

CALIFORNIA WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODELING FORUM

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

For May 15, 2020

(This meeting was conducted via teleconference due to social distancing requirements resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic)

Major Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The in-person 2020 CWEMF Annual Meeting has been cancelled by the SC. Two subcommittees formed to investigate the feasibility of an online option. • 2020 CWEMF business meeting scheduled for June 26, 2020.
Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ED (P. Hutton) will send a request for nominations for CWEMF Vice Convener to the general membership to try and secure a nomination before the June business meeting. • T. Kadir to contact CWEMF Annual Meeting keynote speaker (Mr. Arax) to notify him that the in-person meeting is cancelled and extend an offer to be the 2021 CWEMF Annual Meeting keynote speaker. • Annual Meeting Sessions subcommittee chaired by W. Anderson to notify session chairs and speakers that the in-person CWEMF 2020 Annual Meeting is cancelled and inquire about their interest in participating in an online version. • Technology subcommittee chaired by N. Sandhu to explore online meeting options and assess the feasibility of an online Annual Meeting option with a possible recommendation for a technical platform. • Ad-hoc subcommittee (J. Medellin-Azura, A. Huber, S. Tanaka) will revise the draft refund policy in order that it can be more general in its application (<i>i.e.</i> for any annual meeting and/or workshops) and presented for further discussion and possible adoption at the July 17th Steering Committee meeting. • Secretary G. Nichol and Secretary In Training B. Bray will prepare and disseminate the draft 2019 Business Meeting minutes to the general membership before the June 26th Business Meeting.
Parking Lot Items	<p><i>Parking lot items moved to the end of the minutes</i></p>
Motions Passed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A motion to accept the minutes as amended for the March 20, 2020 Steering Committee meeting was made by J. Medellin-Azura and seconded by S. Tanaka. The motion carried unanimously with no abstentions. • Motion to cancel the in-person 2020 Annual Meeting to be held at Lake Natoma Inn September 22nd-24th made by J. Medellin-Azura, seconded by S. Tanaka. Motion carried with 17 ayes, 0 votes against, and 2 abstentions. • Motion to approve the Executive Director contract for services covering the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 made by T. Kadir and seconded by S. Tanaka. Motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

REFERENCES INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET:

1. Executive Director’s Report for the May 15, 2020 Steering Committee Meeting (Attachment 2-1, 1p)
 2. Secretary’s Report, Draft Minutes of the March 20, 2020 meeting (Attachment 2-2, 11p).
 3. Treasurer’s Report, FY 2019 SC Meeting: May 15, 2020 (Attachment 2-3, 1p).
 4. COVID-19 Annual Meeting Refund Policy (Attachment 6-1, 1p).
 5. CWEMF Executive Director Recommendations for 2020-21 (Attachment 8-1, 1p).
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1. INTRODUCTIONS/DESIGNATION OF QUORUM – S. Chowdhury called the meeting to order. Attendance was taken from those participating online via Zoom video conference platform and on the phone. 18 persons were present, all were either online and/or on the phone, and 1 proxy held. A quorum was declared.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. Executive Director’s Report – The Executive Director (ED) highlights Attachment 2-1. There were no questions or further discussion.

- b. Secretary’s Report – B. Bray noted some revisions sent in after the Draft included in the SC agenda packet. B. Bray highlights one key revision related to ED budget. Another typo was pointed to in the header to item 4. A motion to accept the minutes as amended for the Mar. 20, 2020 Steering Committee meeting was made by J. Medellin-Azura and seconded by S. Tanaka. The motion passed unanimously via roll call vote.

- c. Treasurer’s Report – The taxes will be due after July 1, 2020. No discussion on the Treasurer's Report (see Attachment 2-3).

ACTION ITEMS

3. ANNUAL MEETING

- a. Registration Status & Refund Requests – Refunds provided to 3 state agencies: Delta Stewardship Council, DWR (Division of Planning & Regional Assistance), and State Water Board. There are still 75 people registered for the conference. So the good news is there haven't been a lot of refunds.

- b. Program Status – Email went out to moderators and individuals planning to give talks. Out of the 28 sessions with speakers, 10 have confirmed their commitment to moving forward and attending the meeting in September. About 5 more have expressed some willingness but are apprehensive for various reasons. For example, some are not sure based on their agency’s policy or have expressed a reluctance to participate in person but are open to participating if there's a virtual option.

J. Jankowski shares his perspective as the California Water Boards' representative. There is a lot of uncertainty about what the health orders or potential restrictions might be in

September, will restrictions such as now where all travel and conference attendance is not permitted be extended, we don't yet know. Some have speculated that the orders may be extended as far as September. Also, California Water Boards' staff wouldn't be able to register until after the start of the *next* fiscal year (starting in July) and there is a lot of uncertainty related to budgets and budget cuts; the State just announced a 10% salary cut for all state employees and it's not clear how that will get implemented such as with furloughs. That said, he believes the same number of State Water Board staff would attend if they could, there's just a lot of uncertainty as to whether they will be able to attend given the uncertainties resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion: The SC members then debated whether to continue to move forward with the AM at Folsom in September or to cancel the physical AM and whether to hold an online or "virtual" option. ED (P. Hutton) noted that in his discussions with Lake Natoma Inn, if we cancel our meeting for any other reason than a state mandate, we will lose the deposit (roughly \$5,000). Members shared that most other conferences that had been scheduled in the fall were being moved out or rescheduled to later in the year.

The discussion included exploring what it might take to move forward with a virtual option. This discussion included thoughts on software and necessary functionality, registration fees, the length of the conference, the number of sessions and whether it's necessary to have parallel tracks, changes in the scheduling such as half day meetings over a longer period like a week rather than continuous over 2.5 days. Some thought it may be too ambitious to do a virtual option for 2020 AM and instead get on the learning curve by conducting some virtual workshops.

Convener S. Chowdhury expressed his view that he would prefer we do not skip a year, that a smaller online option would be better than not having a meeting in 2020. Along those lines he thinks that there would have to be a strong commitment by our volunteer members to develop the planning for an online option. The sooner we could commit the better.

This sparked a discussion about the business meeting and the requirement to conduct at least one business meeting annually. The bylaws are unclear if "annual" refers to a calendar year or the fiscal year. Members noted that the business meeting doesn't necessarily have to coincide with the Annual Meeting, that this has been our approach for convenience. It was decided to hold the CWEMF 2020 business meeting on Friday June 26th to both ensure a meeting in the 2020 calendar year and the 2019 fiscal year (July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020). Secretary (G. Nichol) and Secretary in Training (B. Bray) would prepare the draft minutes from the 2019 business meeting and send out for the general membership to review prior to the June 26th meeting. (ACTION ITEM)

T. Slaweki shared that the IAGLR (International Association for Great Lakes Research) conference this year will go "online." He noted that the registration fee was reduced significantly from over \$400 to \$50 dollars in order to participate in the conference. Also that the IAGLR conference will be held over three days (for more info, see the conference website at: <http://iaglr.org/iaglr2020/>). Mr. Slaweki noted that the conference organizers had a lot of the same interests and considerations we would have in trying to put on an online meeting and were

moving forward with "GoToWebinar" videoconferencing platform. There will also be a keynote speaker as part of the meeting. It's generally about a 500-700 person conference. With the meeting coming up soon, he committed to finding out more information about some of the planning considerations, information the software/tools the IAGLR conference organizers went with used for facilitating it, and share his experience attending the virtual meeting since it will all occur before the next steering committee meeting scheduled for July.

There was a motion made by J. Medellin-Azura and seconded by S. Tanaka to cancel the in-person CWEMF 2020 Annual Meeting at Lake Natoma Inn on September 22-24. Motion carried with 17 affirmative votes (including proxy), 0 votes against, and 2 abstentions.

After the discussion, two subcommittees were tasked with follow-up. ED (P. Hutton) is tasked with notifying session chairs and speakers that the in-person CWEMF 2020 AM is cancelled. He will first send this as a draft email for the steering committee to review and comment. The Annual Meeting Planning Sessions subcommittee chaired by W. Anderson would follow-up to gauge session and/or speaker interest in participating in an online option. Subcommittee would report back on how much of the already planned for sessions and talks could move forward with an online concept. This inquiry will help determine if there are enough volunteers and content to move forward with an online meeting and the extent of the scope of such a meeting; what would the content of the online meeting look like? It was requested that the subcommittee report back on the number of possible sessions for the business meeting (June 26th). Members volunteering or already serving on this subcommittee were A. Huber, J. DeGeorge, and B. Geske, with T. Kadir and S. Chowdhury also interested in joining to stay in the loop.

A second new ad-hoc subcommittee was formed focused on developing a recommendation for the "technical platform" *i.e.* the technical logistics for assessing the feasibility of an online meeting (*i.e.* audio, visual and other aspects through an online software platform). N. Sandhu was nominated and agreed to serve as chair of this committee. Members volunteering for this subcommittee were S. Chowdhury, T. Kadir, J. Medellin-Azura, J. Jankowski, C. Wang and S. Tanaka. T. Salwecki agreed to report to the subcommittee on any information as well as his experience participating in the IAGLR meeting coming up in June (see description above). The charge for this ad hoc subcommittee is to develop a recommendation for software and/or website tools that would be necessary to facilitate an online option. As part of the discussion, some members express that an online meeting may not be as effective or valuable an experience and are apprehensive about implementing a new technology that may cause technical problems and take away from the online meeting experience. However, there was general consensus that the options are limited and feasibility for an online option is worth exploring especially given that many other meetings, conferences, and trainings are being conducted online.

c. Officer Election – As part of the business meeting in June CWEMF plans to hold a special officer election to install a Vice Convener and Secretary. S. Chowdhury commented that there were no new nominations for Vice Convener after a solicitation email for nominations were sent to the SC email list. ED (P. Hutton) will send a request for nominations for CWEMF Vice Convener to the general membership to try and secure a nomination before the June business

meeting. (ACTION ITEM) T. Kadir reconfirmed his willingness to serve as Vice Convener if no one volunteers.

T. Kadir requests direction from the SC with respect to the keynote speaker given the decision to cancel in-person AM. The SC requested that T. Kadir notify Mr. Arax of the cancellation and extend the offer to be keynote at *next* year's annual meeting to be held in Spring of 2021. (ACTION ITEM)

d. Theme & Cover Photo – R. Satkowski opened the discussion recapping that at the last SC meeting a theme was adopted but that it is now unclear whether there will need to be a cover photo given the AM cancellation. There was general agreement that this was now moot; cover photo selection was tabled until there is more clarity on the path forward.

4. MODELING PROTOCOLS

R. Satkowski gave a brief report on the subcommittee activities. He noted briefly that a summary report from the panel interviews was drafted as reported on in the prior SC meeting (See 5. *Modeling Protocols* report from the March 30th CWEMF Steering Committee minutes). Consultant Dr. S. Roy completed a draft report compiling the insights and input from the 5 panel interviews and was sent for review and input to the participants on Monday April 13. Effort is focused on updating the protocols document and integrating the panel input.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONTRACT RENEWAL

S. Chowdhury opens the discussion noting it is the time of year to approve the Executive Director (ED) contract. There was a minor change in the contract language noted by the ED (P. Hutton). A motion to approve the ED contract for services covering the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 was made by T. Kadir and seconded by S. Tanaka. Motion carried unanimously with no abstentions.

6. PROPOSED REFUND POLICY

J. Medellin-Azura provided a brief summary of the refund policy draft included in the agenda packet (see Attachment 8-1). The policy is very narrowly focused on refunds for the annual meeting due to COVID-19 illness scheduled for September 22-24. SC requests that the policy be revised to be a more general refund policy applicable to the annual meeting or workshops. A revised draft will be presented at the July 17th SC meeting. (ACTION ITEM)

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. IDEAS FOR A REMOTE OR SOCIAL-DISTANCE ANNUAL MEETING OPTION

N. Sandhu stated that this discussion was covered under the annual meeting item and no further discussion is necessary.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2020-21:

ED (P. Hutton) made a few comments on Attachment 8-1 which is a list of recommendations for SC consideration in the next fiscal year. ED (P. Hutton) highlighted his recommendation that we

need to commit some resources to working on the website and document/chronicle CWEMF's history. A more detailed discussion of the recommendations was tabled for a future SC meeting.

9. USBR MOU for JOBAID KABIR (Hutton)

ED (P. Hutton) reported that he has continued working with a legal point of contact at USBR to resolve the issue regarding potential conflicts of interest and USBR representation on the SC. ED is happy to report that the issue will be resolved soon via a memorandum of understanding (MOU). In essence, the MOU will stipulate that the USBR representative (J. Kabir), will abstain from any future votes that involve a nexus between funding decisions and the US Bureau of Reclamation or the Department of Interior. ED (P. Hutton) is expecting to receive the MOU from USBR attorney he's been in contact with to resolve the matter soon, and expects J. Kabir to continue participating in the SC meetings once it is executed.

10. WORKSHOPS (Kadir)

T. Kadir reported that he is in the process of working with Vice Convener A. Kahn to obtain a copy of the workshop status tracking info and transition duties from the Vice Convener to the Workshops Subcommittee. No further details or report at this time.

11. WEBSITE UPDATE

N. Sandhu states there is no new report regarding the website.

12. MODEL USER GROUPS (Sandhu)

N. Sandhu states there is no new report regarding model user groups.

(no other reports)

13. OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

14. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING –

July 17th, 2020, TBD. Most likely will be another online Zoom meeting.

Friday June 26th will be the next CWEMF Business meeting with the general membership and will also necessarily be held using an online meeting option rather than in-person due to the current COVID-19 health crisis.

ED (P. Hutton) to work with J. Medellin-Azura to handle meeting logistics and schedule these upcoming meetings.

15. ADJOURN – 12:35 pm

Respectfully Submitted
George Nichol, Secretary, CWEMF
Ben Bray, Secretary in Training, CWEMF

ATTENDANCE

Shyamal Chowdhury	Convener	US Army Corps of Engineers
Stacy Tanaka	Treasurer	Watercourse Engr.
Tariq Kadir	Past Convener	DWR
George Nichol	Secretary	Public Member
Paul Hutton	Executive Director	Tetra Tech
Anne Huber	Chair, 2021 AM Improvements Subcommittee	ICF
Rich Satkowski	Chair, Modeling Protocols Subcommittee	Public Member
Nicky Sandhu	Chair, Website & Model Users Groups subcommittees	DWR
Ben Bray	Secretary in Training	EBMUD
Jesse Jankowski		SWRCB
Josue Medellin-Azura		UC Merced
William Anderson		CCWD
John DeGeorge		RMA
Greg Reis		TBI
Katherine Heidel		Tetra Tech
Tad Slawecki		LimnoTech
Chuching Wang		MWD
Samson Haile-Selassie		DWR
Mike Deas		Watercourse Engr.

Proxies: Shyamal Chowdhury for Hubert Morel-Seytoux

Parking Lot Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer Review Process - Development of peer review administrative process. • Equipment Inventory – Needs to be updated. • Storage of Documents – What and where needs to be formulated.
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