

OCTOBER 2023 WEF MA NEWS

You are receiving MA News as you are a MA Board member, MA Committee Chair, MA Staff, MA Contact (Contact at MAs without staff), WEF Delegate, WEF Board of Trustee or a WEF Past President

2023 AWARD WINNERS

On October 3, 2023, WEF proudly presented awards at WEFTEC 2023 in Chicago to recognize the hard work and dedication of individuals in protecting water, one of the world's most valued resource. Please take a moment to view the [2023 WEF Award recipients](#). Congratulations to the Virginia Water Environment Association for winning the Public Communication & Outreach Award (MA Category) and to the AZ Water Association for winning the Outstanding Member Association award. Information on their submission is provided below.

Virginia WEA - Public Communication & Outreach Award (MA Category)

The Virginia Water Environment Association created a new podcast titled "The Straight Flush" in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding that digital communication is an irreversible trend that the water industry needs to follow. The idea behind the podcast format was that the types of communication that were gaining traction during the pandemic and beyond were more conversational and casual in tone, in contrast to technical lectures. In July, 2021, they released their initial four episodes, and the initial plan was to produce quarterly episodes, but this goal was exceeded due to community support and interest as they followed it up with twenty-three total episodes to date with new material in the works. Their podcast has had wide engagement beyond Virginia, as it has been streamed in 432 cities worldwide, covering twenty-one different countries. Their topics ranged from diversity, equity, and inclusion, women in water, the legacy of Virginia's water professionals, One Water, and collection systems. All of this was produced in-house through the volunteer efforts of VWEA. Co-hosts Evan Bowles and Ryan Hendrix from VWEA accepted this award at WEFTEC.

AZ Water Association for the Outstanding Member Association Award

The AZ Water Association was selected for this award because of their focus on member retention, financial stability, student activities, and training events – they know the importance of supporting the next generation. They offer \$15,000 in annual scholarships to students and established an innovative K-12 Outreach Committee that engages students, primarily at the high school level, in learning about the water industry and water careers. In addition, there are AZ Water student chapters at each of Arizona's main universities. Arizona WEA and AZ Water are conducting an outstanding array of educational events. They have hosted events including seminars, webinars, workshops, luncheons, treatment plant tours, operator training classes, and their annual conference attracts over 1,700 attendees. Arizona WEA and AZ Water showed dedication to supporting and enhancing WEF's mission and goals. The Association hired a consultant and is taking steps to foster Justice-Equity-Diversity-and Inclusion within the water industry and to support the communities they serve. Arizona WEA and AZ Water leaders demonstrate the passion and commitment needed to help their members succeed. AZ Water Association Board of Directors President, Jeanne Jensen, accepted this award at WEFTEC.

2024 AWARDS APPLICATIONS OPEN SOON

The 2024 WEF Fellows application window will open on December 1, 2023 and will close on February 29, 2024. All other 2024 WEF Award applications will open on January 15, 2024 and will close on March 31, 2024. Questions about Awards? Email Awards@wef.org

2023 STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to the Member Associations who supported the winning teams at the WEFTEC Student Design Competition! Out of twenty-seven teams representing twenty MAs and three countries, judges recognized the top four teams in each category. WEF had a few new MAs represented this year and look forward to an even larger event in New Orleans next year.

Water Environment Category Winners:

1. Georgia Institute of Technology (GAWP)
2. Utah State University (WEAU)
3. SUNY ESF (NYWEA)
4. University of South Florida (FWEA)

Wastewater Category Winners:

1. Texas Tech University (WEAT)
2. University of Guelph (WEAO)
3. Universidad de Costa Rica (CSWEA)
4. North Carolina State University (NC One Water)

STOCKHOLM JUNIOR WATER PRIZE: NEW EQUIPMENT ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM!

WEF is partnering with [HACH](#) to offer a new grant program: interested high school students may apply for water quality testing equipment loans from HACH. A simple grant application form will live on the [SJWP Webpage](#) and will be reviewed by WEF and HACH. This is a new effort aimed at increasing equity among high school students who are interested in water quality research. This year's inaugural application period will be **November 1st to December 1st**. Please keep an eye out for the live application and encourage any high schooler to apply!

2024 SPRINGBOARD PROGRAM

March 11-13, 2023 | Herndon, VA

Held at the WEFTEC Program Community Meeting

[The WEF Young Professional \(YP\) Springboard Program](#) was developed to further increase opportunities for YP members to become involved in WEF, with particular emphasis on integration of YPs into the WEF technical communities and the WEFTEC Program Community. Previously called the Midyear Meeting, this event primarily provides an opportunity for key volunteer communities to meet face-to-face and develop programming for WEFTEC, which is the largest water conference in the world, offering water quality professionals from around the world with the best available water quality education and training. The 2024 WEFTEC Program Community Meeting allows this group to plan the technical content for WEFTEC. The WEF YP Springboard Program will provide travel expense assistance for the selected YPs to attend the 2024 WEFTEC Program Community Meeting. All WEF member YPs are eligible and encouraged to apply. At present, the deadline to apply is COB, **Wednesday, November 22, 2023**.

We encourage you to invite your YPs to apply—the program application will be available on the [event webpage](#) on November 1st. Please contact WEF Staff, Ama Richardson, with any questions you may have: arichardson@wef.org.

YP SUMMIT

Registration for the 2024 Young Professionals (YP) Summit will open the week of November 20th! The YP Summit, co-hosted by WEF/AWWA, is the premier water and wastewater industry workshop for young professionals. Join other young leaders by exploring your role in water and discussing how you can best serve the water sector at large. The Summit is a one-day skills development workshop that provides supplemental training and networking opportunities to emerging leaders and students in the water sector. All students and young professionals in water-related roles are encouraged to join. [Register Here](#)

EMERGING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP (EYPL)

Held on Monday afternoon during the 2024 UMC conference week in Portland, Oregon, the WEF EYPL Workshop will bring students and young professionals of all backgrounds together around an engaging, relevant industry topic. The workshop focuses on non-traditional topics that promote professional development and strengthen leadership skills. Join us on Monday, February 12, 2024 for this creative, “Navigating the New Workforce” workshop. Admission is free for YP Summit registrants– and includes lunch! [Register Here](#)

WEF MEMBERSHIP CORNER

Membership Corner

Schedule Change for the Membership Community

The WEF Membership Community meetings will be moved to Monday, November 13, and Monday, December 11 due to the upcoming holidays. The community will resume meeting on the third Tuesday of each month in 2024. To join this Community, request to join through WEFUnity or email membership@wef.org.