



**Education Working Group
Meeting Notes
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
9:30-11:30 a.m.**

Attendees

Attendee Name	Title	Acronym	Organization
Julie Bless	Staff Conservation Educator	NDOW	NV Department of Wildlife
Lindsay Budija	Water Resource Specialist 1	CWSD	Carson Water Subconservancy District
Kelsey Denning	Environmental Specialist, Water Quality	WEPD	Washoe Environmental Protection Dept.
Sarah Fichtner	Floodplain Mapping Coordinator	NDWR	NV Division of Water Resources
Christian Fritsen	Branch Supervisor, NPS	NDEP	NDEP Bureau of Water Quality Planning
Rob Fuller	Outreach	RCI	Resource Concepts Inc.
Katie Hay	Stormwater Clerk	Douglas	Douglas County
Brenda Hunt	Watershed Program Manager	CWSD	Carson Water Subconservancy Dist.
Donna Inversin	Trail Advocate	V&T	Historic V&T Trail
Isabella Kurtz	Headwaters Coordinator	AWG	Alpine Watershed Group
Lori Leonard	Property Mgr, River Fork Ranch	TNC	The Nature Conservancy - RFR
Marenda Lovejoy	Senior Naturalist	CCPROS	Carson City Parks, Rec & Open Space
Debbie Neddenriep	Water Resource Specialist 2, CFM	CWSD	Carson Water Subconservancy District
Kelly Nicholas	Senior Watershed Clerk	CWSD	Carson Water Subconservancy District
Courtney Walker	Stormwater Program Manager	DC	Douglas County Public Works

Round Robin

Chris Fritsen, NDEP – The EPA is reviewing the [nonpoint source state five-year water plan](#). Many groups, including CWSD, gave feedback on the draft; the final submission includes education & outreach components, which NDEP supports if they can result in measurable/reportable load reductions. They are now waiting for a revision of EPA guidelines considering federal removal of DEI/environmental justice language, which they expect to extend to project funding. He hopes to examine research he’s heard about societal indicators and education outcomes and apply it to CRC activities. NDEP looks forward to the spring Forum and is optimistic about another round of 319 funding coming out.

Kelsey Denning, WEPD – She is a new employee with the water quality program and would like to hear what partners are doing. Their Earth Day celebration is May 2 at the Stewart Community Center. Their office manager, [Tonya Quiner](#), is the POC if you’d like to host a booth. Her position works under CWA 106 and 319 funds. A current project she’s working on is a stream assessment day with Tribal youth; she’s thinking about water-quality sampling and maybe a macroinvertebrate station in late April on the East Fork at Dresslerville; they’re not yet asking for partners’ help because they’re not sure how many kids can come. – Chris will pass along that information to the Bioassessment and Standards branches.

Rob Fuller, RCI – He does technical consulting for NDEP and is active in source water protection events; he frequently has worked with River Wranglers. He’d be happy to help with Earth Day or the Washoe youth event. He has been working with sixth graders at Riverview Elementary on source water protection and may have some opportunities in Lyon and Mineral Counties; he wants to get the most out of the budget to do presentations around the state. If anyone knows an educator seeking groundwater models, they are purchasing some. RCI is working with the Brewery Arts Center as a potential site for the Kings Canyon Source Water Protection Day in June to coincide with their Pride event to capitalize on foot traffic; UNR Extension will also be involved. – Kelly offered to pass along Amy Riddle’s contact info and mention to Extension the Master Gardener volunteer opportunity.

Lindsay Budija, CWSD – She has been working on the 30-year regional water plan under an OEM grant, which includes outreach to water purveyors, presenting them the current state and then the projected outlook. Because of cooperation and outreach throughout the watershed, the CRW is in better shape than the Walker or the Humboldt. And it's been great to meet the area water purveyors.

Isabella Kurtz, AWG – Upcoming educational activities include helping Diamond Valley Elementary School with Trout in the Classroom March 5 (in class), and the actual release day at The Nature Conservancy's River Fork Ranch on March 27. On March 30 and 31 they will administer their remaining [Whale Tail lessons](#) to the seventh-eighth grade classroom with River Wranglers; the lessons will be on tree rings, the carbon cycle and why carbon is important, and then organisms in and around our watershed. AWG is trying to get two remaining lessons under the grant suitable for first-second graders scheduled before April 15 when the grant ends. AWG's longstanding water monitoring program starts back up next month, with the first sampling event Mar. 12-14. She is updating internal documents like calibration logs using the [Clean Water Teams Toolbox](#). They submitted their application to table at South Lake Tahoe Earth Day April 18 and are waiting to hear if they're accepted.

Reed Cozens, CWSD, introduced himself.

Katie Hay, DC – In January they went to Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School. In March they have some trout releases with River Wranglers. The main focus has been working with a consultant on their stormwater utility rate study; there have been some smaller, focused meetings with the ag group figuring out rate exemptions.

Courtney Walker, DC – Meetings with the ag folks have been really positive. They're very much in support of the stormwater utility, and so we're just trying to figure out how to make it fair, to exempt them, since they do so much work with the ditch maintenance, which is essentially the stormwater infrastructure network throughout Douglas County. She hopes it all goes well; they would like to get this on the tax rolls July 1. They also did the annual water sampling for their MS4 permit off Vista Grande around Clear Creek.

Debbie Neddenriep, CWSD – Emphasized that CWSD would be working with River Wranglers for outreach this spring. Reminded everyone that e-mail aliases for AWG and Carson City have changed: @carsoncity.gov and @alpinewatershedgroup.org.

Julie Bless, NDOW – Margaret is busy with classroom instruction and field trips. The [Outdoor Education Council](#) put in place by AB165 is going strong, and there are two vacancies, one of them is a nature-based educator. They just had their first meeting. Their first major action is going to be creating an outdoor educator of the year award; for now it's limited to certified teachers, but they hope to include non-formal teachers in the future. They are public meetings, and you can join an e-mail list. NDOW will be working with Bighorns Unlimited on several guzzler projects in the western region; a kids and family campout is June 6. These construction projects, which draw up to 300 people, collect water for wildlife. Please let her know if you're interested in going; much of it is keeping children from heavy equipment. They have been continuing work on the [wildlife discovery trail](#) and want to launch the eastern and western sections by summer's end. Lastly, the [City Nature Challenge](#) is Apr. 24-27; enter anything into iNaturalist within the project areas she created (Reno and Elko) and it will end up in their project. This international event is organized by the California Academy of Sciences, and next year it would be good to have competition between Reno, Carson City and Vegas; there is an [iNaturalist Help Guide](#) to get started, and [this is a guide for organizers](#).

Lori Leonard, TNC – They are gearing up for Trout in the Classroom, with River Wranglers taking the lead. They recently hosted a nature journaling class, focused on snowflakes, that was well attended by all ages. A volunteer docent training in late March will include CPR training one of the two days. In April, Genoa Western Heritage Days is taking place; often the Carson Valley Photography Club sets up at River Fork, and then TNC does a nature walk on Saturday. May 10 UNR Extension's Douglas County Master Gardeners will hold their native plant sale at River Fork. TNC has also partnered with High Sierra Fly Casters, who are organizing a beginner fly-tying class; dates are March 4/5, March 18/19, and April 15/16. She also floated the idea of hosting a [Project Wet](#) training for educators and docents. Brenda – it would be good to have a list of educators who would be interested in this sort of training, and River Wranglers would be a good place to start.

Donna Inversin, V&T – Muscle Powered is focused on the bike park near Centennial; right now they are working on that MOU and preparing for Bike Month. For the Historic V&T they did not get their RTP grant, and so now they're going for Conserve Nevada funds for a Phase 1 bridge – pedestrian, bike and equestrian – feasibility study at Bigelow across the Carson River. The site's floodway status has changed and so they may look at other crossing sites. They are looking for match; possible sources are NDOR and the OHV community. She also was invited to a breakfast with Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce and Truckee Meadows Community College, who want to form a consortium like the [Eastern Sierra Trails Coalition](#).

Marena Lovejoy, CCPROS – The City has applied for a Conserve Nevada grant to acquire 80 acres west of the water tanks in Ash Canyon, which is critical because there are many social hiking trails in the area. They're about to launch the third annual [Carson City Trails Challenge](#). The kick-off will be Saturday, March 28 at Silver Saddle Ranch; it's a good introduction to some of the City's lesser-known trails. There's usually an accompanying photo challenge. Folks hike these trails and then are entered into a raffle for great prizes from local businesses. The challenge itself will run until the beginning of November. Also, Erin is planning an Earth Day Trash Bash, a community-wide trash cleanup for several hours on Saturday, April 18, mostly targeting city-owned property. If there's a local neighborhood group interested, they can [reach out to Erin](#). Brenda – If anyone needs maps or stickers for their events, please let us know; it will help CWSD gauge swag counts/needs.

Kelly for Sarah Fichtner, DWR – Department of Water Resources has an upcoming Watershed University Forum on April 22. They also plan to do outreach at [Waterpalooza 2026](#) in Sparks May 29.

Kelly for Rebecca Feldermann, RW – For Trout in the Classroom they're working with 12 schools and helping coordinate two releases in Alpine County. They anticipate more than 700 students in the program this year. A school in Churchill County will be participating in Carson River Workdays. Five are scheduled: two in Douglas County and three in Churchill County. They have two field days scheduled for Carson and an Ag in the Classroom Earth Day event. To add to that, the FPST will host their Earth Day April 25 in Fallon. They have expanded their Seasonal Changes program; this year it's in four schools - two in Carson, one in Douglas and one in Lyon County. They start in the fall, where students go outside and observe and report on their surroundings – temperature and climate, precipitation, visible wildlife and plant life, etc. This is repeated winter, spring, and then toward the end of the school year.

For the [America 250 event](#) done in conjunction with CCPROS, River Wranglers won an award for Nevada. They'll wrap cottonwood trees at Silver Saddle to protect them from beaver and possibly pick up trash April 11 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. They will cap the number of registrations to 50 people, and registration is required. Participants will receive a commemorative T-shirt.

Eagle Valley Middle School seventh graders will have a field day Wednesday, May 27. Rebecca hopes for 12 to 15 stations for 300 students. It will run from 7:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. If anyone is interested in taking part, please [reach out to Rebecca](#).

Kelly Nicholas, CWSD – Several plant sales span the entire month of May. May 9 – Lahontan Conservation District, Fallon; May 9 – The Greenhouse Project, Carson City; May 16 – UNR Extension Douglas Co. Master Gardeners, River Fork Ranch; May 30 – UNR Extension Carson City Master Gardeners, CC Community Garden.

Watershed Literacy

Watershed Resurvey Results: [Responsive Management](#) administered a follow-up to a 2015 survey this winter. The survey was conducted by landline and cell phone, with more than 800 respondents throughout for a usable data sample. We received [the resulting report](#) and are hoping for an analysis in time for our March board meeting. Several ads and cohesive messaging earned a good recall rate among respondents on par with organizations with larger staff and promotions budgets. CWSD needs its partners to also use the collateral it had contractors develop. May 27 notes addition – [Watershed Resurvey Presentation](#).

Watershed Forum April 1-2, 2026 – Kelly reviewed the logistics and confirmed speakers to date, who were all expected to provide an outreach component of some sort into their presentations; she solicited more input for both speakers and topics. Cost is \$50 for two days, \$30 for one, and a reduced \$20 for speakers. CWSD expected 9-11 CFM and AICP CEUS. Brenda expanded upon the presentation by Denver's Mile High Flood District; she came across it while attending a regional workshop with Karin Peternel, formerly Carson City Stormwater Manager, and Gavin Henderson and Taylor Allison, both of Lyon Co. May 27 notes addition – [Forum Program](#) and [Speaker Bios](#).

FEMA Outreach Discussion/FMA Luncheons/Silver Jackets

CTP and FEMA funding statuses are unknown. With the freeze on DHS spending, it is affecting FEMA, and no one can access allocated funds until that is resolved. That's having a current impact on programming. For the next Northern Nevada FMA luncheon, Joe Anderson from the city of Roseville will be speaking about their mapping project for the streams in their community and how they leveraged that project for data collection. That will be at the [Washoe County Emergency Operation Center](#) April 9 at 11:30, \$25 FMA members, \$30 nonmembers. There was to be a Silver Jackets meeting that afternoon.

WQ Grant Updates

CWSD hopes to host an invasive species working group meeting at the end of March; this may be difficult because it conflicts with an NDA meeting as well as the Forum and potentially spraying schedules.

Currently assembling a 208 proposal for the funding that CWSD gets. We'll try to get together with Courtney and Gavin and hopefully NDEP folks and CWSD folks to have a conversation about that as well as funding moving forward for low-impact development or nature-based solutions projects.

For existing grants, for the 319 regen ag grant Brenda is working with Shaker Gorla of Kimley Horn; he is putting together concept drawings for two irrigation outfalls at Fallon's Rambling River Ranches. We hope to start up working on Break-a-Heart soon; owner Cami Hodges has been on maternity leave. For the 319 planning grant, we have been moving forward on the quality assurance project plan (QAPP) but need to submit a draft to EPA soon if we're going to have time to collect water samples. CWSD is working on getting an updated, approvable template.

Please provide any website feedback for sites you like as well as items that you want to see included on the CWSD website. What do you need to access or refer to regularly for your organization? What are the top three-five issues for your county or region? What are the top three-five accomplishments for same?

Next Meeting: June 3, 2026