



CWEA October 2003 Leadership Planning Meeting “Planning Our Future”
October 28, 2003, Fresno

1. Welcome and Self Introductions:

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by President Elect Steven Agor, who thanked everyone who was able to participate.

Attendees:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Email/contact information</u>
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Angela	Nielsen	Exec Assistant & Coordinator of Leadership Development	anielsen@cwea.org
Julie	Taylor, CAE	Director of Professional Development & Member Services	jtaylor@cwea.org

2. Purpose of the Day

President Elect Agor explained that the activities of the day are the first steps in developing a long-term strategic plan. This meeting is designed to generate input on:

- What does it mean for CWEA to be successful (given a 5-10 year timeframe)?
- Issues CWEA will face in working towards that success.

There won't be specific outcomes, decisions, or solutions generated in this meeting. However, the input from this meeting will be:

- Distributed to CWEA leaders who were invited to the October 28th meeting

- Used by the Planning and Program Development Board Committee (President Elect Agor is Chair of this committee) to develop a draft Strategic Plan.

Leaders will have a chance to provide input on this draft plan at:

- The January Board Meeting (an open meeting),
- The April Annual Conference (at board and specific committee meetings),
- A May Leadership Meeting,
- The June Board Meeting – an open meeting, where the “final” draft is to be adopted.

3. CWEA Briefing

President Elect Agor reviewed some key current aspects of CWEA, including:

- Our purpose: We train, certify, disseminate information, and promote sound policies;
- Our membership composition: 80% are employed by wastewater agencies; 13% consulting/engineering firms, and 3% manufacturers;
- Our structure: We offer member services through local sections, committees, the board, and staff.
- Our business model: Certification, training, and membership all drive each other and are supported by volunteers and staff. The three key programs (certification, training, and membership) are driven externally by regulations, public trust, and credibility.
- Our work includes programs that are member-benefit (that run at a net cost to CWEA) and user-pay (that generate net revenue).
- We have grown in membership, conference attendance, and certification.
- We have a new governance model that has built-in opportunity for input.
- We make knowledge-based decisions based on member needs, capacity/resources, market conditions, and ethics.
- We are focused on increasing the value of membership.
- We have close to a break-even budget this fiscal year.

4. Planning Background

a. Planning Concepts and Vocabulary

President Elect Agor reviewed the basics of planning, including:

- Planning Horizons (see last page of these notes or planning horizon graphic),
- The difference between strategic and annual planning and the links between the two

Strategic plan (3-10 yrs)		Annual Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grounded in mission/core purpose & values • Reflects our view of future • Describes desired future & what's necessary to achieve it • Identifies what we are not doing that we should do to support our members & industry • Includes goals, objectives, strategies • Requires ongoing re-evaluation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links with strategic plan through action plans, checkpoints, milestones that show progress toward strategic plan's goals • Reflects our ongoing programs of work • Annual budget supports annual plan/program of work

b. Review our Planning Model

President Elect Agor explained that the strategic planning process would be different from other planning that CWEA has done because it will be repeatable, sustainable, and inclusive. The strategic (long-range plan) will be used to draw ideas and input for the annual plan and work. To improve CWEA's ability to be proactive, rather than reactive, we will engage in environmental scanning – to identify and evaluate trends and opportunities.

c. Ground Rules for the Day

Facilitator Pinhey expressed that CWEA has a good foundation upon which to build, and we are taking the steps to making sure that the process is accessible to everyone. He reviewed ground rules for the discussion and work of the day, which emphasized the brainstorm and supportive atmosphere necessary to be successful.

5. What will success look like for CWEA in the Future?

Item 5 consisted of worksheets distributed and compiled to tables of 6-7 participants each. The outcomes were reported back to the full group, and additions were made. The results of these discussions are as follows in the "Worksheet Responses."

Worksheet Responses

5-a: CWEA Assumptions about the 5-10 Year Relevant Future

Work & Workplace Trends

- People will retire earlier to take advantage (in agencies) of their competitive retirement packages.
- There will be an institution-wide drain of knowledge.
- The industry will rehire or offer contracting positions to experienced and retired former employees.
- The industry is male-dominated currently, and will remain so unless there is a significant effort to appeal to more women – CWEA needs to encourage agency outreach to women.
- Operators in-training will be increasingly difficult to find for the increasingly vacant positions.

Science & Technology Trends

- Technology of our members vs. technology of our profession. Although the profession will require more technical expertise, the members will continue to want benefits that are tangible (for example, *the Wastewater Professional*).
- Technology of our members:
 - Member database will be of increasing importance, and the search capability will improve,
 - Important to make messages impactful, to distinguish the important messages from CWEA from the inundation of e-mail and other message types from everyone else,
 - The member database will be more interactive, with an increasing number of surveys by CWEA being distributed using this resource,
 - Computerization of certification exams (to be completed in 5 years),
 - Use of online interactive training will be established using modules,
 - CWEA will have a research database (such as the Engineering and Research Committee is developing to be able to search for all industry research being done in California),
 - There will be a technology transfer,
 - CWEA will offer video conference training,
 - Open source – free technical information will be given to the members and public (by others and CWEA).
- Technology of our profession:
 - Technology required for instrumentation and control will increase in sophistication.
 - More pollutants will emerge, at lower and lower levels of detection,
 - There will be improved laboratory techniques (to detect more potential pollutants at smaller quantities),
 - The increase in sophistication of technology and the ability to detect will lead to more stringent regulations, and the laboratory/regulatory/treatment technology cycle will continue.

Demographics & Social Trends

- Retirement (aging workforce) crunch will hit in 5-10 years, with a loss of historical knowledge.
- The work ethic of the working population is continuing to change, with less willingness to start from the bottom and work your way up. There is a high expectation of the younger generations that they can start at mid-level (or upper-level) positions.
- Currently in large/urban areas, the number of open positions is decreasing, as agencies are downsizing through attrition. This eliminates the entry-level positions, and the training opportunities (so no one can gain the training and experience that will be needed to fill positions when they are vacated).
- Currently in smaller/suburban or rural areas, there is significant growth for all positions that will continue.
- Technical vocations will continue to need basic skills training on the job, even for employees with higher education in academic and technical schools. There is a lack of minimum knowledge for new employees to start in some areas, and a lack of desire or willingness to enter other areas (and start “at the bottom”).
- There are difficulties in cross-training, with an increased need for skill-oriented training.
- Salary issues will need to be addressed, as there is a rise in:
 - Cost of living
 - Higher educational costs (need to pay-off student loans)
 - And an increase in difficulty to find staff with adequate skills and education (this links back to a concern about both work ethic and the industry wide staff turn-over).
- There will be an increased link to having salary levels related to certification.

Economic & Business Trends

- There is a concern that the economic condition will continue to get worse, or not improve. Will employers continue to pay for, and support CWEA events? Some agencies have already cut back on support. Agencies will begin to look more closely at the quality of the training with higher expectations of return on investment of time and funds.
- More private agencies are running treatment plants. While these plants are licensed by the State, the operators are not able to use their experience at these plants for certification qualification by the State. They are small private operations that need CWEA’s help to address this issue with the State.
- Fewer participants, and less time to participate – based on the increased emphasis on personal lives. The employers’ willingness to pay for training is critical to get employees to go to training.
- Downsizing of organizations and agencies makes it hard to send people to training, as you need a minimum number of staff on hand.
- If the economy crashes, where would agencies stand? Many have “tightened their belt” and others have not.
- Asset management – there is an increased emphasis on managing assets.
- Accountability for grants and in general – what has funding been used for specifically, to ensure that funds are being properly used.
- Succession planning – how do we transfer knowledge? This is an opportunity for CWEA.
- Recycled water – will become more common.

Government (regulatory and legislative) Trends

- New tighter regulations
 - Detection limits and the ability to meet them (or not) effects reputation
 - More training will be required
 - More person hours to complete the more stringent requirements (of permits and other regulations) will be needed. This will have an adverse effect on Agencies, which will opt instead to focus on increasing efficiencies.
- Private companies' financial reporting (both non-industry scandals and the increase in the impact of privatization) will impact how the industry as a whole manages funds and the reporting requirements will get more stringent.
- California economy and budget is an unknown variable.
- Additional costs for equipment, staff time, and other resources mean less money is available for CWEA membership, training, certification, and other services.
- Privatization of agencies – if it is mandated or not allowed, what will happen?
- There is an increase in liability and litigation of individuals (not only agencies).
- There is an expectation by regulators that ethics be integrated with job performance.
- There is an increased scrutiny of boards and regulators when looking at records, and therefore an increased need to keep more records.
- There is a polarization between regulators and implementers of regulations (less collaboration), and also between the industry and environmentalist groups. CWEA needs to promote the message that wastewater professionals provide a service that benefits the environment.
- There is a less educated (perhaps overworked) regulatory board/staff that often needs to be educated by the permit holder about the permit they are issuing.

Globalization Trends

- Desire to share technology across borders, and take advantage of networking, products, and technological standards outside the US – with resistance from boards.
- New culture of CWEA that is more understanding of the need to plan involving more stakeholders, and to accept CWEA values, goals, and mission to carry-on continuously.
- Aging workforce, and also a longer professional life.
- Internet provides global presence, with the “world at your doorstep.”
- Increasing awareness of the need for sanitary conditions across the world, and a desire (and need) to help solve problems (e.g. Water for People). (Increased understanding of the meaning of global connectivity and its impact on the industry.)
- Stormwater pollution and treatment of dry water flows, increases the overlap of issues and common ground with other associations, such as stormwater associations.

5-b: SWOT Analysis

What are CWEA's current strengths & weaknesses? (Some groups identified between one and three priorities for the categories.)

Strengths

- #1 – Certification program
- #1 – Members – their historical knowledge, skills, willingness to train and be a volunteer base
- #2 – Training – good events and technical contents
- #2 – Training opportunities – our ability to hold conferences
- #3 – Volunteer support and effort in their expertise in running activities, and their willingness to share their knowledge.
 - Interaction with other associations and groups in water, recycled water, and others.
 - Non-profit status that attracts volunteers
 - Networking possibilities that emphasizes the culture of CWEA
 - Local section activities and conferences
 - Listserves
 - Size – the number of problem-solvers
 - Growing concern by the public of environmental issues, providing reasons for training and driving the existence of CWEA.
 - More lean and involved organizational structure that makes good use of the volunteers.
 - Wealth of knowledge of the industry by the members
 - Certification program
 - Economically sound
 - Capable and talented and motivated staff
 - Good communication by staff to committees
 - Training – by the state and some local sections
 - Members are representative of the industry (good cross-section)
 - Technical content of training (in some disciplines)
 - Ability to communicate with others statewide (via yahoo groups, membership database, etc)

Weakness

- #1 – Lack discussion with agencies to market membership and participation in programs and as a way that they can market employees
- #1 – Do not have an effective train the trainer program for both content and training techniques
- #2 – Lack of young and new members
- #3 – External weakness/threat – certification is not mandatory for all disciplines.
 - Community involvement and visibility
 - Lack of public outreach and advertising
 - Lack of volunteer turnover and a decreasing percentage of active volunteers
 - Reactionary to regulations, as opposed to acting as a resource for regulators and to inform members of regulations that will be coming (not already here).
 - Foresight
 - Disconnect between the North and South
 - Don't have a consistent and effective way to measure membership needs and wants
 - Lack younger members
 - Lack active members
 - Lack participation by regulators
 - Lack participation by academics
 - Lack of promotion of the profession to the public
 - Lack of consulting company support compared with the past
 - Difficulty finding speakers
 - Need to train the trainers & speakers on content and presentation/training techniques
 - Lack of professional graphics and presentation layouts by presenters at trainings and conferences

- Lack of trainers for certification exam study sessions
- Lack of participation in colleges and trade schools
- Lack of training for entry-level positions
- Lack of training for maintenance staff – strong relative to other member associations and organizations, but it is still not sufficient
- Implementation of communication across the state – staff can help set-up websites and provide material, but currently this is not being utilized
- Effective use of volunteers and development of volunteers (not having activities for new volunteers when others do faster & have experience)

What will be CWEA's opportunities & threats in the next 5-10 years? (Some groups identified between one and three priorities for the categories.)

Opportunities

- #1 – Explore partnerships with other associations to work with regulators (for a larger voice) and involve environmental groups
- #2 – Provide connections to internships into the profession and mentorship into CWEA leadership positions
- #3 – Train baby-boomer replacements
- #3 – Recruit diversity into the industry and CWEA (for example, offer day care or other services at conferences)
 - More effort to find volunteers
 - Volunteers to focus on higher level work, with staff to focus on the implementation
 - Mentoring programs to keep retired members active
 - Leadership training at a local section level – Northern and Southern Regional Committee meetings are not well attended.
 - Involve retirees in conducting training of younger people entering the industry.
 - Develop relationships with community and trade colleges to outreach to the public and to recruit to the industry.
 - Explore partnerships with regulators
 - Explore partnerships with other associations to help disadvantaged areas and countries (such as Water for People)
 - Computerized training and certification
 - Teleconference training
 - Vary membership levels: traditional, e-member, student, etc)
 - Continue stormwater training, and expand into certification
 - Treat “vendors” with more professionalism - many are trained and educated engineers, operators, and industry professionals. The term “vendor” should be stricken from CWEA vocabulary, and replaced with a term more descriptive of their professional status – equipment manufacturer/representative/distributor, etc. We have an opportunity to engage this community, which is 3% of the membership, but a significant source of revenue.

Threats:

- #1 – Aging and declining number of volunteers
- #1 – Less agency support for participation than in the past
- #2 – Competition from private companies for training
- #2 – Limited volunteer hours (social change in priorities)
- #3 – Effects of the economy on agency willingness to allow staff to participate
- #3 – Vendor vulnerability – we need their continued participation to support our activities
 - State budget could have negative effects on participation
 - Board and city councils becoming more involved in micro-management of agencies
 - Competition for computerized certification with other certifying organizations nation-wide
 - Conference attendance could decline
 - Increased focus on ethics (if we don't become more proactive) in all aspects of the industry and the association.

5-c: CWEA's Success – 5-10 years

What are the most important outcomes that we could achieve for our members in the next 5 -10 years if there were no obstacles to success? (Categorized after the meeting.)

Public Image/Outreach

- CWEA is recognized as THE association for the wastewater profession by the public at large.
- The public would recognize what the wastewater and stormwater profession does.
- Expanded outreach to educational institutions.
- Better educated public.
- Become THE resource for information, networking, and community.
- Achieve a better understanding by the public of what the industry does – have a comprehensive public education and outreach program.
- Have collaboration with regulatory agencies and environmental groups.
- Improved status of the industry – so that industry professionals are proud of what they do.
- CWEA has “name-brand” recognition.
- Establish partnerships with other associations and regulators.

Membership Composition

- Stormwater professionals will be fully integrated into CWEA.
- Expanded active membership base.
- Increased participation by regulators.
- Increased student chapters and membership.
- Recruitment of students.
- A student chapter in every California University.
- More active members.
- Retiree funding or name-designated members (fellows, etc), with fellowships provided for their attendance at events to support their training of others.
- Funding for volunteers who want to participate, but don't have agency support for costs, or who are retired.

Industry & Agency Relationships

- Increased agency support.
- Baby boomers are successfully replaced by qualified professionals.
- Perfect communication between all agencies.
- Manufacturers and sales representatives listed online so that members can find local representatives for equipment they need.
- Links to all agencies through the CWEA website.
- Agency support for local participation in CWEA events and activities.
- Recognition and/or rewards for agencies and manufacturers that provide support for CWEA.
- Agencies are staffed with qualified personnel, and recognize the need to have continued training to maintain their qualifications.
- More recognition of human asset management by managers and supervisors (increased recognition of managers and supervisors of the need for positive recognition and encouragement).

Education & Training

- The pool of technical trainers would be excellent (in quality & quantity) and provide comprehensive training (that is not product-specific).
- Online (anytime) training.
- Training on Demand – CWEA modules in specific topic areas.
- More frequent training, in more locations.
- Develop a training corps consisting of retirees.
- Have better access to relevant training at a reasonable cost (similar to WQCI).
- CWEA as the one-stop for training needs.
- Have online training and certification (on demand).
- A wider menu of options for training to take into account different learning styles and needs.
- Education about wastewater treatment in all grade levels of school as a public outreach program.
- More training opportunities in different locations and types.
- More scholarships given annually.
- On-site (in-house) training provided by CWEA, either provided to an individual facility or to several neighboring facilities.
- CWEA provides funding for training and retirees.
- Online training and certification exams – similar to AWWA.

Certification

- Less expensive certification program (to certificate holders).
- Certification for technical fields would be mandatory.
- Online (anytime) TCP testing.
- Have online training and certification (on demand). (Repeated from Education & Training)
- Required certification (lends to demand of professionals and increased salaries).
- Parent administrators for all TCP certifications – nationwide.
- Take over of operator certification from State of California.
- Take back the wastewater certification from the State. CWEA can do a better job at a lower cost.
- Partner with ABC for certification testing. Investigate full partnership or the use of the services and network that ABC has developed on a national level to make them a collaborator rather than a competitor.
- CWEA's certification program is recognized nationwide (so that it is accepted in other states as valid certification).

Web & Communication Technology

- CWEA's website is the primary resource for the industry.
- Improved intradisciplinary communication (via user groups).
- A maintenance site that includes problems and solutions presented by members.
- More defined internet groups for more effective communication.
- More access to data and improved information sharing.
- Discussion groups online to answer questions.
- Local section as a top button on the web page.
- E-Groups for each discipline in CWEA.
- CWEA has links to other associations and resources for professionals.

5-d CWEA's Mega-Issues

What questions will CWEA need to ask and answer over the next 5-10 years in order to create this desired future?

Partnerships with Other Associations, Regulators, and Environmental Groups

- How do we identify which groups to approach?
- What is our common ground?
- What mutual benefits are there to creating a partnership?
- What are the impediments to collaboration?
- How do we communicate our environmental work to other (especially environmental) groups?
- How do we approach these groups effectively?
- How do we forge the partnerships once the value is seen?
- How do we fund these partnerships?
- How do we get potential partners (RWQCB, SWRCB, others) to see CWEA as a resource?

Electronics: Online Training & Certification

- What are the key drivers & barriers?
- Drivers: What are reasons people will want to have online training and certification?
 - How can we market this to agencies and individuals?
 - More flexible training and certification in terms of time and accessibility (agency and home),
 - Improves ability to search for books, references, and resources – electronic information exchange, Egroups, Yahoo Groups
 - CWEA can post technical content to encourage use of online resources
- Barriers: what will prevent people from using these services?
 - People who still don't have time or access to the internet
 - CWEA staff time and costs to support these activities
 - Agency access for employees may be limited and/or not supported
 - Problems with employee abuse of opportunities
- How can we ensure security of testing (ensure that the test taker is who they say – and other security issues)?
- What liability will CWEA have for the information that is provided (training)?
- What is the cost for technical writing?
- How do we put technical content online & provide search capability for easy use?

Public Education and Perception

- How will we fund it? This will not be a revenue-generating source.
- How do we develop partnerships with universities, colleges, and schools?
- How do we get into the elementary schools?
- What would be the best way (technique) to get into the public eye?
- How do we partner with PBS or other public services organizations?
- How do we create sources for speakers in a local area? (Speakers Bureau?)
- How many plants/agencies have a "public education" person or department?
- CWEA should be involved in Earth Day.
- Everyone should know that there are people at the end of the toilet.
 - CWEA is at the end of your flush.
 - Think of us when you flush.
- How do we get our colleagues past the distaste for what they do?

New workforce/Outreach to Students

- How can CWEA organize internships to students?
- How can we support research opportunities?
- How can we support/create mentoring programs?
- How do we outreach to colleges (community colleges)?
 - Through faculty by offering plant and laboratory tours.
 - Through students.
- Web pages to be a resource for students doing research.

Certification

- How do we partner with ABC?
 - Process has begun, with initial inquiries to ABC and WEF. There is a mutual sharing of approaches between the two entities. Agencies are moving towards requiring certification – WEF and CWEA would like to see that happen.
 - CWEA to take over operator certification from the State.
 - Key drivers:
 - More effective
 - Lower cost
 - Key barriers:
 - Perception of moving from state to association – may be less credible (initially)
 - How to accomplish?
 - Legislation
 - Public outreach and communication
 - Convincing the state regulators that it is the right & best approach
 - Training for certification
 - Keep a grass roots approach.
 - Retirees to provide training at agency locations
 - Interactive online training – to be developed by staff and volunteers. Perhaps outsource programming.
 - Would online testing/training be done on the CWEA site? Another site owned by CWEA? Someone else? Should we partner?
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6. Wrap-up and Next Steps

President Elect Agor thanked the group for their work throughout the day. He reported that the worksheets would be compiled and sent to both the participants, and those leaders who were unable to attend (i.e. everyone who had been invited). He encouraged everyone to contact him if they thought of anything after the meeting that should have been included in the day's discussion, but was missed. The regional committees will likely be addressing some of the next steps in developing a successful strategic plan. Two key elements that have not yet been discussed include how to measure a program's progress and success, and how to sunset programs.

He reported that the first draft of the plan would go to the board in January, with chances for review again in April at the annual conference, and again before the board approves the strategic plan in June.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Notes prepared by Angela Nielsen, Executive Assistant & Coordinator of Leadership Development