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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ATLANTIC CANADA WATER AND WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION



2026



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INSIDE:

- The Fresh Ideas Experience
- NextWave 2026
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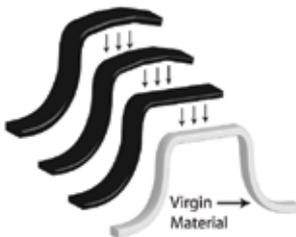
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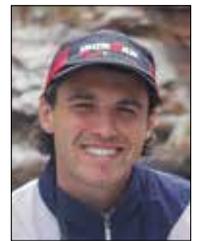
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Magazine Chair:
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On the cover:

The channel between the shore and Crow Island at the reversing falls at Saint John, NB. *Dreamstime.com*





A time of renewal

Dear ACWWA members, colleagues, and friends: As we welcome the spring season across Atlantic Canada, I am reminded of the resilience, innovation, and collaboration that define our water and wastewater community. Spring is traditionally a time of renewal, and this year feels no different as we build on the momentum of our shared accomplishments and look ahead to the opportunities before us.

Over the past year, our region has continued to navigate increasingly complex environmental conditions – ranging from periods of extreme heat, cold, and drought to intense rainfall and storm events. These realities underscore the critical importance of the work you do every day to ensure the safety, reliability, and sustainability of our water and wastewater systems. Your dedication in the face of evolving challenges continues to inspire our association and strengthen the communities we serve.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to another successful year of ACWWA initiatives – our volunteers, board members, committee leads, and the many operators, engineers, technicians, academics, and students who bring energy and expertise to every project, event, and conversation. Whether you participated in training sessions, contributed to *Go With the Flow*, mentored emerging leaders, or supported our outreach efforts, your involvement enriches our association and advances our mission.

Our recent annual conference once again demonstrated the power of connection. From insightful technical presentations to engaging networking events, delegates

showcased the best of our industry: collaboration, curiosity, and a shared commitment to progress. The enthusiasm of first-time attendees alongside the steady leadership of long-time members reminded me how deeply rooted – and forwardlooking – our community is.

As we move into the coming months, I encourage each of you to continue sharing your experiences, challenges, and successes. The strength of ACWWA lies in the collective voice of its members. Whether you are exploring innovative treatment solutions, advancing climate resilience, or supporting public awareness and education, your contributions shape the future of our industry.

As we continually look to increase connection and knowledge sharing, I want to highlight that OWWA, in collaboration with other Canadian sections including ACWWA, is hosting a conference from May 4–7 called NextWave (more details on page 26). This is a great opportunity to engage with colleagues across Canada. Looking further into the year we have the annual ACWWA Conference this year in Moncton on October 4–6 with a theme of Flowing Forward – from Scarcity to Sustainability. Then rounding out the year we have another opportunity for local engagement through the CWWA Annual conference being held in Halifax this year on November 1–4.

Thank you for the work you do, for the passion you bring, and for your ongoing commitment to protecting the water resources that sustain our communities. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the months ahead. 🌊

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Reflecting on my term

This will be my final article for *Go With the Flow* as AWWA Director. As my term on the AWWA Board representing ACWWA comes to an end in June, I can look back on what a wonderful opportunity it's been. I have learned so much about the inner workings of AWWA and I have met so many amazing people over the past three years. It's been an honour to represent Atlantic Canada. I am sure that Jason Phillips will continue to represent us well as he starts his term as AWWA Director in June.

As I reflect on the past three years, there's been a lot of turbulence in

"The one common element is how water professionals come together to overcome the obstacles in front of us."

the water industry. From natural disasters in 2023, to infrastructure reliability and resiliency concerns in 2024, to geopolitical uncertainty in 2025. However, for my final article I'm going to focus on hope and positivity. With all of the challenges facing our industry, the one common element is how water professionals come together to overcome the obstacles in front of us. As I think about the

future of the water industry in Atlantic Canada, I know we are in good hands with so many future leaders ready to take on the challenges we will face as we move forward.

To all of the young professionals and emerging leaders, my message is to get involved both with the local section and with AWWA. Our success can only happen with the help of dedicated volunteers. I can speak from personal experience, having started my involvement with AWWA over 25 years ago as a young professional. To everyone else, I really encourage you to get involved and encourage your colleagues to volunteer as well.

In my role as AWWA Vice President, I get the opportunity to travel to other AWWA sections for their conferences. Last November, I travelled to the Nebraska AWWA Section. It was a long journey to get there, but well worth it. Both the Nebraska Section and their conference are slightly smaller than ACWWA and like our Section everyone was very welcoming. I have two more Section visits coming up this spring. I will be travelling to the New York Section in April and then to the Connecticut Section in May.

If you are having difficulty travelling to the US for training and conference opportunities, the OWWA is hosting the Next Wave Conference in May in Niagara Falls. The goal is to bring water professionals together from all across Canada in an AWWA ACE style conference. The conference has a strong program and is worth checking out. 🌊

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Putting the focus on Canadian events

The CWWA National Water and Wastewater Conference (NWWC) and a meeting of the Canadian Affairs Committee (CAC) of the AWWA were held in early November 2025 in Victoria, BC. The Victoria conference was the largest-ever NWWC event. With normal attendance in the range of 400–450 delegates, the Victoria conference grew to over 600 this year with so many Canadian water leaders choosing to spend their conference budgets at home. The conference did not disappoint and included many of our ACWWA water leaders.



The CAC Committee meeting was coordinated to be held on the last day of the conference. These meetings help to coordinate the efforts of the Canadian AWWA sections as they relate to government affairs at a national level. They are held a few times a year and are particularly helpful to increase the impact of the smaller member associations in responding to national issues as part of the CAC instead of as an individual section. The committee's recent focus has been reacting to the impacts that the current US administration has inadvertently had on the Canadian Sections of AWWA. This has included the development of the NextWave Conference, a national conference with AWWA support which OWWA is hosting in Niagara Falls from May 2–5, 2026. The program has been announced and it contains many interesting presentations from across the country, including several from ACWWA members. The NextWave conference, along with Halifax hosting the NWWC conference in November, should set up 2026 as an excellent year to showcase our local water leaders at the national level. 🌊

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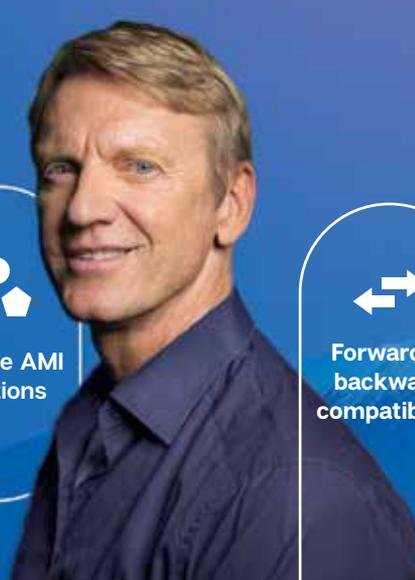
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Keeping you informed



As I am writing this brief “Spring” article in early February, I am looking out the window and all I see is a couple of feet of snow on the ground. Hopefully by the time this magazine hits your desk, the spring weather will melt the snow away.

WEF is celebrating the 52nd Anniversary of WEFMAX (Water Environment Federation Member Association Exchange) in 2026. There will be three in-person events this year.

- Montreal, Quebec, Canada – April 22–24: “MA to MA Collaboration”
- Pittsburgh, PA – May 6–8: “Operator Engagement”
- Bend, OR – May 27–29: “Channeling the Undercurrents: Bringing Energy to the Surface”

The WEF CAC (Canadian Affairs Council) will be attending the Montreal WEFMAX Workshop.

The NL Department of Environment and Climate Change will be hosting their annual Water and Wastewater Workshop in Gander, NL March 24–26, 2026. I have been asked to make a presentation on electrical safety as it relates to water pipes being used as the system ground. Perhaps I will see you there. The MPWWA is also holding their Annual Operators Workshop April 12–15, 2026, in Fredericton, NB. The calls for abstracts for the ACWWA Fall Conference are out, so make sure you get yours in. The ACWWA Fall Conference will be held in Moncton, NB, October 4–7.

Considering the recent activities south of the Canadian border, and the harsh discussions of the term DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion), WEF has re-branded DEI to be “Inclusion and Belonging.” Although WEF has not changed anything regarding the importance of DEI, the outward messaging is using different terms, to not create any unnecessary friction.

Based upon feedback from key members, WEF has created Roundtable Discussions for those responsible for implementing inclusion and belonging programming within their Member Associations (MAs). The purpose of the ‘Roundtable’ is to host small groups discussions on best practices and lessons learned and is complimentary to the existing House of Delegates Culture and Belonging quarterly networking calls. These calls will be held on a quarterly basis, with each meeting focusing on a specific topic such as succession planning, communication and messaging techniques, measuring success, and member training.

I am one of the 16 MA representatives that participate in virtual Teams meetings along with WEF staff. WEF has requested the participants report on this effort to their MA leadership and staff. We are supported by Kelsey Hurst (Director, Community Engagement) khurst@wef.org and Steve Hamai (Senior Director, Culture and Belonging) shamai@wef.org.

If you have any suggestions, please let me know and I will bring these ideas to WEF. [📧](#)



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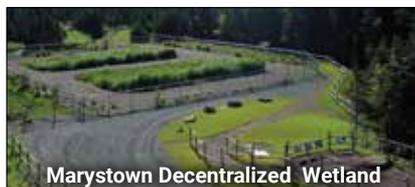
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Strengthening our outreach together

As I sit down to write this article in the heart of winter – when our systems are challenged by freezing temperatures, unpredictable storms, and the unique demands of the season – it’s encouraging to know that by the time you read this, spring will be well underway.

I had the privilege of representing ACWWA at the 2026 AWWA Membership Summit, held January 14–16 in Denver, Colorado. The Summit continues to be an invaluable opportunity to exchange ideas, share experiences, and collaborate with fellow membership committee members and executive directors from across North America, all with the goal of strengthening the support we provide to our members.

I am proud to share that ACWWA received a Membership Award in recognition of our continued growth. In addition, we were the sole recipient of a complimentary registration for the 2027 Membership Summit. These achievements would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our Membership Committee – Gabriel Belliveau, Brandon Howard, and Aaron Ryan – as well as the ongoing support of our entire membership. Thank you to each of you for contributing to this success.

In the coming year, the Membership Committee will continue to expand member networking opportunities to enhance engagement, strengthen outreach

to small communities and small systems that can benefit from ACWWA resources, and further support social media initiatives across the Association.

Please note that due to recent database transitions and the need to ensure accurate information retrieval, the Refer-a-Member Contest will be placed on temporary hold.

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John Oram	AIWUC	AWWA
Matt Stewart	McWane Canada	AWWA
David Colborne	Sunset Community	AWWA
Brad Eckert	City of Saint John	AWWA
Aidan Fisher	Fisher Engineering	AWWA
Miek Benson	DCA Consulting	AWWA
Jeremy Cunningham	City of Moncton	AWWA
Thomas Kickham		AWWA
Gina Jamieson		AWWA
Peter Boland	Town of Labrador City	AWWA
Tim Preston	City of Moncton	AWWA



As of January 31, 2026

Total AWWA active members: **401**

Total active WEF members: **92**



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The **2026 ACWWA Annual Conference** is being held October 4–6 in Moncton, NB, where the ABEA will bring its usual flare to the program.

Annual Sunday Golf: We are currently awaiting confirmation from the course – stay tuned!

The **Monday evening ever-popular Hospitality Night** will be held at the Tide & Boar Ballroom from 8:00 pm to 1:00 am with entertainment being provided by Raglan Road (see right). Nibbles and entertainment is for all ages. Come meet up with your friends or make some new ones.

The main event – the **Trade Show** – will be held on Tuesday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Delta Beausejour; lunch will be served during the event. Come see what’s new in the industry to solve your most troublesome problem or review the technology currently in use with some new tips – either way it’s worth a stroll.

Training: Education is always a hot topic, and our membership continues to find ways to assist 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.

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Raglan Road is one part Prince Edward Island, one part Newfoundland and 2 parts Miramichi, NB and together, they comprise one of the most energetic and engaging acts in Eastern Canada!

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The band has also released a critically acclaimed 13 track debut album and followed that up with their latest single, "Pour it Black" that went to #1 on the East Coast Countdown and spent 15 weeks in the top 10. Raglan Road also has sponsored artist partnerships with Stonebridge Guitars, Headhunters Percussion, Four Rivers Brewing Co. and Three Dog Distilling.

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Atlantic Branch Equipment Association Annual Scholarship (est. 2011)



In keeping with the spirit of the ABEA, “the object of the association is to encourage and stimulate the exchange of ideas concerning water supply systems between members of the association and between members of the ACWWA and other bodies/persons having similar interest” (Article II (2) Objects/ABEA Constitution).

The scholarship was established in 2011 with the goal of its first award for the 2012 academic year, to a first-year entrant into a college or university program.

The ABEA is a body made up of 40+ members, including manufacturers, manufacturer representatives, and service providers, who have, as their joint goals, the desire to:

- Promote understanding and goodwill

- Encourage and stimulate the exchange of ideas
- Acquire and disseminate information
- Provide funding to education initiatives
- Foster relationships amongst members and between associations
- Encourage fair and ethical ventures
- Promote member products/services

Number and value: Up to four/\$1,000 annual awards | **Tenure:** One year

Basis of the award: Selection of the award is based on an equal opportunity basis with the assessment of the following weighted criteria:

1. Academic record (30%) – Official High School Transcript Required
2. Statement/Essay (50%)

3. Work Experience/Community Involvement/Service Projects (20%)

Eligibility: Applicants shall:

- Be a son/daughter of an ACWWA/ABEA member.
- Be a Canadian Citizen or permanent resident of Canada.
- Be a resident of Atlantic Canada, or whose parent is the Atlantic Canadian supplier representative.
- Preference will be given to those intending to pursue a career related to the water/wastewater industry, and those choosing to study in Atlantic Canada.

Apply to: ABEA Scholarship
c/o #9 – 50 Thornhill Drive
Dartmouth, NS, B3B 1S1

Or: abeacontact@gmail.com

Application deadline: OPEN

Please submit the following information:

- Resume: include name, phone number, mailing and email address, as well as a listing/description of all places of employment including volunteer work.
- Name and relationship to Association Member (along with membership number, if applicable). Member must be in good standing.
- Proof of Canadian Citizenship or Permanent Residence Status.
- Intended institution and program of study.
- A 500-word statement describing goals, interests, and relevance to a career in the industry.
- An official high school or equivalency transcript.

Selection: To be carried out by an ABEA appointed committee. 

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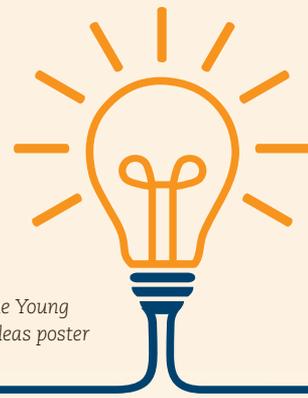
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By Catherine Evans

The FRESH IDEAS Experience



The Fresh Ideas program has been developed through AWWA's Manufacturers/Associates Council and the Young Professionals Committee. The top presentation selected is given the opportunity to compete in the Fresh Ideas poster competition at the AWWA Annual Conference and Exposition, representing the YPs of ACWWA.

It's always a pleasure as a researcher to attend events like the ACWWA Annual Conference. My first time getting to go was in Fredericton in 2024.

The ACWWA conference consists of a few rooms of themed sessions with breaks for meals and coffee, and social events bookending the days. I got to jump between talks from both academics and industry, which means I was drinking from a firehose of information. As a person who focuses on remote sensing and environmental monitoring, it was hard to pick between talks at some points! My passion is really in creating tools for community climate adaptation. I'd attend a session about how a company was helping remote communities double their clean water supply without increasing their power load or spatial footprint, and then I'd move to another group helping lower testing costs for toxic cyanobacteria.

By the end of the first day, my notebook was filled with information, and I was collecting contact information from incredible people across fields.

Having the opportunity to present my research on using low-power machine learning and AI for algae bloom monitoring ultimately led to forming connections with my fellow early-career researchers. We had the chance to exchange ideas and support each other through our presentations. I was honoured to be awarded the Fresh Ideas Competition award among such strong participants.

Part of the award as a Fresh Ideas winner was to present my research in a poster session at the following year's ACE conference. Travel plans were not as expected, but discussions with the ACWWA team happily led to an invitation to the 2025 conference in St. John's, Newfoundland.



St. John's has been a bucket-list city to me for years. We were lucky to have warm and sunny weather through this year's conference. It gave me the chance to hike legs of the East Coast trail beforehand. I highly recommend bringing a pair of hiking shoes the next time you have the chance to visit! The downtown screech-in and the Young Professionals networking evening hosted by ACWWA allowed me to catch up with people I'd met the year before and meet even more future leaders of Atlantic Canada's water industry.

ACWWA conference sessions give a small-town feel. I was greeted warmly by colleagues I'd met the previous year. It's not uncommon to have attendees on opposite sides of the serving table look up from filling their plate and realize they're looking at an old friend! In classic Atlantic Canadian fashion, they'd still make sure the line kept moving while they took a moment to chat or leave to find a seat together.

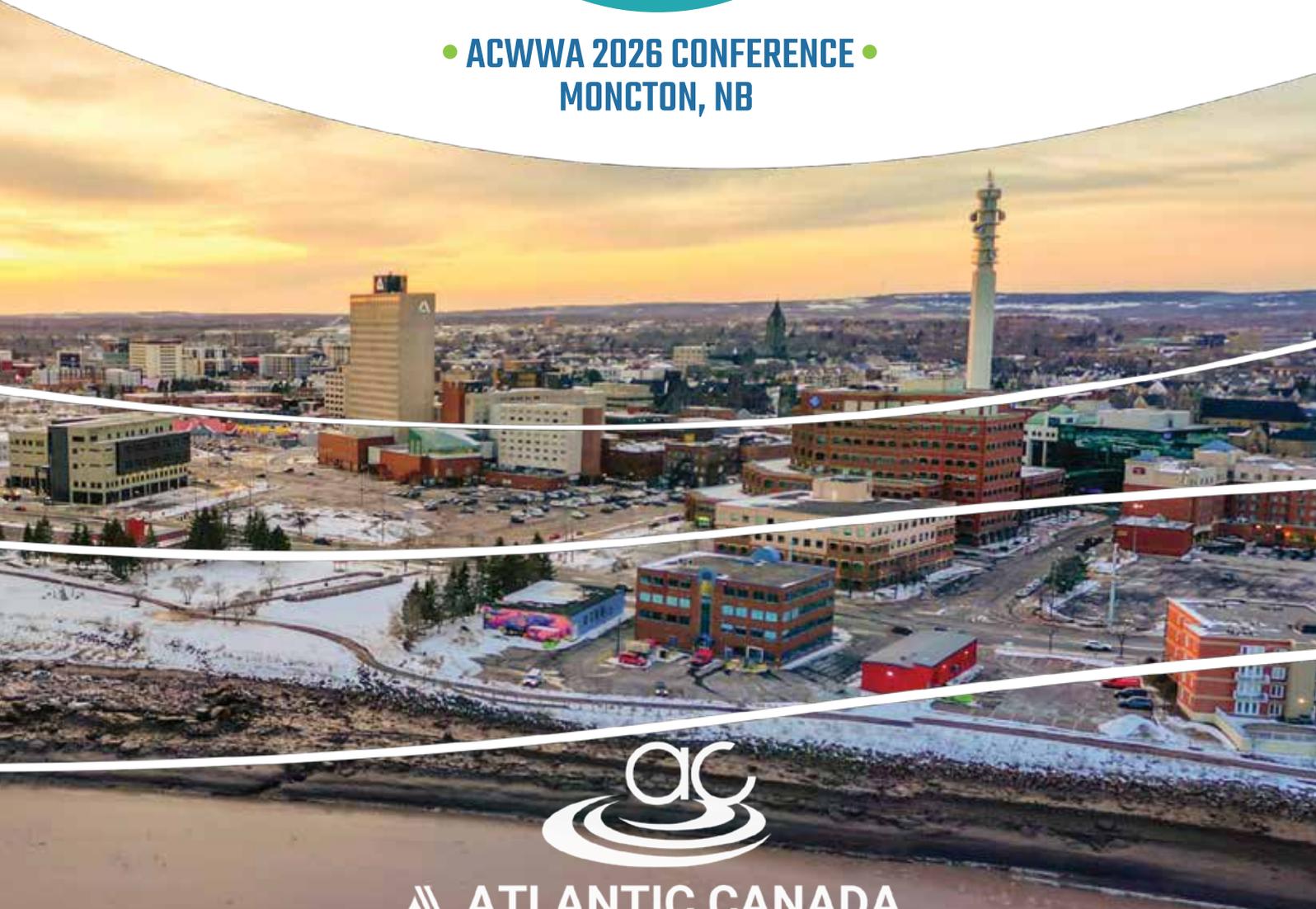
At this conference, I had the opportunity to moderate a few sessions, which allowed me to engage with some very bright minds.

I also presented updates on how my research has evolved. Since my first conference, I incorporated and am now conducting pilot projects with interested communities to see how we can help in their climate adaptation mission while keeping costs affordable. I founded Advanced Climate Monitoring Inc. to provide water monitoring and alert systems for rural communities. Being able to share my progress and recognize how directly it connects to the feedback I received from my first ACWWA was especially meaningful. Without those early conversations, I wouldn't be where I am today.

Looking back, I'm grateful to continue building a career that I know is making real world impacts in my community. With every conference, I'm able to see the important strides and accomplishments our Section of AWWA makes. Atlantic Canada punches above its weight in talent and innovation, which makes me incredibly proud to have founded my company here. I'd like to thank the team behind ACWWA for welcoming me to the water family and I look forward to attending for years to come. 🌊



● ACWWA 2026 CONFERENCE ●
MONCTON, NB



 **ATLANTIC CANADA**

Section • American Water Works Association
MA • Water Environment Federation



2026 ACWWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FLOWING FORWARD FROM SCARCITY TO SUSTAINABILITY

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 new 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 Beauséjour, 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, researchers, students, 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

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Planning is well underway to deliver a memorable experience for delegates and vendors alike. Our 2026 theme is Flowing Forward: From Scarcity to Sustainability. The program will span several days and feature diverse technical sessions, social events, technical tours, networking opportunities, awards and recognition, and the ABEA Trade Show.

The success of the ACWWA Annual Conference depends on the generous support of our industry partners. Sponsorship offers your company visibility beyond the conference sessions and trade show floor – reaching municipalities, regulators, utility managers and operators, design professionals, contractors, suppliers, and other water and wastewater professionals across Atlantic Canada and beyond.

We're excited to come together again to share experience and knowledge with our peers – and we need your support to make it happen. Please consider sponsoring the 2026 conference. We've designed multiple participation levels to suit a range of budgets and objectives, ensuring every sponsor has time in the spotlight.

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Contact Clara at (902) 434-6002 or contact@acwwa.net

LOGO INFORMATION

Send logo in a vector (.eps) or Illustrator (.ai) format. If a vector format is not available, a PDF with high resolution is acceptable.



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 projects, technological advancements or research on water and wastewater, 2) presentations featuring 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 (formerly known as Young Professional – a 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 accepted Fresh Ideas entries be presented through a dedicated poster session at the conference, allowing opportunities for attendees to connect directly with presenters and learn about their work. The top poster presentation selected by judges will be given the opportunity to attend a national conference held by the

American Waterworks Association or Member Association or the Water Environment Federation, representing the Emerging Leaders of ACWWA. The 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, and the Emerging Leader that submitted the abstract must deliver the poster presentation.

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.

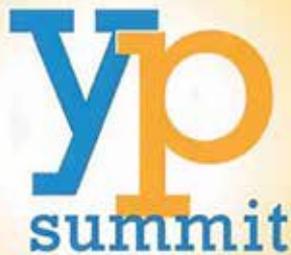
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING ABSTRACTS

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>. The final day for submitting abstracts will be posted on the ACWWA website and social media accounts.

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.

WE WILL SEE YOU IN MONCTON, OCTOBER 4–6, 2026



YP UTILITY SCHOLARSHIP WINNER:

Dallys Serracin-Pitti

Hosted jointly by WEF and AWWA, the Young Professional (YP) Summit has become the premier national gathering for emerging professionals in the water and wastewater industry. The goal of the YP Summit is to bring together early-career engineers, operators, technologists, and leaders from across North America to exchange ideas, deepen technical and leadership skills, and build the connections that will shape our industry for decades to come. This year's summit is focused on **The Next Wave: Navigating Water Sector Currents**, creating the opportunity to explore the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a rapidly changing sector while understanding the trends and drivers behind those changes.

Each year, AWWA and WEF award five scholarships (10 in total) to young professionals employed by a water utility in North America to attend the Young Professional Summit. The goal of the scholarships is to increase utility representation at the Summit and to help build leadership development within WEF and AWWA. The scholarships cover the travel and registration for each recipient.



Dallys Serracin-Pitti, Project Engineer at Halifax Water and ACWWA IDEA Chair, is one of the five recipients of the 2026 AWWA YP Scholarship, awarded through AWWA Water Equation. Congratulations, Dallys, on receiving this award, and for representing ACWWA at the YP Summit in Charlotte, North Carolina. 🌊

ACWWA EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

NEW COURSES AND DATES RELEASED

REGISTER ONLINE

ACWWA is regularly updating the list of available courses. Courses that have been recently added include:



Meters: Basic – Repair – Calibration
Meters: Basic – Repair – Calibration
SCADA Training For Operators

Corner Brook – May 12
St. John's – May 12
Amherst – May 15

For more details and the full list of course offerings, check out the ACWWA website: www.acwwa.ca/education/education-opportunities.html

NextWave 2026 momentum builds as program launches and early interest surges

As the season turns and planning for the year begins, momentum around NextWave 2026 continues to build. With the official release of the conference program, excitement is accelerating for what is shaping up to be one of Canada's most significant water and wastewater events.

This year's technical program reflects both the depth and breadth of the sector. Following a record number of abstract submissions, the NextWave Planning Committee has finalized a comprehensive lineup of sessions spanning key tracks such as Automation, Asset Management, Drinking Water Treatment, Distribution, Utility Management, and Emerging Issues and Contaminants. The program also features high-profile specialty sessions, including the Opening General Session, highlighted by keynote speaker Peter Katz, a Juno-nominated singer-songwriter and acclaimed keynote speaker, alongside the CEO Forum and Townhall, which bring industry leaders and decision-makers together for shared dialogue and perspective. In addition, forward-looking themes such as Climate Change, Smart Systems, and Water and Energy Efficiency offer practical insights alongside strategic discussion. Together, these sessions showcase diverse viewpoints from across the country and are designed to spark knowledge exchange and meaningful conversation. Attendees can now explore the program, plan their schedules, and prepare to connect with professionals and organizations representing every corner of Canada's water community.

Interest in the conference extends well beyond the program. Sponsorship demand is strong and continues to rise, with many opportunities already



secured and others seeing high levels of interest. Organizations from across Canada are recognizing the value of aligning their brand with a flagship national event that brings together operators, utilities, consultants, suppliers, manufacturers, academics, and regulators under one roof. For sponsors, NextWave 2026 offers visibility, engagement, and a meaningful presence within the broader water sector.

Registration continues to grow, with attendees and their organizations taking full advantage of early bird pricing (available until February 13). As professionals plan for May, early registration is proving popular among returning delegates and new participants alike. With interest coming from across the country, securing a place early remains a smart choice as demand builds.

As winter gives way to spring, NextWave 2026 offers something to look forward to. Whether planning professional development, exploring sponsorship opportunities, or finalizing travel plans, now is the time to engage. With the program released, NextWave 2026 is well-positioned to be a defining moment for Canada's water sector in the year ahead. We look forward to seeing you in Niagara Falls in May! 

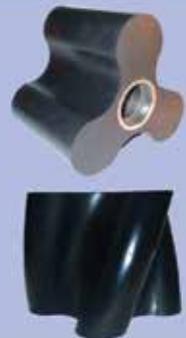
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Efficiently planning for growth

By Adam Sketchley, P.Eng., M.A.Sc. – DesignPoint Engineering & Surveying Ltd.

Growth is a focus across many municipalities, and with it comes pressure to “build for the future.” The instinct is often to oversize infrastructure early so the system will never be caught short. But while planning for growth is essential, blanket oversizing can create long-lasting technical, operational, and financial problems that quietly undermine system performance for decades.

The fundamental goal of infrastructure planning is not to build the biggest system possible, it is to build the right system, at the right time, with the flexibility to expand when demand justifies it.

Oversizing can be framed as responsible planning. In reality, it shifts capital spending forward without delivering near-term service benefits. The result is inflated upfront costs that strain budgets, delay other critical upgrades, or push rate increases onto current users for capacity they may never need.

Infrastructure assets begin degrading the day they are installed, not the day they are needed. If a system is oversized for ultimate buildout, major components can age through much of their service life before demand materializes. This is especially problematic for assets with predictable replacement horizons like pumps, mechanical systems, and valves.

A common misconception is that bigger infrastructure automatically improves system resilience. In practice, oversized systems can create operational inefficiencies and, in water systems, water quality issues. Distribution networks rely on sufficient turnover to maintain water quality. When demand is too low relative to system volume, water age increases and operators are forced into compensating strategies such as flushing, rechlorination, and operational workarounds.

Water storage illustrates this clearly. Storage is necessary for fire protection, peak balancing, and

emergency supply. However, a facility sized for ultimate growth can store excessive volume for years, with limited turnover and increased risk of stagnant water. This is not theoretical: water age and chlorine residual are consistently linked, with higher water age generally corresponding to lower chlorine residual in distribution systems.

Good planning still requires long-term thinking. The difference is that fundamentals-based planning focuses on staged construction: define the ultimate need, but build in increments aligned with measurable triggers.

This approach typically includes:

- Short-term upgrades that solve real existing constraints
- Modular capacity additions that can be expanded as demand grows
- Clear monitoring triggers tied to flow rates, pressure performance, storage cycling, and water quality indicators

Hydraulic modelling is essential in this process. It allows systems to be evaluated under existing, short-term, and long-term demand scenarios, and highlights where future growth affects pressures, fire flow performance, and storage replenishment.

Planning for growth does not mean building ultimate infrastructure immediately. It means designing systems that can expand efficiently when demand justifies it. Oversizing may feel conservative, but it can produce the opposite: higher costs, degraded assets, and operational complexity.

Do you have a topic for a future Back to Fundamentals article?

Email adam.sketchley@designpoint.ca or contact@acwwa.ca and we will do our best to cover it! 🐼

“The fundamental goal of infrastructure planning is not to build the biggest system possible, it is to build the right system, at the right time, with the flexibility to expand when demand justifies it.”

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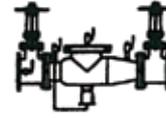


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