

The Connector

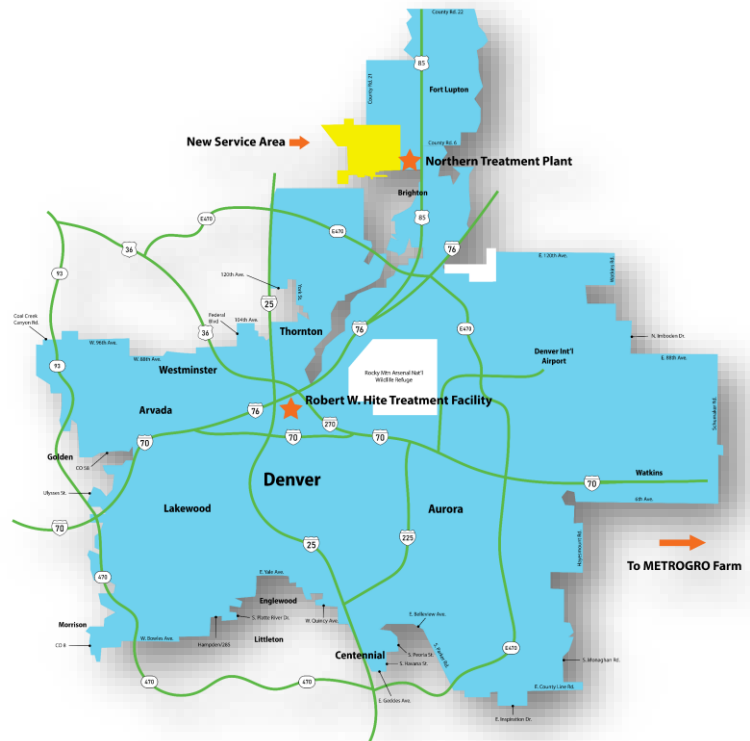


Bringing you quarterly updates from Metro Water Recovery

Issue 14, Jan 8, 2024

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Metro Water Recovery's Service Area (new Todd Creek area in yellow)

Welcome Todd Creek! Metro's Newest Connector

As a wholesale wastewater treatment provider, Metro Water Recovery is proud to serve you, our connectors. We're pleased to announce that Todd Creek Village Metropolitan District (TCVMD) is Metro's newest connector, bringing our partnership to 62 local governments.

The Special Connectors Agreement was signed on December 21, 2023, officially adding TCVMD as Metro's 27th special connector. "With this agreement, Metro will provide high-quality water treatment and resource recovery services to people in the Todd Creek area, which will benefit the region and the environment," stated Metro CEO Mickey Conway.

[Learn more about our connectors here.](#)

"Since 1998, TCVMD has been providing water services to very unique areas in northern Adams and southern Weld Counties. We are currently servicing approximately 7,300 residents. TCVMD is happy to now offer wastewater services to our customers as well," said Don Summers, President of TCVMD. You can learn more about TCVMD on their [website](#).

Metro will be accepting TCVMD's flows at our Northern Treatment Plant (NTP) in Brighton via two interceptors, the Todd Creek Interceptor and the South Platte Interceptor, which has yet to be constructed. Flows via the Todd Creek Interceptor are expected to begin in late 2025. Flows to NTP will start slow with the connection of the TCVMD office building, with the potential to increase to 6.8 million gallons per day (MGD).

2024 Warrant Authority Bill CO General Assembly

Metro Water Recovery has partnered with Representative Gabe Evans supporting an important legislative proposal in the 2024 Colorado Legislative Session.

Part of Metro's obligations under the Federal Clean Water Act, is to implement a federally approved pretreatment program which is intended to protect collection system workers, wastewater treatment plant processes and water quality. Some discharges from businesses can create hazardous conditions for people who are working in these areas as well as harm sewer infrastructure and lift stations causing unnecessary expense for the public.

Metro's current legal authority to implement its pretreatment program is set forth with a combination of legal agreements and associated city codes throughout Metro's service area. The current piecemeal approach does not afford Coloradans in Metro's service area the most effective and timely means of ensuring federal pretreatment Clean Water Act requirements are being met.

To address this issue Rep. Gabe Evans along with Metro have drafted a legislative proposal for 2024. The proposal will ensure that Colorado approaches this important health and safety issue uniformly and with transparency.



Colorado State Capitol

The bill will seek a statutory change to provide Metropolitan Sewage Disposal Districts with independent inspection administrative warrant authority. This will allow Metro to work in partnership with our connectors and the court system to quickly and directly seek an administrative inspection warrant to enter and inspect a business that may pose a danger to public health and/or the environment.

Metro has engaged in stakeholder conversations over the past year. These conversations have been with our connectors, board members, Colorado Municipal League, Colorado Counties, Denver and Colorado Chambers. In all these conversations, there have been no significant concerns raised.

Metro expects the bill to be introduced early in the session. Reach out to Erin Bertoli, Governmental Affairs Liaison, at ebertoli@metrowaterrecovery.com for questions.

Metro Supports Arvada High School Students New Job Shadowing Program

During the month of October, Metro Water Recovery teams welcomed students from Arvada West High School as part of a new job shadowing program. Arvada West High School's Advanced Studies in Water Quality course, led by teacher Chris Madsen, offers a unique opportunity for job shadowing at both Metro and Denver Water.

Students began with an initial shadowing opportunity in the fall semester. Between October 2nd and November 2nd, Metro welcomed 17 pairs of students at our facilities for three-hour-long shadowing experiences with various teams. Students were welcomed by Metro's Environmental Sampling, Information Technology, Laboratory, Operations, Regulatory, Strategy and Communications, Transmission, and Water Quality teams.

"This program gives the students a feel for the careers that exist in water quality," Patricia Lopez, Senior Human Resources Manager, shared. "Then in the spring semester, they select a career at one of the two organizations to complete a nine-hour shadowing opportunity, which is done over three visits."

Called *Give Me 9*, the program aims to help students understand the day-to-day rigors and challenges of working in the water sector. While Lopez has yet to hear whether students will join Metro this spring, her hope is that this program is the start of something big for recruiting talent.



Arvada West High School students learning about Metro's aeration basins.

"We're dipping our toes in and hoping to grow our efforts to intrigue potential candidates early on in their careers in the water quality field," Lopez added. "HR's recruiting team is looking at partnering with more community colleges and high schools to find opportunities, get the word out, and even do some tabling at career events."

As Metro grows this new model for recruiting talent, you may soon see more students at our facilities. Lopez wanted to shout out to Metro's teams for finding time to welcome students this fall. "Thank you to all the groups that participated! I know this took a big chunk of time from your day—and many of your crews are short of staff—so for you to make the time for the students was huge."

If you're interested in learning more about the program, please reach out to Patricia Lopez at Plopez@MetroWaterRecovery.com.

2023 Board Chair Award Winner

Congratulations - Jim Nickolette!

Join us in congratulating Jim Nickolette, Operations Work Planner Senior, as Metro's 2023 Board Chair Award Winner. Board Chair Andrew Johnston presented the award during the December 19 Board of Directors meeting. Nominations for Jim were submitted by employees from the Operations, Maintenance, and Engineering Departments.

Here are a selection of remarks from his various nominations:

Jim has worked at Metro for over 25 years as an operator, supervisor, planner, and now senior planner. His understanding of the entire treatment process including existing utilities, equipment, and previous projects make him invaluable. His attention to detail is immensely helpful; his suggestions or identification of issues oftentimes results in cost savings to Metro.

In fact – on PAR 1382: North Complex Gas System Replacement Project – Jim laid out a phasing plan to allow the contractor to complete the gas line replacement in the north complex with very minimal outages and reduced the temporary heating requirements, thus reducing the anticipated project costs.

Jim works tirelessly to meet Department objectives, assists new and experienced operators, shares knowledge, and always sets a good example. His exceptional performance has been on display over the past year as Jim has been key to our collective success during the bypass operation at Hite.



Liam Cavanaugh Deputy CEO/Chief Operating Officer (left) and Board Chair Andrew Johnston (right) present Jim Nickolette (middle) with his award

Daily (including weekends, holidays, and inclement weather), Jim goes above and beyond for this organization. His input between all groups – regardless of inside or outside the organization – is outstanding. His mindset is focused on continuous improvement, simplifying processes, and assisting in the development of those around him, all with an indisputable desire to make Metro Water Recovery a leader in the industry for years to come.

The 12th recipient of the Board Chair's Award, Jim's name has been added to an award plaque located in the lobby of the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility.

The Board Chair's Award recognizes Metro employees for consistently exceeding job expectations, working to meet department and division objectives, and collaborating with coworkers to complete tasks and create a positive work environment. The selection process for the annual award begins with employees nominating their peers and ends with the Board Chair making the final selection.

Connector Engagement Opportunity

2024 Annual Charge Process Webinar

Metro will be hosting two webinars via Microsoft Teams to share the annual charge process, including a high-level overview of the sampling process. Both sessions will be held for one hour and will share the same information. Below are the dates and times in which the webinar will be offered.

Annual Charge Webinar

February 7, 2024, at 9:00 am

AND

March 7, 2024, at 2:00 pm

If you plan to attend, RSVP to Dawn Ambrosio at dambrosio@MetroWaterRecovery.com. Dawn will provide an invitation with the agenda and meeting link for the specific date of your request.

Ode to the Plains Cottonwood

Metro's Underappreciated Partner in Improving the Aquatic Health of the South Platte River

While we certainly appreciate our Metro employees working tirelessly to recycle and return over 135 million gallons of clean water to the South Platte River every day, we'd like to take a moment to praise an underappreciated partner in protecting the aquatic health of the river: the plains cottonwood tree!

Native plains cottonwood (*Populus deltoides monilifera*) thrive near rivers and riparian areas throughout Colorado's eastern plains and can be found all along the South Platte River. These trees can grow to more than 80 feet tall and provide critical ecosystem benefits to the river corridor including enhanced wildlife habitat, streambank stabilization, erosion control, and improved water quality.



Anchored cottonwood root was providing bank stabilization and fish habitat at our Phase III Instream Habitat Improvement project along the South Platte River in Brighton, CO.

In fact, Metro has incorporated dead cottonwood trees in every phase of our [instream habitat improvement projects](#). By anchoring these dead cottonwoods into the streambank and riverbed, we provide critical microhabitats for native fish species including fathead minnows, sand shiners, longnose dace, white suckers, longnose suckers, green sunfish, creek chub, Iowa darters and Johnny darters.

[Read more via the Currents on Metro's website.](#)



Dan Freedman, Director of Technology and Innovation and Tanja Rauch-Williams, Chief Innovation Officer

Currents Employee Feature

Tanja Rauch-Williams and Dan Freedman Hired to Lead Innovation at Metro

Metro strives to be a local and national leader in innovative approaches to wastewater treatment and beyond. Based on the importance of innovation at Metro, the organization created a new role—Chief Innovation Officer (CIO)—to help lead us to success. After a competitive selection process, Metro is proud to welcome two great leaders in the industry: Tanja Rauch-Williams as our CIO and Dan Freedman as our Director of Technology and Innovation. [Learn more about these leaders and their unique perspectives.](#)

Important Dates to Remember

Jan. 15, 2024	Q4 2023 Sewer Connection Charges Due
Jan. 16, 2024 (5:30 pm)	Board of Directors Meeting
Feb. 7, 2024 (9:00 am)	Annual Charge Webinar (RSVP required)
Feb. 20, 2024 (5:30 pm)	Board of Directors Meeting
March 1, 2024	Member Connector Updated Service Area Maps Due
Mar. 7, 2024 (2:00 pm)	Annual Charge Webinar (RSVP required)
March 15, 2024	Q1 2024 Annual Charges Due
Mar. 19, 2024 (5:30 pm)	Board of Directors Meeting

[Previous issues of The Connector can now be found on Metro’s website.](#)



Welcome new Metro Board Director!

January 2024:
Garrett “Cody” Berg – Applewood Sanitation District

[Check out Metro’s website to reference all Board Members](#)

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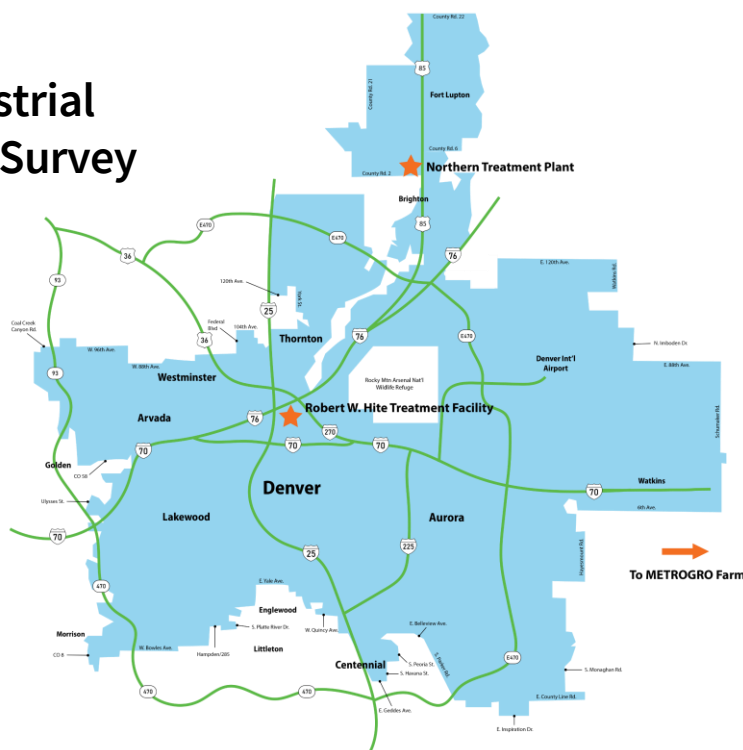


Enhancing Metro Water Recovery's Industrial Pretreatment Program Industrial Waste Survey

The August 2022 [Emerging Issues](#) report provided an overview of the Industrial Waste Survey (IWS) work Metro Water Recovery performs as part of its Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP) implementation. In addition to requirements included in the federal pretreatment program regulation, Metro's discharge permits involve specific requirements associated with IWS, which include:

1. Identifying and locating all non-residential dischargers (Industrial Users or IUs) in the service area which may be subject to pretreatment program requirements.
2. Evaluating the operations and discharges from those IUs and determining which, if any, pretreatment requirements apply to each IU.
3. For IUs subject to pretreatment requirements, notifying IUs of applicable requirements and ensuring the sanitary sewer discharge is appropriately controlled.
4. Maintaining the list of IUs and the associated evaluation and information in an IWS Inventory (Inventory); and,
5. On an ongoing basis, continuing to conduct all steps of the IWS to maintain an updated Inventory.

This *Emerging Issues* report is focused on three additional items Metro Water Recovery will be adding to its IWS implementation starting in 2024. The additions will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the IWS implementation and improve engagement with new businesses.



The IPP covers an expansive 805-square-mile service area.

Current IWS Implementation

Metro Water Recovery's IWS Inventory was first developed in 1986 and has continually been updated since that time. Key aspects of the IWS work include identifying and engaging with new businesses and ideally, engaging with businesses still in the planning stage.

Currently, Metro Water Recovery uses multiple approaches to identify new businesses. These include reviewing and following up on the Connector tap reports, conducting field "windshield" surveys to visually observe changes in buildings or new construction, and conducting Google and state records searches. In addition to these active methods, Metro Water Recovery may receive new business information through Connector referrals. While these approaches enable Metro to meet its minimum regulatory requirements for the IPP, they are not ideal.



The annual Gold Awards celebrate and recognize local businesses for meeting compliance. Metro Water Recovery's IPP is committed to improving and streamlining processes to benefit all parties.

Oftentimes, these approaches leave gaps in information and timing which result in inefficiencies and issues for Metro Water Recovery as it implements the IPP. They can also cause issues for new and expanding businesses trying to make capital and other financially impactful decisions.

Improving Key Aspects of IWS Work: Working Better Together

Connector Business List Updates

Every year, Metro Water Recovery sends each Connector a list of currently active businesses from the IWS Inventory along with a request to provide Metro with any updates. Starting in 2021, the business list was transmitted via email to the IPP Connector Contact on file with Metro. It was previously sent out in hard copy format via normal mail.

This process has not been very successful and is one area where Metro Water Recovery is looking to its Connectors to help improve the IWS work. Specifically, in early 2024, Metro will be reaching out to Connectors to identify the correct contacts for Metro to work with in developing procedures and timing for Connectors to provide Metro with more frequent updates regarding new businesses.

Improved IPP Information for Businesses

Metro Water Recovery is in the process of developing a high-level summary of Metro's IPP and general business requirements along with specific contact information which new businesses can use to learn more about working with Metro's IPP. Metro is updating the IPP section of its website to provide clearer, more comprehensive information and other resources for businesses and Connectors regarding the IPP. Metro's Connector outreach in 2024 will include information regarding these new IPP resources as well as an opportunity to ask questions and provide input on additional IPP information needs.

Developing Ways to Engage with Connectors and Businesses Still in the Early Planning Stage(s)

Another area of opportunity with the IWS Survey is to identify and implement business processes between Metro Water Recovery and its Connectors which will provide more timely and comprehensive engagement with businesses who are still in the early stages of planning. This will also be a topic of the 2024 Connector outreach.

For questions regarding Metro Water Recovery's Industrial Pretreatment Program, contact Director of Environmental Services Jennifer Robinett at jrobinett@MetroWaterRecovery.com.

METROGRO Farm works to combat wheat stem sawfly infestation

The METROGRO Farm is experimenting with a different variety of wheat and crop rotation to deal with a growing pest issue.

The 52,000-acre dryland farm is operated by Metro Water Recovery. Much like a growing number of Colorado farms, the wheat stem sawfly has proven to be a challenge in the three years since it began infesting the crops.

The sawfly's larvae feed on the upper stem of the wheat, often causing it to break just before harvest. According to a 2022 study by the Colorado Association of Wheat Growers and Colorado State University, this pest causes approximately \$33 million in damage annually to Colorado's wheat crop.

For the upcoming season, the farm is planting a new variety of winter wheat with a stronger stem that should be more difficult for the sawfly to destroy. Barley and milo crops will be rotated to stop the sawfly from spreading.

The 2023 harvest season wrapped up on Aug. 22 and was successful thanks to unusually wet spring conditions following extreme drought the year prior.

An unprecedented 26 inches of rain fell this year compared to the typical 10-12 inches. While the extra moisture helps overall quantity, it can degrade the wheat quality as the threat of fungus increases.

The crew harvested approximately 313,000 bushels of wheat this year for a yield of more than 36.5 bushels per acre. To minimize sawfly damage, 5,354 acres were swathed and windrowed before combining. About 2,000 acres of wheat were lost due to hail.

As for other crops, more than 3,000 acres of milo were planted in the spring in failed wheat fields and are expected to provide good yields. Just over 71,000 bushels of milo were harvested in 2022. 🌱



The METROGRO Farm produces an average of 250,000 bushels of wheat a year.



Crop storage at the farm.



Equipment at the farm.

Metro updates strategic plan

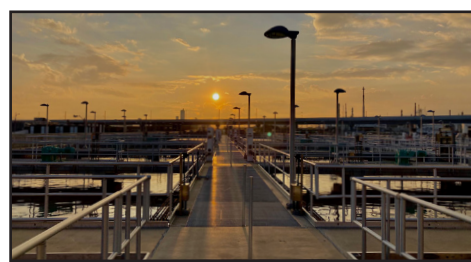
The updated strategic plan for Metro Water Recovery will take the organization's mission, vision, values, and goals to the next level.

Building upon the accomplishments of Metro's 2016 Strategic Plan and reflecting a commitment to continuous improvement, the plan has outlined what organizational success will look like for the next five years. The details provide a roadmap to support Metro's role as a regional leader.

As the largest resource recovery and clean water agency in the

Rocky Mountain West, Metro is committed to educating and engaging with our communities.

Learn more about the updated plan at metrowaterrecovery.com/strategicplan. 🌱



The sun rises at the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility.

PFAS monitoring expands at Metro

Metro Water Recovery has begun monitoring biosolids for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), along with our ongoing monitoring of the treated wastewater.

PFAS are not byproducts of the wastewater treatment process but are present in the wastewater that enters facilities from homes and businesses. All of Metro's PFAS levels meet permit requirements and sit below the trigger level for required actions.

Metro monitors and tests treated wastewater for PFAS levels established

by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, regularly sharing raw data with the public since May 2022. At the beginning of this year, Metro began monitoring and sharing PFAS data for biosolids as well.

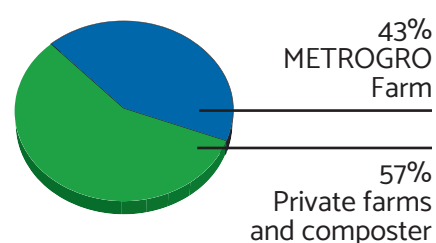
Metro Water Recovery is committed to being part of the solution and offers a webpage with more information, community resources, and access to the monitoring data at metrowaterrecovery.com/pfas. 🌱

Biosolids Distribution for 2023

The chart below summarizes the breakdown of biosolids distributed to the METROGRO Farm, private farms, and a private composter for the first eight months of 2023. All biosolids produced during that period at the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility (RWHTF) and the Northern Treatment Plant (NTP) were beneficially reused.

Distribution from RWHTF..... Dry Tons
 METROGRO Farm..... 8,815
 Private farms..... 11,529

Distribution from NTP..... Dry Tons
 METROGRO Farm..... 401
 Private composter..... 621



A total of 21,367 dry tons (104,610 wet tons) of biosolids were beneficially reused from January through August.

Dry weight is the solids from biological treatment of wastewater after all water is removed. The average METROGRO® Cake solids content for the first eight months of 2023 is 20.50% for RWHTF and 20.51% for NTP. 🌱



Questions or comments? The METROGRO Update is a publication of Metro Water Recovery.

If you have questions or comments, please contact: Patrick Stanley, Metro Water Recovery, 6450 York Street, Denver, CO 80229, 1-800-237-6603, MetroWaterRecovery.com