Water Environment Federation

GLOBAL WATER STEWARDSHIP

COSTA RICA CIRCULAR WATER ECONOMY STUDY TOUR

JANUARY 25-31, 2026

IMMERSIVE INNOVATION: EXPLORING COSTA RICA'S CIRCULAR WATER SOLUTIONS

This weeklong immersive experience will be led by Global Water Stewardship (GWS), a WEF Charity of Choice.

Costa Rica integrates water-related goals into its National Circular Economy Strategy and proposed Circular Economy Bill, prioritizing reduced consumption and improved wastewater treatment. Study tour delegates will explore the country's Reduce-Recover-Regenerate model in action, from advanced treatment and reuse to resource recovery and nature-based solutions.

SCAN THE QR-CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GLOBAL WATER STEWARDSHIP

JOURNEY AROUND COSTA RICA

PROGRAM

6-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1, January 25 San José

Arrive, check-in at your hotel

Hotel: Wyndham Garden, Escazu

Day 2, January 26, Belén

08:30-09:45	National Circular Economy Strategy; MINAE-TEVU
09:45-11:00	Technical presentation: Resin 8 Pedregal & retention basins
11:00 -12:00	Field visit retention basins & permeable sidewalks
12:00-13:00	Lunch
13:00-13:30	Transport
13:30-14:00	Conexión Viva Project
14:00-14:30	Transport
14:30-15:30	Rosales biogarden
15:30-16:00	Closing session

Hotel: Villa Verde, Monteverde

Day 3, January 27, Monteverde

08:00	Monteverde Reserve: Cloud Forest Hike
12:00-13:00	Lunch
PM	Monteverde Institute: Digesters, Composting, Water Harvesting, Climate Change agenda

Hotel: Villa Verde, Monteverde

Day 4, January 28, Playa Flamingo

AM	Monteverde: ASADA Community Water Management & Springs conservation forest tour
12:00-13:00	Lunch
PM	Travel to Flamingo Beach

Hotel: Hotel Nany, Playa Brasalito

Day 5, January 29, Santa Cruz

08:00-11:00	Santa Cruz: Parque Tecnológico Ambiental Santa Cruz+ Coopeguanacaste wind energy production
11:30-12:30	Lunch
13:00-16:00	Transport
16:00-17:00	Cordillera de Fuego Coffee Plantation: Waste and Wastewater reuse, biological odor control with fungi
17:00-19:00	Transport

Hotel: Wyndham Garden, Escazu

Day 6, January 30, Escazú

08:00-10:30	Los Tajos WWTP: energy from biogas, reuse for heating sludge, mixing biodigesters, sludge composting
11:00-13:00	Transport
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-16:00	Coope Tarrazú: Coffee Cooperative that practices Circular Economy principles and Sustainable Development into its operations. Composting alliance with municipality, biogas from waste and wastewater

Hotel: Wyndham Garden, Escazu

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Aim for:** laptop bag + 1 suitcase. That's the ideal setup for this trip.
- **Do not overpack** but bring what you will actually use.
- **No formal attire required.** Keep it casual and practical.
- **"Most formal" option (if needed):** for guys, one pair of khaki slacks + one short-sleeve button-up is plenty.
- Go for easy, **clean, put-together basics.**
- **Good staples to pack:** shorts, jeans, sweats, lightweight performance shirts (e.g., Columbia PFG-style), a hoodie.
- **Rain-ready:** bring a poncho or rain jacket.
- **Footwear:** comfy walking shoes (e.g., Hokas) + flip flops.
- **Media-friendly clothing:** we will be taking photos/videos. Avoid anything you would not want in a WEF or GWS social post/article.
- **Sun protection:** sunglasses + a good cap are strongly recommended.
- **Landfill visit (Thursday):** Wear closed-toe shoes (tennis or hiking), long pants, a hat/cap, and sunglasses. Long sleeves are recommended for sun protection.

GWS, AYA AND WEF STAFF

Mohammed Haque

District Manager for the Northern Moraine WRD in Island Lake, Illinois. He has also been the Executive Director of the Central States Water Environment Association since 2012 and founded Global Water Stewardship (GWS) in 2013, a service-based volunteer organization that has been a catalyst for growth of a wastewater industry in Costa Rica. He holds an MBA from the University of Notre Dame and B.S. in Civil Engineering and Environmental Engineering from the University of Wisconsin – Platteville.

Laura Torres

Civil engineer with an M.S. in Water Engineering and Management from Universität Stuttgart. She has taught and conducted research at Universidad Nacional and the University of Costa Rica and has spent 19 years at AyA focused on wastewater treatment and sanitation. Since 2017, she has led AyA's Wastewater Management Department, supporting rural ASADA associations and advancing sanitation projects and WASH education with GWS.

Anna Abraham

Manager for Circular Water Economy at the Water Environment Federation, focusing on scaling circular solutions, fostering innovation, and fostering cross-sector collaboration to address global water challenges. She has experience leading a consulting project in Costa Rica focused on watershed justice, and an EPA fellowship on water affordability and environmental justice. Anna holds a BA in Spanish and an MA in Global Environmental Policy.

Jack Connors

Senior Manager in the WEF Community Engagement Department and manages the Students & Young Professionals Community. He has worked at WEF for three years and also serves as the lead manager for the WEFUnity platform and assists with the Community Leadership Council. Jack previously worked in the government contracting industry and graduated from the University of Delaware in 2016.

MEET THE SYPC DELEGATION

Arturo Ayala

Environmental chemical engineering student at the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro with a strong interest in sustainable technologies and environmental solutions. His main interests include circular economy, sustainable processes, and water treatment. He currently works at CIQEC (Research Center for Chemistry for the Circular Economy), contributing to research and applied projects focused on sustainability and resource recovery.

Jayla Berry

Water/Wastewater Engineer at Highfill Infrastructure Engineering, where she supports water and wastewater projects focused on reliable, sustainable infrastructure and treatment design. She is actively involved with the Water Environment Federation as a Delegate-at-Large. Through the study tour, she hopes to gain a global perspective on sustainable water management, circular water economy practices, and community-centered solutions.

Joseph Robinson

Wastewater professional with the City of Portland, Oregon, driven by firsthand experience growing up in a Detroit neighborhood affected by unsafe drinking water, CSOs, and sewage-flooded basements. Joe supports efforts to improve water quality and reduce waste for a major metro area in one of the country's most diverse biological and hydrological regions.

Lydia Silber

Technical Content & Regulatory Policy Manager at the WateReuse Association, leading the association's regulatory affairs, research, and industrial water reuse portfolios. She guides key committees in these areas and serves as the staff lead on related initiatives. She studied International Relations (Environment & Development) at Boston University and earned an M.S. in Sustainable Water Management from Tufts University.

Madeleine Harris

Engineer and project manager based in Colorado's mountains, where she works for the Eagle River Water & Sanitation District. She earned a Civil Engineering degree from Case Western Reserve University and later worked in Denver as a consultant. Her work focuses on water and wastewater design, process improvement, regulatory affairs, sustainability initiatives, innovation, and program development.

Melany Trujillo

Environmental Engineer from Costa Rica and a member of the Environment and Social Global Team at ECOM. She has been involved with Global Water Stewardship (GWS) for several years, which has deepened her interest in water and wastewater solutions. Outside of work, she enjoys reading and playing basketball.

Nico Kiilu

Multidisciplinary engineer completing M.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of California, Irvine, specializing in hydrology and water resources, with a strong interest in advancing Circular Water Economy principles. He works with the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (LACSD), supporting the design and implementation of cost-effective wastewater and solid waste management projects that protect public health and the environment while recovering value through resources such as recycled water and energy.

Ryan Clemens

Graduate of the Illinois Institute of Technology with a B.S. in Chemical Engineering. He collaborated with a multidisciplinary student team to design a system to remove PFAS compounds from leachate received by the Fox River Water Reclamation District. After graduation, Ryan began working as a water treatment operator at FRWRD, and later moved into an assistant civil engineer role in the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan section at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

Samuel Scholz

Process Engineer in Madison, WI with 2 years of experience in wastewater treatment planning and design. Interests in water reuse, nutrient and energy recovery, and addressing U.S. and global water challenges through collaboration across industries. Sam holds a bachelor's degree in Biological Systems Engineering and a master's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering, both from the University of Wisconsin.

Vicki Chou

Impact-driven water and environmental professional committed to building a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable world. As a Water Resources Engineer at Arcadis, she supports cities and utilities in meeting water quality goals and strengthening community resilience through green infrastructure, stormwater management, resilience planning, and community engagement.