



MEET North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's Newest Team Members

By Sienna Houle

MEET KEVIN COREY

Circuit Rider East

Kevin Corey joined North Dakota Rural Water Systems (NDRWSA) in July as a Circuit Rider for eastern North Dakota. He has been in water distribution and water treatment since 2013. In his free time, Kevin enjoys spending time with his fiancée and friends, camping, and playing cribbage. He also volunteers for his local fire department and ambulance. Kevin is excited to be part of the NDRWSA team.

The Circuit Rider program provides a team of drinking water professionals to provide training and technical assistance to water utility managers, boards and operations specialists. As the NDRWSA Circuit Rider for the eastern half of the state, Kevin provides hands-on training and technical assistance to small, rural water systems on an everyday basis. The on-site training is designed for participants to take ownership in learning how to resolve their current and future problems. Some of the assistance opportunities include identifying and evaluating affordable solutions to water and wastewater problems in rural areas, enhancing compliance with federal regulations, and improving treatment processes with efforts to protect the environment and public health.



"I'm excited to meet people who work in different communities and assist them with their water needs."

MEET SIENNA HOULE

Source Water Specialist

Sienna joined NDRWSA in November as the Source Water Specialist. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in Geohydrology and a minor in GIS from Bemidji State University. She is passionate about hydrology and is excited to contribute to the meaningful work being done by ND Rural Water.

The Source Water Protection program is designed to protect the quality of drinking water in rural areas while building local responsibility and more sustainable communities. As the Source Water Specialist, Sienna can work with small water municipalities, governments, and other groups to develop and implement strategies to protect drinking water sources. As a voluntary program, Sienna can recommend actions to reduce or eliminate contamination threats to water quality and public health, provide contingency planning and public outreach education. Efforts in source water protection can reduce point and non-point source pollution, resulting in protecting public health and welfare of communities, as well as saving consumer's money.



"I'm looking forward to helping protect drinking water sources for systems across the state and to educating them about water in their community."

Sustaining Rural Water Systems: A Community Commitment

By Rachel Takala, Project/Funding Specialist

Across North Dakota, many residents rely on small rural water and wastewater systems. These systems are the backbone of our communities, yet they face mounting challenges: population decline, limited technical expertise, aging infrastructure, and stricter regulatory requirements for safe drinking water. Sustainability is no longer just a goal—it is a necessity.

The future of small rural water systems depends on community involvement. Here is how you can make a difference:

- Serve and volunteer by joining your city council or local water board.
- Volunteer your time to assist with essential tasks.
- Advocate for funding by supporting efforts to secure grants, loans, and fair rate structures to keep systems financially viable. This could include volunteering your time. Grant and loan applications can be overwhelming and time consuming; not all communities have full-time employees to fulfill these tasks.
- Promote awareness by encouraging neighbors to conserve water and participate in community planning. The more community members who take an active role in your system the better the outcome.
- Prepare for emergencies by proactively planning for outages or contamination events to protect public health. Having a plan in place will reduce confusion and support a timely return to normal operations.

To ensure safe, sustainable, and efficient water services, rural systems must strengthen their capacity in key areas:

- **Technical Assistance:** On-site operator training, remote monitoring, troubleshooting, and standardized operating procedures.
- **Financial Management:** Accurate financial records, audits, rate-setting guidance, and asset management are essential for long-term sustainability.
- **Leadership Development:** Training board members, engaging the community, and creating a strategic plan for future growth.
- **Technology Integration:** Implement SCADA systems for remote monitoring, leak detection, smart metering, and energy-efficient pumps and treatment systems.

- **Best Practices & Compliance:** Regular chlorination and disinfection, routine maintenance, emergency response planning, and adherence to state and federal regulation.

Sustaining small rural water systems requires commitment, collaboration, and continuous learning. Every citizen's involvement matters—whether through leadership, volunteering, or advocacy. Together, we can ensure that our communities thrive, and that safe, reliable water remains a cornerstone of rural life. Contact ND Rural Water Systems Association for more information on our training programs and on-site technical assistance.

NDRWSA On-Site Assistance

Aerial & Sludge Drones
Backflow Testing Training & Repair
Leak Detection/Water Loss Management
Curbstop, Line & Valve Location
Poly-Pigging (Water & Sewer)
Consumer Confidence Report
Rate Analysis & System Planning
Water & Wastewater System Troubleshooting
Lagoon Sludge Testing
Rule & Regulation Updates
Sustainability & Management Planning
Source Water Protection Plan Development
Emergency Response Planning
Risk & Resilience Assessment

Training Programs

Annual EXPO & Conference
Operator Certification Preparation
Leadership Retreat
Technical, Managerial & Financial Training
WaterPro Conference
Apprenticeship Program
Virtual Training
Backflow Certification & Re-certification

