

MWEA LPC 2022 FALL WORKSHOP BIOS

Katie Bruegge

Katie graduated from Bradley University in Peoria, IL with a BS in Environmental Science - Biology in 2012. After graduation, she worked in natural resource conservation and monitoring until she moved to Missouri. Katie joined the wastewater workforce in 2017 when she started working for the City of St. Joseph Water Protection Division. As Technical Services Manager for the City, she oversees the Industrial Pretreatment Program, Water Protection Facility laboratory, MS4 compliance team, FOG program, and the City's developing biosolids fertilizer program. She holds an A level Wastewater Operator Certification, D level Laboratory Analyst Certification, is a Core Emerging Leader Training (formerly Core Growth) alum, and is a proud recipient of the Crystal Crucible Award.

Billy Stone

Billy Stone graduated from Missouri State University in 2014 with his Bachelor of Science degree in Media Studies with a minor in Theatre. In December 2021, he received his Graduate Certificate in Environmental Monitoring and Sampling, also from Missouri State University.

Billy is a Drinking Water Specialist with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources at the Southwest Regional Office in Springfield, MO. His job is split between assisting Public Water Systems with compliance visits and teaching certification classes for the State's many water operators. Billy has been with DNR since September 2021.

Billy previously worked as a Wastewater Operator and Assistant Lab Technician at the Nixa, MO Wastewater Treatment Facility for about 4 years.

Billy is a member of MWEA & WEF. Billy has the Wastewater B, Distribution 1, and Drinking Water Treatment D Certificates as well as the Wastewater Lab Analyst: D Level from the MWEA Lab Practices Committee.

Billy has been married to his wife, Rowena, for 12 years. They have 2 children: Isobel Louise is 5; Ian Lewis is 1-1/12 who is recently adopted. In his free time, Billy likes to read, watch movies, play board games, and spend time outdoors with his wife and kids.

Karla Pierce

Karla has over 15 years of experience in operating and managing wastewater treatment facilities, including Hutchinson; KS, Independence, MO; Johnson County Wastewater, KS; and Parkville, MO. Her passion for clean water, water protection, and maintaining regulatory compliance keep her motivated as an environmental professional.

She began working for the Kansas City Regional Office of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources in April 2022 as the Environmental Manager of the Water Protection Program Section. Her main responsibilities include leading a 20-person team in helping Missouri's regulated community understand and comply with environmental rules and regulations pertaining to drinking water and wastewater.

Karla holds numerous certifications in Missouri & Kansas.

Rachelle Thibert

Rachelle Thibert is a Regional Sales Manager for the Hach Company. For the last 2 years she has helped countless utilities across Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas determine the best options to get to the right results in their Water Quality Analysis programs.

Rachelle is passionate about helping customers find the best solution to meet their specific needs from both a regulatory compliance as well as an operational efficiency perspective. Using a very collaborative and consultative approach, her natural curiosity for the details of what a customer is challenged by creates the foundation for her problem-solving process.

A graduate of several educational institutions including the University of Guelph and Athabasca University from Canada and joint program with Purdue University, Rachelle holds degrees in Agricultural Science, Management and a Master of Business Administration.

In her spare time, you can find Rachelle out working in the shop on her race car or at a drag strip somewhere across the country pursuing her need for speed.

Emily Lute

Emily Lute is the Chief Wastewater Operator for the City of Moberly. In Moberly, Emily's main focus is on pretreatment, lab, and making sure the poo continues to run smoothly. She graduated from Missouri State University in 2014 with a degree in Wildlife Conservation and Agronomy. She started her wastewater career in Jefferson City as a lab analyst. She lives in Madison, MO with her husband Chris and baby Clyde. They raise cattle, pigs, and recently added sheep to the mix. In her free time she like to travel, hunt, fish, and loves listening to live music!

Brian Stapleton

Dr. Brian Stapleton currently leads the Data Analytics group at KC Water. He strives to bring technology and data systems together to develop solutions that are extendible, useful, and dynamic. As someone that has worked in both the technology and scientific field, he attempts to connect users with relevant, current, and quality information. He studied Computer Science and Math and holds a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and doctoral degree in Biochemistry from Florida State University. After working in the tech field and a short time in academia he entered the Environmental/Utilities sector about 10 years ago and has been really involved in providing solutions to issues around data for a few laboratories and utilities. He worked for Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories as well as the City of Lawrence before coming to KC Water.

Aurora Shields

Mrs. Shields has been serving the environmental industry since 1989. She is a graduate of Wichita State University with a B.S. in Chemistry.

Mrs. Shields is Utilities Manager for KCMO Water Services providing overall management, strategic direction, and coordination of laboratory functions for water and wastewater testing. She provides technical support to plant operations, and handles regulatory compliance reporting for water, wastewater, and laboratories.

Mrs. Shields previously worked for the City of Topeka, the Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories, and the City of Lawrence before coming to KC Water.

Mrs. Shields is a member of several professional organizations including AWWA, WEF, MWEA, and The NELAC Institute. Ms. Shields is also active in the laboratory community, especially in standards development, accreditation, and environmental measurements.