CALIFORNIA WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODELING FORUM

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

For Nov. 20, 2020

(This meeting was conducted via Zoom meeting with call in number due to social distancing requirements resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic)

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<th>Action Items</th>
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1. INTRODUCTIONS/DESIGNATION OF QUORUM – S. Chowdhury started the meeting at 9:00am, a quorum was declared with 15 people online and 2 proxies; B. Bray has been designated as proxy for M. Deas and N. Sandhu has been designated as proxy for T. Kadir.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

   a. Executive Director’s Report – The Executive Director (ED) (P. Hutton) highlighted his report (see attachment 2-1). Highlights included the following:
      - Locked in the dates for June 14-16 for 2021 annual meeting at Lake Natoma Inn.
      - We have a new organizational member, Geosyntec Consultants.
      - ED (P. Hutton) continues to work with USGS to get organizational dues paid.
      - Completed review of the website included in Agenda packet and will table further discussion for later agenda item (agenda Item 6).

   b. Secretary’s Report – B. Bray refers to the Aug. 28, 2020 Steering Committee meeting minutes (Attachment 2-2) and thanks all of those that provided input and comments on the Draft minutes. Motion to accept the minutes as included in the packet was made by S. Tanaka and seconded by J. Jankowski, passed by unanimous vote. Brief comments were made regarding Secretary’s approach to the minutes and welcomes any input.
Before the treasurer’s report, ED (P. Hutton) interjected a brief recap of online sessions and expressing his appreciation to organizers W. Anderson along with his subcommittee team for organizing as well as J. Jankowski for helping host.

c. Treasurer’s Report – For the General Fund we have $330,873 (see attachment 2-3) with no substantial changes to Peer Review or Operating funds since prior report (in August). Our organization will not show a net revenue for this year which is not surprising given the circumstances but our organization is not at any risk of financial insolvency.

ACTION ITEMS

3. 2020 ANNUAL MEETING ONLINE (Chowdhury).

   o Recap: 10/06, 10/08, 11/17 Sessions

      S. Chowdhury starts the recap, notes over 60 attendees participated in the online sessions without any major technical glitches. S. Chowdhury expresses an abundance of appreciation to volunteers helping to organize and to J. Jankowski for his role in hosting with Zoom.

      W. Anderson reported that he found CWEMF members were very much motivated to share their work and get feedback. He related that there was some effort expended to develop the schedule, however. Finally, W. Anderson noted that additional help from volunteers is still needed. Volunteers are needed to serve as hosts and work with session chairs to put on the remaining scheduled sessions (see next agenda item).

   o Upcoming Sessions: 12/01, 12/03, 12/10, 12/15, 12/17

      S. Chowdhury reported that he has three volunteers that can help host three of five remaining sessions and called for volunteers to fill the remaining two slots. After additional discussion, session dates were assigned to volunteers as follows: Dec. 1 to B. Bray, Dec. 3 to W. Anderson, Dec. 10 to N. Johns, Dec. 15 to S. Tanaka, and Dec. 17 to A. Constantino.

      J. Jankowski provided overview of host duties. There are only a handful of responsibilities to consider. Host to give a technical logistics talk at the beginning such as the following: the meeting is being recorded, participants should remain on mute during the presentations, and guidance for submitting questions in chat or via hands up software feature. Host may also need to help with brief transitions into and out of breaks, remarks to wrap up or close out after presentations and help ensure questions are fielded. Prior to the session the host would need to work with session chairs to coordinate on agenda and software logistics. J. Jankowski states that the host role is really pretty easy carry out and is helpful as a show of support and leadership by steering committee members. He shared that we’ve been having good success in planning and execution of the online meetings with session chairs so far.

      For those willing to volunteer and serve in the host role, J. Jankowski will provide a brief training session. J. Jankowski has also put together a set of tutorial or "how to" documentation to provide guidance to presenters for recording their presentation that can be shared with the hosts as well (ACTION ITEM). Presenters or speakers have been
encouraged to pre-record their talks and most have been willing to proceed that way. However, if some presenters want to present live, presenting in this way can also be accommodated and is just a matter of screen sharing logistics. Also, J. Jankowski notes that online sessions so far have taken precautions to provide backup copies to session moderators or other presenters in case of technical issues — which has been appreciated — although the backups haven't been needed so far. Doing a dry run with Zoom is not difficult either. It would be a matter of coordinating and finding the time that works for participants. Such a meeting would only be on an "as needed" basis.

J. Jankowski to send P. Hutton his availability for the next week (ACTION ITEM). Based on J. Jankowski's availability, ED (P. Hutton) will set up a doodle poll for a half-hour time slot within the next week to facilitate a training session between J. Jankowski and with host volunteers B. Bray, W. Anderson, N. Johns, S. Tanaka, and A. Constantino (ACTION ITEM).

ED P. Hutton to send message to session moderators to put them in contact with their designated host volunteers (ACTION ITEM).

J. Jankowski to forward communications regarding logistics for Dec. 1 online session with moderator J. Anderson to B. Bray (ACTION ITEM).

N. Sandhu gives update on recordings. From past session, one was recorded and has already been split into individual talks, the second recording was lost, and the third from earlier this week not yet processed.

N. Sandhu points out that we don't have a process right now to facilitate the post-processing necessary to deal with the recordings and get them posted and so they haven't been prepped for posting yet. There hasn't been anything more done with the recordings for the first session yet. As far as the third session from this past Tuesday November 17, N. Sandhu noted that he has several high quality prerecorded individual talks that he plans to post. In these cases, if we have high quality pre-recorded individual talks already, then we are ready for posting with minimal effort. N. Sandhu comments that he is willing to continue to help on the processing tasks but could also use some volunteers to help as far as some of the pre-processing work needed to get recordings prepped for posting. Any software that edits video can do be used including some freeware options.

N. Sandhu clarifies that the "hosting" in this context means the following. As far as uploading the files, we have been — and plan to continue — using YouTube for the video files, however, the CWEMF website will be the host to the links that provide the gateway to access the files. The files are private on YouTube i.e. are not available via search but are placed on a playlist that can only be accessed via the appropriate link. This link can be integrated into the CWEMF website where the link wouldn't require a password for access. This is an important detail because the size of the video files can be large. N. Sandhu is committed to a brief training session to any volunteers that would like to help process the full length recording into the individual talks with the freeware he uses if necessary. There is not much to the process; it can take a little time for the computer to process the file but the manual effort is really finding where the start and the end of an individual talk is within the
session recording. The processing can be done on a Mac or Windows, where we are typically producing .mp4 or occasionally .wav files that can be uploaded to YouTube. YouTube does not charge us to host these files.

Zoom account has been set to auto-record to the cloud. Anyone who has access to the account can get to it after the session is over. Again, the video files are large and we need to clean out the cloud after it is recorded. The recording from Tuesday Nov. 17 was 1.9GB and we only have a 1GB limit, so we should expect to be paying overages soon.

S. Tanaka then makes a motion to spend $40 per month for Zoom account subscription add on for 100GB of cloud storage, N. Sandhu seconds the motion and with no further discussion the motion passes unanimously. The SC also discussed that we would plan to keep this additional option activated until the end of the year. Once we've we download all the files, then we discontinue this feature. S. Tanaka adds this feature instantaneously during the meeting once the motion had passed.

Further discussion on hosting files or storing files temporarily for sharing or access among CWEMF members is tabled for later, offline discussions about the CWEMF website.

K. Heidel volunteers to help with the video post processing, N. Sandhu to follow-up with her to review the workflow process (ACTION ITEM).

o Awards Presentation

ED (P. Hutton) reported that he and T. Kadir reached out to Dr. Parviz Nader-Tehrani, the 2020 career achievement award honoree to discuss his preference for receiving the award. His preference was to hold it over to 2021 where we may be able to meet in person. Therefore, the decision was made not to hold an online session to honor the recipient this year as part of the online sessions programming. Does it mean there will not be an award for 2021? To clarify, CWEMF would also go through our standard process for 2021 award nominations and considerations. Also, ED (P. Hutton) reminds the SC that we did not designate a recipient for the Hugo Fisher award in 2020, where the career achievement award was conferred to Dr. Parviz Nader-Tehrani, and P. Hutton was honored with the Life Member Award.

4. 2021 ANNUAL MTG: OPTIONS FOR SOLICITING SESSIONS & PRESENTATIONS (Huber)

A. Huber reports that the SC proceeded with an online vote for three options on how to proceed with the 2021 Annual Meeting regarding approaches for requesting sessions and talks. A. Huber provides a quick recap of the two options and reported that Option 2 was the narrow winner by one vote. A. Huber refers to supplemental documents provided to the SC (Option1_Message.docx and Option2_Message.docx) explaining that the messages are not so different between the two options. To open it to discussion, A. Huber wonders if the SC would like to proceed with Option 2 or perhaps whether compromise language can be made to combine the two into a single email solicitation.
W. Anderson recommends that the SC consider proceeding with some web development that can facilitate the submission of talks or sessions via website. He wonders if there might be a way to have people solicit abstracts online, in a way they are transparently listed, and they could get proposals that are a little more fleshed out. Might be a pie in the sky idea, but going through the process last year, he was afraid there would be an email issue where communication could get missed. There is a lot of overhead to populate Excel spreadsheets. Seems like there should be a way to do the contact management more efficiently.

N. Sandhu comments that his email sent during the time of the vote on the options is exactly consistent with the points W. Anderson has made. We can use Google forms, for example, to allow user to submit information, and it could facilitate transparency in the process in terms of putting sessions together or connecting session chairs with proposed talks.

Additional discussion on the options was had. W. Anderson reminded the SC of the motivation for the proposed options where we had a lot of interest in participating in the annual meeting this year. That meant there were a lot of proposed sessions and a lot of individual talks proposed, too many actually than could be accommodated even with three tracks. There were also a lot of proposed sessions that didn't have very much information, they were just a sentence or a phrase. without an indication of how developed the idea or session was, which then made it difficult to evaluate when it came time to prioritizing one session over another when it became clear there were too many. The subcommittee found that it had to negotiate with session moderators on number of talks within a session, feeling like they had to step on toes to request moderators to take on proposed talks in their sessions. The idea is to adjust the process so as to not have those conflicts. Transparency might help with that. Emphasis, however, may need to be on having more fully developed session proposals so they can be more easily or fairly be evaluated or compared. Trying to keep it organic, trying to minimize conflicts, and alleviate administrative burden are all good considerations for considering how we solicit for volunteers to participate in the annual meeting and develop the program. In his view, it boils down to setting clear expectations in terms of proposals so that they can be evaluated and compared if we are to have a selective process. Also, we need to make clear that not all session proposals may be accepted. W. Anderson closes, stating he is not ready to make a motion, but encourages flexibility as much as possible as we make plans for the path forward.

N. Sandhu proposes that we can solicit sessions as we have before. If someone has a fully formed session, everything is lined up, that a good thing. If it's not a fully formed session, then it's another process, there will be a deadline to fill or we back fill empty slots with talks that need to be accommodated.

A. Huber opines that if you encourage people to create and propose fully formed sessions as soon as possible, then it seems unlikely sessions would have empty slots that are necessary to integrate individual proposed talks on a related subject. A spreadsheet could be helpful to show where there are gaps or slots in the program for someone or a set of individuals to submit a talk with a session already in mind. Higher level goal is self organizing, maybe intermediate goal is transition.
W. Anderson asks, when it becomes selective, who ultimately decides? Is that something that comes to the SC, does the subcommittee decide? It took a lot of time to work through that in the subcommittee. In response, A Huber thinks that going to the SC would take up a lot of time for the SC to work through. W. Anderson concludes his comments stating that we just need to have clear expectations and try to be as inclusive as possible.

A. Huber: That could be one potential drawback of online tracker is all can see what get's added or tracked. It becomes public who might get cut or excluded as far as the decision process.

P. Hutton: That's a key part of the issue. We need to be comfortable with our decision making process. There's no guarantee that a session submittal is approved. The subcommittee has done a good job trying to fit everybody in. With more proposed talks and sessions, the other side of the coin is that we may have to turn away people. Do we want that process to be out in the open online?

S. Chowdhury asks that if people submit their request through Google forms, does it have to all be "seen" out there by anyone online?

N. Sandhu responds that yes, this can be done either way. He doesn't see it as an either-or; we keep doing what we can and then when we get to a point where we need to adjust the process we can do so.

P. Hutton: The Annual Meeting Subcommittee can have a lot of latitude in how they approach the solicitation and process of consideration. Further, he cautions that the less responsibility that is put on the moderators, the more responsibility shifts to the subcommittee (or SC as backstop). SC can let the subcommittee have a lot of latitude in terms of delegating decisions on the program.

SC decides that email message content for soliciting volunteers for the 2021 Annual Meeting is delegated to the Annual Meeting Subcommittee, they are to draft the message. P. Hutton comments that it would be best to come up with a decision on the format soon. S. Tanaka: proposes that, we wait until beginning of next year for the 2021 call for sessions, finish 2020 AM before we send messages out to 2021 given AM is not until June to minimize confusion. A. Huber asks when would we need abstracts in by? March? P. Hutton replies that by March or April, the agenda should be pretty well formed up for the June meeting. If all volunteer submissions are in by March 1st that would be 3.5 months before June. ED (P. Hutton) reminds that in the past we called for moderators and sessions 6 months before the meeting. Consensus is to wait until 2021 to send the message.

5. 2021 ANNUAL MEETING: PREPARATION (Chowdhury)

○ Sessions Subcommittee Volunteers:

Ideal we'd get the full subcommittee formed or at least the select chair because we have them tasked with drafting and email and consider developing the Google forms.
W. Anderson describes the responsibilities based on past experience. The subcommittee had to gather information, make decisions about the schedule, communicate with session chairs, and it is time sensitive to complete the work. Communicating with moderators to develop the schedule is a core responsibility. There are other issues, coordinating with keynote speaker (T. Kadir has already taken carry of that for 2021). Developing the theme also is a responsibility. ED (P. Hutton) also communicates that he provides support to the subcommittee by providing a lot of admin support to the subcommittee, help with email communications, assembling the program, develop a mock up into typical format, printing out materials. What the subcommittee spent a lot of time with was negotiation with moderators and participants/volunteers.

P. Hutton notes that we currently have developed a standardized spreadsheet with slots for information to enter such as title, individual names, collaborators, are they willing to share the info online and box for an abstract. Worst case, if we don't pull together an idea for an online submittal, we do have a standardized form we can work with. A Huber responds that the standardized form was used last year to get more detailed information from presenters after they had already dropped in their suggestions. Perhaps if the form was used to begin with it may have helped to smoothed out some of the decision process. K. Heidel: commented that the WORD template was cumbersome and so EXCEL was a better way to go to get the information we needed.

W. Anderson agrees to continue to participate in the subcommittee and agrees to be interim subcommittee chair. A. Huber volunteers to also continue to serve on the subcommittee. N. Johns agrees to participate as well. A. Constantino volunteers to help with the spreadsheet and the Google forms communication.

Subcommittee is charged to coordinate with ED (P. Hutton) to get the solicitation email sent out in the first week of January (ACTION ITEM).

- Awards Subcommittee Volunteers
  ED (P. Hutton) gives a brief recap on subcommittee duties. The Subcommittee reviews nomination submissions, makes a recommendation to the steering committee, and drafts the language for the award certificates.

  G. Nichol, and J. Jankowski volunteer to be on awards subcommittee. T. Kadir is not in attendance, however, SC assumes that he will act as chair in his role as past convener according to tradition. ED (P. Hutton) to send email to T. Kadir and verify he will serve as chair for the awards subcommittee (ACTION ITEM). B Geske also volunteers to round out the subcommittee with four members.

- Officer candidates
  CWEMF will need to fill convener and vice convener roles. S. Tanaka agrees to stay in role of Treasurer. B. Bray agrees to stay on as Secretary. Convener and Vice Convener roles should be a member of the Steering Committee. ED (P. Hutton) to send out descriptions of officer roles and solicit SC volunteers for the vice convener and convener role (ACTION ITEM).
Keynote speaker (reported on by T. Kadir in prior August 28 SC meeting)  
S. Chowdhury to verify with T. Kadir that Mr. Arax is informed of the dates reserved for the annual meeting in 2021 (ACTION ITEM).

Theme  
SC Members discuss selection of the Theme in past years.  
Theme we came up with for the 2020 meeting was the following:  
*Water Resilience: Developing a Comprehensive Strategy to Meet the Water Needs of California Communities, The Economy, and the Environment*  
S. Chowdhury suggests members read Mr. Arax’s book and send in ideas for the theme to the Annual Meeting subcommittee.

ED (P. Hutton) follow-up email call for award nominations (*tabled for January; no further discussion*)

6. ED REVIEW OF WEBSITE CONTENT (Hutton): (Attachment 6-1)

ED (P. Hutton) introduces the topic and refers to his draft report in the agenda packet (Attachment 6-1). ED (P. Hutton) reviews the next steps recommendations beginning with delegating responsibility to a subcommittee to review the report to take actions on recommendations in the report. ED (P. Hutton) wants to make clear that our webmaster should be able to implement the actions recommended in the report.

The second recommendation is that the website subcommittee should systematically and frequently review the website. A lot of missing outdated or bad information was found when reviewing website content. For example, PowerPoint presentations from past Annual Meetings were posted on our website but are no longer there. Given the new world we are in, the website is a key hub for sharing information. The website needs to be actively maintained and accurate.

Last recommendation is that responsibilities for updating website content should be clearly defined. Sometimes the ED (P. Hutton) takes the lead, sometimes others like N. Sandhu take the lead. It would be good to formalize responsibilities.

S. Chowdhury asks about the website subcommittee. The subcommittee was composed of T. Kadir and N. Sandhu when it was updated about five years ago. The subcommittee was more active at that time. Call for volunteers to join the subcommittee. In response C. Liu from the SWRCB volunteers to serve. B. Bray also volunteered as he sees a role for Secretary in the website update project. S. Tanaka also requests to join the subcommittee.

K. Nam reported that he was also active in the subcommittee focused on the website, which was formed over a year ago. He feels it is a good point in time to review the contents of the website in light of the recommendations and update as necessary.

P. Hutton also adds that in his experience, the Webmaster has been very responsive and his rate is a bargain for his services. From that standpoint, as long as we provide structured guidance,
our arrangement is working well. The SC needs to review the recommendations and take action as the subcommittee sees fit and stay on top of regular maintenance and content review.

Subcommittee to meet, ED (P. Hutton) will be invited to the first meeting to discuss his report and recommendations with the subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet to confer and will report out to the SC. In closing remarks to spark some input and additional interest in the subcommittee, N. Sandhu asks if there is anything else the subcommittee should cover? Should it encompass a Wiki? What about storage of documents? If anyone is interested in these issues related to the website, they are encouraged to come to the initial meeting and then they can decide if they would like to be a regular attendee. B. Geske volunteers as he would like to be a part of the Wiki conversation.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. MODELING PROTOCOLS (Satkowski)

Modeling protocols -- Work is ongoing. Subcommittee expects to have a 2nd draft to the subcommittee submitted in the next few weeks in early December. Then there will be another round of revisions. Pending those revisions, there will be a third—and hopefully final—draft out by the end of December or the first week of January. Once the final draft is completed, the subcommittee will hold a workshop online to solicit public comment sometime in February.

P. Hutton comments that there will be a possibility to submit an abstract to the Delta Science conference by Dec. 28th on this project if there is interest.

8. WORKSHOPS (Satkowski): Attachment 8-1

R. Satkowski reports that there is no new news on conducting workshops; the plan is to work on organizing some workshops for after the 1st of the new year. Look for online workshops in 2021. He discussed a recommendation from the technical workshop subcommittee to develop a policy for incentivizing individuals and organizations to conduct a workshop via scholarship award (see Attachment 8-1).

The motivation for developing the policy is a goal for our organization to increase the number of workshops and encourage more diversity in the type of workshops offered. To incentivize this, the subcommittee has developed the recommendation included in Attachment 8-1. Details of the proposal are provided in terms of award and considerations around the financial award.

Proposal was discussed by the SC, however, there are complications with developing the policy. Proposal was made to modify the recommended policy dropping the workshop part of the proposal and make it a free registration for the annual meeting. Decision was ultimately made to table the proposal at this time pending revisions to clarify the recommended policy language. The recommendation will be modified and posted on Google Docs for SC members to review and access. R. Satkowski to work with ED (P. Hutton) to get the subcommittee recommendation to the SC posted on CWEMF Google docs account (ACTION ITEM). Once posted, members will have time to review and modify the proposal as necessary for a set period of time. Then the
SC plans on proceeding with an online vote with deadline for the vote submission pending the review and comment period.

At this time 12:01pm Convener tables the remaining two items to be first up on the agenda for the next SC meeting in January 2021 (ACTION ITEM). Convener states that we need to adjourn the meeting given other commitments.

9. WEBSITE UPDATE (Sandhu) 
(Tabled for Jan. 17, 2021)

10. MODEL USER GROUPS (Sandhu) 
(Tabled for Jan. 17, 2021)

11. OTHER BUSINESS (All)

N. Sandhu requests that B. Geske have an agenda item in January to report on what the Integrated Modeling Steering Committee (IMSC) is proposing for user groups (ACTION ITEM).


13. ADJOURN – SC Meeting adjourned at 12:03pm

Respectfully Submitted
Ben Bray, Secretary, CWEMF

ATTENDANCE
Shyamal Chowdbury Convener Corps of Engineers
Paul Hutton Executive Director Tetra Tech
Stacy Tanaka Treasurer Watercourse Engr.
Ben Bray Secretary EBMUD
Anne Huber ICF
Rich Satkowski Public Member
Ben Geske Delta Science
George Nichol Public Member
Nicky Sandhu DWR
Jesse Jankowski SWRCB
Ana K. Constantino FlowWest
Katherine Heidel Tetra Tech
Kijin Nam DWR
N. Johns DWR
Chloe Liu SWRCB

Proxies: B. Bray is designated as proxy for M. Deas, and N. Sandhu is designated as proxy for T. Kadir.

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<td>• Equipment Inventory – Needs to be updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Storage of Documents – What and where needs to be formulated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>