

# INNOVATIVE WATER MANAGEMENT AWARD

2026

## Ted Trimble

The recipient of the 2026 Innovative Water Management Award embodies humility, technical excellence, and principled leadership shaped through more than three decades of service to California water. This year, we are honored to recognize Ted Trimble for his extraordinary career and lasting contributions to the Sacramento Valley.

A graduate of California State University, Chico in 1990, Ted chose hydrology—by his own lighthearted admission—because electrical engineering and geology seemed like too much work. What followed, however, was a career defined by intellectual rigor, practical experience, and steady leadership. After initially applying to several large consulting firms and being told he lacked experience, Ted pursued that experience directly. In 1992, he joined Western Canal Water District (WCWD or District) as a water operator, gaining firsthand knowledge of agricultural water delivery and district operations.

In 1996, his skill and dedication were recognized by then-General Manager Gary Brown, who promoted him to lead special projects. Among them was the Butte Creek Existing Conditions Report, a collaborative effort involving Friends of Butte Creek, Butte Creek landowners, M & T Ranch, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and numerous regional stakeholders. This early work reflected Ted's ability to integrate sound science, agricultural interests, and environmental stewardship into practical, solution-oriented outcomes.

Ted authored WCWD's AB 3030 Groundwater Management Plan and AB 3616 Agricultural Water Management Plan, along with numerous regulatory and planning efforts that positioned the District to proactively address California's evolving water framework.

In 2001, the WCWD Board of Directors promoted Ted to Assistant General Manager under the mentorship of Interim General Manager Bob Feldmend, preparing him to assume General Manager responsibilities in 2003. As General Manager, Ted guided the District through increasingly complex water policy challenges while maintaining a steadfast focus on protecting agricultural productivity in the Sacramento Valley.

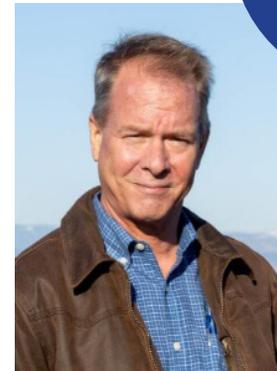
Ted was a leading force in the development of a Sacramento Valley water transfer program, working alongside technical expert Marc VanCamp, to create flexible water management tools that strengthened regional resiliency. He played an instrumental role in protecting Feather River water districts' interests during the California Department of Water Resources' FERC relicensing of Oroville Dam, contributing to the historic Cold Water Settlement Agreement that safeguarded rice lands while balancing environmental objectives.

Among the many issues he navigated, Ted describes the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Program as the most complex water resource challenge of his career. His leadership helped ensure that Sacramento Valley agricultural voices remained at the table during negotiations that reshaped California water management. As he transitions from General Manager to Special Project Director, implementation of Healthy Rivers and Landscapes is underway, alongside the commencement of construction on Sites Reservoir—two milestones he considers the "cherry on top" of his career.

One of Ted's personal highlights was spending the day with Huell Howser filming a segment on the success of the Butte Creek Spring-run Salmon Recovery effort—a memorable recognition of collaborative water management in action.

The Sacramento Valley has benefited immeasurably from Ted Trimble's dedication, experience, and steady leadership. From water operator to General Manager, his career reflects integrity, collaboration, and a deep commitment to balancing agricultural viability, environmental stewardship, community, and responsible water governance.

The Northern California Water Association is pleased to honor Ted Trimble with the 2026 Innovative Water Management Award.



THE INNOVATIVE WATER MANAGEMENT AWARD  
is given by the NCWA President to an individual (or organization) who has demonstrated  
innovation and creativity in advancing water management in the Sacramento Valley.

## PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS



2025  
Barry O'Regan



2024  
Kevin O'Brien,  
Esq.



2023  
Marc Van Camp



2021  
Curt Aikens



2020  
Butte Creek  
Water Users



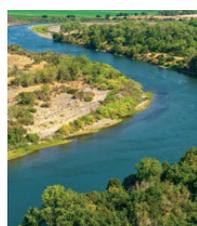
2019  
River Garden  
Farms



2018  
Grant Davids



2017  
Paul Bartkiewicz



2016  
Sacramento River  
Settlement  
Contractors



2015  
Max Sakato



2014  
Walter Cotter



2013  
Fran Borcalli



2012  
Joe Scalmanini



NCWA