

Executive Summary

CWEA Annual Leadership Meeting, 2010 November 16, 2010 ~ Ontario, CA

1. Welcome, purpose of the day, & introductions

This year, we were at full capacity as 50+ CWEA leaders met on November 16, 2010 in Ontario, CA.

The planning group (CWEA's Planning & Program Development Committee) sent out an invitation to leaders across the state inviting them to this Annual Leadership Meeting.

This Executive Summary captures the key points made during the day-long workshop.

Attendees:

Jody Allen	Patrick Griffith	Denis Pollak
Dave Bachtel	Rashi Gupta	Robert Potter
Patty Banducci	James Gusman	Pavitra Prabhakar
Chris Berch	Duane Johnson	Michael Reilly
Debra Bogdanoff	Teresa Kistner	Josh Rogers
Mike Boock	Latif Laari	Richard E.T. Sadowski
John Boyd	Luis Leon	Paul Schmidtbauer
Fran Burlingham	Connie Leonard	Phil Scott
Gina Cloutier	Chris Lopez	Joselito Uy
Daniel Cravins	Pei-Chin Low	Simon Watson
Greg DeBois	Alec Mackie	Richard Watts
Sandie Dudley	Carrie Mattingly	Doug Wing
Dave Greenwood	Berlinda McCadney	Wendy Wert
Brett Fickel	Patrick McNelly	Megan Yoo
Joe Flores	Logan Olds	Paula Zeller
Giti Heravian	Gary Parker	

Staff:

Elizabeth Allan, CAE
Lola Dvorak
Chris Lundeen, CAE
Julie Taylor, CAE
Victoria Rawson

2. CWEA Local Section & Committee Success Stories

Presenters from 4 CWEA Local Sections / Committees provided a report on what has worked in their sections/committees:

1. Alec Mackie from the CWEA's Member Communications Taskforce has been driving website improvements for some local sections using Wordpress. The Los Angeles Basin Section, Tri-counties Section and E-bulletin sites are all built using this content management system. Benefits include low startup cost and minimal technical skills. CWEA offers free hosting for local sections, which may

choose the web site management technology they prefer, although Wordpress is recommended for ease of use and support. Lola Dvorak on staff is available to assist with setup or questions.

2. Sandie Dudley from CWEA's Students and Young Professionals (SYP) Committee described last year's first Students and Young Professionals Specialty Conference, which was inspired by a similar WEF event. The conference held simultaneous face-to-face sessions in the north and south with 20-25 attendees at each location and multiple speakers per location. The presentations were projected via a live video feed so that attendees in either location could see and hear all of the speakers. The next conference, *Working Together Across Disciplines*, will be held March 23 in the north, south and central valley. The event is free for students and will be approximately \$40 for other attendees. Promotion is done through social media and universities. CWEA local sections interested in getting more involved in SYP activities can join monthly conference calls, participate in Annual Conference events such as speed mentoring, or contact Sandie directly.

3. CWEA Tri-Counties' Section (TCS) President, Teresa Kistner, presented the Tri-Counties Section's strategies for event success. The TCS event calendar includes events such as the annual golf tournament, past president picnic/camping trip, Turkey of the Year dinner, southern regional TCP session and three training workshops. Training workshops are targeted to the rank and file and include a plant tour and dinner for only \$20. Sponsors help keep costs down. The board works as a team to develop the annual calendar far in advance and uses active retirees and succession planning to keep volunteers knowledgeable.

4. Denis Pollak from CWEA's Southern Sections Collection Systems Committee described the success of the Committee, which was founded in 1989 to promote collections training in CWEA's southern local sections. The Committee develops workshops and provides speakers for events. They can also provide sessions in Spanish, which have been very successful. For 2011, the Committee is developing a ruler to help estimate overflows to hand out during their workshops.

3. Leadership Challenges

The next portion of the meeting was a group breakout. Each group worked on real-world examples of some of the challenges local sections and committees are facing, and the facilitator reported the findings from each group.

Difficult Volunteer Challenge

A difficult volunteer can make committee work or section events less enjoyable. However, situations arise all the time where we have to work with difficult people. So let's talk about the impacts of a difficult volunteer and gain some insight from one another how we might best deal with this situation.

- What do you do when you have a volunteer that isn't performing his/her duties?
- What about when a volunteer is dictatorial and domineering?
- Are there ways to bring that person in and engage them?
- How can you use their strengths?
- How do you ensure that your section/committee doesn't suffer due to the difficult volunteer's involvement?
- Have you been in a situation like this? What was it? What did you do? If you had to do it all over again would you do anything differently?

Solutions for a problem volunteer:

- Ask if they need help.
- Support the volunteer.
- Acknowledge accomplishments and growth.

- Clarify roles.
- Ask what the problem is.
- Increase F2F (face-to-face) communications.
- Decrease emails.
- Develop job description.
- Apply peer pressure.

Solutions for a Domineering Volunteer:

- Fire or replace.
- Coach.
- Use CWEA state board liaisons and other resources.
- Be specific with deadlines.
- Train on policies and procedures.
- Develop job descriptions.
Redirect energy.
- Acknowledge accomplishments and growth.
- Seek help from staff and other colleagues.
- Find a compromise.

Lackluster Leadership Challenge:

In this tough economy it's hard for members to make time to attend CWEA Committee and Board activities. Sometimes the employer support isn't there for training events. How can we best reinvigorate CWEA leaders who are feeling burned out or aren't being adequately supported?

- What challenges are you seeing in the way of leadership participation?
- Have you done something that has been especially effective to keep yourself or your leaders engaged and excited?
- Have you had to overcome a decline in committed leaders or have you had to revive a flagging committee? How did you do it? What are some things that worked? Why do you think this approach was successful? What hasn't been as successful?
- Are there ways we can communicate to employers the need to support their employees' involvement?

Solutions:

- May not have enough time with job commitment.
- Get employer to recognize value of volunteer: what's in it for you.
- Teleconferencing can still be a waste of time if not managed efficiently.
- May need to hold calls during lunch if needed.
- Volunteer fair. Allow volunteers to explore other opportunities.
- Offer help when leaders need it.
- Monotony of same volunteers being used over and over.
- Enthusiasm can be contagious.
- Make time with CWEA relevant. Don't waste peoples' time.
- Provide benefit of volunteering for employers.
- Use technology such as Skype or GoToMeetings.
- Recognize volunteers -- make up special awards.
- Many LSs have a planning meeting at the beginning of their year.
- Help and mentor new volunteers.
- Have list of what is expected of each volunteer role.
- Communication always helps! Speak up if over capacity and check in with others who seem to be over capacity.

- Find out what volunteering gives to them. Find out what motivates them.
- Find a replacement for burned-out volunteers.

4. Behind the Budget

CWEA State Board Treasurer Simon Watson stated that the driving force behind the annual organization budget is CWEA's mission. Some key points:

- The Board is comprised of four committees: Executive Committee, Planning & Program Development (PPD), Member & External Relations (MER), and Operations (OPS). PPD supports the board's strategic planning work, and develops an annual program of work and budget. Staff supports all committees. PPD presents the annual program of work and budget to Board. OPS oversees the implementation of budget once approved by Board.
- The Board's guiding philosophy is that the annual budget should cover operating expenses and must include both direct and indirect costs. Member benefit and user fee programs generally break even but some programs subsidize others which helps to balance the needs of all association members.
- For FY10-11, the Board assumed that the economy would not show signs of recovery until FY 13-14, so it did not increase dues (holding dues at 2008 levels) and set minimal fee increases. Certification renewal fees increased by \$2 to cover operating expense of revalidation. Reduced staff size and froze salaries to help reduce expenses.
- Member value added with in Fiscal Year (FY) 10-11: new web site, Collection System Maintenance (CSM) certification tests revalidation, revised test prep materials, AC10 proceedings online and webinars.
- Reserves support long-term stability by providing for emergency and for project investment.

5. Leadership Story

Phil Scott, past CWEA state board member, narrated how CWEA helped him develop his job skills throughout his career. His CSM certification and continuing education courses in creative writing and public speaking helped him gain confidence to go after promotional opportunities. Meeting facilitation was among the most important skills he learned through CWEA. After finishing his Bachelor degree at age 39, he helped Burlingame win CWEA's Collection System of the Year award. Employers helped him learn technical skills, but CWEA taught him leadership skills. He served on CWEA's CSM Committee, NRTC Committee, and the CWEA state board for 6 years.

8. Open Forum

PPD Chair Jody Allen asked for questions and comments from the attendees.

Highlights included:

- CWEA's greatest role is to develop mentorship, friendship and camaraderie with other wastewater professionals. One leader stated that he still serves as CWEA Desert and Mountain Section (DAMS) treasurer, along with his role as WEF Delegate Director, because he likes to be grounded in his CWEA Local Section.

- CWEA State Board Treasurer asked what the CWEA Board can do to help Local Sections. Don't hesitate to get in touch. He said that he is working to simplify Local Section budget templates and hopes to have a new easier template in February for FY 2011-12.
- CWEA Redwood Empire Section President said that this was his first time at the leadership training and that he would make sure more of his section's members attend next year because it is very valuable.
- CWEA Golden Empire Section Past President asked if it would be possible to return to a 2-tier membership option that would allow for LS-only memberships. Elizabeth responded that the CWEA State Board could choose to explore this possibility; however, an option currently available to local sections is to offer nonmembers a subscription to the local section newsletter. The local section can stay connected to nonmember subscribers through the newsletter and make them aware of the value of local section offerings such as training, award and recognition and networking. Subscribers can attend any local section event by paying the nonmember fee. Subscribers are likely to see the value of CWEA membership and eventually join. Subscriber service would be more supportive and sustainable for the organization than offering a local section only membership.
- CWEA State President asked the group if CWEA is doing its best at adding value? If not, then let the Board know. This free leadership training is an example of the ways CWEA provides value to Local Section.
- It was noted that a VP nomination for the North is needed.
- A new DAMS member shared his job transition story. He became unemployed last year from IT retail and enrolled in a community college wastewater program. He found an internship at VVWR as an operator and was hired for an ECI job. He said CWEA recognizes the need to mentor and train professionals and hopes to inspire others to join the association.

9. How did we do today? What else do you need?

PPD Chair Jody Allen asked for feedback from the group and let everyone know that CWEA is offering Leadership Training at AC 2011 in Ontario. He expressed his thanks to the presenters, attendees and staff.