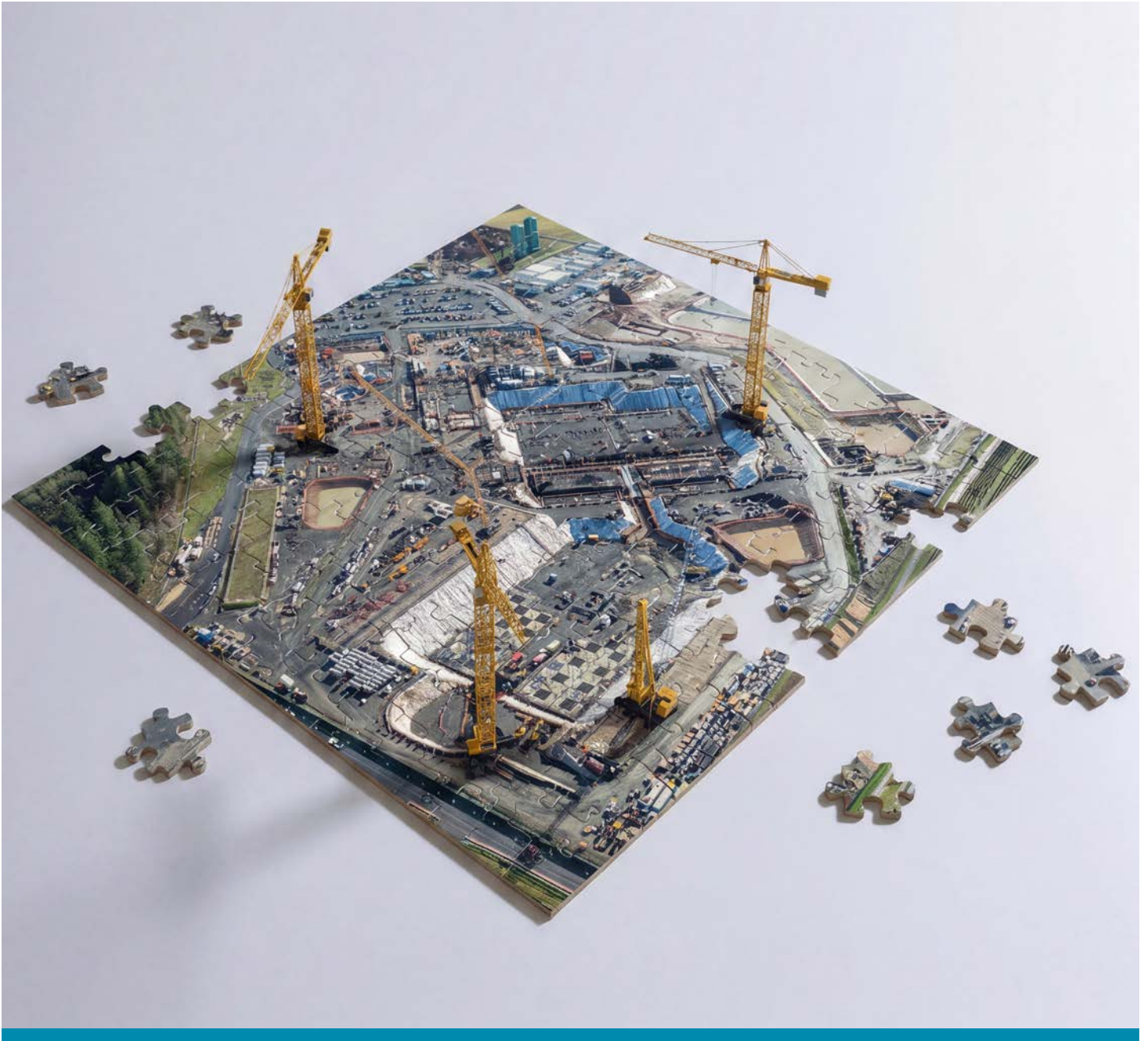


# FOUNDATIONS

The Official Newsletter of MWH | 2026 | Issue 2



CONSTRUCTING A CULTURE OF  
**CONNECTED**  
COLLABORATION

# A FEW WORDS FROM BLAIR

At MWH, collaboration isn't just something we talk about; it's the foundation of how we work, how we lead, and how we succeed. Every project we deliver, every challenge we overcome, and every milestone we celebrate is the result of people choosing to work with one another, not simply alongside each other. None of us builds anything meaningful alone. Our strength comes from our teamwork—one organization, aligned by US strategy, guided by shared Core Values, and committed to the same outcomes.

We see this spirit of connected collaboration come to life every day across our projects. One example is the leadership approach modeled by the Bull Run Filtration, Walnut creek, and many other jobs throughout the US. Leadership begins with showing-up and is not something that happens behind closed doors; it's something felt throughout; the jobsite, the office or when you're on business travel.

As we move forward together, I encourage each of you to embrace that same spirit of presence and connection. Our work is stressful and complex, but our purpose is clear. When we communicate openly, support one another, and stay aligned to our shared values, we will build a better world.



**See you on the jobsite!**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Blair M. Lavoie". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Blair M. Lavoie, PE**  
MWH President/CEO



When we communicate openly and stay present, people grow, leadership becomes real, and a culture of praise, family, and teamwork takes hold. No matter the size of the project, it always comes down to people talking, listening, helping each other, and delivering work that serves the community for generations. This really is a family—about 300 people strong—and that’s how we work every day.”

**TOM PAUL, SVP**  
MWH

*Read more on page 10*



As a leading U.S. contractor in water, wastewater, and industrial water construction projects, we are committed to delivering maximum value to clients and their communities. MWH history dates to the early 19th century and features some of the world’s most groundbreaking water and wastewater innovations as well as specialization in client-focused collaborative delivery methods.

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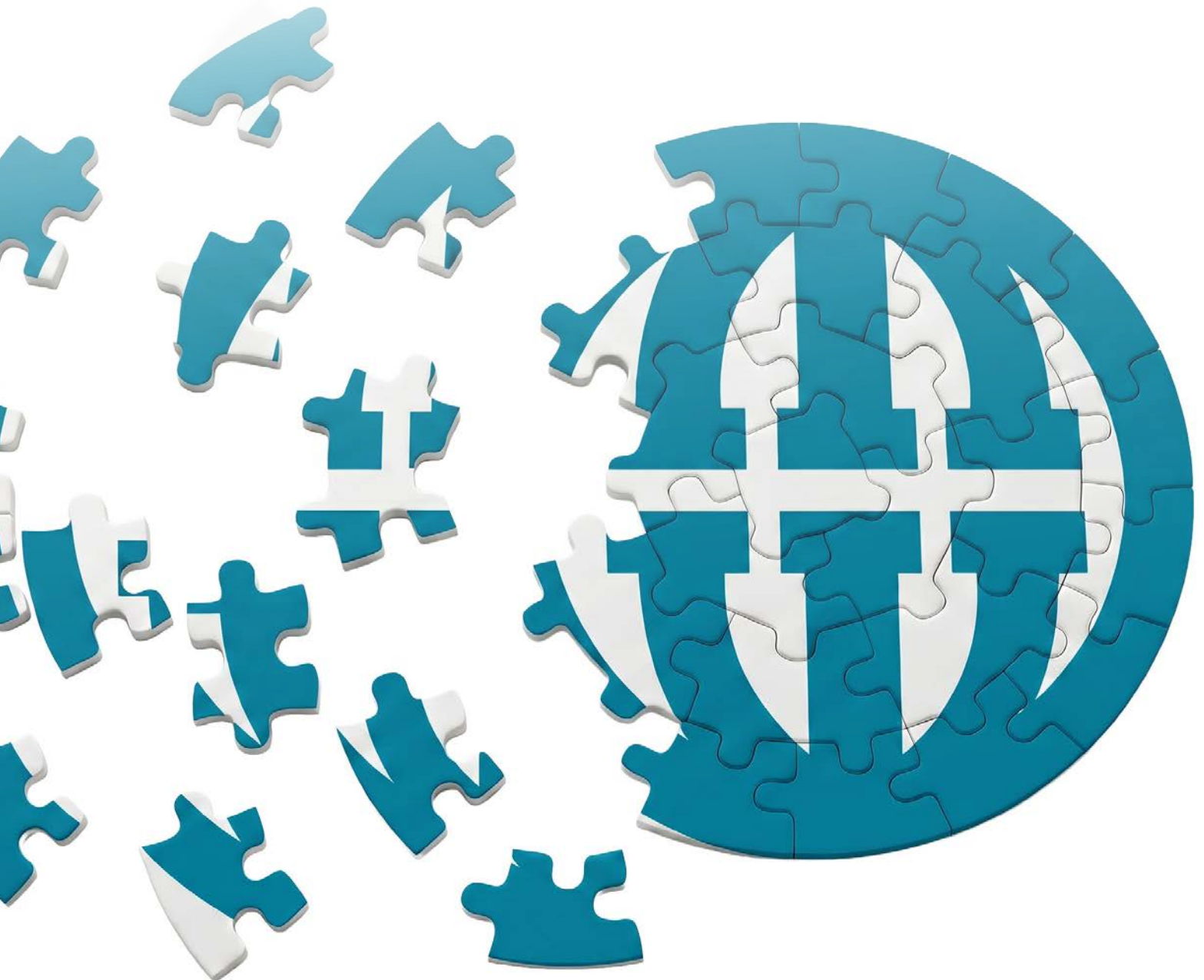
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# 20 **BUILDING** 26 connections

**MWH brought back Building Connections in 2026, a focused two-day conference designed for recently hired professionals. The event gave new team members an opportunity to meet company leaders, learn the firm's history and strategy, and experience what the organization calls "The MWH Way."** What began as early curiosity for many attendees turned into confident contribution as the program illustrated how every role fits into the full lifecycle of MWH's work. The program invited all new hires at or above a designated professional level to participate in a curriculum tailored to those who were new to the MWH organization. Over two days, speakers, team exercises, and interactive sessions introduced participants to MWH, Methuen, and Slayden, explained company operations and policies, and helped newcomers expand their networks beyond their immediate job locations.

Organizers aimed to create an immersive experience in which attendees met and heard from senior leaders, gained a clear sense of the company's strategic direction, and learned who to partner with to leverage the full power of the organization on their projects. The conference emphasized practical takeaways: how to navigate resources, whom to call for specialist support, and how to align daily work with the broader goals of the company.



## BUILDING TOGETHER: COLLABORATION PRINCIPLES AND FOCUS AREAS

- ◆ Throughout the program, Presenters repeatedly highlighted a central truth: MWH succeeds—delivering standout projects, delighting clients, and sustaining growth—when teams collaborate across functions. Every transition, every message, every contribution counts, from the earliest pursuit to final closeout and long after. The conference made clear that operations and back-office teams must move in rhythm, guided by shared strategy, values, and goals. It also gave new employees practical ways to bring that rhythm to life in their roles.
- ◆ The agenda centered on four core areas. A company-level overview traced the histories of MWH, Methuen, and Slayden and explained how the businesses fit together and where they are headed strategically. Sessions on core values explored the principles that shaped decisions, behavior, and client relationships, and translated those principles into expectations for daily work. Presentations on specialist support teams introduced the experts who provide technical, operational, and administrative assistance, clarifying who they were, what they did, and how to engage them effectively. Finally, workshops on personal growth offered practical guidance on career development at MWH, including finding mentors, building crossfunctional relationships, and using company resources to accelerate impact.

Building Connections functioned as more than an orientation; it served as an investment in how the company worked together. Attendees left with clearer maps of company resources, a stronger understanding of expected policies and practices, and a broader network of colleagues and managers. The conference prepared new hires to contribute at a high level, aligned with The MWH Way, and helped them see how their individual roles connected to the organization's collective success. MWH looks forward to welcoming future cohorts and continuing to strengthen the ties that make collaborative work possible.



MWH is an organization where all operational staff and back-office support staff work in rhythm informed by the same strategy, guided by the same values, and committed to the same outcomes. This conference will enhance each employee's knowledge of the company resources at their fingertips and the policies and practices that are expected of each employee to contribute at the highest level aligned with The MWH Way."

**BLAIR M. LAVOIE**  
President and CEO  
MWH

# SAFETY WEEK 2026



Safety is a core value and the foundation of every MWH project. Our commitment to protecting everyone on the job site drives a culture that goes beyond checklists and procedures. We maintain a year-round focus on awareness, accountability, and care for one another, empowering every team member to uphold this value in everything they do.

## LIFE-SAVING DAILY TOPICS

Safety Week 2026 began with a clear message: All In Together. The theme reflected how we operate every day — united in our purpose, accountable for our actions, and committed to protecting one another. It underscored that safety is not just a priority but a shared responsibility, strengthened by teamwork, communication, and a collective commitment to sending everyone home safe. **Read along to learn more about how our team members observed and celebrated Safety Week 2026 daily!**



“At MWH, we are all responsible for safety, not just for ourselves, but for everyone we work alongside. Our programs are built on the expectation that hazards are identified early, communicated clearly, and controlled effectively at all levels. Speaking up and taking action when something is not right is what prevents incidents and strengthens our safety culture every day.”

**JOE BARRY**  
NATIONAL SAFETY DIRECTOR  
MWH

## DAY 1: Recognize

The first day of Safety Week began with a focus on Recognition. Our industry had still saw 1,075 preventable fatalities in 2023, with falls, struck-by incidents, electrocutions, and caught-in/between hazards remaining the leading causes. Recognizing these hazards start with early identification through multiple proactive strategies, including: the Energy Wheel; Stuff That Can Kill You (STCKY); and the Fatal/Focus Four.



## DAY 2: Respond

Day 2 focused on Respond — taking action the moment a hazard is recognized, because early, intentional steps prevent harm. Knowing where risks exist — heights, equipment, energy sources, weather, and shifting site conditions — and using strong preplanning, daily reviews, and clear communication helps turn those hazards into controlled risks. A plan only works when everyone understands it, discusses it, and improves it together.



## DAY 3: National Safety Stand-down To Prevent Falls

Falls remain one of the leading causes of construction fatalities — and are preventable. Even a fall from just a few feet during routine work can change a life in seconds. Consequently, on day three we paused to refocus on planning ahead, using proper protection, and staying alert on every step, ladder, and edge. **Stop. Speak Up. Stay Tied Off.**



## DAY 4: Respect

Respecting the plan means respecting each other. As conditions shift — weather, equipment, sequencing, site layout — the safest teams don't push ahead on autopilot. They pause, communicate, and adapt. If something changes: **Stop. Reassess. Replan.** Respect also means using Stop Work Authority with confidence and supporting others when they use it. It's how we prevent Serious Injuries and Fatalities (SIFs), eliminate STCKY hazards, and ensure the plan protects everyone.



## DAY 5: Safety Week Wrap Up

This week highlighted what matters most — our people. The photos from our jobsites show teams living the pillars Recognize, Respond, Respect and managing high-energy risks with tools like the Energy Wheel and the Hierarchy of Energy Control. Thank you to everyone who participated and led by example. We're carrying this momentum through the remainder of 2026 and into 2027 as we continue **Building a Better World.**



## Thank You for Making Construction Safety Week 2026 a Success!

Thank you for the commitment and teamwork brought to Construction Safety Week. You showed what All In Together truly means. Every time you Recognized a hazard, Responded with intention, or Respected the people and work around you, you strengthened our shared effort to prevent serious injuries and fatalities. Whether you led a discussion, shared your experience, joined a demo, or simply checked in on a teammate, your actions mattered. And the momentum doesn't end here. **Let's carry these pillars forward and keep building a culture where everyone speaks up, takes action, and gets home safely.**

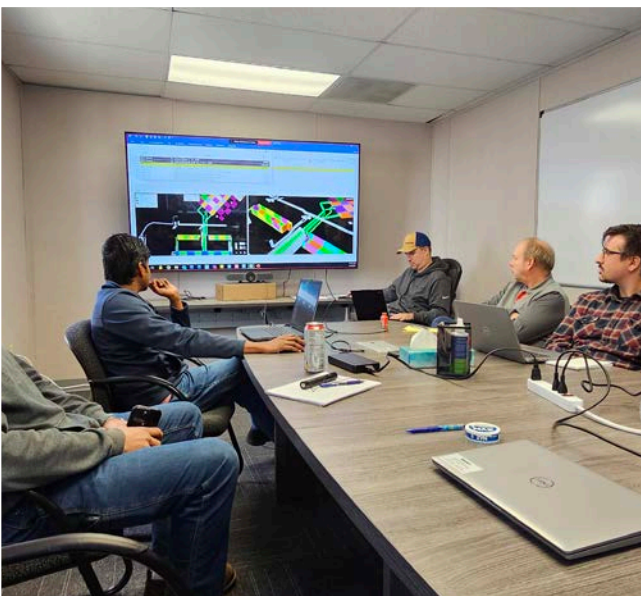
# FEATURED

ARTICLE



## BUILDING TOGETHER

HOW COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY DRIVE THE BULL RUN FILTRATION PROJECT



On an ordinary afternoon at the Bull Run Water Filtration Project, the conference room hums with energy. Dozens of people gather around long stretches of whiteboards covered in color-coded notes, names, and dates. Conversations overlap with laughter, problem-solving, and focused planning. This daily ritual—known as the Play of the Day, or POD—is where the project connects, aligns, and moves forward together.

Located in East Multnomah County, Oregon, the Bull Run Filtration Project spans more than 90 acres and will provide high-quality drinking water to nearly one million people for the next 100 years. The facility is being built to meet federal and state requirements to filter out naturally occurring microorganisms such as *Cryptosporidium*, ensuring long-term resilience and public health. But while the scale of the project is immense, what truly defines Bull Run is the people behind it—and the culture they are building day by day.



## LEADERSHIP THAT SHOWS UP

For Tom Paul, MWH Senior Vice President overseeing the project, leadership begins with presence. From his earliest days on site, he made it a priority to be visible—arriving early, joining meetings, and creating space for honest conversation. Leadership wasn't something happening behind closed doors; it became something felt throughout the jobsite.

"It's about managing people," Tom says. "When you start to break it down, it's all about people talking and communicating."

That philosophy is woven into every part of the project. Tom personally kicks off new-hire orientations each week, emphasizing safety, communication, and the importance of looking out for one another. Stop Work Authority is not just encouraged—it's expected. "If something doesn't feel right, trust your gut," he tells every new team member. "I will back you 100% every time."

This consistency has built trust across the site. As Tom puts it, "Open communication and being present in the moment" is what keeps the team aligned and confident.

## THE PLAY OF THE DAY: THE SPINE OF THE JOB

The POD meeting is the heartbeat of Bull Run. Each day, about 75 foremen and superintendents gather around an 80-foot wall of whiteboards marked by days, work areas, and color-coded tasks from every subcontractor—creating a living, shared plan for the entire site. But the POD is more than a schedule; it's a space for accountability, collaboration, and connection. Wins are celebrated, challenges are addressed openly, and teams solve problems in real time, often untangling complex scheduling issues simply by talking through them together.

Tom Paul's first POD meeting set the tone. He paused the room and asked, "Raise your hand if you're going to build this by yourself." When no hands went up, he made the point clear: "Exactly. We need to find a way to build this together." From that moment, the culture began to shift. People started joking with one another, offering help, and taking shared ownership of the work. As Tom often reminds the team, "Praise is more valuable than blame."

He also shares a guiding principle borrowed from General Patton: **"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what needs to get done—and let them surprise you with their ingenuity."**



## A FAMILY-STYLE CULTURE

Bull Run Filtration Project operates with what Tom calls “family-style construction.” Respect is demonstrated through simple actions—introducing yourself, participating in safety walks, and engaging in Play of The Day meetings. Support shows up in practical ways too: busing and vanpool options, an on-site EMT, and leaders who check in not just about work, but about people.

**“We talk a lot about family, and there is a family here,” Tom says. “A family of 300.”**

Tom often references Tuckman’s Ladder—the five stages of group development—as a way to understand the team’s evolution. When he arrived, the project was in the “storming” phase. Through intentional leadership and a focus on communication, the team is now transitioning from “norming” to “performing,” where trust is high and collaboration is seamless.

Small gestures reinforce this sense of belonging. On weekends, Tom checks who is working, heads to the grocery store, and cooks a meal for the team. They eat together, laugh together, and take a moment to simply be people—not just workers on a jobsite.

## CONNECTION BEYOND THE FENCE LINE

The site is surrounded by long-standing tree farms and generational families. That proximity makes community engagement essential—and deeply meaningful.

Once a month, MWH leadership participates in

Coffee with the Contractor meetings at the local grange hall. Residents can meet the team, ask questions, and voice concerns. MWH leadership listens, shares information about the project, and works to address resident concerns—everything from speeding trucks to site lighting at night.

“If people don’t understand, their initial instinct is to be scared,” Tom explains. Transparency has been key to building trust. Whether it’s notifying residents about upcoming cement truck traffic or answering questions face-to-face, the team’s patience and empathy have made a lasting impact.



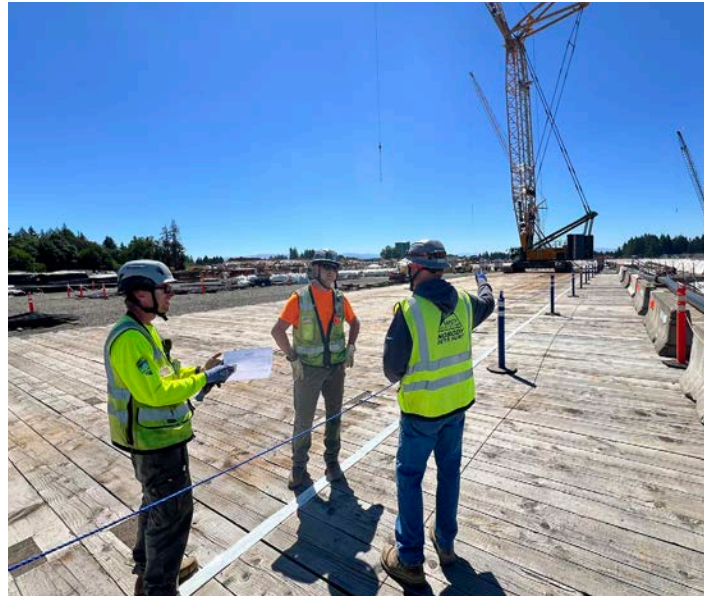
## THE MOST POPULAR MACHINE ON SITE: WHY BULL RUN SMELLS LIKE POPCORN & FEELS LIKE CONNECTION

Walk through the doors at Bull Run on the right afternoon and you might think you've stepped into a movie theater. The smell of fresh popcorn drifts through the trailer, pulling people in from across the site. Foremen, inspectors, engineers, and visitors slow down, grab a handful, and linger just a little longer than planned. Conversations spark, stress eases, and for a moment the pace of the job softens.

The popcorn machine—now a small but beloved part of Bull Run's culture—was brought to the project by Steve Clapper when he joined in July 2025. He'd seen how something simple could make a big impact, and he knew it was worth bringing along. Since then, it has become more than a snack station; it's a meeting point, a morale boost, and a reminder to pause and connect. As Steve says, "As soon as you open the front door, you smell popcorn, like going into a movie theater."

That familiar scent resets the room. People coming in from a long morning or a tight schedule walk through the door smiling. The popcorn creates space for shared moments that don't require an agenda—just a chance to breathe.

On a project as large and demanding as Bull Run, those small moments matter. The popcorn machine may never appear on a schedule or a report, but its impact is felt every day, quietly reinforcing the culture of connection, care, and community that defines the site. Sometimes, it really is the little things.



## A PROJECT WITH PURPOSE

When asked what he's most proud of, Tom doesn't hesitate: the relationships. "I sat down with most everybody here one-on-one and got to know them," he says. "When you get to that point, then all of a sudden the job becomes a family." He's also proud of the diversity and discipline on site—proof that "it takes a world to build a job, not just a village."

If he had to describe the project in a single phrase, he'd say "Communication and being present." Ultimately, the Bull Run Filtration Project is about far more than construction milestones. It is about stewardship—of water, of relationships, and of the people doing the work. Designed to serve future generations, the facility represents a long-term commitment to both infrastructure and community. **"This plant is designed for 100 years,"** Tom says. **"We're going to deliver the highest-quality water to almost a million people for the next 100 years."**

At Bull Run Filtration Project, collaboration is built day by day, communication is intentional, and connection is treated as essential. Together, those elements have shaped a project moving forward with momentum, purpose, and a shared sense of pride in what's being built—together.



*Bull Run Filtration Project Completion Rendering*

# MWH'S COMMISSIONING & STARTUP

## BUILDING CONNECTIONS FROM DESIGN TO DAY ONE

MWH delivers a fully integrated Commissioning & Startup (C&SU) program that begins in preconstruction and carries through final acceptance and operator handover. Unlike traditional approaches where commissioning is treated as a late-stage activity, MWH embeds commissioning into every phase of project delivery, ensuring systems are designed, constructed, tested, and optimized as a cohesive whole.

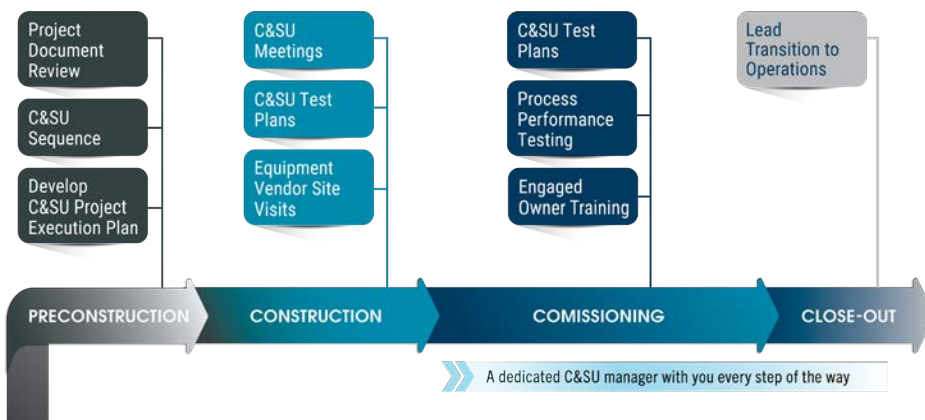
Our program is built on a systems-based, process-driven approach that aligns design intent with operational performance. We focus on getting facilities online and ensuring they operate reliably, efficiently, and in full compliance with regulatory and owner requirements from day one.

### CORE ELEMENTS OF OUR PROGRAM

- **Early Integration:** Commissioning planning begins during design, interim and startup operations, water management, and long-term facility operations.
- **Dedicated S&C Team:** Specialized commissioning managers, coordinators, and discipline leads with deep water/wastewater expertise.
- **Systems-Based Approach:** Equipment is tested as part of fully integrated systems, not in isolation.
- **Digital Commissioning Tools:** Real-time tracking of checklists, deficiencies, and test results for full transparency.
- **Progressive Testing:** FATs, SATs, pre-functional, functional, and performance testing executed in a structured sequence.
- **Operator-Focused Turnover:** Training, O&M validation, and hands-on involvement of operations staff throughout



### COMMISSIONING AND STARTUP PROCESS





### BUILDER + OPERATOR MINDSET

As a contractor with deep water/wastewater specialization, MWH brings a “builder’s perspective” to commissioning, we understand how systems are actually installed, interconnected, and operated in the field. This allows us to:

- Identify and resolve issues earlier
- Sequence startup activities realistically
- Reduce rework and delays

**Result:** Faster, smoother startup with fewer surprises.

1

### COMMISSIONING STARTS ON DAY ONE, NOT AT THE END

Many competitors treat commissioning as a punch-list phase. MWH integrates it from the outset by:

- Developing a Commissioning Execution Plan (Cx Plan) during preconstruction
- Defining C&SU sequence early
- Coordinating closely with designers and vendors

**Result:** Reduced risk of late-stage failures and costly redesigns.

2

### TRUE SYSTEMS INTEGRATION (NOT JUST EQUIPMENT TESTING)

We go beyond individual equipment checks to validate entire process trains and facility-wide performance under real operating conditions.

**Result:** Facilities function as intended on Day 1, not just on paper.

3

### PROVEN DIGITAL TRACKING & TRANSPARENCY

Our use of digital tools provides:

- Real-time commissioning status
- Clear documentation for every asset
- Streamlined issue tracking and resolution

**Result:** Owners have full visibility and confidence in readiness.

4

### OPERATOR-CENTRIC APPROACH

We actively involve owner operations staff throughout startup:

- Hands-on training during commissioning
- Validation of SOPs and O&M manuals
- Gradual transition of system control

**Result:** Operators are prepared, confident, and self-sufficient at turnover.

5

**BENEFITS TO OWNERS:** MWH’s Commissioning & Startup Program reduces schedule risk through early planning and disciplined execution, preventing delays in the project’s most critical phases. Our approach to integrated teams, empowers Owner’s operators to engage throughout C&SU; building confidence on how to operate the new systems prior to turnover. Our systematic approach fully demonstrates system functionality and performance, enabling our seamless handoff from C&SU to long term operations. The program also builds regulatory confidence by proving compliance from day one and ensures a clean handoff to operations with a fully functional facility.

# LEVEL UP BUILD STRONG



MWH  
WOMEN IN  
CONSTRUCTION

## WOMEN WHO LEAD, ELEVATE, AND ARE BUILDING A BETTER WORLD

In January, MWH officially launched its Women in Construction chapter—an exciting milestone for the company and a meaningful step forward for representation across our jobsites, offices, and leadership teams. The launch reflects a growing commitment to elevating the voices and experiences of women who contribute to every part of our work.

Women in Construction is a national organization dedicated to supporting and connecting women in the construction industry through education, mentorship, and community. At MWH, the chapter was created

with a clear goal: to expand opportunity, visibility, and belonging for women across the company.

The effort was spearheaded by Shanda Walburn, Project Controls Manager, who has spent her 14 years at MWH working across multiple departments and roles. Known for her drive, authenticity, and ability to bring both focus and laughter into any room, Shanda saw an opportunity to build something meaningful and lasting—setting the tone for a chapter rooted in connection, confidence, and shared progress.

Since its launch, the WIC chapter has already had an active and impactful start, bringing women together and laying the foundation for a community that will continue to grow.



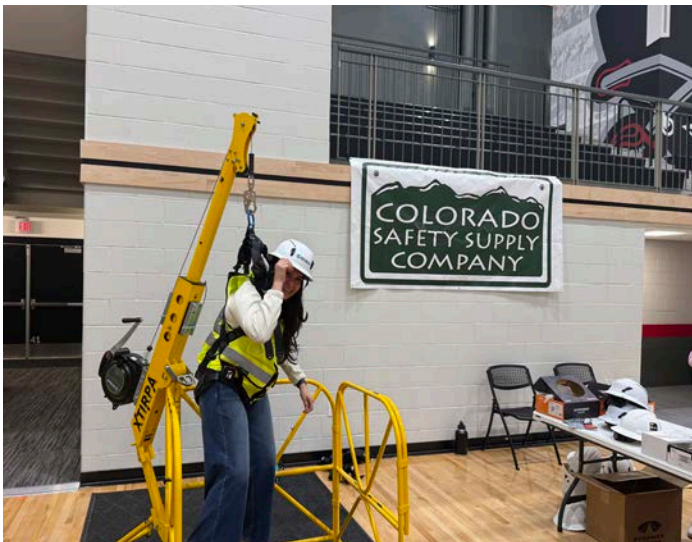
## SHANDA WALBURN

Project Controls Manager

*"I am led by the belief that we must lift as we climb—building strong relationships, sharing knowledge, and advocating for the women who follow. Leadership isn't about shrinking to fit norms but showing up with confidence and authenticity and creating space for others to do the same."*



# CONNECTING WITH THE NEXT GENERATION



One of the chapter’s first outreach efforts brought a group of MWH women—alongside Shelley Tijerina from Colorado Safety Supply—to Colorado State University’s Women in Construction Club. The team joined students for an open conversation about careers in construction, internship paths, and navigating an evolving industry. The discussion was thoughtful, and energizing, with strong engagement from students eager to shape their future careers.

The momentum continued with a hands-on outreach event at Roosevelt High School in Johnstown, where female students interested in construction and the trades participated in a pop-up booth walkthrough experience. Students explored a VR site walkthrough of the Johnstown Water Treatment Plant Expansion, took part in a building activity, and learned firsthand about safety systems including harnesses. Keeping the students engaged through movement, conversation, and real-world examples made the experience both memorable and rewarding for everyone involved.

## A WEEK OF CELEBRATING WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

From March 1–7, offices across MWH came together to celebrate Women in Construction Week. Luncheons, self-defense classes, and team celebrations highlighted the contributions of women across all roles—from the field to the office and everywhere in between. The week marked not just a celebration, but the confirmation that this chapter is already becoming part of MWH’s culture.

As the Women in Construction chapter continues to grow, it remains focused on what matters most: community, opportunity, and the collective strength of the women who make MWH, Slayden, and Methuen what they are today.



# MWH WELCOMES CHRIS BANTER, PROJECT EXECUTIVE

Chris Banter's career reflects range, resilience, and a deep curiosity about the industry at every level. Now serving on the Bull Run Filtration Project, he brings the same hands-on mindset that has shaped his entire path. He began as a concrete finisher, later earning two BS degrees and an MBA with support from a Kiewit scholarship and internship. Over the next 20 years, he moved through nearly every operating role, ultimately becoming CCO—an intentional path shaped by his drive to learn and understand the business from the ground up.

After decades in construction, Chris sought a new challenge where his large-project experience could create broader societal impact. That search for meaningful work set the stage for his next chapter.

When taking over a project, Chris starts with mindset—controlling what can be controlled and approaching challenges with clarity rather than emotion. Passion matters, but emotional reactivity can derail progress. His second principle is to have fun. Construction is demanding, and he believes laughter and levity help teams stay resilient and engaged under pressure.

In moments of conflict between field operations and project management, Chris anchors teams in shared purpose. By connecting individual goals to a larger vision and building from common ground, he helps people navigate adversity and strengthen collaboration. True leadership, he believes, shows up when things aren't going well.

## WHY MWH

Chris was drawn to MWH's view of talent and potential. In conversations with Blair and the executive team, he appreciated that they valued his major-project leadership more than his lack of water and wastewater experience. That focus on capability over narrow specialization resonated immediately. He was equally inspired by the mission behind the work and the company's impact on community health, sustainability, and resilience. Joining MWH felt less like a career move and more like a chance to contribute to something meaningful.

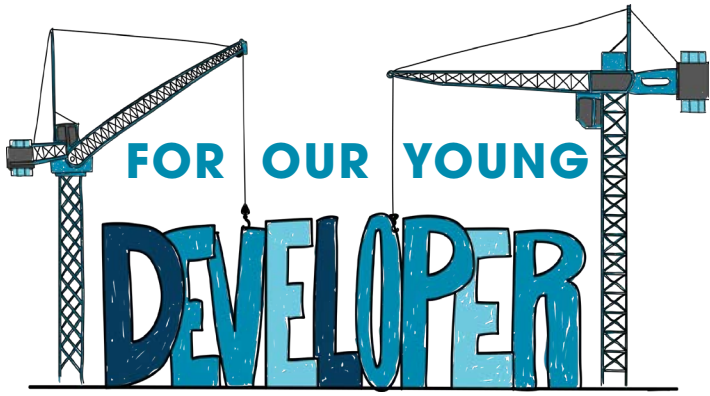
Outside of work, Chris stays active. He's a regular at the gym, enjoys hiking and hot yoga, and plays the occasional round of "consistently bad" golf. He's also an avid reader, finishing 50 to 100 books a year—most without pictures, as he likes to joke. Whether through fitness, the outdoors, or learning, he thrives on movement and curiosity.



“MWH valued my large-project experience over my lack of water expertise, and that perspective resonated deeply with me.”

## CHRIS BANTER

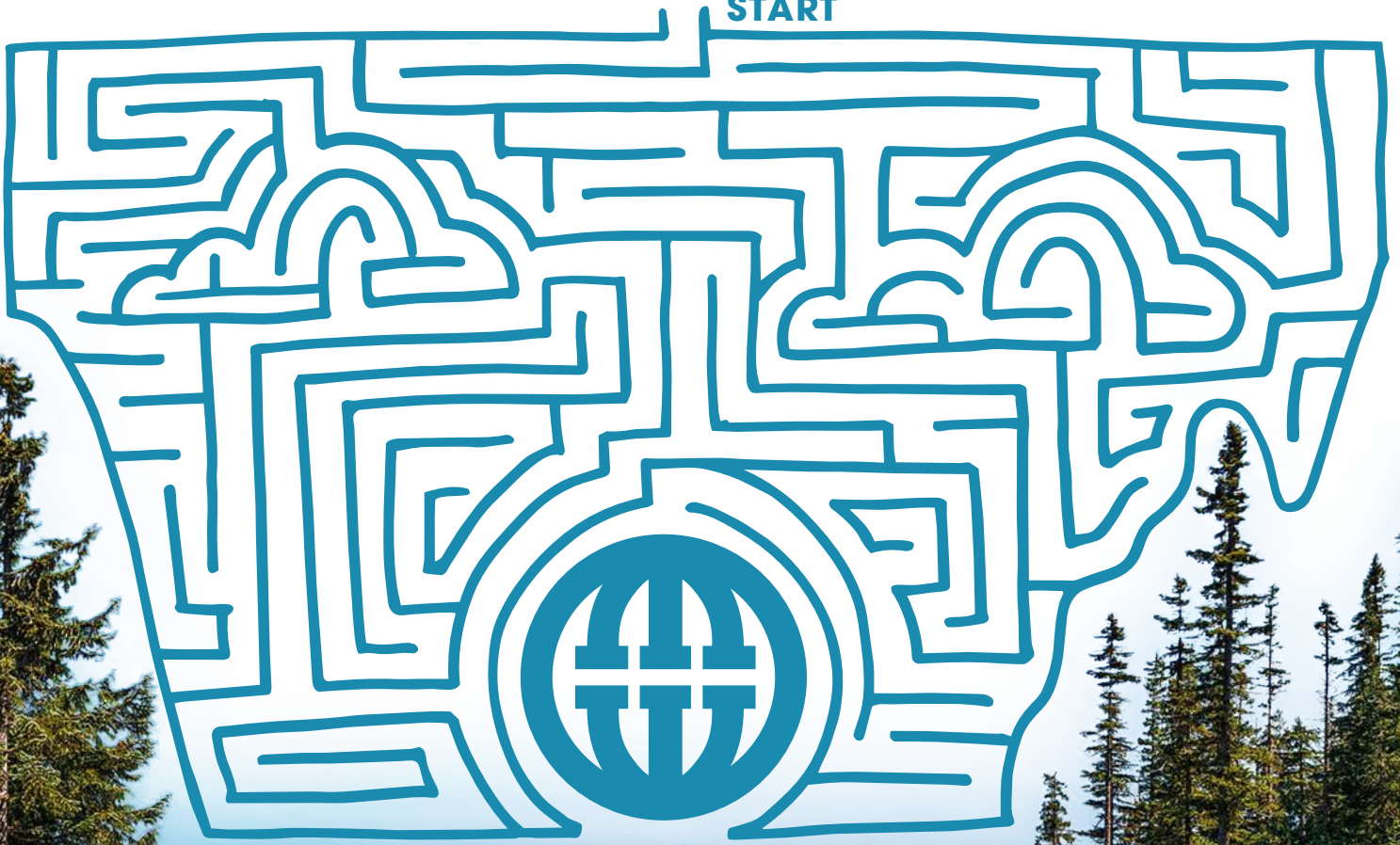
Project Executive  
MWH



## BULL RUN LAKE

Known for its exceptionally clean, natural water, Bull Run Lake is an essential part of the region's water supply. It feeds the Bull Run River, which provides most of Portland's drinking water. MWH is currently supporting both the Portland Water Bureau's Bull Run Pipeline and Filtration Facility projects, which will help deliver safe, reliable drinking water to more people in the community.

START



FINISH



Join us in  
**Building a  
Better World**



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