

CALIFORNIA WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL MODELING FORUM

MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

For March 15, 2024

(This meeting was conducted online via Zoom meeting)

Action Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ED P. Hutton with volunteers R. Graziano, Y. Sun, S. Tanaka, R. Satkowski, and J. Jankowski (chair) form (ad hoc) AM Financial Options Subcommittee charged with developing a proposal for the May 17 SC Meeting on an Annual Meeting financial exemption policy or procedure to mitigate potential issues related to limitations on State of California employee attendance during the current State budget crisis.</li><li>• Convener J. Jankowski will lead the effort to organize and task CWEMF officers with respective reports for the May 17 CWEMF annual business meeting and will work with ED P. Hutton and Treasurer S. Tanaka to schedule an online meeting via Zoom.</li></ul>
Motions Passed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motion to approve the January 19 2024 CWEMF Steering Committee minutes by S. Tanaka, seconded by J. Medellín-Azuara was unanimously approved (21-0-0).</li><li>• Motion by S. Tanaka that CWEMF hold its annual business meeting on May 17, 2024 on Zoom at 1pm, seconded by B. Bray, carries via unanimous vote (21-0-0).</li></ul>

REFERENCES INCLUDED IN THE MEETING PACKET:

1. Attachment 2-1: Executive Director’s Report for the March 15, 2024 Steering Committee Meeting. 1p.
2. Attachment 2-2: Draft Minutes of the Steering Committee for November 17, 2023. 13p.
3. Attachment<sup>1</sup>: Treasurer’s Report, FY2023 SC Meeting: March 15, 2024. 1p.
4. Attachment 4-1: Membership Update for the March 15, 2024 Steering Committee Meetings. 1p.

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1. INTRODUCTIONS/DESIGNATE QUORUM REVIEW ACTION ITEMS

At 9:32 Friday March 15, 2024 Convener J. Jankowski calls the CWEMF Steering Committee (SC) meeting to order, welcomes the members participating in the meeting, and declares a quorum<sup>2,3</sup>. J. Jankowski announces that he is S. Chowdhury’s designated proxy for the meeting. There were no other designated proxies noted.

J. Jankowski reviews status of action items listing from the January 2024 SC meeting<sup>4</sup> noting that these will be reported out on the appropriate agenda items for this (March) SC meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Sent to the CWEMF Steering Committee via email March 15, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> ED P. Hutton comments that B. Geske corresponded that he plans to attend but may be late joining the meeting.

<sup>3</sup> T. Kadir notes via chat, “[u]nfortunately. My participation today will be intermittent.”

<sup>4</sup> January 2024 SC meeting action items are provided in Agenda Attachment 2-2 on page 1.

## 2. CONSENT CALENDAR

### a. Executive Director's Report (P. Hutton):

Executive Director (ED) P. Hutton refers to Attachment 2-1. ED P. Hutton continues highlighting one item not on the report. Regarding the membership renewal for the organization member the California State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), the State Water Board has decided to increase their organizational membership status up to the large organizational member designation. At that level, membership dues are \$5,000 annually up from \$2,500. A challenge regarding the State Water Board's membership however is encumbering the payment, particularly during this time when a State budget freeze on discretionary spending has been imposed. The State Water Board is seeking to enter into a contract with CWEMF as a vehicle to facilitate membership fee payment. The State Water Board sent a contract to the ED P. Hutton and the other officers where there were some concerns expressed regarding the contract language. CWEMF officers and the ED P. Hutton are in the process of making some revisions and will send back to the State Water Board contract in an attempt to converge on language agreeable to both organizations.

J. Jankowski adds that he received some example language for framing the scope of the contract from similar contractual agreements for other organizational memberships. He is attempting to coordinate with the State Water Board contract office staff and revise the contract language to be consistent with the other example(s) that has/have already been approved and executed. After additional discussion regarding the appropriate CWEMF representative that should sign the contract, ED P. Hutton agrees that he is comfortable signing as the CWEMF representative if the State Water Board is not stipulating specific actions from this organization. ED P. Hutton and J. Jankowski are hopeful that they will agree on appropriate language and execute the contract accordingly.

### b. Secretary's Report

Secretary B. Bray refers to Attachment 2-2 reporting that he called for a short turn around on the minutes review for the November SC minutes. There was one additional review that Secretary B. Bray received that suggested several additional relatively minor corrections. J. Jankowski shares his screen displaying the first page of Attachment 2-2 and Secretary B. Bray begins reviewing the corrections to the attachment:

- On page 1, Second action item, the word "state" should be capitalized as we are speaking of the great State of California. This same typo occurs at the bottom of Page 2, twice more times in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph on page 3 and at the top of page 4 where the action item is listed.
- On page 3 in the second paragraph starting on the third line of the page, there is a suggestion that the officer title, "Convener" as in "Convener J. Jankowski" be struck. This occurs twice in the paragraph, at the beginning and at the end. It was suggested that J. Jankowski was speaking as a representative of his employer in communicating

budget effects on the State Water Board. Along these lines, one reviewer suggested that the title, “Convener” be struck or removed given the context.

N. Johns adds an additional suggestion regarding a grammatical correction. On page 3, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 5<sup>th</sup> sentence uses the word “appropriate” appears in the sentence twice; N. Johns suggests striking the first occurrence of the word “appropriate” in the sentence.

Finally, J. Jankowski cites the misspelling of Natomas where the “s” should be struck.

S. Tanaka makes a motion to approve the January 2024 CWEMF SC Meeting Minutes as shown in Attachment 2-2 with the edits and corrections discussed during this meeting, seconded by J. Medellín-Azuara. The motion carries unanimously (21-0-0); no abstentions or votes against the motion were expressed orally or through the chat record.

#### c. Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer S. Tanaka refers to the Treasurer’s report sent to the CWEMF SC earlier in the morning via email<sup>5</sup>. Treasurer S. Tanaka continues reporting that the Fischer Award endowment is being tracked separately as its own line item in the accounts summary information along with the general fund, the peer review fund, and the operating reserve. Hence, if one compares this March 15 report with past reports, the general fund has declined by the Fischer Award endowment amount, as the latter was previously lumped in with the general fund. CWEMF’s only major source of income at the moment is organizational members’ dues payments with some individual membership payments received as well. Expenses are focused on strategic plan and professional fees (such as for work on the website by the webmaster or for compensating the CWEMF ED). Figure 1 at the bottom of the Treasurer’s Report provides a snapshot of where the major account categories stand as of the beginning of the week, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## ACTION ITEMS

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

- New Meeting Dates September 23-25

ED P. Hutton reports that CWEMF was able to reserve a new Annual Meeting (AM) date of September 23 through 25, 2024 for the CWEMF annual meeting at Lake Natoma Inn (LNI). Currently our reservation is consistent with a three-track program.

- Venue Update – Cliff House (N. Johns/P. Hutton)

ED P. Hutton reports that in discussions with Cliff House, he has learned they will be closing or going out of business with a possible change in ownership. ED P. Hutton adds there is some uncertainty with how this venue will operate moving forward and plans to let some time pass before making further inquiries or developing a recommendation to the SC on the appropriate course of action to take. He recalls from prior surveys that

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<sup>5</sup> Report was sent to the SC via email as attachment *TreasurerReport\_03-15-24.pdf* Friday March 15, 2024 at 8:14 AM.

alternative venue options close to LNI are few, if any. ED P. Hutton is hopeful that the Cliff House will continue to operate under new ownership and we will still be able to reserve space for the CWEMF business meeting and social under the same or a similar arrangement as CWEMF was able to make with the business in past years.

- Program (Sessions) Subcommittee (P. Hutton)

ED P. Hutton reached out to session moderators and speakers to gauge willingness to participate in the CWEMF AM now postponed to September. While ED P. Hutton did not receive a unanimous response, he received a two-thirds response rate where most responses (19 of 20 responses) received were positive in terms of willingness to participate in the AM in September with one exception. Given the feedback received on the sessions proposed, presuming that State employees will be able to participate, it appears that enough sessions and talks are confirmed such that we can continue to move forward with the planning for a three-track AM program. There were five proposals rejected from the initial call for proposals. Hence, the ED and Sessions Subcommittee (i.e. Planning Team) may be able to fill in the one session that was unable or unwilling to commit to the September AM with one of the five alternates that they were unable to accommodate in the initial call for session proposals.

Convener J. Jankowski clarifies further that approximately eleven sessions are composed entirely of State employees or that were chaired by State employees. J. Jankowski adds, therefore, that under a worst-case scenario where no State employees could attend or participate, he estimates that these eleven sessions would be potentially impacted. However, with the remaining 19 confirmed sessions, there is enough to proceed with a two-track program. As far as attendees, if we assume attendance is *proportionally* down (from 271 to 173), gross revenue is expected to decrease by about 43%, or from about \$87k to about \$49k based on assumptions on how the registration fees breakdown.

Convener J. Jankowski asks Treasurer S. Tanaka to provide an estimate of the AM expenses that would allow an estimate of *net* revenue from the worst-case scenario gross revenue estimate. Reviewing her records, Treasurer S. Tanaka responds that the LNI bill from the 2023 AM was \$52,500. After consideration for the Cliff House expense, extra room expenses, and other miscellaneous expenses, she estimates the total cost was approximately \$57k. However, the facility rental costs would be reduced for a two-track program where 2023 was a three-track program<sup>6</sup>. Also, Treasurer Tanaka reminds us that the coffee and beverage expenses with LNI were excessive in 2023 and will also be reduced to bring down the cost of the event in 2024.

There was additional considerable, wide-ranging discussion among the SC members regarding how plans may need to be adjusted given the State budget crisis. Discussions

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<sup>6</sup> It was noted that the Pavilion rental cost is \$1,000 which was used for the third room for the three-track program. With a two-track program, the Pavilion rental would not be needed representing a cost savings as long as LNI is notified well in advance.

included the possibility of scholarships to certain members for registration, a possible policy for waiving registration fees for State workers, a program for in-kind volunteers in exchange for waiving registration, the possibility of State employees paying out of pocket to attend, and cancellation of the 2024 AM. Members debated whether the current budget crisis is a "blip" or whether it is something we can expect to extend over more than one year or whether such a crisis is likely to occur again in the next ten years. There were no motions proposed and no action items resulting from the discussion. There was general consensus among the SC that the Planning Team will need to be nimble, that the 2024 AM will not be canceled, rather, that we will move forward planning for the AM in September 23 through 25. Uncertainty remains regarding the extent that State employees may participate in the AM and whether there will be a three-track or two-track program, which will be determined as more information becomes available to the Planning Team.

In closing, ED P. Hutton reiterates his position that it was a mistake to postpone the meeting and is hopeful the SC would make a different decision under similar circumstances in the future. ED P. Hutton cautions the CWEMF SC against a precedent setting decision that may have long term implications in response to a crisis affecting potentially this year and possibly next year.

- June Outreach/Registration (P. Hutton)

ED P. Hutton reports that June would be the right timeframe for membership outreach and to open registration to the membership. ED P. Hutton asks, given the uncertainty with the State employees, should we switch our default plan and move forward planning for the two-track AM program? A. Huber asks whether there is a deadline for going from a three to two-track program with LNI? ED P. Hutton is not aware of a specific date or timeframe. The current contract with LNI is written assuming a three-track program, however, we have changed our plans in the past. Given past experience working with LNI, ED P. Hutton believes that we could make changes to the contract before the end of June, opting to change the reservation consistent with a two-track program without any financial cost of doing so. He adds that the price difference is not that substantial moving from a three to a two-track program, rather a larger price difference may be associated with a change in policy on the coffee and beverages.

J. Jankowski speaks to the timeline in terms of how it affects their action at the State Water Board. Once the AM announcement is distributed and the registration is opened up with a clear delineation of registration costs, that will initiate the internal approval process at his agency. He has set expectations with his management regarding the timing of the AM and the registration cost. Once the registration opens, that necessitates the various approval processes and motivates the determination of whether State employees can attend and how many. J. Jankowski agrees that June sounds good for the announcement and opening registration.

V. Bedekar proposes we do not wait until June, can we get started now? We could get the word out, open the registration. Then by the end of June we would have a better sense on what the attendance might look like and a gauge on whether State employees will be able to attend. This information is needed so the Planning Team can move forward. ED P. Hutton responds that we are not locked into a particular time; more of a pros and cons issue when considering the timing. V. Bedekar responds that opening the registration as early as possible will lock in the dates on peoples' calendars. There may be other workshops or meetings competing for people's time so it would be good to get folks to commit through the registration process earlier rather than later. ED P. Hutton agrees, although he counters that typically a draft program is made available when registration is opened to help potential registrants decide whether to register and attend. However, it would be difficult to do so under these circumstances because the program is much more in flux or less certain. Many of the sessions we are planning for may not ultimately happen in September because of limited State employee participation. ED P. Hutton was asked whether this would affect early registration? He responded that he is unsure.

V. Bedekar asks if ED P. Hutton could explain the typical timeline to set-up and announce registration. ED P. Hutton recalls that in a normal year the meeting would be held in April. Usually, the call for session proposals is emailed in late fall to early winter at the end of the previous year. At the January SC meeting, the AM program layout is typically agreed upon, and registration is opened soon after in February with the approved program layout with the early bird registration option.

Convener J. Jankowski asks for volunteers for an ad hoc subcommittee to develop a proposal for a financial exemption applicable to AM registration. R. Graziano, Y. Sun, S. Tanaka, R. Satkowski, and J. Jankowski volunteer as members to the ad hoc subcommittee to develop a proposal to the SC on an AM financial exemption policy or procedure. ED P. Hutton also agrees to participate. J. Jankowski agrees to chair the ad hoc committee. The charge for the ad hoc subcommittee is to report on potential vehicles for offering such an exemption to present at the May SC meeting. (ACTION ITEM)

Convener J. Jankowski also plans to follow-up with ED P. Hutton to develop some estimates of the number SC members that are employed by State agencies and participate either by chairing a session or presenting at the AM. Convener J. Jankowski will follow-up with ED P. Hutton for some descriptive statistics from past AMs to support the effort. J. Jankowski thanks the volunteers and welcomes others if interested to follow-up offline.

A. Huber seeks to clarify whether a decision was made on when to announce the AM? ED P. Hutton responds that the announcement would go out *after* the next SC meeting (scheduled for May 17). J. Jankowski concurs and ponders another possible survey to gauge presenter participation after the next SC meeting.

After SC discussion, there was a general concurrence to move forward with planning for a three-track program unless and until there are a number of cancellations and the number of remaining sessions is only adequate to fill a two-track program.

- Presentation Guidelines (N. Johns)  
N. Johns comments that he has no report on this agenda item. ED P. Hutton reminds N. Johns that this work product will be a helpful reference irrespective of the timing of the AM; he urges N. Johns not to feel constrained by the schedule. N. Johns acknowledges.
- Contingency Planning (J. Jankowski)  
*[there was no additional discussion, this item was reported under previous agenda item.]*

## INFORMATION ITEMS

### 4. MEMBERSHIP UPDATE (P. HUTTON)

ED P. Hutton refers to Attachment 4-1, a membership report prepared for reference. ED P. Hutton is hopeful that the State budget freeze is not affecting membership dues payments particularly for organizational members.

J. Jankowski clarifies that the State Water Board is working through a separate process to pay the annual membership fee. They are working through the logistics internally in their organization to pay their organizational dues as discussed earlier (see 2a. Executive Director's report above). He does not envision any problems getting through the process. With respect to DWR, representatives had earlier confirmed that they are working through a process to request an exception to ensure that the membership dues are paid as well.

V. Bedekar comments briefly that he intends to contact his colleagues at his firm (S.S. Papadopoulos & Assoc.) to check on the status of his membership dues payment.

### 5. STRATEGIC PLAN (J. JANKOWSKI)

J. Jankowski reports no new updates or activity. J. Jankowski provides a brief status report on this effort referring to Attachment 2-2, the January 19, 2024 SC Meeting Minutes.

### 6. BRANDING SUBCOMMITTEE (A. KHAN)

*[A. Khan Chair of the Branding Subcommittee is absent and provided no report]*

### 7. HISTORY SUBCOMMITTEE (R. SATKOWSKI)

R. Satkowski reports the History Subcommittee has conducted two meetings since the last SC meeting. The History Subcommittee has completed a draft writeup of the history of this organization. The Subcommittee has also gathered information to prepare a poster that will be fully developed for the AM poster session. R. Satkowski reports further that the draft write up has been sent to several senior members of our organization—Greg Gartrell, Richard Denton, George Nichol and Jay Lund—to get their input and comments on the historical document. The Subcommittee plans to incorporate their input before the next SC

meeting in May. Finally, as part of the process to develop a slideshow for the AM, the Subcommittee is reviewing old pictures and visuals that have been gathered and sent in documenting past annual meetings and workshops. J. Jankowski reminds any SC members that have any such material *i.e.* documents, or photos to share with the History Subcommittee for incorporation into their efforts, please email Secretary B. Bray.

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

K. Nam comments there is no report for the Website subcommittee<sup>7</sup>.

#### 9. MODEL USER GROUPS (K. NAM)

K. Nam reports that Min Yu is planning for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Delta Modeling Users Group in April<sup>8</sup>.

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

B. Geske reports that a draft, “vision paper” was released for public review and comment. Some CWEMF members have reviewed the paper and provided comments. The Delta Science staff plan to review and incorporate the public input. Delta Science staff are currently developing a work plan to implement the suggestions and lay out a path forward to the vision presented in the paper.

B. Geske is seeking a few CWEMF volunteers to help create a survey for the modeling community. The goal would be reach out and inquire about what types of online modeling forums they use and solicit input on the pros and cons that they perceive to each of those formats such as Reddit or wiki pages. The goal is to gather some data on how the modeling community interacts with web-based forum tools. If anyone is interested in crafting some survey questions that would help them understand that issue, let B. Geske know.

#### 11. WORKSHOPS (T. KADIR)

*[T. Kadir, chair of the Workshops Subcommittee is absent and did not provide a report.]*

J. Jankowski is lobbying his colleagues at the State Water Board to do an external training workshop on the SacWAM model with CWEMF as there was recently an in-depth training conducted internally within their organization.

ED P. Hutton comments that over the last several years, we have had the luxury of having T. Kadir lead a lot of hands-on workshops with different models. However, it is important to remind the SC that hands-on model training workshops are not the only types of workshops CWEMF has historically organized. Over the past several years we have not seen a lot of grassroots participation in terms of proposing and organizing any informational or educational workshops. If any SC members have ideas for workshops on any topic area of

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<sup>7</sup> Via chat upon indicating he needs to drop off the meeting, K. Nam provides his reports for the Website Committee and Model User Groups agenda items.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*



interest, it would be great to use this vehicle as a way to showcase the benefits and the role of CWEMF within the modeling community.

## 12. OTHER BUSINESS (ALL)

Secretary B. Bray raises a potential issue. Thinking back to the pandemic when society was locked down and CWEMF had to shift plans for the annual meeting, he recalls that there was a requirement for conducting at least one business meeting each fiscal year. B. Bray refers back to the business meetings that were conducted online in June 2020<sup>9</sup> and June 2021<sup>10</sup> during the COVID-19 pandemic latter case the business meeting was scheduled to follow the CWEMF SC meeting for convenience. S. Tanaka confirms that CWEMF will need to conduct a business meeting before June 30, 2024. S. Tanaka recommends we follow the example from 2021 and schedule a separate business meeting to follow immediately after the May 17 SC meeting. J. Jankowski concurs that we schedule a separate business meeting for the afternoon on May 17 and asks for a motion on the decision. S. Tanaka moves that CWEMF hold its annual business meeting on May 17, 2024 on Zoom at 1pm, seconded by B. Bray, the motion carries via unanimous vote (21-0-0). Convener J. Jankowski will lead the effort to organize and task CWEMF officers with respective reports for the business meeting and will work with ED P. Hutton and Treasurer S. Tanaka to schedule an online meeting via the Zoom platform. (ACTION ITEM) The SC further agreed to conduct the May 17 SC meeting exclusively online as well as the business meeting in the afternoon.

J. Medellín-Azuara reports on a National Academy of Science review of the State Water Project and Central Valley Project operations that is being led by former Delta Science lead Dr. Peter Goodwin. Dr. Goodwin was central in motivating the integrated environmental modeling workshop and other efforts in the modeling community with a nexus to the effort reported on by B. Geske (above). There is some discussion regarding a proposal for a talk, or perhaps a full session on the review at the AM. J. Medellín-Azuara reached out to ED P. Hutton via email to get in the queue in case there is an opening for a talk or a session proposal for the AM. The charge for the review has an established timeline over the next two years, so there may be a good chance of finding an opportunity to engage with the CWEMF AM. J. Jankowski responds that a session on the review could be a good option for filling some slots that may open up due to cancellation at the AM. B. Bray adds that this could also present a good opportunity for a workshop. Perhaps the workshop could be held in Sacramento to minimize required travel by State employees. J. Medellín-Azuara adds that he anticipates that there will be some public workshops happening as well. J. Medellín-Azuara can send some additional information to share for any SC members that are interested.

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<sup>9</sup> See [https://cwemf.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2020\\_CWEMF\\_Business\\_Meeting\\_Minutes.pdf](https://cwemf.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2020_CWEMF_Business_Meeting_Minutes.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> See [https://cwemf.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Jun11-2021CWEMF\\_BM\\_AD040422.pdf](https://cwemf.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Jun11-2021CWEMF_BM_AD040422.pdf).

13. NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING – MAY 17, 2024

14. ADJOURN – 11:35pm

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
Stacy Tanaka	Treasurer	Watercourse Engr.
Ben Bray	Secretary	EBMUD
Tariq Kadir	Past Convener	DWR
Anne Huber		ICF
Ben Geske		DSP
John DeGeorge		RMA
Jon Traum		USGS
Josue Medellín-Azuara		UC Merced
Katherine Heidel		Tetra Tech
Kijin Nam		DWR
Mike Deas		Watercourse Engr.
Nicole Osorio		DWR
Norman Johns		SWRCB
Regina Graziano		SWRCB
Rich Satkowski		Public Member
Tad Slawecki		LimnoTech
Will Anderson		CCWD
Yiwei Cheng		DWR
Yung-Hsin Sun		Sunzi Consulting
Zhong Zhang		PSU

Proxies: Jesse Jankowski is designated as proxy for Shyamal Chowdhury.