



StratComm: H2O Virtual Event

SPEAKER PROFILES

National Association of Clean Water Agencies

June 1 - 2, 2020



Monica Billger
Community Outreach and Education Specialist
Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Alexandria, VA

Monica Billger currently works at Alexandria Renew Enterprises as the Community Outreach and Education Specialist complementing her previous experience through a comprehensive and deepening understanding of the human impact on local waterways. She also serves on the Fairfax County Tree Commission in a volunteer capacity and has also served as the Lee District Representative for the county's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Exception Review Committee, as the Environmental Co-Chair for the Fairfax Federation of Citizen Associations, and as the Get2Green Chair for her children's elementary school Parent Teacher Association.

A native of MI, she has a Bachelor's Degree in Nursing from the University of Michigan and a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Georgetown University.



Stephanie Dillon
Communications Management Professional
Great Lakes Water Authority
Detroit, MI

Stephanie Dillon is a Public Affairs Management Professional for Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA). She's been with GLWA for three years. In her role, she oversees GLWA's internal communications efforts including *One Water News*; an e-newsletter, is executive editor for the quarterly magazine, develops engagement initiatives, volunteering opportunities, supports PR events and crisis communications efforts. Most recently, in 2019, she launched GLWA's Young Professionals Network. Prior to her role at GLWA, Ms. Dillon worked for Ford Motor Company serving as their Internal Communications Coach at the Flat Rock Assembly Plant.

She earned her Bachelor's Degree from Michigan State University in English and a Master's Degree in Literacy from Oakland University. She is also a National Writing Project certified writing consultant.



Tricia Garrison
Public Affairs & Education Manager
NEW Water
Green Bay, WI

Tricia Garrison is Public Affairs & Education Manager for NEW Water, the brand of the Green Bay Metropolitan Sewerage District. Ms. Garrison launched her career as a journalist, serving as a foreign correspondent, and journalism instructor at universities across Central and Eastern Europe. She segued into public

relations and communications for organizations including Habitat for Humanity International, the Clinton Foundation, and also worked as a Hollywood film publicist.

Ms. Garrison has a BA in Journalism from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and an MS in Sustainable Management, with a focus on *Communicating the Value of Water*, from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.



John Gonzalez
Manager, Communications
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
Cleveland, OH

John Gonzalez is the Communications Manager and Social Media Coordinator for the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District in Cleveland. The Sewer District has been actively engaged in social media since 2009, building reliable followings on Twitter, Facebook, and elsewhere to share updates, answer questions, and promote often-overlooked aspects of clean-water work. He also contributes to the utility's public outreach strategy and oversees its internal communications programs.



Karen Hansen
Principal
Beveridge & Diamond, PC
Austin, TX

Karen Hansen's environmental law practice focuses on the Clean Water Act (CWA) and state programs for regulating and permitting water discharges and water supply/use. She has extensive experience assisting industrial and municipal clients in preparing strategies for and pursuing water permits for ongoing operations, expansions and new operations, including permit challenges. Ms. Hansen also represents clients that must defend CWA and state water law enforcement actions, including claims pursued by governmental as well as third party entities. She recently led a multi-year, complex negotiation of a consent decree for the San Antonio Water System, which was targeted for sewer overflow reductions under EPA's national "wet weather" enforcement initiative. Ms. Hansen advises clients on business strategies related to increasing water scarcity, and counsels clients on emerging trends in water quality programs, including initiatives such as watershed-based permitting, Total Maximum Daily Loads, trading and allocation, and land-based impacts on coastal and ocean resources. She also has extensive experience assisting clients with conducting compliance audits and managing related disclosures, and with developing and implementing management systems for environmental compliance.

**Victoria Johnson**

Management Consultant, Business & Finance
Jacobs
Atlanta, GA

Victoria Johnson is an accomplished strategic communications professional with 15 years of experience in corporate communications, marketing, journalism, and project/program management. She is a Program Consultant with Jacobs Engineering in Atlanta, leading strategic communications for water/wastewater utilities, projects and clients. She also serves as Jacobs' Leader for National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) engagement.

Ms. Johnson is a Water Equity Program Consultant with Louisville Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), in which she is partnering with Louisville MSD Executive Director Tony Parrott and his management team to implement and execute their One Water Initiative and comprehensive water equity goals, including workforce development, economic inclusion and environmental justice. Ms. Johnson has been instrumental in working with Louisville MSD in launching their inaugural jobs portal, JobLink, as well as developing its emerging Community Benefits Program, exploring workforce development opportunities in partnership with The Brookings Institution's Renewing the Water Workforce report, and working with other peer-utilities, community partners and non-profit organizations, including the US Water Alliance. Ms. Johnson has worked with utilities throughout the US, including the Miami-Dade Department of Water and Sewer, the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management and the New York Department of Environmental Protection.

A native of Orange County, CA, Ms. Johnson has a BA in Communication and English from Purdue University.

**Bess McCoy**

Co-Chair, NACWA Communications & Public Affairs Committee
Public Affairs Specialist
Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District
St. Louis, MO

Bess McCoy is a Public Affairs Specialist with the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District (MSD), serving on a team of four in the district's Public Affairs Division.

Driven by her passion for public engagement and government transparency, Ms. McCoy leads MSD's employee communication and municipal communication efforts. She is responsible for engaging more than 1,000 employees and 88 municipalities in MSD's efforts to protect the public health and water environment. Ms. McCoy also serves as an official spokesperson for MSD. The "positive face" of the district, she is the primary representative for MSD's proactive media engagement including their educational campaigns and stories highlighting their preventative activities.

Prior to joining MSD, Ms. McCoy served as the Public Information Officer for the City of Creve Coeur, a municipality in St. Louis County. She also spent four years working in the advertising industry where she specialized in online marketing and strategic research. A lifelong St. Louis area resident, Ms. McCoy earned a BA in Communication from Saint Louis University.

Ms. McCoy is currently the Co-Vice Chair of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies' Communications and Public Affairs Committee.



Vincent Morris

Communications and Government Relations Manager
DC Water
Washington, DC

Vincent Morris currently serves as head of government relations for DC Water, which supplies drinking water for the capital and is the only three-jurisdiction wastewater utility in the country. He also manages the social media and media relations functions at DC Water. Prior to that, he worked nearly a decade in Congress in both the House and Senate as a senior staff member to an array of active Democratic leaders including Senators Jay Rockefeller of WV and John Kerry of MA, as well as Senators Bernie Sanders of VT and Barbara Mikulski of MD.

Before that, during the administration of DC Mayor Tony Williams, Mr. Morris worked as Communications Director and served as the Mayor Williams' primary spokesman and media advisor. Before his work in public affairs, he worked as a newspaper reporter for nearly 15 years and covered national politics and campaigns and the White House, as well as the war in Iraq in 2003.

Originally from MA, Mr. Morris graduated from Boston University and has three daughters. In his free time he enjoys books, movies, swimming, tennis, motorcycles, hiking and Finland.



Pamela Perez

Marketing Manager
City of Los Angeles - LA Sanitation
Los Angeles, CA

Pamela Perez spent 15 years in sales and marketing in the hotel industry before taking on the role of Vice President of Sales and Marketing for the Los Angeles Convention Center. Ms. Perez transferred to LA Sanitation in 2013 to handle their branding, digital communications, and community outreach efforts in addition to planning special events. Ms. Perez has a BA in Communications from Pennsylvania State University and an MBA from Pepperdine University. Along with her duties at LASAN, she served as the Chair of NACWA's Communications & Public Affairs Committee from 2015-2017.



Maria Rosales-Ramirez
Senior Engineer
Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Whittier, CA

Maria Rosales-Ramirez is a Senior Engineer in the Public Information Office of the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts and a Board Certified Civil Environmental Engineer with State of CA. After her post-graduate work, Ms. Rosales-Ramirez joined the Sanitation Districts in the solid waste management department focusing in research of landfill gas projects and later in landfill disposal capacity and recycling projects for the County. Currently, she manages the Sanitation Districts' social media program, produces the Sanitation Districts' internal newsletter, the Pipeline, and participates in a variety of outreach programs for the Districts.

Ms. Ramirez-Rosales holds a BS Degree in Environmental Engineering and an MS Degree in Environmental Engineering from the University of Southern California.



Jean Smith
Co-Chair, NACWA Communications & Public Affairs Committee
Community and Media Relations Manager
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
Cleveland, OH

Jean Smith joined the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (Cleveland, OH) in 2006 as a Public Information Specialist. She currently serves as Manager of Community and Media Relations, and is responsible for public outreach and education as well as media relations. She serves at the Co-Chair of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies' Communications and Public Affairs Committee.

Prior to the Sewer District, Ms. Smith worked for the American Red Cross Northern Ohio Blood Services Region handling communications and media relations for 19 counties. She worked for Clear Channel Communications, including as Promotions Director for 96.5 Kiss FM and Mix 106.5.

A native of Columbus, OH, she holds a Bachelors degree from Baldwin Wallace University and an MPA Degree from Cleveland State University (CSU). Currently, she's working on her MBA Degree from CSU.



Franchesca Thompson
Digital Communications Manager
DC Water
Washington, DC

Franchesca Thompson is a dynamic and award-winning strategic communications and marketing leader offering 10+ years of experience leading key growth initiatives within the public and private sectors. She is analytical, curious, and competitive with a proven progressive career reflecting strong leadership experience that collaborates with motivated teams.



Michelle Zdrodowski
Chief Public Affairs Officer
Great Lakes Water Authority
Detroit, MI

As Chief Public Affairs Officer, **Michelle Zdrodowski** guides Great Lakes Water Authority's (GLWA) efforts to build and maintain its relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

She brings 30 years of strategic communications and community engagement experience to GLWA. Prior to joining GLWA, she served as Chief Communications Officer for Detroit Public Schools during a period of unprecedented challenge. Her public sector communications experience also includes serving as Deputy Press Secretary to former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer. For more than a decade, she also led the nonprofit/government practice group for a Detroit-based PR agency.

Ms. Zdrodowski holds a BA Degree in Communications from Michigan State University. She serves on the Public Affairs Council of the American Water Works Association (AWWA), the Communications and Public Affairs Committee for the National Association of Clean Water Agencies, and as Chair of the Communications Council for AWWA's Michigan Section.



Rebecca Zito
Communications Project Manager
Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
Pittsburgh, PA

Rebecca Zito is an accomplished communications professional with experience in the public sector. She is a skilled community engagement architect, writer, collaborator, and content strategist. Ms. Zito is passionate

about the art of storytelling to build awareness about the initiatives that shape a community.



Ms. Zito focuses on strategic communication efforts for the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority's growing stormwater program and manages special projects including the launch of the Authority's new website. Previously she worked for the City of San Mateo, CA where she built the city's digital marketing presence and led a cross-departmental team to redesign the city's website.

She holds an MS Degree in Public Policy/Management from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA and a BS Degree in Marketing from Gannon University in Erie, PA. She is continuously developing her skills in digital marketing, content strategy, and media relations.