

CALIFORNIA WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODELING FORUM

**MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

For January 19, 2024

*(This meeting was conducted online via Zoom meeting)*

Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Director Paul Hutton to contact Lake Natomas Inn, inquire about rescheduling and application of deposit to October but will seek to avoid the week of Oct 14<sup>th</sup> given the federal holiday.</li><li>• ED P Hutton to report to Convener J. Jankowski on the feasibility for conducting the annual meeting if no State employees could attend.</li><li>• J. Jankowski to work with ED P. Hutton to craft a message to all CWEMF annual meeting submitters (presenters and session chairs) inquiring about their willingness to move their proposed session and/or talk to October.</li></ul>
Motions Passed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• N. Johns moves to approve the November 17 SC minutes with proposed revisions, seconded by V. Bedekar, was unanimously approved (22-0-0).</li><li>• T. Kadir moves to reschedule the CWEMF annual meeting from April 2024 to October 2024 pending availability with the venue Lake Natomas Inn, B. Geske seconds the motion, J. Jankowski proceeds with a roll call vote and the motion carries (16-6-0).</li></ul>

**REFERENCES INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET:**

1. Attachment 2-1: Executive Director’s Report For the January 19, 2024 Steering Committee Meeting. 1p.
2. Attachment 2-2: Draft Minutes of the Steering Committee for November 17, 2023. 13p.
3. Attachment 2-2\*: Final Review Draft of Steering Committee Minutes, November 17, 2023. 13p
4. Attachment 2-3: Treasurer’s Report, FY 2023, SC Meeting: January 19, 2024. 1p.
5. Attachment 3-1: 2024 Annual Meeting Draft Program. 21p.
6. Attachment 3-2: Draft Agenda 2024 Annual Meeting 30th Anniversary Plenary Session. Monday, April 15, 2024 10:30 am – 12:15 pm. 1p.
7. Attachment 3-3: 2024 Annual Meeting Sponsors. 1p.
8. Attachment 3-4: Alternative 2014 CWEMF Annual Meeting Themes. 1p.

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**1. INTRODUCTIONS/DESIGNATE QUORUM REVIEW ACTION ITEMS**

At 9:34, Convener J. Jankowski calls the meeting to order with twenty-two members and the executive director on the Zoom meeting platform. Convener J. Jankowski welcomes those in attendance extending a happy new year to all explaining that there was not enough interest in the in-person meeting where participation is fully through the Zoom platform.

Convener J. Jankowski reviews the action items from the November 17, 2023 SC meeting.

## 2. CONSENT CALENDAR

### a. Executive Director's Report

The CWEMF Executive Director P. Hutton refers to Attachment 2-1. He reminds SC members that the membership year is now on a calendar year and encourages members to pay their dues. Organizational dues invoices have been sent out and have been paid by two firms, RMA and ICF. Convener J. Jankowski reports on his organization's progress to pay their dues through a contract exemption process.

### b. Secretary's Report

Secretary B. Bray reports that a marked-up draft was included in the agenda packet. Additional comments were received and consolidated into a final review draft that was sent out to the SC via email on Wednesday January 17<sup>th</sup> for final review with 13 pages total.

N. Johns requests several clarifications to the minutes. N. Johns moves to approve the minutes given the proposed revisions, seconded by V. Bedekar, was unanimously approved (22-0-0).

Secretary Bray reports that the website meeting minutes archive has been updated up through approved meeting minutes to September 2023 including business meeting minutes for 2021 and 2022. Secretary B. Bray also requested that webmaster update the officer's webpage, which was completed and is now current.

### c. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer S. Tanaka is not in attendance and hopefully enjoying a nice vacation. She prepared and submitted a report for the agenda packet. The SC reviewed the Treasurer's report (Attachment 2-3). There was no additional comment or discussion.

## ACTION ITEMS

### 3. 2024 ANNUAL MEETING PREPARATION (ED P. HUTTON)

- Status of State Travel Restrictions (T. Kadir)

In late December, California State government announced a budget freeze that affected all State agencies including the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). DWR circulated a memo providing guidance under the conditions of the budget freeze announcing restrictions on expenses. The memo included restrictions on travel as well as attending meetings and conferences. T. Kadir comments that the Modeling Support Office is State Water Project funded and may not be subject to the same restrictions as other parts of DWR that receive funding through the general fund. T. Kadir has put in a request with DWR management to seek an exemption to pay the organizational dues to CWEMF and to attend the annual meeting (AM). However, he is still working through the process and has not received a decision yet regarding his request. Personally, he is not sure whether attendance will be approved and

suspects the restrictions will broadly affect the ability of many departments and divisions within DWR to be able to attend the AM.

J. Jankowski confirms that the SWRCB is also affected by the budget freeze as their agency is funded through the State's general fund. Although the SWRCB typically has less attendees than DWR, they too will likely require a specific exemption to attend. J. Jankowski reports that they are also pursuing an exemption to be able to attend the CWEMF AM. J. Jankowski is hopeful that his agency will be permitted to send five to ten individuals, perhaps not as many as would have requested to attend. He reiterates that the State's budget letter does call out restrictions on State employees to conferences specifically, which will make it difficult to obtain approvals. Ultimately, the decision will come down to the internal division that processes these approvals. The ruling on the exemption is still pending. J. Jankowski reports that he and his colleagues at SWRCB are going through a separate process to seek approval to pay their annual organizational dues as well. J. Jankowski makes clear he is committed to attending the CWEMF AM even if he has to take personal leave and attend on his own time.

B. Geske confirms that the same is happening within the Delta Science Program. He is being asked for justification for dues and meetings where he is finding a strong requirement to show that the expense is "mission critical." Others SC members that are employed by State agencies concur.

With a quarter to one third of the presenters and session organizers belonging to State agencies, it would be a big impact if agencies cannot attend the AM in April. Moving the meeting online may not improve the situation depending upon if there is a fee to attend and because it would still involve employee time to attend. Postponing the AM to later in the year does not guarantee that State employees could attend either. However, postponement would give more time for the budget situation to settle. State employees could work within their respective organizations and agencies to seek exemptions, as appropriate, in order for State employees to attend as long as they can justify their participation as a mission critical activity. SC members discussed different possible options and shared a range of valuable perspectives. After more than an hour of discussion and debate, a motion was made.

Given the California State budget situation, T. Kadir makes a motion to reschedule the CWEMF annual meeting from April 2024 to October 2024 pending the Executive Director to confirm availability with the venue, B. Geske seconds the motion, J. Jankowski proceeds with a roll call vote and the motion carries (16-6-0).

- Program (Sessions) Subcommittee (N. Johns/P. Hutton)

After additional discussion the following action items were formed.

- ED P. Hutton to check for availability of dates in early October and will not prioritize week of Oct 14<sup>th</sup> given the federal holiday. (ACTION ITEM)

- ED P Hutton to report to Convener J. Jankowski on the feasibility for conducting the annual meeting if no State employees could attend. (ACTION ITEM)
- J. Jankowski to work with ED P. Hutton to develop a message to reach out to all submitters for the CWEMF 2024 AM, presenters and session chairs to inquire about their willingness to move their session and/or talks to October. (ACTION ITEM)

If all the submitters agree to move to October, there will be a full and complete AM program. Therefore, the SC agreed to not re-open the submission window for the AM at this time until hearing back from the submitters.

V. Bedekar closes discussion pointing out that there is a potential conflict with the Groundwater Resources Association (GRA) Seventh Annual Western Groundwater Congress the week of October 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

- Recommended Program: Attachment 3-1 [*tabled – no report*]
- Volunteers for 2 Grab Bag Session Moderators: Attachment 3-2 [*tabled – no report*]
- Plenary Session: Attachment 3-2 [*tabled – no report*]
- January Outreach/Registration (P. Hutton) [*tabled – no report*]
- Presentation Guidelines (N. Johns) [*tabled – no report*]
- Awards Subcommittee (T. Kadir)
 

T. Kadir reports that the Awards Subcommittee met, reviewed nominations, and developed their recommendation. T. Kadir has a 15 to 20-minute presentation on the Awards Subcommittee deliberations and recommendation. In the interest of time and given the motion to delay the AM, the subcommittee report was tabled for a future SC meeting.
- Nominations for Distinguished Life Member Award (T. Kadir)
 

Nominations will remain open for the Distinguished Life Member Award. Qualifications for this award are listed on the CWEMF website<sup>2</sup>. Further discussion was tabled for a future SC meeting.
- Sponsors (P. Hutton): Attachment 3-3 [*tabled – no report*]
- Theme / Program Cover Graphic (R. Satkowski): Attachment 3-4 [*tabled – no report*]
- Screencast Recording Volunteers (K. Nam) [*tabled – no report*]

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<sup>1</sup> N. Osorio comments via chat that the Water Education Foundation October Northern California Tour is scheduled for the third week of October 2024 and the WEF Water Summit is scheduled for the last week of October 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Available online: <https://cwemf.org/wp/about-2/awards/distinguished-life-membership-award/> Last Accessed: March 4<sup>th</sup> 2024.

#### 4. Proposed Strategic Plan Retreat (P. Hutton)

J. Jankowski reports on the Strategic Plan Retreat. He opens with a big thank you to the subcommittee members Ben Geske, Shyamal Chowdhury, Will Anderson, Yiwei Cheng, and Nicole Osorio and the Executive Director Paul Hutton for giving up their weekend to participate in the strategic plan retreat in Petaluma. J. Jankowski is pleased to report that they had a productive retreat. They had an intensive day and a half focused on reviewing and discussing the elements of the CWEMF Strategic Plan and associated action items.

The subcommittee decided not to make any changes to the CWEMF mission statement<sup>3</sup>. The focus of the retreat was to update and align strategic plan goals and objectives with the mission statement. The prior CWEMF strategic plan had five goals listed. Based on the meeting and subcommittee deliberations, the decision was to update the strategic plan and focus on three main goals shown below via screen capture.

**Goal 1: Provide educational opportunities through conferences and technical workshops.**

- Strategy 1.1- Conduct the CWEMF Annual Meeting.
  - Example Action Item 1.1A: Develop Annual Meeting program.
- Strategy 1.2- Host technical modeling workshops.

**Goal 2: Support water and environmental modeling activities.**

- Strategy 2.1: Support efforts to improve existing models and develop new models.
- Strategy 2.2: Develop issue or model-specific white papers and documents.
- Strategy 2.3: Foster collaborative problem-solving and communication around modeling.

**Goal 3: Provide management and support to the CWEMF organization.**

- Strategy 3.1: Ensure participation in CWEMF's Steering Committee.
- Strategy 3.2: Communicate CWEMF's mission and activities.
- Strategy 3.3: Maintain the integrity of CWEMF's finances.
  - Example Action Item 3.4B: Initiate a forward-looking Budget tied to the Strategic Plan.
- Strategy 3.4: Track actions on CWEMF's Strategic Plan.

*Draft outline of strategic goals and strategies via J. Jankowski screen share. Please note that it is not representative of the final strategic plan text or the action items, rather it provides an outline to give a sense of the progress made at the retreat. The draft plans and work products from the retreat will be formally presented to the SC at a future meeting.*

The three main strategic goals are listed (shown above) that describe how CWEMF achieves its mission through defined goals. Within each goal are several strategies that represent ways in which CWEMF can achieve the goals. Strategies are still considered continuous or ongoing activities the organization will continue to work on. Goals and strategies will be set out in a strategic plan document that will be submitted to the SC for review and approval.

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<sup>3</sup> Available online: <https://cwemf.org/wp/about-2/mission-governance/mission-statement/> Last Accessed March 4, 2024.

Tiering off strategies is the action list which are concrete actions to meet the strategies and goals of the strategic plan in ways that are actionable, achievable, and realistic. A set of new actions will be part of a separate, living document that can be updated or revisited frequently and includes metrics for tracking progress. The actions tend to fall into two categories. One category is core or repeating actions such as the AM. The other category is initiatives or special projects that are proposed which kick off an action that may evolve into further goals or strategies and lead to other actions aligned with our mission.

J. Jankowski and B. Geske are taking the lead to finalize the two work products coming out of the Strategic Plan retreat. B. Geske reiterates that folks coming to the retreat may have thought that the retreat focus was going to be on the action plan development, however, going back to sharpen and focus the strategic goals was key to their effort. While the strategic plan is also considered as a “living document” meaning that it should be revisited and revised as needed, however, changes to the strategic plan document are anticipated to occur much less frequently. The action plan document is intentionally a separate document, also a “living document” where it is more frequently updated and revised. The action plan document would have a clear and explicit connection to the organizational budget, a vision the subcommittee hopes to bring to the SC that will allow our organization to better align resources with actions and initiatives consistent with our mission.

V. Bedekar asks whether peer reviews were considered, how they fit into the goals and strategies, and also whether the subcommittee discussed or had any thoughts on CWEMF partnerships with other organizations for coordination and collaboration activities. J. Jankowski responded that peer reviews efforts were framed as a goal in the last strategic plan; however, in the updated plan, the thinking is to redefine peer reviews as a strategy within the second goal focused on, “[s]upporting water and environmental modeling activities.” B. Geske reiterates that this document being shared with the SC via screenshare is an outline for discussion purposes as the documents are still being drafted. If any SC members are passionate about partnerships, it is an area of interest B. Geske shares and welcomes any members to reach out and discuss this topic with him as he and J. Jankowski work to finalize the two draft documents. ED P. Hutton adds that under Goal 2, Strategy 2.3 is where they discussed initiatives that would involve partnerships with other outside groups. B. Geske closes by alluding to the integrated modeling framework and collaboratory initiative as a good example of where there is a good fit for CWEMF to participate or partner with other organizations in a larger effort that is consistent with the organizational mission.

## INFORMATION ITEMS

5. BRANDING SUBCOMMITTEE (A. KHAN) [*A. Khan absent, no report*]

6. HISTORY SUBCOMMITTEE (R. SATKOWSKI)

R. Satkowski reports that the history subcommittee met since the last SC meeting in November. The subcommittee has developed a draft document chronicling the history of the

organization and some of the early activities that have a nexus to the formation of this organization. The subcommittee is currently working to distill the information down to a one-to-two-page summary. The thinking is that the shorter summary can be posted to the website and/or included in the AM packet. Also B. Bray worked with ED P. Hutton to send out a request via email for old pre-2000 historical pictures, agendas, or documents that we can use for the work products the subcommittee is preparing for the poster session. B. Bray reiterates the request for any and all SC members, if there is a photo or image you would like to share and get into the slide show and/or poster presentation the history subcommittee is working on for celebrating the 30 year anniversary at the 2024 AM, send your submissions to [ben.bray@cwemf.org](mailto:ben.bray@cwemf.org).

#### 7. WEBSITE UPDATE (K. NAM)

K. Nam reports there are no updates at this time.

#### 8. MODEL USER'S GROUP MEETING (K. NAM)

K. Nam reports that the last DMUG meeting was on November 9<sup>th</sup> before the last SC meeting. K. Nam has no additional information to share about the next DMUG meeting.

#### 9. DSC INTEGRATED MODELING FRAMEWORK UPDATE (B. GESKE)

B. Geske thanks all the individuals that reached out to him with comments, suggestions, and/or questions on the Draft Modeling Framework Strategy paper drafted by the Lead Scientist and DSP staff. The draft document is being circulated broadly for comments and input which are due at the end of January 2024. B. Geske is willing to discuss the paper with any interested members as they review the document and encourages members to do so. The DSP's plan is to present the final draft to their executive team and look for approval to move from a conceptual planning phase into an implementation phase for the project. B. Geske concludes with an appeal to the SC, he will need our help in determining what is the appropriate role for CWEMF and talking through what that might look like. B. Geske is open to bringing more people on board, to setting up some meetings with interested members to discuss the project, and to participate in discussions to regarding the appropriate role for CWEMF and how CWEMF may help move the initiative forward.

#### 10 WORKSHOPS (T. Kadir)

T. Kadir reports there have been no workshops held since the last SC meeting in November. There are no workshops currently scheduled. Furthermore, given the State budget crisis, State employees would likely be restricted from attending CWEMF workshops in the immediate future. J. Jankowski speculates that the only type of workshop that may be acceptable to individuals that work for State agencies might be a free workshop in downtown Sacramento or online assuming they can justify their time attending the meeting.

#### OTHER BUSINESS (ALL)

*[There was no discussion on this agenda item.]*

12. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

The next CWEMF Steering Committee meeting is set for March 15, 2024.

13. ADJOURN – 12:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted  
Ben Bray, Secretary, CWEMF

ATTENDANCE

Jesse Jankowski	Convener	SWRCB
Vivek Bedekar	Vice Convener	S.S. Papadopulos & Assoc.
Paul Hutton	Executive Director	Tetra Tech
Ben Bray	Secretary	EBMUD
Tariq Kadir	Past Convener	DWR
Anne Huber		ICF
Ben Geske		DSP
John DeGeorge		RMA
Jon Traum		USGS
Josue Medellin-Azuara		UC Merced
Katherine Heidel		Tetra Tech
Kijin Nam		DWR
Mike Deas		Watercourse Engr.
Nicole Osorio		DWR
Norman Johns		SWRCB
Puneet Khatavkar		Stantec
Regina Graziano		SWRCB
Rich Satkowski		Public Member
Shyamal Chowdhury		US Army Corps of Engineers
Will Anderson		CCWD
Yiwei Cheng		DWR
Yung-Hsin Sun		Sunzi Consulting
Zhong Zhang		PSU

Proxies:

A. Huber is designated as proxy for S. Tanaka.