



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual - New Year's Confluence of Colorado Environmental Organizations – January 14, 2026

Calling all professionals, retirees, and students to network with:  
[CEMS](#) | [SWEP](#) | [CGWA](#) | [RMAEP](#)

For an evening titled **New Year in High Resolution: Panel Discussion**

Observations and reflections from a diverse panel of seasoned environmental professionals on their experiences, takeaways, and where to go from here.

Panelists ([bios](#)): Kevin Rein, Tom Dea, Kay Vollmayer, and Melanie Granberg

### Date & Time

Wednesday, January 14, 2026  
5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

### Location

Improper City  
3201 Walnut St, Denver, CO 80205 ([MAP IT](#))

All tickets come with *2 complimentary drinks*. Meals can be purchased from the [food truck](#) on site.

### Ticket pricing:

CEMS, SWEP, CGWA, and RMAEP members \$20.00/person  
Non-members \$30.00/person

### Sponsorship:

\$100.00/sponsor

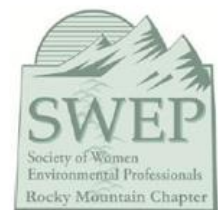
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### Schedule

5:30 Doors Open  
6:15 Announcements from each organization  
6:30 New Year in High Resolution Panel moderated by Giovanna Mendoza and Wenli Dickinson  
7:15 Mixer

For full information follow this [link](#)

[Individual registration and Sponsorships here](#)



## *From the Board...40 Years of Environmental Progress by Evan Singleton, Spencer Fane LLP*

As CEMS celebrates its 40th anniversary, it is worth pausing to recognize not only how far environmental law has come, but also the context in which this organization was born.

When CEMS was formed in 1985, environmental law was still young. Many of the statutes that now form the backbone of environmental regulation had been enacted only in the prior 10 to 15 years. The Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act were still being interpreted through early rulemakings and litigation. CERCLA had been on the books for just five years, and the first Superfund cleanups were defining what remediation would mean in practice. Concepts that are now ubiquitous – such as risk-based cleanup, brownfields redevelopment, vapor intrusion, and stormwater permitting – either did not yet exist or were only beginning to take shape. Much of the science and engineering needed to implement these laws developed alongside the legal frameworks themselves.

What is sometimes forgotten is the breadth of support behind the foundational environmental statutes. The National Environmental Policy Act passed the U.S. Senate unanimously. The Clean Air Act of 1970 passed the Senate without a single dissenting vote and passed the House by an overwhelming margin. The Clean Water Act of 1972 likewise passed by wide margins, and Congress overrode a presidential veto with decisive votes in both chambers. Even CERCLA, enacted in 1980 and later known for its complexity and liability scheme, moved forward with substantial bipartisan backing. At the time, environmental protection was widely viewed as a matter of public health, stewardship, and preventing harm – not as a niche or partisan issue.

That framing is reflected in the language used by national leaders during the period. In his 1970 State of the Union Address, President Richard Nixon described the environmental challenge facing the country in clear and direct terms: “The great question of the seventies is, shall we surrender to our surroundings, or shall we make our peace with nature and begin to make reparations for the damage we have done to our air, to our land, and to our water?” The focus was practical and forward-looking, emphasizing responsibility and long-term consequences rather than ideology.

Colorado’s own environmental landscape of the 1980s reflected this national moment. The state was grappling with the legacies of mining, smelting, early industrial practices, and federal facilities whose operations predated modern regulation. The environmental challenges presented by places such as Rocky Flats, the Summitville Mine, and the uranium mill tailings sites across the Western Slope were symbolic of a broader beginning: scientific understanding, regulatory tools, and public expectations were starting to converge.

*(Continued on Page 5)*

## **2026 CEMS OFFICERS:**

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### **COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON(S):**

#### **Monthly Programs:**

Michael Whelan, PE, Anchor QEA, LLC, (303)952-4850, [mwhelan@anchorqea.com](mailto:mwhelan@anchorqea.com)

#### **Spring Movie Event:**

Monica Genadio, Kleinfelder, Inc., (720)936-1694, [mgenadio@gmail.com](mailto:mgenadio@gmail.com)

#### **Fall Conference:**

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## CEMS Lunch & Webinar Meeting/Newsletter Sponsors



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## CEMS REGULATORY UPDATE FEDERAL AND STATE ACTIONS IMPACTING COLORADO

By **Pete D. Jaacks**  
**Jewell Jimmerson Natural Resource Law LLC**  
**December 2025**

On November 20, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Army Corps of Engineers published their [proposed rule](#) to revise the definition of “waters of the United States” (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Following many years of litigation and WOTUS rulemaking, the current administration promotes this proposal as fully implementing the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2023 decision in [Sackett v. EPA](#). In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the “significant nexus” test that extended WOTUS status to wetlands and other features if they were found by the agencies or courts to significantly affect the “chemical, physical, and biological integrity” of traditional navigable waters.

The proposed rule would establish a narrower scope of federal CWA jurisdiction through several revisions:

- **Actually Navigable and “Relatively Permanent” Water Bodies:** Beyond traditionally navigable waters like rivers, lakes, and oceans, WOTUS jurisdiction would only extend to other tributaries, lakes, and ponds if they are standing or continuously flowing surface waters year-round or at least during a wet season.
- **Adjacent Wetlands:** WOTUS wetlands would be limited to those abutting (touching) such jurisdictional waters and having continuous surface connections at least during their wet seasons.
- **Interstate Waters:** Water features that simply cross state lines would no longer automatically qualify as WOTUS.
- **Clarify Exclusions:** The definitions of excluded items such as ditches, prior converted cropland, and waste treatment systems would be clarified. Groundwater would be added to the expressly excluded features.
- **New Definitions:** Other important terms like “tributary,” “continuous surface connection,” and “relatively permanent” would be newly defined.

Comments on the proposed rule must be received on or before **January 5, 2026**.

On November 21, 2025, the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) [adopted](#) a broad package of regulatory updates aimed at cutting ground-level ozone-forming emissions by 50% from upstream oil and gas operations by 2030 (relative to 2017 levels). This includes updates to multiple regulations (Regulations 7, 11, 25, and 26) and revisions to the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for ozone nonattainment areas. The rules expand leak detection & repair requirements, strengthen emissions controls across sectors, and integrate these updates into Colorado’s (SIP).

On December 15, 2025, the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) voted unanimously to [adopt](#) rules implementing House Bill 24-1379, designed to protect streams and wetlands under a state-level Clean Water Act Section 404 dredge-and-fill permitting program (Regulation 87). This move implements Colorado’s response to weakened federal protections following the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Sackett* decision, which narrowed federal Clean Water Act coverage. Under the new rules, most seasonal streams and wetlands in Colorado will require state permits before being disturbed by development, agriculture, or infrastructure projects. Final action on Regulation 87 is expected at the WQCC’s February 2026 meeting.

## **From the Board** *(continued from Page 2)*

The Colorado Department of Health (as it was then known) was building its environmental divisions. The work was enormous, and the tools were young, but the trajectory was clear – environmental protection was becoming more rigorous, science-driven, and integrated across disciplines.

Over the past forty years, environmental law has continued to evolve. Regulatory programs have become more sophisticated, increasingly grounded in science and risk assessment. Brownfields programs and voluntary cleanup pathways have transformed redevelopment. Air-quality and water-quality regulations have expanded alongside improved monitoring and modeling. New challenges – such as emerging contaminants, climate resilience, and water scarcity – continue to shape the field. Yet, compared to many other areas of regulation, environmental law remains relatively young, and adaptation has been a constant feature rather than an exception.

As we look ahead to the next forty years, it is worth remembering that environmental progress has always been grounded in coalition-building and shared purpose. Complex challenges will continue to require bipartisan commitment, technical excellence, scientific integrity, and forums like CEMS that bring experts together to solve problems collaboratively. CEMS's 40th anniversary is not just a milestone in time – it is a testament to the enduring value of community in a field defined by change. We celebrate the progress behind us, acknowledge the challenges ahead, and look forward with optimism to the next chapter of environmental leadership in Colorado.

### **Bio**

*Evan Singleton advises clients on real estate transactions and development with a strong emphasis on environmental and land use issues. His practice covers the full development lifecycle, including site acquisition, environmental due diligence, entitlements, permitting, construction, and operations. He regularly negotiates and drafts purchase and sale agreements, easements, restrictive covenants, leases, financing documents, and construction contracts for complex development, infrastructure, and redevelopment projects.*

*Evan also counsels clients on environmental matters that intersect with real estate, including brownfield redevelopment, remediation strategy, environmental cost recovery, stormwater and wetlands permitting, regulatory compliance, and enforcement matters. He has been actively involved with the Colorado Environmental Management Society for more than ten years, serving on committees, the Board of Directors, and as an officer.*

## **Presentation Opportunities for Upcoming CEMS Meetings**

The CEMS Program Committee is currently searching for "interesting, topical and informative" presentations for our meetings in 2026. This is a great opportunity to network with your peers, share information and technology, and become more involved with the environmental community. CEMS is interested in a variety of topics relevant to environmental and natural resources professionals. Each monthly presentation is roughly 50 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer period.

If you or someone you know is interested in presenting at our monthly meetings, or our annual conference, please feel free to contact our Programs Committee: Chairperson Michael Whelan at [mwhelan@anchorqea.com](mailto:mwhelan@anchorqea.com).

**Are you a lawyer, looking for CLEs?**

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## MEMBERSHIP – RENEWALS & NEW MEMBERS

### New Individual

Addisu Atsibha, Independent Consultant

### Renewal Individual

Robin Fryberger, Sundance Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Andy Horn, Westwater Hydrology LLC

Tim Mower, Independent Consultant

Cathryn Stewart, AquAeTer, Inc.

### Corporate Renewal

#### **Eagle Environmental Consulting, LLC dba EIS**

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Kurt Rhea	Lewis Sternhagen	Luke Woodward		



## CU Denver – Hydrologic, Environmental, and Sustainability Engineering Registration

Fall 2025 graduate course registration is now underway in [Hydrologic, Environmental, and Sustainability Engineering](#) (HESE) at CU Denver. Registration for Spring 2026 starts now. Please register by January 15 to ensure enrollment.

### **CVEN-5333 Surface Water Hydrology**

Instructor: David Mays, P.E., Ph.D.

Tuesday/Thursday 5:00-6:15 pm starting Tuesday 1/20

<https://engineering.ucdenver.edu/dmays/5333>

### **CVEN-5401 Introduction to Environmental Engineering**

Instructor: Arun Karunanithi, Ph.D.

Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45 pm starting Tuesday 1/20

→ *Cross listed with undergraduate course CVEN-3401*

### **CVEN-5426 Pipe Network and Sewer Design**

Instructor: Matthew Hayes, P.E.

Monday/Wednesday 3:30-4:45 pm starting Wednesday 1/21

→ *Cross listed with undergraduate course CVEN-4426*

Some department news here: As you may know, for the first time since CU Denver was founded in the 1970s, we have changed our name to the Department of Civil Engineering and Construction to recognize our two ABET-accredited undergraduate programs in construction. One could include a construction graduate class as an elective in our HESE graduate program.

If anyone needs more information, please ask them to contact me directly—I would be delighted to help you, or your colleagues, to create a customized plan for advanced study in engineering.

**David C. Mays, P.E., Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor**

**Department of Civil Engineering**

**University of Colorado Denver**

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