

DUKE WATER
NETWORK
PRESENTS...

A VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM

WATER AND BORDERS

FRI, OCT 16TH & FRI, OCT 23RD

Symposium Speaker Bios

Day 1: Interstate Water in the United States

Friday, October 16 from 3pm – 5pm ET

Sara Larsen, Upper Colorado River Commission

Sara Larsen is the Deputy Director and Chief Engineer at the Upper Colorado River Commission, an interstate water administration agency created by the 1948 Upper Colorado River Basin Compact to work on behalf of Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico on Colorado River issues. The Commission's role is to promote interstate comity, foster partnerships, to remove causes of present and future controversy in the Upper Basin, and advance data and science in support the River's sustainable management. Sara has over 20 years of experience working in the nexus of water resources, hydrologic modeling, mapping, data analysis, and water policy and data problem-solving at local, state, and interstate scales.

Before joining the Commission in 2019, Sara worked at the Western States Water Council for seven years as a water data enthusiast (#waternerd) on the Water Data Exchange (WaDE) – a collaborative and long-term program to assist the 18 member states of the Council with “open data” concepts and using the latest and greatest technologies to share water planning and allocation information. Sara has also worked as an infrastructure modeler at Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico and as a GIS tech and water engineer at the State of Utah Division of Water Resources.

Sara has a M.S. in Civil Engineering with an emphasis on Water Resources and a B.S. in Geography from the University of Utah. She is also a licensed professional engineer in the State of Utah.

Brett Cyphers, Northwest Florida Water Management District

Brett Cyphers has served the State of Florida in numerous roles since 2001, most recently as the Executive Director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District since December 2014. Prior to his appointment at the District, Cyphers oversaw water management district budget development at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. He has also served Floridians by working on water and environmental policy issues in the Governor's Office, Florida Senate and House of Representatives, and the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Cyphers is a veteran of the United States Army and Florida National Guard and holds a degree from Florida State University. He lives in Tallahassee with his wife and three daughters.

Bidtah Becker, Navajo Nation

Ms. Becker has dedicated her career to the Navajo Nation and its natural resources. Since July 2019, Ms. Becker has been serving as an Associate Attorney for the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority. Prior to that she had the honor of serving as the Director of the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources from May 2013 to January 2019, as an appointee of President Begaye and Vice-President Nez. Prior to that she served as an attorney for the Navajo Nation focusing on water rights and natural resources issues from 2002 to May 2013. During those years and including her time as Division Director and current work with NTUA, she may be most proud of having worked on the Nation's Settlement to its water rights to the San Juan River Basin in New Mexico and the Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project.

Continuing her deep interest and passion for water, she serves on the Leadership Team for the Tribal Working Group for the Colorado River and Becker is honored to serve as a Commissioner on the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, as an appointee of Governor Lujan Grisham.

Ms. Becker is a member of the Nation and lives on the Navajo Nation in Fort Defiance with her husband and two school age children.

Dr. Sharon Megdal, University of Arizona

Sharon B. Megdal is Director of The University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), a Cooperative Extension center and a research unit in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Her work focuses on water policy and management, on which she writes and frequently speaks. The geographic scope of Dr. Megdal's work ranges from local to international. Projects include: comparative evaluation of water management, policy, and governance in water-scarce regions; groundwater recharge; and transboundary aquifer assessment. She is the lead editor of the book, *Shared Borders, Shared Waters: Israeli-Palestinian and Colorado River Basin Water Challenges*. Her policy columns and Reflections can be found at <https://wrrc.arizona.edu/director>. Sharon Megdal serves as Board President, International Arid Lands Consortium and Board Member, American Water Resources Association and represents the residents of Pima County on the elected Board of Directors for the Central Arizona Water Conservation District, also known as the Central Arizona Project (CAP).

Day 2: Water Scarcity and International Borders

Friday, October 23 from 12pm – 2pm ET

Dr. Aaron Wolf, Oregon State University

Aaron T. Wolf is a professor of geography in the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University. His research and teaching focus is on the interaction between water science and water policy, particularly as related to conflict prevention and resolution. He has acted as a consultant to US Department of State, the US Agency for International Development, and the World Bank, and several governments on various aspects of transboundary water resources and dispute resolution. All told, he is (co-) author or (co-) editor of seven books, including *Core and Periphery: A Comprehensive Approach to Middle Eastern Water*, (Oxford University Press, 1997), *Transboundary Freshwater Dispute Resolution*, (United Nations University Press, 2000), *Managing and Transforming Water Conflicts* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and close to fifty journal articles, book chapters, and professional reports on various aspects of transboundary waters, from the local scale to the international. A trained mediator/facilitator, he directs the Program in Water Conflict Management and Transformation, through which he has offered workshops, facilitation, and mediation in basins throughout the world.

Charles Iceland, World Resources Institute

Charles Iceland is Director of Global and National Water Initiatives with WRI's Food, Forests, Water, and the Ocean Program. Charles is implementing the Water, Peace, and Security Partnership with several European and American partner organizations. This project has developed a machine learning-based, near-real-time global early warning system for water and conflict hotspots and helps developing countries better address these issues.

Charles previously partnered with several major multinational corporations, including Mondy Group, Rio Tinto, Akzo Nobel, and BC Hydro, to develop, road test, and apply an innovative methodology for assessing corporate risks and opportunities stemming from ecosystem change. Prior to that, he worked at the World Environment Center, where he developed innovative supply chain environmental management pilot programs for Alcoa, Johnson & Johnson, Dow Chemical, and General Motors. Charles has worked at the Office of the United States Trade Representative, the United States House of Representatives, and the Peterson Institute for International Economics. He also worked in the banking and finance sector for several years and is a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). Charles earned his undergraduate degree from Yale University and a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University.

Carol Chouchani Cherfane, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Carol Chouchani Cherfane has served as Chief of the Water Resources Section in the Climate Change and Natural Resource Sustainability Cluster at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut since 2009. She previously led the Technology and Enterprise Development Team. Her current work focuses on implementing regional initiatives focused on climate mainstreaming, transboundary waters, the water-energy-food security nexus, and the water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This includes leading the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources and Socio-Economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR) under the Arab Centre for Climate Change Policies based at ESCWA, and supporting the Arab Ministerial Water Council, ESCWA Committee on Water Resources and Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET). Prior to joining the United Nations, she worked for the Harvard Institute for International Development and the World Bank. She holds degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (Boston) and Georgetown University (Washington, DC).

Dr. Erika Weinthal, Duke University

Dr. Weinthal specializes in global environmental politics and environmental security with a particular emphasis on water and energy. Current areas of research include (1) global environmental politics and governance, (2) environmental conflict and peacebuilding, (3) the political economy of the resource curse, and (4) climate change adaptation. Dr. Weinthal's research spans multiple geographic regions, including the Soviet successor states, the Middle East, South Asia, East Africa, and North America. Dr. Weinthal is author of *State Making and Environmental Cooperation: Linking Domestic Politics and International Politics in Central Asia* (MIT Press 2002), which received the 2003 Chadwick Alger Prize and the 2003 Lynton Keith Caldwell Prize. She has co-authored *Oil is not a Curse* (Cambridge University Press 2010) and co-edited *Water and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding* (Earthscan Press, 2014) and *The Oxford Handbook on Water Politics and Policy* (Oxford University Press 2018). She is a member of the UNEP Expert Group on Conflict and Peacebuilding and a co-editor of *Global Environmental Politics*. In 2017 she was a recipient of the Women Peacebuilders for Water Award under the auspices of "Fondazione Milano per Expo 2015".