

CALIFORNIA WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODELING FORUM

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

For July 21, 2023

(This meeting was conducted via Zoom meeting with call in number)

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| Action Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• J. Jankowski to modify the Annual Meeting program, to add hyperlinks to the pdf versions of the MS PowerPoint files and then share the pdf with the Website Subcommittee for posting with the webmaster.• Website subcommittee tasked with producing an estimate of total volunteer hours to edit the 2023 CWEMF Annual Meeting video recordings for posting and provide a recommendation regarding resource needs to complete the task within three months of the annual meeting for future reference.• J. Jankowski to share his up-to-date list of Annual Meeting presenters that opted out of posting their presentations with the Website Subcommittee to verify that the videos for these individuals are not posted on the CWEMF website.• Secretary B. Bray to work with ED P. Hutton to develop a list of Subcommittees with the corresponding chairs, solicit information regarding subcommittee meeting frequency, and a current list of Steering Committee members. |
| Motions Passed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Motion to accept the June 2, 2023 SC Meeting Minutes by T. Slaweki, seconded by J. Medellin-Azuara, was unanimously approved (18-0-0) |

REFERENCES INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET:

1. Attachment 2-1: Executive Director’s Report for the July 21, 2023 Steering Committee Meeting. 1p.
2. Attachment 2-2*: Minutes of the Steering Committee for June 2, 2022. 9p.
3. Attachment 2-3: End of Fiscal Year 2022 Treasurer’s Report. 2p.
4. Attachment 6-1: Student Scholarship Awards Proposal. 5p.
5. Attachment 11-1: CWEMF Steering Committee Meeting July 23, 2023 Subcommittee on Workshops. 1p.

1. INTRODUCTIONS/DESIGNATION OF QUORUM

At 9:34 Convener J. Jankowski declared a quorum with 16 participants and the executive director. It was noted that K. Nam has N. Sandhu’s proxy; A. Huber has S. Tanaka's proxy; and T. Kadir is designated proxy for A. Khan.

2. CONSENT CALENDAR

- a. Executive Director’s Report [20:46]
ED P. Hutton refers to the executive director’s report (Attachment 2-1). ED P. Hutton reports that he was able to lock in a reservation with Lake Natoma Inn for April 15-17, 2024 for the next CWEMF Annual Meeting. A deposit has been placed to hold the dates and reserve the meeting rooms.

J. Jankowski reports that a letter of appreciation was sent to Mrs. Fischer on June 16, 2023 regarding the renewed Hugo B. Fischer award endowment.

b. Secretary's Report

Secretary B. Bray opens with the second consent item, referring to the June 2, 2023 meeting minutes sent out Friday July 14th to the SC (Attachment 2-2*). Secretary B. Bray noted that there seemed to be more participation in the reviews via Google Docs. He thanked the SC members that took the time to review and provide input. Motion to accept the June 2, 2023 SC Meeting Minutes by T. Slawecki, seconded by J. Medellin-Azuara, was unanimously approved (18-0-0).

Secretary B. Bray closed by briefly reporting that he will try out a new app called Otter.io that converts a sound recording into a rough transcript form. The goal is to reduce the time necessary to produce SC minutes and post the draft minutes within a week or two of the SC meeting.

c. Treasurer's Report

ED P. Hutton for Treasurer S. Tanaka refers to Attachment 2-3 in the agenda packet. FY 2022—the first fiscal year post-pandemic—shows net revenue is up compared to the previous two fiscal years.

ED P. Hutton reports that Treasurer S. Tanaka plans to file CWEMF's taxes after returning from vacation. Treasurer S. Tanaka will file digitally using the software purchased last year for this purpose, as required by the Internal Revenue Service.

One of the CDs with Live Oak Bank has matured, and Treasurer S. Tanaka plans to roll over the principal and interest accrued into another 12-month term. Treasurer S. Tanaka is still researching options with another bank for a third CD. She plans to open this account with the target maturation date of September so this CD and the other CDs will have staggered maturation dates throughout the year.

T. Slawecki, Y. Sun, Treasurer S. Tanaka, and ED P. Hutton convened a meeting of the budget subcommittee on July 13th, 2023. T. Slawecki provides the report summarizing the takeaways from the subcommittee meeting.

The current budget process is good and is consistent with our level of activities. T. Slawecki reports that the Budget Subcommittee concluded that there is not a need to have a more formal budget development and reporting process than current practice if our plans are to continue with business as usual. A formalized budget development and approval process can underscore things or activities that CWEMF wants to emphasize as important. The key question follows: what does CWEMF want to, or what should CWEMF, emphasize?

Looking at the budget report, with a substantial balance in the bank that has been steadily increasing notwithstanding the losses that occurred due to the pandemic, he wonders what can or should we be doing with our funds to advance our mission? There is a lack of clarity on exactly what CWEMF wants to emphasize above and beyond what we are currently

doing. The annual meeting and the workshops are actions CWEMF is currently routinely engaged in that are consistent with the organization's mission; but is there another level? Are there other aspects of our mission that we should be emphasizing and working on? That is not a question for the Budget Subcommittee, rather, this is a strategic planning question. In conclusion, the discussion at the budget committee led to underlining the importance of the discussions at the SC recently regarding strategic planning.

T. Slawecki recognizes that, if the SC wants to emphasize the importance of a strategic planning process, perhaps a line item for the budget could be funding towards a retreat. If the SC decides to put funding towards a retreat, this action shows that the SC values a strategic planning exercise; it is an important activity worthy of our investment in the long term so CWEMF can move ahead and advance our mission.

G. Reis comments that he too recognizes that revenues are exceeding expenses in most years. G. Reis continues with an apt analogy of the account as a reservoir that will never spill, with inflow exceeding outflow. Continuing with the analogy, he asks what would a controlled release look like? Stating that this is a question of equity, he suggests lowering fees for other non-profits or students to participate, making workshops more affordable, or perhaps making scholarships available for underrepresented groups.

Convener J. Jankowski closes the discussion thanking P. Hutton and T. Slawecki for their reports and G. Reis for thoughts, adding that he expects there to be further discussion on these topics raised under items 5 and 6 on the agenda.

ACTION ITEMS

3. 2023 ANNUAL MEETING PRESENTATION ARCHIVE (N. SANDHU)

- Audio-Video Recordings

K. Nam reports that he and the webmaster are still working to complete posting all the 2023 Annual Meeting videos. Most of the work has been completed for prepping the videos. The webmaster is working on posting the video links to the website.

- PowerPoint Presentations [39:25]

J. Jankowski reports that all the MS PowerPoint files authorized for posting have been collected. J. Jankowski is tasked with modifying/updating the Annual Meeting program¹, to add hyperlinks to the pdfs of MS PowerPoint files. (ACTION ITEM)

N. Johns asks whether the SC should allocate some funding to speed up the video editing process. K. Nam responds that he has already completed most of the editing. From his experience, the task is not difficult but time consuming. The editing could be outsourced, perhaps, and he will discuss the idea with N. Sandhu.

¹ Available online: <https://cwemf.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CWEMF-2023-Annual-Meeting-Program.pdf>.

T. Kadir wonders if more volunteer support could be leveraged and a deadline for posting within three months of the meeting could be set. T. Kadir asks K. Nam to elaborate on his volunteer experience, how long does it take to synchronize the audio and edit a video? K. Nam responds that one meeting day takes several hours to synchronize the sound and video and chop the file up into individual talks. K. Nam and T. Kadir make a rough estimate of the time it takes to edit an individual talk; given there were three meeting days, with roughly four sessions per day and about four presentations per session, assuming it takes about eight hours for 16 presentations, that would work out to about 30 minutes per talk. After additional discussion it was agreed to try to meet a three-month deadline using volunteers without having to go to an outside vendor for assistance.

Though some people may have limited experience with video editing of their own personal videos, most people do not know what is involved with the annual meeting video editing effort. Members may be reluctant to help because they may think it is difficult or simply not know what is involved. Perhaps a mini workshop would be helpful to educate members. Secretary B. Bray adds that our Zoom account could be used to record a demo of a volunteer going through the editing process. The recording could be edited and could serve as a short training video for folks that want to volunteer, providing the steps necessary to complete the editing task and prepare the videos for posting. T. Slawewski wonders if CWEMF might take on an intern and this could be a good area where they could help, adding that they may have the background and interest to assist in the project effort.

J. Jankowski requests that the Website Subcommittee provide an estimate of the total volunteer hours it took to edit the videos [this year] and the website subcommittee's recommendation on whether some funding resources may be necessary to be able to get the videos up within three months of the annual meeting. (ACTION ITEM)

J. Jankowski will share his up-to-date list of speakers that opted out of posting their presentations with K. Nam and the Website Subcommittee to verify that the videos for these individual talks are not posted, commenting that there were a few changes from the preferences that were published in the program. (ACTION ITEM)

4. 2024 ANNUAL MEETING PREPARATION (P. HUTTON)

- 2024 Meeting Dates – April 15-17

ED P. Hutton reports that the first-choice dates (April 22-24) were unavailable; however, the second choice dates (April 15-17) were available and are locked in with a deposit. The 2024 Annual Meeting is set for April 15th, 16th, and 17th at Lake Natoma Inn.

- Program Subcommittee – Volunteers & Scope of Responsibility

ED P. Hutton opens the agenda item with a renewed call for volunteers for the Annual Meeting Subcommittee. N. Johns, A. Huber, and K. Heidel volunteer to serve on the Annual Meeting Subcommittee. The first activity the subcommittee will need to decide is

firming up their role. In the past year, the subcommittee took on an advisory role with day-to-day logistics and planning delegated to ED P. Hutton. This arrangement went smoothly.

N. Johns comments that there is an immense amount of work going on in California with respect to ecological and biological studies that have a bearing on water resources and water quality modeling and management. N. Johns elaborates that he is thinking of ecosystem models, statistical models, and life cycle models. This realm of California modeling is not well represented in CWEMF. N. Johns recommends that members make an effort to cultivate relationships with individuals working in this realm as that is something he is interested in pursuing as a member of the Annual Meeting Subcommittee.

- Registration Fees

ED P. Hutton opens the item by asking whether the SC would like to take up an item to review the CWEMF annual meeting registration fees. One member commented that the annual meeting registration fee has not been a contentious issue at their organization, a public agency, although prospective attendees are required to take advantage of the early bird registration rate. ED P. Hutton closes noting that the SC will start planning discussions for the next annual meeting in September and the Annual Meeting Subcommittee would be more active following initial discussions.

5. FOLLOW-UP ON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATIONS (J. JANKOWSKI)

- Strategic Plan

J. Jankowski recaps the discussion from the last meeting captured in the June 2, 2023² SC Meeting Minutes. ED P. Hutton builds on the discussion, adding that he recommends the strategic planning effort be done as an offsite retreat based on the prior strategic planning experience. The first task would be to form the list of people that would like to be involved. If ED P. Hutton has the list of folks, then he could pursue organizing that meeting and looking at possible venues and associated costs.

The discussion regarding formalizing the organization's financial planning process and budget is linked to the strategic plan discussion. The SC would not want to discuss funding a task or initiative simply because the organization has disposable funds available. Rather, the SC should pursue a task or initiative based on how it fits within CWEMF's strategic plan.

J. Jankowski adds that a facilitator was recommended to assist in the strategic planning process as part of the prior discussion in June. T. Kadir expresses his concurrence with this suggestion of hiring an outside facilitator based on his professional experience with the Department of Water Resources on other efforts.

ED P. Hutton reminds the SC that CWEMF will not be starting from a clean slate. CWEMF has a Mission Statement and a Strategic Plan. The participants in the strategic

² Under item 4 Executive Director Recommendations for 2023-24.

planning process would be looking to review the high-level goals and see if they are still relevant or need updating. The difficult work in the strategic planning process will be outlining the actions the CWEMF organization will take in the near term, an action plan.

Reviewing the mission statement was also suggested as part of the strategic planning effort as well. In any strategic planning effort, the mission statement is generally on the table. Additionally, the consideration of expenditures and budget planning for the activities and associated planning efforts is also part of the scope of the strategic planning exercise. Financial planning should be consistent with the strategic plan and action plan guiding what CWEMF is doing as an organization. The goal of the strategic planning exercise is giving the organization a framework for future activities, budget expenditures, and workshops.

One member asked when the last strategic plan was adopted. ED P. Hutton recalled that the general membership approved the last Strategic Plan in 2015³.

- **Chronicle CWEMF History**

A. Huber reports that there is no new information to report because the Subcommittee did not meet.

J. Jankowski asks about collecting previous CWEMF Annual Meeting programs that are not online as part of the effort. T. Kadir also recommends an oral history be included as part of the effort via interviews with past CWEMF Executive Directors and/or Conveners.

T. Kadir asks whether there is a list of the CWEMF subcommittees available that includes the subcommittee chairs and how often they meet. This information would be helpful to make available through the website. J. Jankowski agrees, noting such a list would also be helpful for conducting the SC meeting. After further discussion ED P. Hutton commented that he had a list circa 2020. The approved SC minutes over the past few years would help to document any changes and chairs of the subcommittees also. Secretary B. Bray will work with ED P. Hutton to develop a list of Subcommittees with the corresponding chairs and solicit information regarding subcommittee meeting frequency and produce a current list of CWEMF Steering Committee members. (ACTION ITEM)

6. STUDENT/SCHOLAR FELLOWSHIP PROPOSAL (J. MEDELLIN-AZUARA ATT. 6-1):

J. Medellin-Azuara reports on the Student/Scholar Fellowship Proposal in Attachment 6-1. He had prepared an initial proposal that was discussed in prior SC meetings. J. Medellin-Azuara received constructive feedback from the membership and has incorporated the input he received into the revised proposal included in the agenda packet (Attachment 6-1). The motivation for the proposal is to recognize students that constitute the future generations of water professionals and environmental modelers that will be leading the landscape in the next decade or two. This creates an opportunity to recognize their effort and keep them motivated

³ The CWEMF Strategic Plan is dated March 9, 2015.

and part of our community. Other organizations have similar programs to celebrate their young professionals, such as the American Society of Civil Engineers, American Geophysical Union, and the American Water Resources Association.

The proposal is to have three awards that would be added to the set of awards CWEMF confers each year at the annual meeting: best student applied water and environmental modeling research, best oral presentation, and best poster presentation. There are some logistical challenges in all of them.

The student or recent graduate⁴ award for applied research or project would be selected from a group of nominated students. Nominations would be submitted for an individual that has completed or is in the process of completing a thesis, dissertation, and/or peer reviewed publications for creative and original research that furthers the application of modeling tools for water and environmental management in California. The award would include a certificate of recognition, a monetary—amount yet to be determined—stipend, and a certificate to attend a CWEMF workshop. The student awards could be integrated with the current awards ceremony at the annual meeting. A request for nominations for the student award for applied research can be included with the call for nominations for the Hugo Fischer and Career Achievement Awards sent to the membership.

For the best oral presentation, judges would be recruited from members attending the annual meeting. Perhaps we can add an “opt in” field to indicate a registrant’s desire to be considered for the award or as a judge with the criteria included as part of the registration process as is done for other similar organizational meetings. This would require some effort to integrate with registration and capture the information provided by those registering. A rubric could be provided to volunteer judges with instructions and the awards subcommittee could compile the information and select a winner. An example rubric for judging student oral presentation from the College of Science at Purdue University is included in the agenda packet for reference.

The third award proposed is the best poster presentation. Again, judges would come through an “opt-in” option as part of their registration process. Judges would evaluate the poster on a range of criteria that could include their interaction experience with the student presenter. An example rubric is also provided in the agenda packet.

All three awards would include a certificate of recognition, a monetary award, and a certificate to attend a CWEMF workshop (*i.e.*, in lieu of registration fee). J. Medellin-Azuara put the amounts as tentative/to be determined with an initial estimate provided. The stipend would be nominal and should be easy to accommodate; however, including some nominal monetary award makes a significant difference for incentivizing students typically living on a budget.

Some additional considerations as follows. The student awards proposals would increase the responsibility of the Awards Subcommittee. Perhaps this can be addressed by increasing the subcommittee size from three to four or five members. Time allocation during the awards

⁴ Defined as an individual attending the Annual Meeting within one year of their conferred degree.

ceremony is yet another matter for consideration. The ability for judges or students to opt-in as appropriate for either judging or applying for the awards as part of the registration process would need to be addressed. Also, the timing and means for distributing the awards, particularly the oral and poster awards given the judging would occur during the meeting and possibly up to the last session on the last day, which would occur *after* the awards ceremony. On this latter issue of timing, T. Kadir suggested that the awards get presented at the next annual meeting. The winners can be announced in a follow-up email to the membership with other information recapping the annual meeting and the presentation of the award(s) can be done as part of the next annual meeting.

Suggested next steps (as listed in Attachment 6-1) are highlighted concluding the report out. The first step is to form an ad-hoc Student Award Committee (SAC) that will develop the call for nominations, rubrics, roles and responsibilities, and timelines as well as work through additional next steps outlined in the attachment. T. Kadir, J. Jankowski, and B. Bray express their support and volunteer for the SAC, with J. Medellin-Azuara agreeing to serve as chair.

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. BRANDING SUBCOMMITTEE (A. KHAN)

[A. Khan absent, no report given.]

8. WEBSITE UPDATE (K. NAM)

The website Subcommittee has not met recently. As reported earlier, most CWEMF video recordings from the annual meeting have been processed and prepared for posting. There may be a few sessions left to process. The edited videos have been uploaded to YouTube. The webmaster is posting links to the YouTube files on the website. K. Nam reports that there has been a revision to all the CWEMF award pages to update them to add content and ensure the information is current as of the most recent annual meeting.

K. Nam reports that he is also looking into opening an organizational account with Google. CWEMF members or officers would have access to official accounts rather than a personal account. K. Nam is going through the process to verify CWEMF's non-profit status.

9. MODEL USER GROUPS (NAM)

K. Nam reports that the summer DMUG meeting has been canceled. The next DMUG meeting will be scheduled for September or October.

J. Jankowski gives kudos to DWR staff for the recent DSM2 training.

10. DSC INTEGRATED MODELING STEERING COMMITTEE (IMSC) UPDATE (GESKE)

B. Geske reports he and his colleagues have completed a synthesis report on the recent integrated environmental modeling workshop meeting. The Delta Science Team is pulling the last bit of information and videos together supporting the release of the report. They are

planning for a public release on Wednesday July 26th to go out on their listserv. B. Geske will also send a link to ED P. Hutton for disseminating the information to CWEMF members.

B. Geske reports that they are also working on an update for the IMSC website with the Delta Stewardship Council. The IMSC has met its charge and they are looking to rebrand this subcommittee as the Integrated Modeling Framework (IMF) Effort. When the link goes out for access to the workshop summary and videos, there will be a link to the website that will have information about the updated committee effort. Part of their next steps will be some one-on-one interviews to expand, to follow-up, and explore some of the details and great ideas from the workshop with some individuals. B. Geske anticipates they will look to engage with about ten to twenty individuals that will help them move forward from a conceptual phase to an implementation phase. The synthesis report and follow-up interviews will then go into white paper on the topic that will go out to a much broader group of professionals in the modeling, managing, and decision-making community with a call to action.

B. Geske closes noting that this standing item on the agenda can be updated, therefore, to Integrated Modeling Framework Effort and he can provide updates in future SC meetings.

11. WORKSHOPS

T. Kadir opens his report referring to Attachment 11-1 Subcommittee on Workshops report, in the agenda packet, adding there is no significant update in status to the workshops listed.

T. Kadir continues to work with Jon Herman at UCD on planning for a workshop focused on machine learning and sensitivity analysis with SALib software library. They are considering an introductory, pre-requisite workshop on basic programming with Python as well. They are planning for introductory level workshops for some time in the fall or winter 2023.

J. Jankowski expresses interest in the fifth workshop listed under **Workshops in the Conceptual Stage** titled Unimpaired and Natural Flows workshop. J. Jankowski also notes that DWR recently conducted a workshop on DSM2 that reportedly worked out well; should DSM2, therefore, be taken off the list under Workshops in the Conceptual Stage or perhaps there are more to come. The recent DSM2 workshop was in-part hands on and partly on-line.

K. Nam responds affirmatively that DWR expects to conduct additional DSM2 workshops. Elaborating, they found there is not a lot of interest for multi-day workshops and decided to go with shorter, focused workshop content. The DWR modeling group plans to conduct additional workshops with the shorter module format with more information coming soon. Kevin He is the DWR staff member leading the effort. T. Kadir suggests that DSM2 and SCHISM be removed from the list as these were placeholders and it seems that DWR is now pursuing these workshops outside of CWEMF.

Regarding the Unimpaired and Natural Flows workshop, T. Kadir states that he is awaiting a report on the subject that is currently under review to be finalized. Once the report has been finalized, is publicly released, and made available on the web, T. Kadir plans to move forward with planning the workshop and envisions engaging with SWRCB staff to ensure

that a range of perspectives go into the workshop planning effort. He anticipates that this workshop would likely come later at the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024.

J. Traum provides a brief update on the CVHM2 workshop. The CVHM2 workshop is still in the conceptual stage. USGS staff have completed the model and are drafting the report. Once the report goes through their internal review process and is officially published, he plans to move forward with the planning for the CVHM2 workshop.

12. OTHER BUSINESS (ALL)

Convener J. Jankowski noted that the last two SC meetings have been online only. Solano Irrigation District (SID) has made the generous offer to use their meeting room at their Vacaville office free of charge for the CWEMF SC to meet in-person. Convener J. Jankowski is hopeful that we can get enough folks to RSVP to attend future SC meetings in person to take advantage of this opportunity. Another member adds to the discussion that their federal organization has guidelines in place that prioritizes the on-line option for meeting attendance over an in-person option. If a hybrid meeting is offered, therefore, their policy is to utilize the online option over in-person. Convener J. Jankowski responds that this shared perspective is good input, and he anticipates an online option would continue to be available for the foreseeable future. Convener J. Jankowski's concern shared by others is that if CWEMF continues to conduct SC meetings with all members attending online, the SC may lose the opportunity to use the meeting room at the SID office without charge. Another member comments that they appreciate the option for meeting in-person, adding that although they are slow to RSVP, they do like having the option to attend in-person. Yet another member adds that the refreshments and occasional lunch option certainly help incentivize in-person attendance as well.

13. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING:

September 15, 2023.

12. ADJOURN – 11:23 pm

Respectfully Submitted
Ben Bray, Secretary, CWEMF

ATTENDANCE

Jesse Jankowski
Vivek Bedekar
Paul Hutton
Ben Bray
Tariq Kadir
Anne Huber
Ben Geske
Greg Reis
John DeGeorge
Jon Traum
Josue Medellin-Azuara
Katherine Heidel
Kijin Nam
Mike Deas
Norman Johns
Shyamal Chowdhury
Tad Slawecki
Will Anderson

Convener
Vice Convener
Executive Director
Secretary
Past Convener

SWRCB
S.S. Papadopoulos & Assoc.
Tetra Tech
EBMUD
DWR
ICF
DSP
Bay Institute
RMA
USGS
UC Merced
Tetra Tech
DWR
Watercourse Engr.
SWRCB
US Army Corps of Engineers
LimnoTech
CCWD

Proxies: A. Huber is designated proxy for S. Tanaka. K. Nam is designated as proxy for N. Sandhu. T. Kadir is designated proxy for A. Khan.