

Ah, the Memories
by
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When I first came to work for NeRWA in May of 1999, I was much younger and a little uncertain about what I was getting myself into. I applied for the position of “Deputy Circuit Rider” without really knowing what the job would entail. This was a new position being funded with a portion of the State Revolving Fund money that was set aside for technical assistance. Even the state was not sure what the duties of the person working under this contract would consist of. I spent the first several months of my new job driving around the state setting up and adjusting chlorine pumps for systems with Total Coliform issues. Most of these systems were small privately owned systems who could not receive technical assistance from our USDA Circuit Rider. I met a lot of nice water operators, and a few that were in over their heads, having bought a business that had its own well, thus making them the owner of a public water supply system.

After about 6 months, the Training Specialist position became vacant, and I applied and was hired for that position. That position was in charge of water operator training classes and backflow training, as well as setting up the annual and western conferences. I met many more operators in this position, many of whom I admire to this day for their dedication to their communities and keeping the water systems running smoothly. I enjoyed this position for about a year and a half, until the Deputy Circuit Rider position came open, and the NeRWA Board asked me to return to that position.

I returned to work as the Deputy Circuit Rider for a little over four years until NeRWA gave up the contract for that position. At that time I was offered the position of Source Water Specialist, which I accepted and fulfilled until 2007 when the NeRWA submitted a proposal for the Capacity Development grant from DHHS and was awarded the contract. This position was involved with system assessments, rate studies and income surveys among other things. This position lasted for six years until the grant was renewed and NeRWA did not receive the grant.

For the next two years, I was doing system mapping as the GPS specialist, a skill I had to learn from scratch as the software we had previously used was upgraded and the new version was very different from the old version. I still assist with the mapping now, but by locating points that need to be included in the map. The mapping itself is fee based, but locating is done for free. From GPS specialist, I went back to Capacity Development Specialist, where I worked until late 2018 when illness required the Source Water Specialist to resign, and I once again took that position.

In addition to this, I worked as a USDA Circuit Rider for a while when Russ Topp was undergoing cancer treatments, and I got a Class 2 Wastewater Operators certification so I could assist in teaching math for the Wastewater Operator Class to prepare operators for the test. I have worked in every position currently available at NeRWA, except Wastewater Technician, and I have enjoyed all the time I have worked and all the fine water operators I have come to know. I will be retiring later this year, and I wish all of the water operators in the state the best of luck in their positions, and I hope you are all looking for your replacements as you near retirement.