shared water stories. Monday evening's Fun Run was a highlight for many, offering a scenic route along the colourful streets of St. John's. Participants of all paces joined as a way to recharge after a day full of engaging technical sessions and enjoy the cool ocean breeze. A big thank you to Sansom Equipment for sponsoring these events and helping to make them a success!

Throughout the conference, the Emerging Leaders Committee hosted a silent auction and 50/50 draw to raise funds for Water For People and the St. John's Single Parents Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. Thanks to generous donations from our members and sponsors, the auction featured an exciting mix of local goods, experiences, and industry-themed items.

We're incredibly grateful to everyone who participated, donated, and supported our events. The Emerging Leaders Committee is proud to foster connection, growth, and leadership in the water and wastewater community. Make sure to follow ACWWA on social media to hear about our upcoming events – we hope to see you there! 



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## DALHOUSIE PHD STUDENT WINS FRESH IDEAS AWARD at 2025 ACWWA Conference

As part of the annual conference, ACWWA hosts the Fresh Ideas presentation competition for first time presenters. The Fresh Ideas program originated with the AWWA's Manufacturers/Associates Council and Young Professionals Committee to showcase innovative research and solutions in the water and wastewater sector completed by emerging professionals. The top presentation each year at the annual conference is selected to represent ACWWA at a national level conference.

Among the talented presenters at this year's conference, Sarah Organ, a PhD student at Dalhousie University in the Center for Water Resources (CWRS), earned top honors by winning the 2025 Fresh Ideas Award. Sarah will represent ACWWA by attending the 2026 Next Wave Conference in Niagara next May.

Sarah's presentation focused on developing a Decision Support System (DSS) to optimize treatment performance at wastewater treatment facilities. Her research addresses the growing challenge of meeting regulatory requirements amid climate change and

evolving water quality standards. By leveraging machine learning and statistical modeling, the DSS predicts treatment performance and recommends operational adjustments – such as chemical dosing and recirculation rates – to improve efficiency and sustainability. Sarah also developed a dynamic dashboard using PowerBI, enabling operators to visualize and implement data-driven strategies in real time.

Thank you to our conference dignitaries – Christine Volkay-Hilditch (WEF), Rebecca Venot (AWWA), and Robert Haller (CWWA) – for participating in the program and judging the presentations. 



## ATLANTIC CANADA WATER & WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION 2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE DELTA BEAUSEJOUR HOTEL | MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK October 4-6, 2026

Please join us for the annual ACWWA Conference in Moncton, NB, in October 2026 for a conference you won't forget. We can't wait to welcome you to Moncton, a city full of energy, culture and East Coast hospitality. Discover the intriguing mystery of Magnetic Hill, where cars appear to defy gravity and roll uphill – an experience that continues to fascinate visitors from around the world. Enjoy live performances at the Casino or the historic Capitol Theatre, one of Canada's few fully restored vaudeville venues.

Just a short drive from Moncton, you'll find idyllic beaches and breathtaking natural wonders. Take a day trip to the Bay of Fundy or the Acadian coast, then return to Moncton's vibrant downtown to indulge in exceptional dining and warm East Coast hospitality.

The Moncton, NB committee is targeting a first-class technical program for the 2026 ACWWA Annual



Conference, being held at the Delta Beausjour, located in the heart of our beautiful downtown, and just a short stroll away from the world-renowned Tidal Bore.

The conference committee is calling on municipalities, consultants, suppliers, and industry representatives to submit technical abstracts on current topics and flowing forward from scarcity to sustainability within our industry. We are hoping to receive a varied range of topics so we can appeal to all the conference attendees. Reunite with friends and colleagues as we share Moncton's friendliness and discuss the many issues and changes that we face in the water and wastewater industry. The conference will feature technical sessions, the ABEA tradeshow, networking opportunities, water taste test, and technical tours. 



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# 2026 ACWWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## FLOWING FORWARD – FROM SCARCITY TO SUSTAINABILITY



• ACWWA 2026 CONFERENCE  
MONCTON, NB

The ACWWA is inviting abstract submissions for the 2026 Conference in Moncton, NB. All topics related to the water and wastewater profession will be considered, with specific emphasis this year on abstracts considering the theme of scarcity to sustainability. Abstracts submitted for consideration in the technical program should fall under one of the three primary categories: 1) technical presentations on relevant water or wastewater projects, technological advancements and/or research on water and wastewater; presentations featuring 2) case studies illustrating a practical application of tools or services; and 3) presentations on workforce attraction. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length with 5 minutes for questions. *Abstracts that are written as a sales pitch without a case study or practical application of the technology will not be considered for the technical program.*

### FRESH IDEAS COMPETITION

Please indicate if the presenter is a first-time Emerging Leader participant (student or professional under 35 years of age) at the ACWWA Section conference and would like to be considered for the Fresh Ideas program that has been developed through AWWA's Manufacturers/Associates Council and the Emerging Leaders. Based on conference feedback, we're introducing a refreshed format designed to make judging more engaging and accessible, while giving Fresh Ideas presenters greater visibility. This year, Fresh Ideas entries will be featured in a dedicated poster session at the conference, allowing opportunities for attendees to connect directly with presenters and learn about their work. The top presentation selected from this group of presenters will be given the opportunity to attend a national conference held by the American Waterworks Association, Water Environment Federation, or the Ontario Waterworks Association, representing the Emerging Leaders of ACWWA. ACWWA will provide the winner with a stipend to assist with conference registration and travel costs to the conference. Please note that the Fresh Ideas program does not permit co-presenters.

### CALLING ALL OPERATORS AND STUDENTS!

We are excited to offer an added incentive for operators. Operators whose abstracts are accepted will have their conference registration waived! Also, in addition to being considered for the Fresh Ideas program students whose abstracts are accepted will have their ACWWA conference registration waived.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING ABSTRACTS

Please submit an abstract (maximum length of 300 words), a presenter biography (maximum length of 200 words) and copyright release form at <https://acwwa.ca/abstract-submission> by March 1, 2026.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

Submissions will be reviewed based on the significance of the work/content to a broad audience, originality of the work, new concepts, improvements or new data, technical content, the status of the completeness of the work, and the relevance to the theme of the conference, if applicable. Case studies on new technologies and industry presentations that are innovative/educational are encouraged, however submissions that appear to be marketing material for a particular product or company will not be accepted. Authors will be notified of the selection of their abstracts for presentation by the end of July 2026. 

### PRESENTATIONS

The ACWWA is inviting abstract submissions for the 2026 Conference in Moncton, NB. All topics related to the water and wastewater profession will be considered, with specific emphasis this year on abstracts considering the theme of scarcity to sustainability. Abstracts submitted for consideration in the technical program should fall under one of the three primary categories: 1) technical presentations on relevant water or wastewater



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# PFAS IN ATLANTIC CANADA

The Government Affairs Committee serves as a liaison between the provincial and municipal levels and the ACWWA membership. Its purpose is to promote cooperation, raise awareness of government programs, and communicate relevant updates to ACWWA members.

One of the committee's strategic goals is to improve communication with ACWWA membership. In support of this, the committee developed a presentation for the 2025 Annual Conference titled: **"PFAS in Atlantic Canada – A Jurisdictional Review from the Regulators."**

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of human-made chemicals often referred to as forever chemicals because they break down very slowly in the environment. PFAS are used in a wide range of industrial and consumer products and are commonly found near sites where fire-fighting foams have been used or in landfills containing PFAS-containing materials. Emerging research suggests that exposure to certain PFAS may be linked to adverse health effects.

In response to these concerns, Health Canada updated its federal drinking water guidelines in August 2024. The previous maximum acceptable concentrations for two PFAS compounds – PFOA and PFOS – were rescinded. Instead, a new objective was introduced: a total PFAS concentration of 30 nanograms per liter (ng/L), covering 25 PFAS compounds.

Regulators across Atlantic Canada have had to adapt to this change, as each province applies Health Canada's *Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality* differently. The purpose of the conference presentation was to share information and provide a general overview of how each Atlantic province is implementing this updated guideline within their regulatory frameworks.

## NEW BRUNSWICK:

Saint John and Moncton participated in Health Canada's 2023 pilot study measuring PFAS in drinking water, with results below the federal objective. While New Brunswick has no current plans to adopt Health Canada's PFAS guideline, a province-wide voluntary sampling project led by the NB Research and Productivity Council is underway to analyze municipal drinking water for non-regulated parameters, including PFAS.

## NOVA SCOTIA:

As of August 2024, PFAS testing for municipal drinking water in Nova Scotia is voluntary, with municipalities encouraged to report detections, which are assessed

individually based on health risks and site-specific factors. While the province currently applies Health Canada's interim PFAS objective of 30 ng/L on a voluntary basis, any future federal Maximum Acceptable Concentration will be automatically adopted into Nova Scotia's regulatory framework.

## NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR:

Newfoundland and Labrador launched a multi-year PFAS baseline sampling program for public drinking water systems in 2025, prioritizing high-risk sites and expanding to lower-risk areas over time. Early results show no detectable PFAS levels, and following recent wildfires, the program was expanded to include private wells and semi-public systems in affected regions, with testing ongoing into fall 2025.

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND:

Prince Edward Island began PFAS sampling in 2023 to establish a baseline, with results shared with water system owners and growing interest in meeting Health Canada's objective. While most sites sampled show PFAS levels below the guideline, a few exceedances were found near landfills, industrial areas, and schools, and the province continues to monitor Health Canada's direction to guide future regulatory decisions.

## HALIFAX WATER:

Halifax Water voluntarily conducts annual PFAS sampling at all seven of its municipal drinking water supplies, with larger facilities tested twice yearly. Preliminary results show PFAS levels are below Health Canada's new guideline of 30 ng/L for the total sum of 25 PFAS compounds.

## ATLANTIC FIRST NATIONS WATER AUTHORITY:

The Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA) does not currently sample for PFAS, as there is no enforceable regulatory framework specific to Indigenous water systems. However, AFNWA follows an interim standard aligned with Nova Scotia's regulations.

The ACWWA Government Affairs Committee continues to monitor the development of regulations for PFAS and other parameters of emerging concern. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to reach out to the Committee through the committee chair, Michael Brophy, at [michaelbr@halifaxwater.ca](mailto:michaelbr@halifaxwater.ca). We welcome your engagement as we work together to navigate these important regulatory issues. 



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## HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF W&WW INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING IN CANADA

Water and wastewater utilities across the country are facing growing challenges: aging infrastructure, climate pressures, service expectations, and rapid growth in many communities. Strong infrastructure planning is essential to managing these pressures, yet the maturity of planning practices varies widely across Canadian utilities. To better understand these differences and identify opportunities for improvement, the University of New Brunswick is conducting a national survey on infrastructure planning practices in water and wastewater utilities.

This 15-minute survey explores how utilities assess their current and future service needs, evaluate risks and capacity constraints, coordinate across departments, and prioritize infrastructure investments. Your participation will help build a clearer national picture of what's working well, where gaps exist, and what supports utilities need to plan effectively for the future.

**Survey Link:**

<https://forms.office.com/r/6GSSr1f8qP>



Survey results will directly inform the development of several new capacity-building resources designed specifically for small and mid-sized utilities, including:

- A **Water and Wastewater Master Plan RFP Template**
- An **Infrastructure Master Planning 101 Primer**
- A **suite of online courses and webinars** focused on practical planning tools and best practices

Findings will also be summarized in a national report submitted to the Government of Canada, contributing to broader efforts to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of water and wastewater systems across the country.

This research is led by the University of New Brunswick:

**Mike Benson, MScE, P.Eng.** (Primary Contact)

Director of Innovation, Civil Engineering

[mike.benson@unb.ca](mailto:mike.benson@unb.ca)

**Dr. Anna Robak, P.Eng., PhD**

Adjunct Professor, Civil Engineering

**Funding Disclosure:** This research is supported in part by the Government of Canada.

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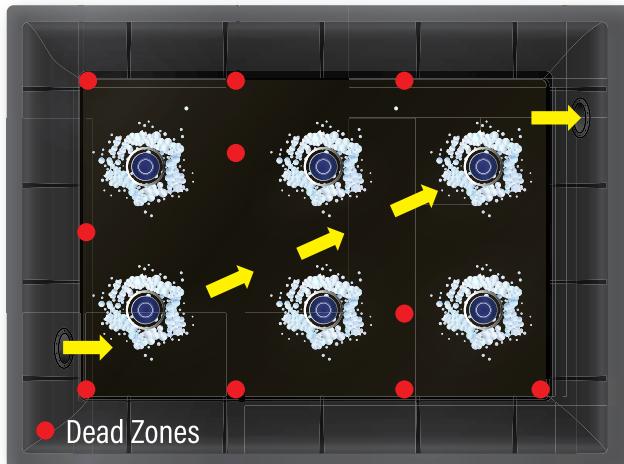
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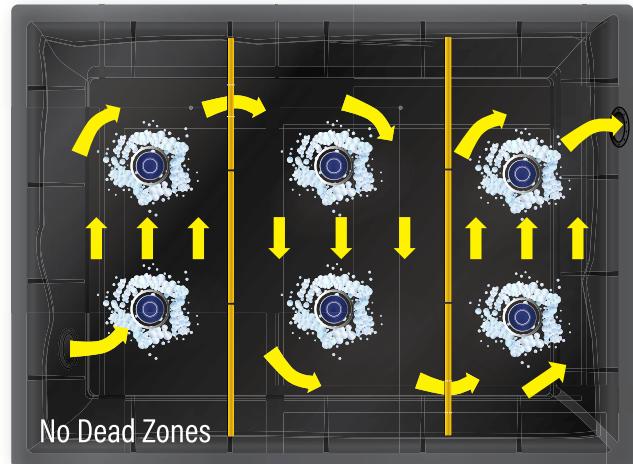
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