

Environmental and Water Resources Engineering, and Center for Water and the Environment Seminar Series Presents:

Thursday, February 5th 2026, 3:30-4:30 pm, ECJ 1.324

Zoom Link: <https://utexas.zoom.us/j/84820581097>



Career Perspectives in Water and Wastewater Engineering

Wesley Tait, PE, Wastewater Consulting Engineer, Austin Water

M.S. and B.S. in Environmental Engineering, Texas Tech University

Presentation Abstract

This presentation shares the speaker's experience as a water and wastewater treatment engineer, tracing his professional journey from college to his current role in the water sector. The talk begins by reflecting on undergraduate and graduate training in environmental engineering and how academic preparation translated into real-world engineering practice. It then examines experience in private engineering consulting, including involvement in the design of water and wastewater treatment facilities, the project-based nature of consulting work, and collaboration with multidisciplinary teams. The presentation also discusses experience in the public sector, including work as a process engineer at a wastewater treatment plant and the speaker's current role supporting municipal wastewater systems from an operational and system-level perspective. Drawing on experience in both sectors, the talk compares the advantages and challenges of private consulting and public utility careers, highlighting differences in work environment, responsibilities, and professional development.

The presentation concludes with practical insights and advice for students and early-career engineers considering careers in water and wastewater engineering.

Presenter Background



Wesley Tait is a Texas Tech alumnus, where he obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental engineering. He currently works as a wastewater consulting engineer for Austin Water and overlooks all the utilities' wastewater plants from a holistic approach. Wesley also has 2 years' experience working as a process engineer for South Austin Regional WWTP and ten years as a private engineering consultant designing water and wastewater treatment plants.