2016 Watershed University
April 27 & 28
Merced County OES – Atwater

Event Description, Daily Agenda, Detailed Information and Speaker Bios

What is Watershed University?

Watershed University is a **free** event that provides education and networking opportunities for California professionals in floodplain management, water management, emergency management and related fields. This event is a cooperative effort led by the California Silver Jackets that evolved from the recognition that some communities could not afford the investment of time and money to send floodplain managers and other professionals to conferences.

Watershed University will be held online and in person at the Merced County Office of Emergency Services (OES) in Atwater, California. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is hosting the event in partnership with the California Department of Water Resources, CAL FIRE and the Merced County OES.

We hope to reach as many people as possible with this **free** event by expanding beyond geographic borders into the virtual space! Participants can log in from a computer or call in for any portion of the event. Participants may also earn Continuing Education Credits by attending the full two-day event online or in person.

Register to attend (online or in person) by clicking on the link below.

Register for Watershed University

What topics will be covered?

- FEMA Flood Mapping
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Update
- California Water Action Plan Update
- Flood Risk Communication Tools, Tips, and Techniques
- Climate Change and Drought Risk versus Flood Risk
- Partnering and Collaborating for Integrated Water (and Land) Management

Details:

When:

Wednesday, April 27: 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
Thursday, April 28: 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Where: Online (unlimited) and in person (limited space)

Cost: Free

Note: Room location or login information for the webinar will be provided by email the week before the event.

Questions? Contact:

Maria Lorenzo-Lee at Maria.Lorenzo-Lee@water.ca.gov
David Pesavento at David.Pesavento@water.ca.gov.

2016 Atwater Event: Committee Team Members

Mike Walejko, Merced Dept. of Public Works mwalejko@co.merced.ca.us	Mike Walejko is the Administrative Engineer for the Merced County Department of Public Works. He has been with the Department for 11 years. He is the Flood Plain Manager and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Coordinator for Merced County, and he oversees all aspects of the County Service Area zones of benefit for street lighting, drainage ponds, landscaping and parks along with all of the solid waste haulers franchise agreements. Mike solely represents the County in the Merced Streams Group, which maintains 135 miles of channel that convey flood waters throughout the County.
Jeremy Rahn, CAL FIRE Battalion Chief, Deputy Director & Operational Area Coordinator **Merced County Office of Emergency Services** Jeremy.Rahn@fire.ca.gov	Jeremy Rahn began his fire service career in 1990 and been assigned to Merced County OES for the last three years. He responds throughout the state to "All Risk" incidents as Public Information Officer, Division Group Supervisor and Strike Team Leader.
Hunter Merritt, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District hunter.merritt@usace.army.mil	Hunter Merritt is a Water Resources Planner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District. Hunter started with the district in 2009, in the Public Affairs office, and moved to Planning Division to focus on flood risk management studies, flood risk communication, and plan formulation. He is trained and experienced as a facilitator, and his area of focus is on policy and planning for recreation, as well as flood risk management.
David Pesavento, CA Department of Water Resources David.Pesavento@water.ca.gov	David came to the Department of Water Resources in 2008 from a private Civil Engineering firm working in Land Development. He spent the first 7 years with the Department managing the inspection program for State-Federal flood control system as well as being one of the leaders in emergency response for water related emergencies in California. David now works to implement enhancements to the flood system and assists in communicating the Departments activities in flood management to the public and other agencies.
Maria Lorenzo-Lee, CA Department of Water Resources Maria.Lorenzo-Lee@water.ca.gov	Maria Lorenzo-Lee is a registered Civil Engineer in CA, a Certified Floodplain Manager, and has over 20 years of experience. Since 2012, Maria has been DWR's Flood Coordination Lead and works closely with state, federal and local agencies to develop tools to reduce flood risk and coordinate outreach and engagement, including past Watershed University events. She is the Deputy to CA's Silver Jackets Team Lead and is DWR's State Lead for CA Flood Preparedness Week efforts. In the past, she supported: the Implementing California Flood Legislation into Local Land Use Planning handbook; Alluvial Fan Task Force; Building Code Update team; National Flood Insurance Program; and the CA Floodplain Management Task Force. In 2015, Maria was elected as Vice-Chair of the Floodplain Management Association.

Agenda At A Glance – Day 1

Wednesday, April 27th

8:00-8:30	**Coffee and Networking (virtual participants log in at 8:15)**
8:30-9:00	**Welcome, Introductions, Overview of Watershed University - Atwater** **WU Event Coordination Team Members**
9:00-10:30	**PANEL PRESENTATION:** **California Water Action Plan – Alignment for Sustainable Water Management** **Darren Suen, CA DWR** **Strategic Planning and Partnerships – A Federal Perspective** **Felix Yeung, USACE** **Collaborating for Optimization** **Hicham ElTal, Merced Irrigation District**
10:30-10:45	**BREAK**
10:45-11:45	**Watershed Planning and YOU!** **Rhiannon Kucharski, USACE**
11:45-1:00	**LUNCH**
1:00-1:55	**Flood Insurance Frenzy Amidst Legislative Reform** **Edie Lohmann, FEMA**
2:00-3:00	**Integrated Water Management Round Table** **Moderators: Hunter Merritt, USACE & Marco Bell, Merced Irrigation District**
3:00-3:15	**BREAK**
3:15-4:15	**Flood Follows Fire: Post-fire Assessment and Response in the Watershed** **Jeff TenPas, U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region**
4:15-4:30	**Group Closing & Agenda for Day 2**

Agenda At A Glance – Day 2

Thursday, April 28th

8:00-8:30	**Coffee and Networking (virtual participants log in at 8:15)**
8:30-9:00	**Welcome & Introductions** **Cindy Tejeda, USACE**
9:05-10:00	**FEMA Risk MAP** **Eric Simmons, FEMA**
10:00-10:15	**BREAK**
10:15-12:00	**PANEL PRESENTATION:** **Snow and Drought: What The Past Can Tell Us About The Future** **Mohammad Safeeq, Sierra Nevada Research Institute, UC Merced** **Adapting to California's Changing Hydrology** **Michelle Selmon, DWR**
12:00-1:15	**LUNCH (OPTIONAL: log in for FMA luncheon speaker Mitch Avalon)**
1:15-2:15	**Risk Communication and 21st Century Interpretation** **Christy Cox, USACE**
2:20-3:00	**How to Apply for An Interagency Silver Jackets Project** **Rachael Orellana, USACE**
3:05-3:30	**Closing Session: Around the Horn** **Moderators: Hunter Merritt, USACE & Maria Lorenzo-Lee, DWR**
3:30-4:00	**Cleanup, Adjourn**

Speaker Bios

Felix Yeung
Felix Yeung is a Program Manager for Strategic Planning and Alignment in the Sacramento District, responsible for aligning the District's water resources management strategies with other federal, state, and local partners. Prior to joining the Army Corps, he worked for U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein in Washington, D.C., with responsibility for water, environmental, and tribal issues. He graduated from Stanford University in 1997 with a double-major in English and Communications, and from the University of Virginia's School of Law in 2009. He is a member of the State Bar of California.
Felix.S.Yeung@usace.army.mil

Darren Suen
Darren is a registered civil engineer currently serving as the Flood Strategic Communications Lead and serves a critical role within the Department to think strategically about conveying the value of the Flood Management Division programs to internal and external stakeholders. He also possesses strong communication skills and promotes a collaborative atmosphere. His role as an Elk Grove City Councilman can help raise awareness to other elected officials about flood management. He is also on the Board of Directors of the Floodplain Management Association. Previously, Darren served as a civil works project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as Chief of the Flood Operations Center for the California Department of Water Resources. He played a key role in organizing the Department's initial response to the drought emergency. Darren.Suen@water.ca.gov

Hicham ElTal
Hicham ElTal joined the Merced Irrigation District in October 1993 as a Senior Engineer with the Water Resources department and currently serves as the Deputy General Manager of Water Supply/Rights.

As Deputy General Manager of Water Supply/Rights, Mr. ElTal is responsible for MID's water storage and distribution. In this position he is responsible for administering water-resource related activities involving water rights, water quality, water supply, water marketing, and water resource development.

Mr. ElTal has more than 25 years of demonstrated experience in water resource engineering, infrastructure, design and construction, and planning and management. Over the past 17 years, he has played a key role in the success of the District's Water Resources Division.

Mr. ElTal is a registered Civil Engineer with the State of California and holds a BS in Civil Engineering from California State University, Fullerton. He is the active chairman for Merced Area Groundwater Pool Interests (MAGPI) and Merced Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP).
heltal@mercedid.org

Rhiannon Kucharski
Rhiannon Kucharski is Chief of the Watershed Assessment and Ecosystem Restoration planning section at the Sacramento District (SPK) of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Rhiannon started her career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2009 as a Water Resources Planner for the Los Angeles District (SPL). She completed developmental details to Construction, Programs and Project Management and Regulatory Divisions, served as the Endowed Chair to the Southwestern Division (SWD) Regional Integration Team (RIT) in Washington, DC during her time at SPL. She moved to SPK as a Senior

Planner in 2013 and completed a developmental assignment to South Pacific Division Planning and Policy in 2015. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Zoology from University of Oklahoma, and a Masters in Public International Affairs focused on International Economics and Environmental Policy from the University of San Diego, School of Global Policy Solutions.
Rhiannon.L.Kucharski@usace.army.mil

Edie Lohmann
Edie Lohmann is the FEMA Region IX National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Insurance Specialist. She has enjoyed working for the NFIP for 23 years in various capacities. As the NFIP Insurance Specialist, Edie acts as the Regions subject matter expert on flood insurance issues, and provides technical expertise to internal and external stakeholders including Congressional Affairs, the media, the public, and insurance, lender, and realtor industry professionals. She also conducts flood insurance training and outreach. Edie received her MBA in International Marketing from Saint Mary's College in Moraga, CA and her bachelor's degree from Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. She is a Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM), and holds an Associate in National Flood Insurance (ANFI) from the Institutes.
Edith.Lohmann@fema.dhs.gov

Jeff TenPas
Jeff is the Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program manager for the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region and its 18 forests and 20 million acres in California. A normal year involves managing the BAER program for 20 or more fires. The BAER program responds to wildfires with an assessment of burn severity, changes in hillslope soils, infiltration, and runoff response, and threats of all types to life, property, and natural resource values. Jeff reviews assessments of enhanced runoff, floods, and debris flows, and risks to life and property, and the units' requests for emergency response funding.

Jeff is currently the regional soil scientist and has worked for the U.S. Forest Service as soil scientist, hydrologist, and watershed program manager. He holds a Master of Science in Soil Science from the University of California, Davis. jtenpas@fs.fed.us

Cindy Tejeda
Cindy Tejeda is the Watershed and Floodplain Program Manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, South Pacific Division. She is the regional program manager for Floodplain Management Services (FPMS), Planning Assistance to States (PAS), and Tribal Partnership Program (TPP) and serves as a regional resource for federal, state and local agencies and non-governmental organizations. Examples of her work include the execution of a regional Memorandum of Understanding with The Nature Conservancy for the South Pacific Division, and regional leadership for the California Bay-Delta Memorandum of Understanding among Federal Agencies. She holds a Bachelor of Science with Honors in Conservation and Resource Studies, with an emphasis in aquatic ecology, from UC Berkeley. Through the Education Abroad Program, she enjoyed studying at the University of Adelaide in Australia.
Cindy.L.Tejeda@usace.army.mil

Eric Simmons
Eric Simmons is the senior engineer with the Mitigation Division of FEMA Region IX in Oakland, CA. His work focuses on the reduction of flood losses to people and the environment due to unwise floodplain development. Flood hazard mapping and other risk analysis work is the primary method of accomplishing this goal. Mr. Simmons' responsibilities include coordinating flood map projects and support for activities involving digital map production, needs assessment for new hazard analyses,

risk communication, and training on a variety of floodplain management topics. Mr. Simmons graduated with a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Civil Engineering from University of Maryland. eric.simmons@fema.dhs.gov

Mohammad Safeeq
Dr. Mohammad Safeeq is an Assistant Adjunct Professor in the School of Engineering at University of California, Merced, and an assistant research scientist at the Sierra Nevada Research Institute. His research involves studying how the complex interactions between climate, vegetation, soil, and geology control and modulate critical zone processes related to water, with a goal to identify key hydrologic controls crucial for quantifying and predicting the impacts of climate change on future water supply to develop science-based, targeted land management and restoration strategies for sustaining future water supply and the environment. msafeeq@ucmerced.edu

Michelle Selmon
Michelle Selmon has been a senior environmental scientist and regional climate change specialist with the California Department of Water Resources for more than six years. She previously worked as a wildlife biologist for the California Department of Fish and Game and others for 15 years. Michelle has a Bachelor of Science in Ecology and Psychology and a Master of Science in Biology.
Michelle.selmon@water.ca.gov

Christy Cox
Christy Cox is a Department of Army (DA) Intern Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analyst in the Engineering Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District. Prior to her work in USACE, she spent three years working with the Board of Equalization and the Technology Agency on the Digital Land Record Inventory (DLRI) Project to improve the development and sharing of parcel data through standardization of parcel attributes. Christy holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from California State University Sacramento and a certificate in GIS from American River College.
Christy.Cox@usace.army.mil

Rachael Orellana
Rachael is the flood risk program manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, where she oversees the Flood Plain Management Services, Planning Assistance to States, and Silver Jackets teams for California, Nevada, and Utah. Rachael's portfolio includes projects that are completing a hydrologic analysis of the Sacramento and San Joaquin river basins, reviewing geotechnical levee evaluation reports in California, developing software and flood hazard mapping in Utah, and creating flood chronologies in Nevada. Prior to her work in Planning Division, Rachael worked in the Operations and Readiness Branch of Construction & Operations (CONOPS) Division where she worked closely with Levee Safety Program Managers. Her accomplishments include leading the International Levee Handbook Operations and Maintenance team, serving as the manager of the Non-Federal Levee Program, serving as project manager for the West Sacramento's Southport 408 Early Implementation Project and Sacramento District Enterprise GIS Encroachment Permit Database, and developing the Operations and Maintenance Manual and As-Built Library. Rachael received the USACE Levee Safety Program Award from HQ in 2015. She holds a Master of Science degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Davis and a Master of Education from Framingham State College. Rachael is a licensed Professional Engineer in California. Rachael.Orellana@usace.army.mil