

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29

Presenters: Ivy Drexler and Don Palenchar (City of St. Petersburg)

Q: Tim: Can you talk about your reuse system?

A: Initiated in the late 70s. Public access reclaimed system. No surface water discharges. During dry periods, almost all reclaimed water is used. During the wet season, deep injection wells are utilized. Driven by the protection of Tampa Bay. The goal was to reduce the amount of nutrients or stop discharging into surface water. The EPA was willing to fund the majority of the infrastructure. Issues with saltwater intrusion caused many wells to be unusable. This was the first urban reuse system.

Q: Direct potable reuse?

A: Member of Tampa Bay Water.

Q: Joe: Can you discuss storage tanks and additional wells?

A: Storage tanks and additional wells are used. The only time we had to shut down was after Hurricane Ian when saltwater got into the system.

Q: How does the City review and determine eligibility for the utility bill roundup?

A: The customer must go through non-payment. Best practice would be to provide the money before they get the bill.

Presenter: Clara Shea (Atlantic Canada WWA)

Shared her [Mount Everest Base Camp](#) experience. Clara shared she needed to do this for herself and made it through while battling pneumonia. Her Mantra was “The sky is the limit, just don’t expect to breath up there”

THURSDAY WEFMAX MAY 30

[EARLY BIRDS: Yoga or Walk/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, WEF Delegate. Thank you, Lance!

WEF MESSAGE

Presenter: Tracy Ekola

My Water Story

- * Grew up on a farm in the Western Bump of MN at the cont. divide where Red River of N flows to Hudson Bay and the Minnesota River starts its flow to Great Mississippi down to Gulf of Mexico.
- * First generation college graduate and found my fit in civil and environmental engineering focusing on water. It was a natural fit as I had grown up working the land, seeing the interaction and between land and water, as well as being involved in many farm construction projects and being responsible for maintaining equipment and pumping and spreading manure as fertilizer.
- * My dad as a farmer in a rural community was a leader in many local organizations including the Upper Mississippi Watershed Planning Board which I would also served on as wastewater engineer representative.
- * BS Civil & Env. Engineering from U of MN and have worked in the water industry for over 30 years in both the public sector at WLSSD and in consulting firms. I was co-founder for a local water festival providing a day long educational event for over 400 4th graders each year that is still going strong 25 years later. Throughout my career I have inspected, planned, designed and provided strategic planning for small to large water and wastewater treatment systems. Later in my career I attended Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Education Program focused on Leadership, Innovation and Strategy. I have been a leader of over 400 employees and provided leadership and development training in the industry as well for a local MN college environmental engineering program.
- * I have held Board and Advisory positions for numerous entities which have provided leadership and personal development growth opportunities.
- * Having a clear sense of purpose to provide clean water for all in addition to an unyielding sense of perseverance which I think comes from my farming background, and striving for excellence and proficiency has brought me to serve on the WEF BOT.
- * As a member of CSWEA I have filled many roles in my member association for my first 10-15 years of my career. In addition, I was a regular presenter at CSWEA conferences as well as WEFTEC and Biosolids Specialty Conferences. In WEF I have been a Delegate at Large in the HOD and through this experience I was encouraged to join the Government Affairs Committee. I was later served again as a WEF Delegate for Central States WEA. I became a CLC Director about 5 years ago and served on the CLC SC for 4 years before being appointed to the BOT. I am currently a member of the UMC. As part of the UMC workgroup, I developed and lead a WEF Leadership Book club this spring with 8 facilitators with almost 90 WEF members participating as we learned and read together a book called Emotional Intelligence 2.0.

Favorite hobbies: Gardening, canning, hiking, biking, canoeing, spending time family, and volunteering with various organizations – usually doing physical labor such as construction or being a mentor for teens and young adults.

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 motivate 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. We've taken a number of steps to address DEI over the past several years and will continue working on these efforts every day.

- **Began work in 2019 - Board of Trustees established the WEF Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Task Force**
 - Charge: Provide recommendations on where WEF should best focus efforts. The Task Force recommended that to help the water sector, WEF needed to take a critical look internally first.
 - **In 2020, WEF established a DE&I BOT Subcommittee and House of Delegates DE&I Work Group**
 - to consider our organizational strategy in addition to a Staff Working Group on Racial Equity for internal efforts.
- **In 2021, updated WEF policy on DE&I**
- **Along the way, we created programs, published definitions, and listened to each other.**
 - At WEFTEC each year, we offer an inclusive range of networking options, designed to help all members get the most out of the conference experience, and ensure everyone feels safe and able to participate in the full range of member activities.
 - **In 2023, we did the research and analysis necessary to create WEF's first DEI Scorecard, which was released early in 2024.**
- **Visit www.WEF.org/DEI for the latest information and DEI Toolkit and Scorecard.**

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 2024 – Leading the Future of Water

- 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

FWEA LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

Presenters: Kristiana Dragash, Joe Paterniti and Mike Sweeney

- FWEA has 9 chapters
- Leadership Workshop is by Invite Only
- 36-hour retreat / workshop with FWEA leaders
- Focuses on
 - Drafting Business Plans for upcoming Fiscal Year
 - Training leaders on FWEA procedures (FWEA crash course)
 - FWEA Organization (and roles)
 - FWEA State budget
 - Utility Council Update
 - Leader panel discussions
 - WEF Updates / initiatives
 - Chapter / Committee / Event Spotlights
 - Uniting leaders from around the state (Networking)
- Offers engaging panel discussions, ice breaker activities and social media or break out group activities sprinkled throughout. Nice happy hour and dinner, breakfast, and lunch before leaving all provided
- The organizers offer “wild card” sessions where they pick things to focus on or highlight such as our annual conference, journal, WEF updates or initiatives, Operations Challenge, fundraising, etc.
- Typically held January through the end of February which is 2 months prior to the annual conference and this time of year rates are more reasonable.
- Events are held on a Thursday-Friday and also a Sunday-Monday.
- Event is organized by the Executive Manager and President-Elect
- No registration fee to attend; attendees need to pay for hotel and travel

- FWEA spends between \$10-\$18K for this event in support to 45-50 attendees
- FWEA hosts this event to engage, educate and reward their leaders
- This annual event unites the leaders, helps grow their professional network, and gives a holistic view of the organization.
 - Results in cross-pollination of chapters and committees once they see the big picture
- Has held a Build a Bike community service project, Ops Challenge Demo and Brave Blue World

Q&A Time

Q: Where do you spend most of the revenue you get at your MA?

A: Back into the organization. Scholarships, Utility Council.

Q: Alternative ways to get funding?

A: Exhibits were sold out, 2100 registrations, chapters raise money. Funding now is over \$1M.

Q: Engagement. How do you get everybody together? What are the great things you've done for it?

A: We try to keep it central so everyone can come. Extend the invite down to the treasurer or secretary so chapter representatives can attend.

Q: How do you broadcast throughout the entire state?

A: Utilities, social media, local relationship building.

Q: In NY, there is a poster contest. The problem is that the same schools end up winning and it discourages other schools from participating.

A: 6-7 people look at the videos to score them. We do not have this problem. We are looking for creativity. Kids know how to make those videos better than us, and all they need is a phone.

Q: What do you focus on to grow emerging leaders?

A: For YPs, over the last 2 years, we have been actively looking for them. That's one of the benefits of having the Leadership Workshop to identify them.

Q: What is the relationship with AWWA?

A: It depends on the chapter. Some always collaborate on events, such as the Utility Council. Both UCs join meetings. Some local chapters do not collaborate as much. Sometimes we promote each other's events and join those events.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES FOR YPS

Ama Richardson and Olga Mikhailchishina

Olga's Water Story

Born in Ukraine, grew up in Russia and lived in Florida for past 10 years. She likes to walk her dog, hike and travel to live concerts and shows. Olga works at Woodward and Curran in Tampa, Florida, is the WEF Service Project Chair and the WEF SYPC Vice Chair.

Ama's Water Story

Born in Ghana West Africa and has lived in Northern Virginia for 10+ years. Started at WEF in 2022. Ama is staff liaison to the WEF SYPC.

Volunteer Leadership at the MA level

- Student Chapter Activities
- FWEA events
- FWEA SYPC meetings and calls

Volunteer Leadership at the WEF Level

- WEF Service Project
- WEF Springboard program
- WEF Community Service Project
- WEF Fly-In Scholarships

Olga's Other Volunteer Engagement at WEF

- Facilitated the "Learn to Communicate" workshop at WEFTEC
- Presented at the Utility Management Conference
- Co-Chair of "Open Doors to Operations Careers" (this is a learning exchange)
- SYPC Mentorship Program

Volunteer Leadership and Its Impact on Personal and Professional Development

- Personal Development
 - Friends
 - Self-Confidence
 - Time Management
 - Broader perspective
- Professional Development
 - Public Speaking
 - Networking
 - Leadership Skills
 - Well-rounded knowledge about the industry

How to Engage Your YPS at the MA Level

- Be inclusive and diverse
- Active listening
- Offer regular networking opportunities
- Provide mentorship opportunities
- Seasoned volunteers can encourage and support YPs in their workplace to join/be active
- Consider the following tips for better engagement with YPs:
- Ask what their interests/needs are (from the MA)
- Circle back with timely feedback

Knowledge Sharing Between WEF and MA YPS – Best Practices

- Encourage WEF YPs to share national updates at the MA level
- Reward active volunteers by providing scholarships to help them attend national events
- Invite YP leaders to attend MA events with their WEF Delegates\

Final Tips and Take-aways

- Communicate opportunities to your student & YP members
 - Continuously share information about volunteer opportunities and engagement events – these are crucial for driving interest and participation
- Encourage idea sharing and actively listen
 - Provide support to implement new and feasible ideas
- Mentor your student and YP leaders
 - They can become your future WEF Delegates

ENGAGING FUTURE LEADERS

Presenters: Joe Paterniti, Jason Patty and Doug Pike

Florida WEA – Joe Paterniti

- Over the past 2-years we have recorded over 50 water stories at our annual conference
- We are sharing the videos on our social media platforms
- We encourage our membership to “like” and share the posts with their social network.
- I like to share a brief video compilation of a few of our water stories
- The FWEA PCOC launched the annual "To Flush or Not to Flush?" Florida High School video contest in 2017
- This contest is open to all Florida High School students.
- Videos must be under 45 seconds and can be submitted by individuals or teams of up to four students.
- To incentivize and reward winning students and their teachers with cash prizes.
- Students \$700, \$500 and \$300
- Teachers \$500, \$300 and \$200
- 2024 Competition 42 High schools and 6 Middle schools

Q&A Time

Q: How do you involve students to participate in the video contest?

A: Cash prizes for students and teachers.

Q: Who helps you with video production?

A: A consultant handles production and editing of the videos. We also have operations videos. This year, we want to work with the communication committee to bring those videos to high schools.

Kansas WEA – Jason Patty

Work in Water is a program that was started and grown through 3 EPA grants. Work in Water's goal is to increase the young talent coming into the water industry by supporting water career awareness and summer internships for high school students. The project includes field trips to water and wastewater utilities for classes and groups, and then offering the internship.

The grants are over, but the resources developed are now available in a “Take and Bake” way and can be found on the website. Resources to help utilities connect with schools, to help plan for interns, step-by-step activity guides for interactive water lessons anyone can do with students on school visits, etc.

Kansas is using these resources to engage utilities and schools for a few interns this summer, 2024.

Part 2 of the resources Kansas and other states are using to grow future water leaders is another EPA grant funded program, geared towards resources for teachers, school counselors and other types of educators... The Future Water Leaders Resource Hub – is a searchable database of lesson plans, posters, and more to promote water, wastewater, and careers in the field. Share this resource with educators you know. These are great jumping off points for discussions about coming in to share about water careers in your utility, talking about internships, etc. Resources focus on water education and water career exploration. For more information, visit: efcnetwork.org/future-water-leaders. Connecting with school career counselors is a great

way to find interns, connect with students that might be a good fit for the jobs you're looking to fill. Counselors love being able to connect students to opportunities that fit.

Both KsAWWA and KWEA budgeted \$5,000 to support internships at utilities this summer.

Q&A Time

Q: Paid internships?

A: Yes, \$15/hr. Provided funding for those internships.

C: Tracy organized the Water Festival, focused on middle school 4th graders, State of Minnesota. It grew from 400 to 40,000 kids attending. Kids from those festivals became water operators.

Pennsylvania WEA – Doug Pike

- SYP Committee has grown from 5 members to 15.
- They hold quarterly networking events and Trivia Nights with teams across the state.
- They invite Board members to tell their “Water Story” at the committee meetings
- YPs do a service project at PWEA's annual conference
- In 2023 the first Student Chapter was formed with Carnegie Mellon University just months before WEFTEC.
- CMU quickly put a team together to compete in the Student Design Competition
- Stockholm Junior Water Prize
 - Members volunteer to judge at various science fairs.
 - In 2023 Saranya Anantapantula finished second overall.
 - Her project was titled “Meta-analysis of Field Experiments & Experimentation of Gypsum, an Inexpensive and Natural Treatment, Towards Effective, Low-Cost, High-Efficacy Algal Bloom Control”.
- PWEA Sections
 - \$2000 is given to each of the three sections to help fund their scholarships.
 - In the Western Section, scholarships are given for:
 - College
 - Typically, two \$2500 scholarships.
 - Community College Wastewater Operator Program
 - Up to two \$1250 scholarships.
 - Leadership
 - New this year.
 - Used to send a Board member to a WEFMAX.

WEF HOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Presenters: Erin Longworth and Jim Barsanti

- Nominating Committee Responsibilities

- Speaker Elect
- Delegate-at-Large (4)
- 6 Committees
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I)
 - Budget
 - WEFMAX
 - Nominating
 - Communications *New*
 - Water Advocacy *New*
- Speaker-Elect
 - Entering or completing at least 2 years serving as a Delegate
 - One year term
 - Duties
 - Assist the Speaker of the House
 - Member of HOD Steering Committee, Nominating Committee, and Budget Committee
 - Attend 2 WEFMAX meetings
 - Attend mid-year meeting
 - Attend Board of Trustees meeting
 - Serve as the House liaison to the Committee Leadership Council
- Delegate-at-Large
 - 4 selected each year
 - 3-year term
 - Represent an underrepresented demographic group in the HOD
 - Professional Perspective
 - Operations
 - Utility Leadership
 - Manufacturers
 - Demographic Perspective (Age, Race,
 - Ethnicity, Gender)
- HOD Committees
 - Comprised of Speaker-Elect and Delegates
 - Budget (6)

- Nominating (6)
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (6)
- WEFMAX (6)
- Communications (6)
- Water Advocacy (6)
- Steering (Speaker, Speaker Elect, Chairs of all Workgroups, Committees)



Delegates: Apply Now

- Getting involved is not just for senior delegates!
- Encourage 1st year delegates to apply for committee positions.
- We need you!

MA SHARING SESSION

Presenters: Chesapeake WEA, WEA of Ontario and WEA of South Carolina

Chesapeake WEA – Ellen Frketic and Laura Jo Oakes

Establishing Standard Operating Procedures for Committees

- Leadership Onboarding
 - The Leadership Onboarding Session is designed to:
 - *give Chesapeake WEA Leadership a quick overview of the tools that are available to be successful in their position*
 - *explain processes and guidelines that we need to adhere to in accountability to our mission and our 501(c)(3) status*
 - *foster connection and networking within the Chesapeake WEA committee chairs and leadership*
 - *ensure unity and alignment in reaching our goals*
 - *express appreciation for Chesapeake WEA's leaders*

Trustee/Board Overall Responsibilities

- Liaison between Committee Chairs and Board of Directors
- Facilitate and ensure Committee usage of website for all documents and relevant information
- Coordinates receipt of Committee reports and communicates any updates at Board Meetings in the Chair's/Vice-Chair's absence
- Assist Committees with budget preparation, organizing events and supporting committee equity
- President
- Oversees the affairs of the Association
- Presides at all meetings/Chair of the Board

- Appoints Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs
- President-Elect
- Assumes the duties of the President in his or her absence
- Assists the President
- Chairs the Nominations Committee and Leadership Series
- Vice President
- Assumes the duties of the President-Elect in his or her absence
- Supports Trustees in their active oversight of Committees
- WEF Delegates
- Represents Chesapeake WEA in the WEF House of Delegates
- Trustees
- Active Oversight of Committees
- Annual review of Treasurer's records
- Serves on or appoints designate to Nominations Committee
- Serves on Bylaws Committee

Committee Chair/Vice Chair Responsibilities

- Vice President
 - Assumes the duties of the President-Elect in his or her absence
 - Supports Trustees in their active oversight of Committees
- WEF Delegates
 - Represents Chesapeake WEA in the WEF House of Delegates
- Trustees
 - Active Oversight of Committees
 - Annual review of Treasurer's records
 - Serves on or appoints designate to Nominations Committee

Q&A Time

Q: Who monitors compliance with SOP sheets?

A: SOPs are provided at the board meetings.

Q: Have you considered having meetings for Chairs?

A: Yes, we have an annual leadership retreat. Board meetings are for board members, chairs, and vice chairs. Serial volunteers are those who don't know how to say "no."

Q: How often are SOPs reviewed?

A: Annually at the Leadership Retreat event.

WEA of Ontario

Presenter: May Beth Holmes

Succession Planning for Board of Directors and Committees

Best Practices

- Staggered Terms
- Committee Participation
- Focus YP Path
- Natural Flow
- Policies
- Strategic Planning
- Continuous Candidate Identification

Committees

- Process and Structure
- Robust Committee Participation
- Terms of Reference
- Continuous Candidate Identification

Future Consideration

- Volunteer Burnout
- Formalize Processes
- Staff Support
- Strategic Planning
- Ask
- Committee Crossover

Q&A Time

Q: How is the vote done?

A: We are in the process of reevaluating the process. Currently, it is all done online.

Q: Are there any committees that you want to sunset?

A: We are working on evaluating this. There are some committees that do a lot of amazing things.

Q: How are you utilizing folks who have been in the organization for a while?

A: There are some members who have been active for a while.

Q: Should a regulatory representative be a voting member?

A: It would require a whole organization change. We have 2 new directors and try to have people with different backgrounds. It is seen as a conflict of interest. We bring regulatory representatives to talk about issues. The government affairs committee provides behind-the-scenes perspectives.

Q: In NY, there are 3 board positions for EPA and State Revolving Fund representatives who are present for only half of the meetings and are excused from any parts of the meetings that may create a conflict of interest.

WEA of South Carolina

Presenter: David Baize

Establishing a New Workforce Collaborative Website

Is Workforce Development a Priority?

- Critical shortage of operators now
- 50% of the existing workforce is eligible to retire in the next 8 years
- Both SCAWWA and WEASC have designated workforce development as one of our top priorities

Association Leadership Academy

- Preparing the next generation of leadership
 - Focus on the transition from peer to supervisor
 - Advanced class for those already in leadership

Committees

- Workforce development
- Student chapter
- K-12 outreach
- PIO committee

Water Coalition

- Partnership between SCRWA, WEASC, SCAWWA, and SCWQA
- Share the cost of a lobbyist and present a united front on important issues

Can South Carolina Create a Workforce Collaborative?

- Baywork as an example of what can be done

What can the Collaborative do?

- Create a web site that would be a one-stop shop for water and wastewater careers
- www.scwatercareers.org

What else can the Collaborative do?

- Television and digital advertising to raise awareness of the water industry and our careers
- Hire a full-time person to have workforce development as sole priority
- Career fairs
- Work with educators
- Presentations

- Work with media

Request for Proposals

- Seed money provided by SCAWWA, WEASC, and SCWQA
- \$32,000 total
- Asked for metrics to determine effectiveness
- Will serve as a proof of concept to attract members to join the collaborative

Questions:

- Contact me at david@scwaters.org
- Contact Lynn at lynn@scwaters.org

Q& A Time

Q: City of Honolulu. Went out and focused on a few high schools to find operators. Started to do tours showing how collection systems operate. Had all the students try hands-on activities themselves. Educated kids that this career could be a good fit for them. Got 3 collection system workers from this program. Now schools are asking the utility to join this program. These programs take time to put together. Sometimes you just need to go and do it, and you'd be surprised by what comes out of it.

Q: Have you thought about hiring some college students to do media outreach?

A: We have tried to get universities involved, but it did not work out.

PANEL DISCUSSIO

Q&A Time

Q: Describe how your MA changed over time?

A:

Florida WEA: A lot has been done over 5 years, such as Leadership Workshop; reinvigorated Vendor Committee; addressed dormant chapters; pushed the Panhandle to get involved.

WEA of Ontario: Reallocated tasks to ensure efficiency.

Chesapeake WEA: assessment and development committee helps other committees; DE&I committee, outside consultant did board training; Developing a program with water works; Goal is to hire more staff.

Q: What has changed after COVID?

A:

WEA of South Carolina: One thing that can't be replaced virtually is networking. Restocking volunteers to bring more people to be involved.

Chesapeake WEA: Adding in-person lunches or happy hours.

Florida WEA: 50% virtual / 50% in-person. The last 3 board meetings saw half of the board showing up in person. Organizing events at the end to attract people to come in person.

Board meetings are back in person. Providing administrative support for 4 organizations.

Q: What do you outsource?

A:

Florida WEA: Utility Council has lawyers, website work, and an accounting firm that helps speed up vendor payments and reimbursement processes.

WEA of South Carolina: IT, webmaster. Educational content is volunteer-driven but may be outsourced soon.

Q: How have you managed pricing?

A:

WEA of South Carolina: Increased the price of conferences by 3-5% per year but kept the membership price the same.

WEF DELEGATE-AT-LARGE CONSTITUENCY SESSION

Presenters: Kristiana Dragash and Doug Kobrick

- 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 St Petersburg had 2 DAL's in attendance
 - Kristiana Dragash – Caregivers
 - Doug Kobrick – DEI/Budget

WEF COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (CLC)

Presenter: Tracy Ekola

- 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 FOSTERING RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMERGING LEADERS: BENEFITS TO THE ORGANIZATION AND INDUSTRY AT LARGE

Presenter: Lindsay Anderson

My Story

- Technical Director, ACWWA
- B Eng (Env Eng), MSc and PhD (Civil Eng) at Dalhousie University
- Research on various aspects of drinking water and wastewater treatment in Atlantic Canada
- Currently focusing on clean water & climate

My Path as a Leader

- 2010 – First student presentation at ACWWA conference, became AWWA member, began attending Young Professional events

- 2012 - 2016 – Regularly attended local and national conferences, did some volunteering at conferences
- 2017 - 2020 –Young Professionals Committee Chair, actively engaged in conference planning, attended AWWA and WEF Leadership Summits
- 2020 - Director of Member Involvement, helped establish IDE Committee, changed from “Young Professionals” to “Emerging Leaders”
- 2023- Technical Director

Inclusion Diversity and Equity is a priority

- Emerging Leaders are active members of the Inclusion Diversity and Equity committee and vice versa
- Recent changes:
 - “Young Professional” to “Emerging Leader”
 - Moving away from age restrictions towards “early career” view

Intentionally Fostering Relationships with EL’s

- EL’s are more likely to volunteer and participate if they feel included, valued, and part of a community – sense of belonging.
- Take time to engage in intentional conversations.
 - Ask about their interests and passions regarding water.
 - Tell them how you got involved, be relatable.
- Offer ongoing mentorship and support.
 - Regular check-ins, guidance on career development, and support for personal and professional growth
- Encourage participation.
- Give EL’s the chance to take on new challenges and responsibilities – create/support a culture of learning.
- Training
 - AWWA/WEF Young Professionals Summit
 - WEF Water Leadership Institute
 - IDE programs – integration at EL level means it will be embedded in the future.
- Create scholarships or funding opportunities.
- Encourage EL’s to participate at board level.
 - e.g., Involvement with EDI committee, strategic planning, conference planning

Be Open to New Ideas

- Give EL’s the chance to take on new challenges and responsibilities – create/support a culture of learning.
- Training

- AWWA/WEF Young Professionals Summit
- WEF Water Leadership Institute
- IDE programs – integration at EL level means it will be embedded in the future.
- Create scholarships or funding opportunities.
- Encourage EL's to participate at board level.
 - e.g., Involvement with EDI committee, strategic planning, conference planning

Provide and Receive Feedback

- Provide constructive feedback and guidance on how to improve.
 - Be specific and offer actionable advice that they can use to make positive changes.
- Encourage emerging professionals to reflect on their strengths and areas for growth.
 - Help identify their leadership qualities.
- Ask for feedback in return from Emerging Leaders – what do they need from you and the association/federation to succeed?
 - IDE is key – needs vary.
 - Need to consider new generation – millennial vs gen z.

Atlantic Canada EL Thoughts

“Getting to know more people in the industry from a variety of jobs (consulting, utilities, product suppliers, etc.) and making connections definitely keeps people engaged and is a big reason why we keep showing up”

“I think the biggest thing the organization could do to enhance EL development is participation from the leadership... Things like coming to and/or sponsoring EL events and engaging with the newer professionals”

“Volunteering always fills my "feel-good" cup. I'm forever grateful for the experiences, skills and people I encounter through volunteering. It is Afrocentric to give back to my community and support its growth. Volunteering with our section keeps me connected with the water sector and has supported my professional development within the Atlantic water community. ”

Emerging Leaders are the Future

In the next 10 years, **37%** of the water utility workers and **31%** of wastewater utility workers **will retire**

We need **Emerging Leaders** to share knowledge and passion to ensure safe and sustainable water in the future...

Emerging Leaders look up to you for mentorship and leadership!

Q&A Time

Q: What are some ideas to recognize and celebrate Emerging Leaders (Eps)?

A:

- Send YPs to MA and WEF events.
- Have an EP board member.
- WEF engages EP at the Springboard.

[WEF UPDATE ON WORKFORCE STRATEGY](#)

We Face Four Critical Inter-related Water Challenges

- Water Challenges
 - Quantity
 - Quality
 - Variability
 - Accessibility
- Mega Trends
 - Climate
 - Emerging Technologies
 - Demographic Changes
- Circular Economy is the Response to these Challenges
 - Eliminate Waste and Pollution
 - Circulate Products and Materials
 - Regenerate nature
- Water Has always been Circular
 - A more deliberate approach to circularity can address water challenges
 - Maintain Quantity
 - Expand reuse and desalination
 - Encourage water use efficiency
 - Improve Quality
 - Convert waste to resources
 - Reduce impact on industries on watersheds
 - Innovate on treatment technologies
 - Reduce Variability
 - Create a carbon positive water sector
 - Diversify water sources
 - Build resilience
 - Improve Accessibility
 - Monetize resources
 - Improve cost efficiencies
- Circular Water Initiatives
 - Build circular water skills
 - Amplify circular water stories
 - Build Markets
 - Connect and convene
- Focus Areas
 - Agriculture
 - Energy
 - Food and Beverage
 - Semi-conducting manufacturing and data centers
- We Cannot Get to Circular Water without the Next Generation Water Workforce
 - Challenges
 - Recruit and retention for smaller utilities in specific geographies
 - Older and less diverse workforce
 - Professional Development Opportunities and resources are scattered
 - Communication Efforts to Reach Youth are unsatisfactory
 - Unknown impact of AI in the water industry
- WEFs Approach Will Create a Pipeline of New Workers and Improve the Productivity of Existing Workers
 - Attract – Raise awareness about the importance of water and the water workforce
 - Recruit – Connect employers and employees, reduce barriers to employment
 - Train – Build the skills needed to stay and succeed in the water workforce

- Retain and Grow – Support lifelong career development

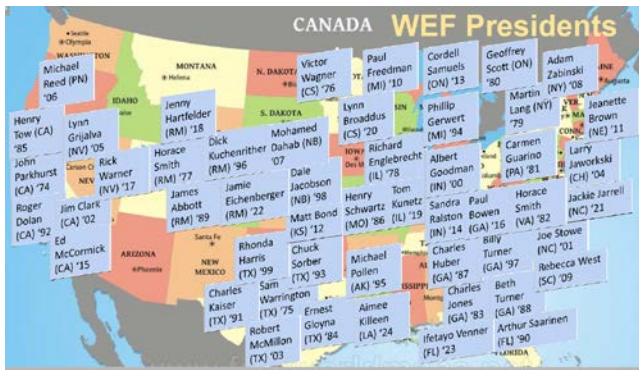
Discussion Breakouts Notes

1. What support do MAs need to advance the circular water economy at the state/province level?
 - a. Consider w/in prelim design
 - b. Collaborate with other MAs
 - c. Integrate and advocate with educational institutions
 - d. Coordinate with regulatory bodies
 - e. Be proactive , not reactive
 - f. Share success stories
2. What are the most successful workforce development initiatives you've seen inside or outside of water?
 - a. Paying our workers enough to not have to work a second job
 - b. Clear guidance as to what is needed to advance
 - c. Benefits at the Top
 - d. Career Ladder
 - e. Need to have flex schedule
3. What global activities, if any, are North American MAs interested in doing?
 - a. Technology changes in other countries
 - b. Learning more from IFAT and share with the MAs
 - c. Learning more from IWA and share with the MAs
 - d. Learning about what Japan and other countries are doing about workforce changes
 - e. What are other countries doing about water rights and indigenous/First Nations in Atlantic Canada
 - f. Truth in reconciliation
 - g. New Zealand and Canada's approach
 - h. Rural Community Regionalization
 - i. Learn how other countries are dealing with extreme weather events in regard to infrastructure
 - j. Issues including drought
 - k. Learn and understand supply chain issues and how it affects WE members and water security/resilience here for our members
4. What else could WEF be doing to support the MA community and deliver on the strategy?
 - a. Provide workforce development training/operator capacity
 - i. Offer Operator training courses online for membership
 - ii. Free to WEF members
 - iii. Online with local trainers
 - b. WEF Website is not user friendly
 - c. Publicize strategy we don't know much about
 - d. Have government affairs Fly-In is "one water"

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: Alexie Kindrick

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 – Doug Kobrick
 - 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** – Ellen Frketic



- **Water Advocacy Committee** – Kristiana Dragash
 - 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.



FLORIDA WEA HOST SHARING SESSION

Panel Discussion: Nicole Cohen, David Hernandez, Megan Nelson, Tim Ware

Q&A Time

Q: How do you attract YPs, and how has volunteering in FWEA impacted your career?

A:

David: Trying to get YPs involved early by planning happy hours, running the booth, and providing support for YPs to get involved.

Tim: Many YPs got involved after participating in the SDC.

David: Supporting students to attend local and national conferences.

Nicole: FWEA is very supportive, offering plenty of opportunities. Everyone feels ownership. One challenge is attracting YPs to get plugged in.

Q: What is the impact on the association from having YPs?

A:

Megan: Mentorship programs.

David: YPs bring new ideas and a fresh perspective, which helps the organization.

Tim: Embrace change and put yourself out there more.

Nicole: The lack of experience among YPs is valuable because it brings a fresh perspective.

Q: Any recommendations for other MAs?

A:

Nicole: Create well-intentioned positions for YPs at the leadership level. Offer scholarships to attend conferences. Develop a SYPC succession plan and reestablish the system to provide more leadership opportunities.

Kristiana: There is an opportunity for MAs to get funds from WEF to sponsor YPs.

Tim: Encourage companies to support their YPs' involvement. Talk to YPs and ask them to volunteer.

Megan: Are we here to learn how to love our job, or are we here because we love our job?

WORKFORCE SESSION

Pinellas County, leading the way with outreach efforts for middle and high schoolers and sponsoring a mentorship program through the state operator association.

Presenter: Steve Soltau, and Ivy Drexler

Q&A Time

Q: Is there any reward for employees who train apprentices?

A: No, but for the Mayor's Future Ready Academy, there is an additional \$2/hr pay.

Q: Do you think that Sacramento course is outdated?

A: It has been successful, but it will be updated, and there are other resources available. It is all about the instructor choosing which book to use. There is no reciprocity. It is worth discussing with your license provider. The WEF prep book is available in Spanish.

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

Mantras Matter

1. "If you like it give it a WHOOP WHOOP, and if you did not like it, just FLUSH It" - Dave
2. "The sky is the limit! Just don't expect to breathe up there" – Clara

3. "Do Right" [who said this?!]
4. "Use everything but the squeal" – Tracy
5. "You don't know how badly I've wanted one of these " – ACWWA Shovel] Lance
6. "Ask Your YPs and customers what they need" – Listen – Olga and Ama
7. "We are trying to be like the Great Scotts" – Dough K
8. "Share and align information/Lessons learned from the WEF communities to your MA Committees" – Laura
9. Keep sharing your story – Tracy

As a result, you all are part of our WEF family. Hope to see you at a WEFMAX in 2025.