

## **Project Team Biographies**

### **Nirmala Benin, DWR Water Use Efficiency Branch (Project Manager)**

Nirmala is a registered Civil Engineer in California with over 20 years of experience. Nirmala's experience includes regulating and funding small drinking water systems in California, planning and designing water distribution system pipelines, modeling the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and storm water characterization and statewide target setting. Other experience relevant to this project includes: managing water use and quality data from water suppliers, performing technical work and familiarity with the urban water use advisory group functions at DWR, and developing ESRI-based web apps.

### **Julia Ekstrom, DWR Climate Change Program (Project Team Member)**

Julie Ekstrom is a regional specialist in the Climate Change Program. She joined DWR in July this year coming from UC Davis where she led a Climate Adaptation research program for four years, and previously was at the Natural Resource Defense Council. Over the past 10 years she's been conducting research about and contributing to climate change adaptation. Her work at UC Davis focused on drought impacts on small water systems and their considerations of climate change risks. Her work now is assisting DWR programs and water resources stakeholders with adapting to climate change.

### **Fethi BenJemaa, DWR Water Use Efficiency Branch (Project Team Member)**

Fethi is a graduate of UC Davis, with a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering, has over 25 years of experience in the area of water resources planning and management. He currently manages DWR's Drought Contingency Planning and Special Projects Section of the Water Use Efficiency (WUE) Branch. Fethi led the implementation of the agricultural provisions of Governor's Executive Orders B-37-16 and B-29-15, including the development of a framework for new agricultural water management planning requirements to improve agricultural water use efficiency and drought planning. He also served as lead in implementing the agricultural provisions of the Water Conservation Act of 2009 (SB X7-7) including adoption of the Agricultural Water Measurement Regulation and developing a methodology for quantifying the efficiency of agricultural water use. He managed the WUE Grants and Loans Program with over 200 Proposition 50 and Proposition 1 urban and agricultural grants. Prior to that, he was a staff scientist in the Recycling and Desalination Section, where he was instrumental in administering the Desalination Grant Program and supported the work of the Recycled Water Task Force and the Water Desalination Task Force.

### **Jose Alarcon, DWR California Water Plan (Project Team Member)**

Jose is a Senior Engineer with DWR's California Water Plan group, where he works to help identify and address water investment needs throughout the State. Over his 20-plus years in the water field, Jose has led a team that conducted Water Curtailment Inspections during the drought, and a team that provided grant funding for safe drinking water projects. In addition, he was a field engineer with both the State's Drinking Water and Water Rights Programs, and a water quality engineer with Tacoma Water in Washington. Jose is a registered civil engineer. He holds a Master of Science in Civil Engineering with a minor in Water Resources from Oregon State University, and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

### **Betsy Lichti, Water Boards Division of Drinking Water (Project Team Member)**

Betsy Lichti is a registered civil engineer in California, with over 30 years of experience in the drinking water regulatory program and consulting services. Betsy has worked as the District Engineer overseeing the implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act on water systems under the DDW Visalia, Fresno and Monterey Districts. She is currently overseeing the Quality Assurance Section within the California Water Resources Control Board's Division of Drinking Water. Her primary tasks are to oversee the intake and use of drinking water data and information, ensure the integrity of that data, and identify appropriate analytical methods for drinking water compliance monitoring and laboratory accreditation.

### **James Campagna, DWR Water use and Efficiency Branch (Project Team Member)**

James Campagna works in Administrative Support within the Water Use and Efficiency Branch. James has been with the Branch for six months and has greatly assisted in the logistical organization of various group meetings, both public and private. He will be the point of contact for all administrative issues.