



WEFMAX in Park City, UT May 15-17, 2024

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

SUPPORTING REFUGEES – by Ermina Mustafic, Catholic Community Services

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WEF UPDATE ON WORKFORCE STRATEGY EFFORTS

Presenter: John Ikeda

- Plan to do a better job of leaving these conferences and engaging with our communities, universities, etc.
- Provide online leadership training for MAs
- Draft curriculums for different training programs (HS, interns, etc.)
- WEF is working on 3 areas of the WEF Strategic plan: Workforce, A Purpose Driven Community and Circular Water Economy with a global lens for these areas.
- Late summer is the target date to launch strategies
- We have not solved the water challenges
- Value of water is under valued
- WEF has partnered with Brave Blue World Studios on a second documentary “Our Brave World”. The film premieres Tuesday, April 22nd (Earth Day) in New York and will be entered in several international film festivals throughout the year.

Table Discussion Report Outs

Who Should We Be Reaching Out To?

- MAs connect with workforce groups
- Is experience of interest already collected/known by some groups that handle refugees (asylum seekers)
- Constructors / AH collaborative delivery
- Economic disadvantaged individuals -recruit
- Engineers
- Grant writers, funders, \$\$
- Grade School
 - Bring in Demos
 - Have all grade level offers annually not just for 4th and 5th graders
 - Offer programs to engage and educate
 - Volunteer outings
- Junior High School
 - School Boards
 - Field Trips to WWTP
- High School
 - Invite students to a technical conference
 - Reach out to the counselors

- Coop / school to work programs
 - Offer job fairs
- Career Days
- CTE programs
- Technology Schools – MA Grants
- College Certifications
- Intern opportunities
- Laboratory Pros
- Operators
- Partner with NSBE/SHPE/others
 - Pre-collegiate
 - College
 - Professional
 - International
- Previously incarcerated
- Public Communicators
- Regulators
- Trades (electrical plumbing, mechanical, steel)
 - Operators
 - Labs
 - Collections/Maintenance
 - Distributions

2. What Should WEF Be Doing?

- Recognize everyone working in the water sectors as water professionals
- Tiered membership (may exist but needs publicizing)
- Profile the best of the best e.g. HOD profiles
- Go to host state MAs for CEU's for operators
- Operator community (intra and interstate) for exchange of ideas
- WEFMAX event for operators (with CEUs)
- Students do not know about career options in the water sector
- Promote careers to newcomers to the country
- Use universal language (WEF is an international organization)

3. How Can / Should WEF Help MAs with their Workforce

- Promote water jobs nationally
 - Opportunities are not recognized by students nationally
- How to “get into” the schools; reach the students
- Create PPT for national use to promote Water Jobs for MAs to use
- Train + Onboard MA Leadership to know what tools are available
- Grants for internships to aid in outreach
- Internships we can promote together
- Help propose a High School track HOSA

- Videos to share with schools
- Promote Water Week Better in a national way MAs can push it out to attract
- Quarterly meetings to discuss what is working
- Figure out how to offer CEUs for STEM
- Remove the convoluted deception of “How to be an Operator” on the web
- More “What I do” jobs online for students to see with links to operator positions

4. Who is Doing a Good Job in Recruiting?

- Examples of Steller Recruiting
 - Army
 - Compelling commercials
 - Logos
 - Branding
 - Messaging
 - Alarm / Pest Control
 - Incentives
- Examples of non-Steller
 - Police – bad press
- Commonalities
 - Make a Difference – money
 - Part of something bigger
 - Solve big complex problems
 - Perks – Incentives – Awareness
 - Varied skillsets / levels

THURSDAY WEFMAX MAY 16

EARLY BIRDS: HIKE or TRAIL RUN



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WEFMAX

WEFMAX kicked off with a video highlighting the past 10 years of WEFMAX memories. The video was produced by Lance Manabe, a past WEF Delegate. Thank you, Lance!

WEF MESSAGE

Presenter: Kalpna Solanki

My Water Story

WEF Mission

- Our Mission Statement is “Inspiring the water community in pursuit of human and environmental well-being.”
- It taps into the deep passion and sense of purpose that motivates water professionals every day, as we work for people and the planet. It builds on WEF’s role as a water sector convener, educator, and leader and expands our horizons to position us as THE community that water professionals come to for inspiration, connection, and solutions.

WEF Vision Statement

- WEF’s Vision Statement is “Life free of water challenges”
- Our vision elevates our focus. It gives WEF the freedom to address the full spectrum of future water challenges as they evolve. It also allows us to increase our impact and influence in and on behalf of the water sector, continue to protect public health and the environment, and enhance the quality of life in our local communities and around the world. Water Challenges are varied, water challenges are local, the challenges you face are not the same as your neighboring utility, neighboring state or neighboring region.
- As an operator your challenges may be x, as a utility supervisor it may be where are you going to find the next employee, as a utility leader it may be how can you afford the new pump station or treatment plant upgrade or etc.

WEF Core Values

- **Collaborate for Collective Impact.** This value recognizes that WEF cannot be the best at “everything water,” and that collaboration is key to our ability to have positive, lasting impact. So, let’s transform what partnership can mean.
- **Focus on Customers Through Empathy and Service.** This value reminds us to keep customers at the heart of everything we do and recognize that we must continue to evolve to keep pace with and meet their changing needs. Let’s try new things, keep our customers’ perspective in mind, and listen, communicate, and serve with empathy. **At WEF our customers are our members but also those people who consume our products such as publications, conferences, webinars, training materials, etc.**
- **Lead Boldly with Purpose and Agility.** The pace of change and the enormity of the challenges facing us mean that we must think bigger and more boldly and be able to pivot faster and try something new and different. To achieve our vision of life free of water challenges, each and every one of us must help lead WEF down this bolder path.
- **Integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in All that We Do.** Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are not external add-ons to existing efforts, they are core ways we must execute everything we do. At every juncture, we must make sure we have diverse voices in the room, all sharing an equitable experience and contributing new perspectives and new solutions to water challenges.

WEF Strategic Goals

- Attract and develop a diverse and passionate water workforce
 - Raise public awareness about the importance of water and the water workforce
 - Reduce barriers to workforce entry and retention
 - Provide extraordinary opportunities for connection, growth, and education
 - Cultivate strategic partnerships
- Cultivate a purpose-driven community to sustainably solve water challenges for all.”

- WEF will cultivate this purpose-driven community by driving connection and collaboration for the development of innovative solutions, delivering *best-in-class* member experiences, and creatively developing and delivering content and programming.
- Lead the transformation to the Circular Water Economy
 - WEF will not have all the answers or address every issue relating to the circular water economy. Instead, we will lead the transformation to the Circular Water Economy by convening stakeholders to craft WEF's Circular Water Economy framework and best practices, proliferating the framework and best practices, and championing and eliminating barriers to Circular Water Economy adoption.

WEFTEC

- WEFTEC is the world's largest water quality event and is THE place where the water community comes together.
- In 2023, WEFTEC welcomed more than 21,000 registrants to be the world's largest water quality event!
- WEFTEC 2023 included 870 exhibitors, 136 technical sessions, more than 20 community-focused group meetings, and countless other networking and educational opportunities.
- WEFTEC 2024, Oct 5-9, in New Orleans, LA

WEF STUDENT MEMBERS: SUPPORTING THE WATER WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Presenter: Brad Lovett

- Objectives
 - Brainstorm how we can best serve our students
 - Strengthen Student Chapter annual reports
- WEF Strategic Plan Goal 1: Attract and develop a diverse and passionate water workforce
 - Strategy 1: **Raise public awareness about the importance of water and the water workforce**
 - WaterPalooza; Stockholm Junior Water Prize
 - Strategic 2: Reduce barriers to workforce entry and retention
 - Student Design Competition, InFLOW, Student Chapter of the Year Report
 - Strategic 3: Provide extraordinary opportunities for connection, growth, and education.
 - Student Chapters
- Notes from the Brainstorming Session
- Student Chapter Reports due May 20, 2024

MEMBER ASSOCIATION SHARING SESSION

In this session, WEA of Texas, Clean Water Professionals of KT, Illinois WEA, Alabama's WEA, AZ Water, WEA of South Carolina presented.

Moderator: Sarah Ward

WEA of Texas – Matias Pasch

Miles and Miles of Texas: How WEAT Staff and Leadership Support the Diverse Needs of our Sections

- WEAT has 4,114 members
- 254 counties grouped into 19 sections
- WEAT has a Section Engagement Committee focused on geographic diversity.
- WEAT Seeds Sections
 - Identify and recruit new section leaders
 - Draft and approve new ByLaws
 - Offers financial support and assuredness

- Deliver meetings
- Staff and MA Support
 - Financial – Credit Card and banking
 - Logistical – website
 - Swag
 - Officer and leader presence
 - Awards at annual conference
 - Event hosting across Texas

Illinois WEA – Christina Smith

The Importance of Student Outreach for the Water Industry

- **Each year** I have face to face contact with close to 800 students for the sole purpose of promoting water careers, creating spaces to talk about water, drinking water, wastewater, microbes, pollution, regulations, needs for the future, and more.
- **Children are our Future** - As a child I was visiting Biloxi Mississippi and discovered I could not jump into the water and enjoy the beach as I had many times when our family would visit California. I learned pretty early on what fecal coliforms were as I ended up getting dropped off at the local library. While there, I researched what fecals were and what that meant to the water. From that day forward, I saw water through a different lens.
- **Students across America have 100% interest in the environment.** When I visit colleges, I know most Students have their educational interest selected. However, many never knew there were careers in water to pursue. Each year there are students who are excited to learn of the competitive pay and upward mobility various jobs in the field offer. Even more are interested to learn how the emerging needs of water can apply to their career choice.
- **High School Visits** - During High School visits I discuss with students the roles at your facility (point) and how they can begin work right after graduation and earn on the job training for future careers and certifications. Students are SUPER EXCITED to learn they can make more money than they ever thought possible by focusing on their Math and Science classes in HS. I provide them the tools to find our careers.
- **Grade School Visits** - In Illinois, all 5th grade students discuss wastewater facilities and drinking water. During this lesson in class, I visit the school with an activity on the subject. I bring in water filtration tools, microscopes, you name it, what ever their teacher says the students would be interested in I listen to the teacher and design an event around the specific class interest. I will admit, it is usually filtration or the microscope.
- **Scout troops** have water badge requirements. What a great way to plant the seed of water jobs. Depending on the age of the scouts, they can be low intensity and just cover the basics.
- **Home School** - I even attended a homeschool STEM activity. 20 parents gave me the afternoon to talk about water with their children. That was the most intellectual all over the board conversation I have ever had on the subject of water.
- **Student Outreach may look like...**
 - At a University
 - When I arrive at a University before I speak, I walk around and ask each student, if possible, what their major is and what they want to do. I will then pull up a presentation based on the career choices. At Northern Illinois University this year I spoke to their Science Club about PFAS as the majority of the club members are Biochemical engineers. I told them how right now there is a marketing run on the best science idea out there to remove PFAS from drinking water with wastewater and solids well on the way. We discussed the strength of the fluoro bonds how perhaps plant or micro life was the solution as to date chemicals were not the solution. ALLOW and hop into side conversations at this level. They are thinking and this is what we want.
 - At a High School

- The entire science department brings their students in during multiple class hours – see the teachers standing on the edges- and I speak to them about tons of stuff. One popular way to get started is I ask where do they want to live when you graduate? I say pull out your phones and type in that city then the words “water quality report”. While I am asking questions and talking I reward them with life straws if a student can tell me if there is a contaminant that is close to or above the EPAs MCL on that report. I give reusable straws if they can tell me what that MCL exceedance means, and why it matters and we ALWAYS compare this report to an FDA approved bottle of water someone has handy.
 - I have teacher approved candy and have the crowd ENGAGED by walking around and “seeing” them. I NEVER say boy or girl, I say you or they. I ENCOURAGE interruptions, as this means they are listening and care enough to speak in front of peers. Where does your drinking water come from Surface water or ground water? Do you think all water tastes the same? What are some ‘flavors’ water may have and why? Do you think we worked during Covid? Did you know you can make enough to buy a home working right out of high school? I tell them to focus on Math & Science classes because you truly can support yourself. I list jobs available right now. I put all of this stuff and more on my PPT. I show summer internships available this summer and job descriptions for jobs open right now. You wouldn’t believe the number of teachers who want to change their career at each event.
 - At a Plant Tour – provide job descriptions and pay information
 - For Plant tours, (TAP) plan in advance what you will say and do when you bring students to your water plants. Tell them of the different systems out there, what you have at your facility, and why. Then show them and if possible provide hands on activities in your lab. Take them to the wastewater plant walk them from start to finish and tell them what is being removed at each location. Ask them questions. Allow your techs and operators to talk to students, encourage them to share their annual income – its public knowledge. Let them see and tell them we have well paying jobs for them that directly impact their family, friends, and the environment. If we don’t make our jobs seems cool, and accessible, no one else will.
 - School Activities Invest in the Future
 - activities can range from
 - (TAP) the Enviroscape watershed Model. This is fun and easy to take to Career fairs or for small groups. It packs well and has wheels.
 - (TAP TAP) The Microscope is always a hit! Take a fresh sample of your aeration tank and bring an aerator to keep the bugs happy. I bring a puppy pad and disinfectant wipes for clean-up, PPE gloves and glasses. I sometimes let students prepare slides and (TAP) ID organisms via a handout or PPT I have up.
 - (TAP TAP) Filtration activities are fun and work well in teams. And don’t be discouraged by their faces, this young man wanted to be an engineer like his father and was very focused on what I was saying, and his team had the cleanest water!
 - Always practice your activity in advance.
 - **Advertise your job openings**
 - High schools and colleges have career fairs. A benefit of this is it’s an opportunity to connect with ALL students at once. Bring activities that are colorful, interactive, or visually appealing. Keep in mind: not all students attend, you are limited to a few moments - so prepare a handout, and students think “chemistry” when they see water booths – so bring a fun tool! (press spacebar). Sadly, many colleges now request registration fees from potential employers ranging from \$100 – 1000 dollars depending on the event, location and requested placement at the Fair. Unless you have a budget and a well thought out plan to recoup those costs, I recommend instead you get facetime with the shop class, science class, and math class or groups. Local High Schools have various type of job boards, both online and in hallways that are littered with grocery store and retail open positions. OUR JOBS

QUALIFY for these job boards! Many of our entry level positions only require a HS diploma provide great benefits, on the job training for certification, and pay WELL. Call and/or email local schools with your job descriptions. ALWAYS include the pay range, and work hours. Contact your HR if, when interacting with school staff, they share key words or phrases they recommend you use or recommend you eliminate.

- **Resources**

- Who to contact:
- Colleges: Science Teachers, look for professors online & email them.
- HS: Student Services, College and Career Centers, Counselors
- Grade School: Principal, general phone number
- Local Libraries look for activities and events to host
- Allow and encourage word of mouth have your card!
- Online PPTs available for beginners: <https://www.slideshare.net/pradeepbujji7/water-ppt-39058197>
- Advanced Students: <https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/Communications/HIGHSCHOOLPowerPoint.pptx>
- High Thinking: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-04/pfas-mpdwr-presentation_4.9.24_overview.pdf

- **Additional Resources**

- I encourage my team to interact with students on tours and give them time to come up with activities to do with them. I let them do this because they will be excited, and it will show.
- If you cannot find diversity near you and want it, send your resumes to Historically Black Colleges and Universities via (HBCU Connect) a great tool to connect your job to professionals looking for great careers. HBCU Connect, by the way is having their career fair in DC next month grab the QR code for details.
- Handshake is a great multi-school job source. Call schools near you to see if they use this tool before you invest in a membership. If you do invest POST EVERYTHING on this site.
- Listen, when your ready to get out there or expand your outreach, don't be afraid to start with your alma mater or the school closest to your facility. YES, it may take a little time to get in the door, coordinate it all, and get established, but that's okay because.... Water is worth it!

Alabama's WEA – Tina Sheikhzeinoddin and Matt Alpaugh

Investing in Your Future – How to Support YPs and Student Chapters (AWEA)

- Young Professionals
 - Creating a community
 - Networking-why?
 - Lunch and Learns- Communication skills, Finance, YP 5 min presentations...
 - Growth opportunities
 - Support
 - Answer the question: What are you missing out if you don't join?
- Students
 - Career path options
 - Connections for internship/jobs
 - Scholarships
 - MA support
 - SWAG
 - Ongoing goal: keep students engaged after graduation
 - Ideas: Water award given by university, having a cord for graduation.

- How to Increase Student, YP and EP Membership
 - MA conference includes YP and student activities: Job fair, game night social, student poster competition, students presenting, dedicated “meet the boss” event
 - If you don’t have events, they will not come
 - Pay for student lodging and travel expenses to come to conference-key time to interact with the local water and wastewater community and keep them engaged
 - Develop relationships with professors—competing with other student organizations and conferences
 - Increase scholarship amounts
 - “Not only happy hour”- YPs to hold technical sessions-not just social events
 - Figure out what works– casual after work events or lunch and learns during the day
 - Provide money, time, and resources to the group

AZ Water – Amy Baker

AZ Water WELL: Workforce Development Training Platform

- Video - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xwg-5NBQhnlhRRsSDCG-Bh1QUp4RznZ_/view
- Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning Platform to go live July 2024
 - Intro to Water Distribution part 1
 - Intro to Water Treatment part 1
 - Intro to Wastewater Collection part 1
 - Intro to Wastewater Treatment part 1
 - Intro to Arizona Water Resources
 - Intro to Water Conservation
 - Intro to Water Distribution part 2
 - Intro to Water Treatment part 2
 - Intro to Wastewater Collection part 2
 - Intro to Wastewater Treatment part 2
 - Intro to Digital Infrastructure
 - Introduction to Operator Math
- Other Intro courses down the road
 - Lab Practice
 - Cross Connection and Backflow
 - Energy Management
 - Pretreatment
 - Stormwater
 - Bio Solids
 - Customer Service
 - Advanced Water Treatment
 - And more...
- Phase 2 – Winter 24/25
 - Add Intermediate and advanced courses
 - Expand introduction courses
 - Roll out vendor show
 - Regularly evaluate platform traffic
- What will the training platform offer?
 - Workforce training courses free to members
 - Offers automatic PDH issuance
 - Future Features
 - Additional topics/disciplines
 - Sponsored – vendor led training
 - Fees for Premium content
 - Public facing training



WEA of South Carolina – Beth Thompson
Women in Water Life Committee

- Mission Statement
 - Providing our members educational and networking opportunities that promote, protect, and preserve South Carolina's water resources while fostering a community dedicated to the advancement of women in the water industry
- Geographic
 - Represented by 10 chapters
- Offered Round Table Discussions
 - What is your vision of this committee
 - Regionally?
 - Locally?
 - What can groups do next year?
 - What projects would you like to do long-term?
 - What is the easiest way to get together?
- Chapter groups planned activities include but limited to...
 - Multiple opportunities to mingle for drinking and conversation
 - Outdoor hikes and activities
 - Local water bill assistance programs for single parent households
 - Mentorships
 - Litter pickup service events
 - Book club meetings
 - Award program for women who have made an impact in SC
- Wine offered from a woman owned local SC business
- A Women in Water Life pin was designed by a female member



BUILD A BIKE ACTIVITY SERVICE PROJECT ACTIVITY

Attendees broke out into 8 teams to build bikes to give back to children in need in Utah. A few photos are provided below. Teams built their bike, created a name for their bike and did a jingle.



This Big Beautiful Bike



Purple Petuna



Free Ride Fiend

WEF DELEGATE-AT-LARGE CONSTITUENCY SESSION

Presenter: ValaRae Partee

- The WEF HOD has 12 Delegate-at-Large (DAL) positions
- Each position offers the member the opportunity to represent a constituency of their choice and passionate about
- Each DAL serves for a term of three years
- WEFMAX Park City had 6 DAL's in attendance
 - ValaRae Partee representing "Black Women in water, YPs of Color"
 - Mark Poling representing "Current & Past Officers"
 - Kam Law representing "Asian Community"
 - Leigh Thomas representing "Women in Water"
 - Peter Garvey representing "Water Advocates"
 - Cara Jung representing "Multiple States/WEF Chapters, SYP"

WEF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (CLC)

Presenter: Ian Fife

- Comprised of the chairs and vice chairs of all the communities, task forces, accelerators and advisory panels
- The communities are grouped together into Communities of Practice (CoP) each with a Director
- The council is led by a Steering Committee
- The Steering Committee is comprised of a Chair/Vice Chair/Directors of each of the CoP
- A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of three or more WEF Interest Groups (community, TF, accelerator, etc.) with similar goals or focus areas.
- The CoP Director:
 - Provides leadership and direction to the interest groups within the Community
 - Represents the interest group as a member of the CLC Steering Committee
 - Assists with the coordination of activities that involve multiple interest groups
 - Fosters diversity and inclusion in all WEF volunteer engagements
- Directors serve a two-year term
- Application process looks for:
 - Leadership expertise
 - Strategic thinking
 - Communication and planning skills
 - Understanding of and passion for advancing WEF's vision
 - Experience with WEF Groups

DC FLY-IN INSIGHTS – FUTURE PLANNING

Learn about the most recent DC Fly-In, shared stories and experiences.

Presenters: Peter Garvey

- The WEF Fly-In brings together water professionals from across the U.S to meet with lawmakers in the nation's capital, share their water stories, and advocate on behalf of clean water.
- It offers the opportunity to 'walk the halls of Congress' and be heard. The DC Fly-In is organized by the [Water Environment Federation](#) (WEF), [National Association of Clean Water Agencies](#) (NACWA) and [WaterReuse Association](#) (WRA) and is part of WEF's water advocacy program.
- Attendees team up with fellow MA colleagues, they schedule meetings, prepare for meetings, sign up for the Fly-In, meet with legislators, share their stories, and will follow-up with those they met with.
- Three Hundred and Sixty-Three registered, represented by 41 states + Washington DC

- 18 Young professionals attended who were supported by WEF.
- We are pleased to share we have one thousand advocates! Thank you WEFMAX attendees in Alexandria for signing up and bringing us to 1K advocates for water!

PUTTING THE WE IN WEF

Presenter: Scott Aurit

Putting the WE in WEF, “Collaborating for a Collective Impact”, the Nebraska Water Environment Association Story.

Scott Aurit, NWEA WEF Delegate

Presentation Notes

- **WEF Strategic Plan**
 - **As noted in the WEF Strategic Plan, one of our core values is collaboration for collective impact. The presentation today highlights several ways that this collaboration can occur at different levels within WEF. The value of this collaboration provides collective impact for your members, the member association, and all of WEF.**
- Collaborate with:
 - WEF Communities
 - Other MAs
 - WEF Staff
 - WEF Trustees
- **WEF Communities - Specialty Conferences – WEF Collection Systems**
 - WEF and the CLC are working to restructure the Specialty Conferences to better partner with local Member Associations to host these annual conferences.
 - In 2017, NWEA hosted the WEF Collection Systems Conference in Omaha. The original intent for hosting the conference was to highlight the significant investments that the City had made in the combined sewer collection system.
 - Execution of the conference included partnering with the WEF Collection Systems Committee and the 10+ committees responsible for planning the conference. Over 90 members of NWEA were part of the planning effort, which became a large bonding activity for the member association. It gave a common activity and purpose for the MA and brought members together in monthly planning activities.
 - As part of specialty conferences, a social event is hosted by the local member association. In lieu of hosting an event for only conference attendees, we opened it up for all membership (and their significant others) as well. We had over 325 people in attendance for an evening event at our botanical gardens. This was the first time NWEA hosted event that included family members.
 - The conference all increased our knowledge in collection systems as we had over 150 participants within a 3 hour drive of Omaha attend. In addition, a number of NWEA members helped administer the conference as moderators and room monitors.
 - **In summary, NWEA received multiple benefits from hosting a Specialty Conference. Increased membership, a more cohesive membership, membership event that includes all membership (and significant others), increased technical knowledge, and a membership that was focused on common purposes.**

- **WEF Communities - Specialty Conferences – Young Professionals Summit at the Utility Management Conference**
 - We began sending two young professionals to the WEF UMS YP Summit over a decade ago. The results of this leadership training has resulted in a very strong Young Professional Committee that has it's own subcommittee structure including: NWEA mentor program, stream cleanup activities, Spring Conference “bags/cornhole” tournament (with a YP mixer), Fall Conference Poker Tournament (fundraises over \$5,000 each year for engineers without boarders).
 - The YP Texas Hold'em tournament routinely has 90-100 players and occurs after our annual conference banquet. Members who are not playing, join the event as a social activity from 9 PM-midnight. This event keeps most attendees on-site at the conference center and provides a safe environment for everyone to enjoy.
 - **Investing in your young professionals through the YP Submit will pay long term dividends for your member association.**
- **Other MAs – 4 State Governmental Affairs Workshop**
 - For over two decades, Nebraska WEA, Iowa WEA, Kansas WEA, and Missouri WEA have held an annual Governmental Affairs workshop focusing on regulatory issues. The workshop is held in Kansas City, which is the headquarters of Region 7 EPA.
 - The leader of the workshop rotates between the four member associations for organization and coordinating the agenda and presentations.
 - Attendees include EPA Region 7 officials, and regulatory officials from the state regulators in each of the four states. Additionally, representatives from public utilities, consultants, and municipalities attend. **The event is welcomed by all entities to have open conversations, find lessons learned, and sharing of information. The summary of the discussion is published in each of the MA newsletters.**
- **Other MAs – DE&I Committees**
 - In 2021, NWEA created a DE&I committee, which included NWEA members that were also located in Iowa.
 - In 2023, NWEA members attended the Iowa WEA Board meeting and provided a summary of DE&I activities and value, which helped springboard Iowa WEA to creating their own committee. The NWEA DE&I charter and goals were adopted by Iowa WEA.
 - NWEA has held annual Women in Water breakfast (Fall Conference) and lunch (Spring Conference) activities for the last three years. NWEA would welcome comments and ideas from other MAs that have similar women in water events and activities.
- **WEF Staff – Strategic Planning**
 - Nebraska WEA requested assistance from WEF in performing our Strategic Plan update as part of our annual retreat.
 - Kelsey Hurst has helped several MAs in person for strategic planning. The value to your MA in received WEF assistance is threefold:
 - Kelsey can perform a strategic planning session very effectively, making the most out of your retreat.
 - Kelsey will provide her experiences in working with other MAs to provide best-practices, lessons learned, and contacts with other MAs to support the goals and activities for your MA.
 - Members will learn how to perform strategic planning and they can take that knowledge back to support their professional development.

- **WEF Staff – Operator Outreach/Membership**
 - In 2023, Nebraska looked to eliminate their MA operator only membership category and transition those individuals over to full WEF/NWEA members. This allows all operators to serve on the NWEA Board and have greater engagement.
 - June 2023 – Partnered with WEF to assist in transition.
 - July 2023 - WEF Leadership flew to Nebraska and presented at summer operators conference to discuss the advantages of WEF membership specifically focused at operators.
 - WEF offered a reduced operator membership rate (40% off) for a limited time to assist in transition.
- **Know the WEF Staff**
 - Communicate frequently with your MA Staff Liaisons – Dianne, Kelsey, Ama, and Renee.
 - The full list of WEF Staff can be obtained from the MA resources center on the WEF website. Review their job descriptions and identify ways that they can assist your MA in various activities.
- **WEF Trustees – Annual Conferences**
 - The WEF Trustee that attends your annual conference is identified shortly after WEFTEC each year. When you find out the trustee that will be attending your annual conference, reach out proactively to discuss presentation topics and other opportunities for engagement. You have the best of the best coming to your MA!!!
 - Complete the conference request form and include them in all board meetings, lunch and dinner presentation opportunities, and include them with a 30-minute presentation in the opening general session.
 - **NWEA usually holds 2 hour-long planning calls with the trustee coming to our annual conferences. The trustee will tailor the presentations to the needs of your MA, providing the highest level of value for everyone.**
 - **Aimee Killeen participated as a lead speaker in our Women in Water breakfast.**
 - **Jaime Eichenberger presented on opportunities for greater engagement of NWEA members in WEF committees.**
 - **Member Engagement Transformation (MET)**
 - **Work with MA liaisons at WEF to identify MA members that are in WEF technical committees.**
 - **Allows MAs to encourage more local members to be further engaged at the WEF level.**
 - **Don't need to go to conferences to be active in technical committees.**
 - **If you give 0.5hr/wk = great volunteer, 1hr/wk = committee leadership, 4hr/wk = might as well be on the board**
- **Input from other members:**
 - With member engagement – some folks wouldn't be on a WEF committee because they didn't think they'd be able to go to conferences, but it actually increases chances to be able to go.
 - On collections call for CLC, there were 260~ folks on call, lots of engagement which is very exciting.

- **Member Engagement**

- **Grow Your Professional Network**

As consultants, the value of our professional networks cannot be overstated. Developing client relationships for marketing and business development, identifying and recruiting top talent to bring to HDR, and just knowing who to call when you have a question on a particular topic are invaluable. By attending social events, committee meetings, or better yet, helping to coordinate and deliver an event, you have the opportunity to meet others in your industry and area of expertise in a low-stress, social environment. This allows you to learn more about them, establish a deeper, non-transactional relationship, and hey, you might even make some friends along the way!

- **Git Gud**

Joining a technical committee gives you access to other passionate and experienced members in your field. Often, very experienced, senior technical experts are members of these committees and more than willing to share their knowledge and expertise with anyone who is willing to listen. Furthermore, these committees often put on technical seminars and other training opportunities that can help you hone your skills. Before long, you will be the expert, and your work with the committee can also give you a platform to share your technical skills, elevating you as a known expert in your field.

- **Build Your Soft Skills**

As engineers we don't always start with the best interpersonal skills. But these soft skills are what allow us to be better coworkers, better supervisors and better at managing our client relationships. Working with a professional association provides you with limitless opportunities to practice how to communicate with, persuade and manage diverse teams of volunteers in a low-consequence environment.

- **Learn to Lead**

There are no born leaders. Leadership is a series of skills that have to be learned, practiced and refined. Professional associations provide leadership training to their volunteers, both formal and informal, the opportunity to practice and build on these skills, and techniques to make you a better leader.

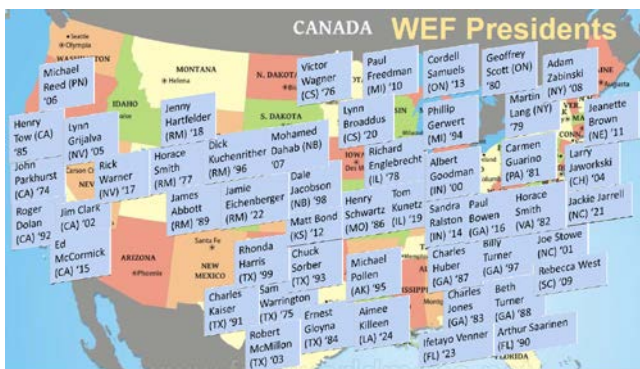
- **It's fun**

Seriously! You do what you do because you find it endlessly fascinating. Spending time with others who share your passion and curiosity is a blast. Plus, most events end with a happy hour.

FRIDAY WEFMAX DAY 2

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF WEF LEADERSHIP

WEFMAX Day 2 kicked off showing the past 50 years of WEF Presidents and the leadership from the House of Delegates since it began in 2008. Thank you, Leigh Thomas, for putting this together.



WEF HOD MESSAGE



Presenter: Bill Davis

What is the House of Delegates (HOD)

- It is the deliberative and representational body of the Water Environment Federation.
- Comprised of delegates from member associations and unrepresented constituencies (delegates-at-large)
- Number of delegates are based on the size of MA membership
- 12 delegates-at-large
- 7 standing committees: steering, budget, DE&I, nominating, water advocacy, communications, WEFMAX
- Work groups: change annually
- Responsible for confirming Trustees, BOT leadership, by-law changes
- Advise the BOT on strategic direction and policy development
- The Delegates are asked to be curious but not judgmental
- Do this by...
 - **Humility**
 - Humility isn't denying your strengths; It's being honest about your weaknesses
 - **Hustle**
 - To have the courage, confidence, self-belief, and self-determination to go out there and work it out until you find the opportunities you want in life.
 - **Heart**
 - By living and working with heart, we create a deeper bond and impact with the people and the work we're committed to.
- WHY?
 - To better serve
 - MAs
 - Be more transparent
 - Be more forward-facing
 - Focus on important issues
 - Be true resource
 - WEF
 - Help implement the strategic plan
 - Be a voice for the Federation
 - Ourselves

- TAKING on a CHALLENGE is like riding a HORSE, ISN'T IT? If you are COMFORTABLE while you're DOING it, probably DOING IT WRONG ~ Theodore, "Ted" Lasso

WEF HOD COMMITTEE UPDATES

- Budget Committee – Scott Aurit
 - Review WEF budget to assure alignment with strategic plan
 - Administer MA grant program
 - Participate in WEF \$\$-related committees (Chair and Vice-Chair)
 - WEF Finance Committee
 - WEF Audit Committee
 - HOD Steering Committee
 - Other projects of our choosing relevant to budget issues
 - MA Grant Program
 - Has become a standard WEF budget item
 - Annual budget: \$125,000
 - Two grant cycles
 - Round 1: closed in January
 - Round 2: due in June – application is open now
 - 50% of annual budget per grant cycle
 - Areas supported by grant program
 - MA operations
 - Seed grant for new initiatives
 - Strategic planning and training
 - Expanded conference attendance – WEFMAX and WEFTEC
 - Grants align with the Strategic Plan
 - 14 applications received, total request \$116,000
 - 8 awarded funding
 - Total \$62,500
 - Some MAs were requested to reduce their amount
 - “Winning ideas”
 - High school student internships with WW utilities
 - Video series
 - Recruiting under-represented populations to the water industry
 - Operator training
 - Expanded attendance at WEFMAX, WEFTEC, etc. – YPs, other groups in addition to the usual folks
 - Women in Water program
 - Expectations for MA Grant Winners
 - Carry out the project as proposed
 - Provide the match as promised
 - Submit the required (brief) progress reports
 - Document your results
 - Share successful ideas with other MAs
- **DE&I Committee** – Amy Baker and ValaRae Partee



- **Water Advocacy Committee** – Peter Garvey
 - Support Member Association Water Advocacy efforts with a focus on local, state and regional approaches:
 - Gather and Share Information
 - Conduct Research
 - Priority Issues & Position Statements
 - Other – Promote DC Fly-in, Coordinate w/Delegate at Large
 - Leader Information
 - Co-Chairs
 - Peter Garvey & Kristiana Dragash
 - Committee Members
 - Candice Au-Yeung, Carol Martinson, Janine Burke-Wells, Louis Lambe, Rosaleen Nogle, Louis Storino & Mike Sweeney
 - WEF Support
 - Steve Dye, Amy Kathman & Kelsey Hurst
 - Achievement Ongoing Activities
 - Article in WE&T for DC Fly-in (goal = 2 articles/year)
 - Provide materials for M-A conferences promoting advocacy
 - Legislative nuggets
 - Gathering best practices for advocacy across active M-As
 - Hosting calls highlighting an active M-A
 - Conduct video interview with legislator
 - Research what other industries do for advocacy
 - Research viability of legislative ‘scorecard’
 - Liaise w/WEF GAC
 - Be an Advocate



WEF HOD STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIVITY

Advertising the WEF HOD Challenge

Presenters: Leigh Thomas, Scott Aurit and Carol Martinson

- Chalkboard Advertisement – 30 minutes to create
 - Each table to develop an advertisement and/or advertising campaign for WEF HOD and/or WEF HOD Delegate candidate
 - Materials provided: Chalk Board, Chalk Markers, Scratch Paper
 - Looking for creativity in messaging and audience appeal
 - Wording and phrasing
 - Artistic elements and use of materials/color/drawing
 - Tying in the WEF HOD purpose and attempt at branding for delegate candidates
 - Some Ad examples are shared below.



WEA OF UTAH HOST SHARING SESSION

Putting the WE in WEF: Investing in the Potential of our Membership

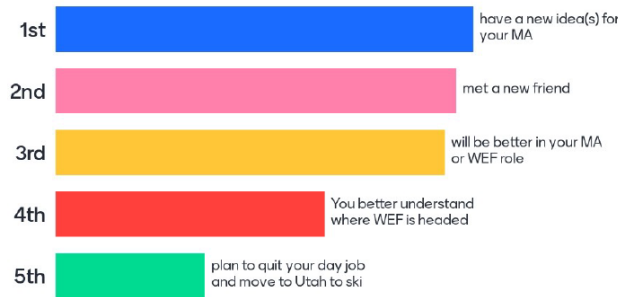
Presenter: Clint Rogers

- WEAU Intro
 - 15-member board
 - Four focus areas
 - Annual Conference
 - Member Services
 - Technical Services
 - Public Outreach
 - Budget ~\$350K +
 - 700 members
 - All volunteer
- Ongoing WEAU Investments
 - Ops Challenge
 - Student Design Competition
 - Young Professionals
 - Annual and Mid-Year Conference
- Recent WEAU Investments

What do you think?



As a result of your Park City WEFMAX attendance, you...



WORKFORCE SESSION

How Diversity Can Help Build our Water Workforce

Presenter: Bill Davis and Cara Jung

- What is the state of our water workforce?
 - Water Utilities across Texas are facing a shortage of qualified personnel
 - The success of any state investment in water infrastructure hinges on the availability of qualified personnel to operate the systems
- Must Understand the Workforce.
 - Brookings Report Research Showed:
 - 1.7 million Water Workers in 2016
 - 50% Higher Pay for Entry Level Workers
 - 85% Male vs 49.6% Nationally
 - 15% Women vs 46.8% Nationally
 - 72% White vs 75.5% Nationally
 - 11.5% are Black or Asian vs 18% Nationally
 - 53% Have HS Diploma vs 32.5% Nationally

- 46.4 Median Age vs 42.2 Nationally
- How Can e Build Our Water Workforce?
 - House Of Delegates Top Survey Results 2023
 - Branding
 - Public Relations / Outreach
 - Operator Training
 - Recruitment
 - Student Outreach
 - Young Professional Outreach
 - Financial Resources
 - Support Emerging Leaders
 - WEF Training Materials
 - Wastewater Fundamentals Training
 - Wastewater Collections Training
 - High School Curriculum
 - Apprenticeship Programs
 - Materials for STEM Recruiting
 - Middle School Career Days
 - College Student Chapters
 - \$ Incentives for Student Membership
 - Veteran Programs - 17,038,807 in USA
- How Can We Retain our Water Workforce?
 - Think Outside of the Box
 - Make Sure We Are Recruiting People From Our Customer Base
 - Allow Staff to Participate in Training at All Levels; Especially YPs
 - Provide Training Opportunities
 - Create an Inclusive Culture
 - Encourage Innovation
 - Value of Water; We Are Essential
- WEF Defines Diversity as...
 - “Diversity encompasses the varying experiences, strengths, skills, perspectives, personal characteristics, cultures, and backgrounds represented by and within the WEF community.”
- Diversity as defined by Bill Davis
 - “Diversity is more than race and gender, yes these are easy to measure, but we need to focus on building awareness of water jobs for veterans, as well as, teaching it in middle schools, high schools, colleges, technical schools, and civic and other organizations.”

What Does Diversity Look Like at WEF

Dimensions of Diversity* @ WEF

- This image shows some of the dimensions of diversity that are present at WEF
 - Internal is typically associated with personal identity
 - Community is how we relate to society and these are more easily changed
 - WEF is the outer circle which captures roles, tenure, and other membership categories within WEF

*Adapted from Gardenswartz and Rowe's "Four Dimensions of Diversity"

- “All That We Share” video; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iD8tjhVO1Tc>
- Table Breakout Discussions

- What is something your MA can do to draw under-represented groups to the water sector, and how can WEF support this?
- What are some of the challenges affecting your MA/region that are creating barriers for a diverse workforce?
- What are some creative ways your MA has boosted a diverse workforce?

CLOSING WORDS

Engagement and Collaboration is worth it. Over these past few days, we hope you each met the goals shared at the start of this WEFMAX.

- Learn something new
- Make new friends
- Create new memories
- Have some fun

As a result, you all are part of our WEF family. Hope to see you at a WEFMAX in 2025 held in California, Oklahoma, and New England. Site selection and dates are coming soon!