

California Water Data Consortium Steering Committee Meeting Notes

November 2, 2020

12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Goals

- Introduce Steering Committee members to the Consortium’s culture and to each other
- Review the draft Steering Committee charter
- Offer tools for Steering Committee decision making
- Introduce the Consortium’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative
- Approve a Working Group co-chair job description and identify a selection committee and process
- Learn about existing Consortium pilot projects and indicate interest in Task Force Team development

Meeting Documents

Item 1. Agenda

Item 2a. “Binder” of Steering Committee Background Material

Item 2b. Steering Committee Member Bios

Item 2c. Steering Committee Contact Information

Item 3. Draft Steering Committee Charter

Item 4. Steering Committee Collaborative Agreement – Potential Elements

Item 7. Draft Working Group Co-Chair Job Description and Application Process

Item 8. Groundwater Elevation Overview

Action Items

- Steering Committee members to provide suggested edits to the Working Group Co-Chair job description by noon on 11/3/2020
- Tara Moran to post Working Group Co-Chair positions on 11/4/2020
- Prospective co-chairs to apply by 11/18/2020
- Dr. Moran to finalize scheduling of Ad-Hoc Working Group Co-chair selection committee meeting on 11/20/2020
- Steering Committee members to communicate with Dr. Moran regarding interest in participating in pilot projects
- Steering Committee members to review and share suggested edits on draft Charter

High-Level Meeting Summary

Welcome, Meeting Logistics, and Agenda

Tara Moran, President and CEO of the California Water Data Consortium (Consortium), welcomed Steering Committee members and the public to the first meeting of the Consortium Steering Committee. She reviewed goals for the first three Steering Committee meetings and noted that the first hour of the next Steering Committee meeting (November 23, 2020) will include a joint session with the Consortium Board of Directors.

Consortium Story and Introductions

Mike Myatt, Consortium Board Chair and Program Officer on the Water Foundation’s Healthy Watersheds team, and Debbie Franco, Board member and Senior Advisor for Water and Rural Affairs in the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, shared the story of the formation of the Consortium.

They asked participants to share about their first experience with AB1755 and the Consortium. Steering Committee members shared observations about the effort for open and transparent water data:

- The effort is mirrored at a national level as well as throughout California
- Other legislation related to water management highlighted the need for better water data
- Local water managers highlighted the need for usable State data to support local and regional management decisions
- The impact of the drought created an opportunity to advocate for legislation related to statewide water data
- A need for an ongoing public-private partnership was identified as a key component of any future effort
- There are strong parallels in the timing of the push for open and transparent water data within and outside of State government

Participants shared the following thoughts about their understanding of the Consortium's vision:

- To more sustainably manage California's water resources through the effective use of (open) water and ecological data
- To help bridge the private and public sectors and help the State's Partner Agency Team advance the goals of AB 1755 and beyond
- A safe space for making hard decisions and taking about next steps together
- Supporting resilient water management across California by providing decision-makers at all levels with access to trusted information
- To foster collaboration and alignment on water data collection and use
- To ensure that there a comprehensive, trusted repository of integrated data that evolves with policy questions. That these data serve as the basis for water management and water policy
- To create a space for collaboration to enable an "Internet of Water" for California
- To serve as a collaborative space where state agencies, NGOs, academia, and most importantly, the public can learn about, contribute to, and advance open water data projects, standards, and initiatives
- To collaborate on data and analytics development to make water data decision making smarter and maybe even wiser
- To provide a venue for public-private partnerships to help develop open, value-added data tools and useful data to improve water resource management
- To help enable open water data in California
- To create and operate a comprehensive, credible access point to water data for decision making
- To enable access to/democratization of open, transparent and trusted data to inform water decision-making across California
- To provide a space for those who seek and use data about California's water supply, use, and management to collaboratively improve access to, use and understanding of that data so that water users can make informed decisions that lead to sustainable use of our water and climate resilience

Draft Steering Committee Charter

Dr. Moran and Ms. Franco reviewed the draft Steering Committee Charter developed by the Board. Steering Committee members were asked to review the Charter ahead of the meeting and identify any red flags; none were indicated. Tara noted that the Board has been grappling with providing sufficient information to support the Steering Committee while also allowing flexibility for the group to define its

direction. She emphasized that the draft Charter is meant as a starting point to be modified by the Steering Committee to best serve the group.

Steering Committee members provided the following questions and comments about the draft Charter:

- Is there a cap on the number of participants in each working group?
 - There are no caps in place and ideally the working groups would be open to all. However, in order to ensure the groups' functionality, the Charter provides for the potential formation of "task force teams" that could work on specific sub-projects and be smaller in size.
- Is each Steering Committee member limited to participation in one working group?
 - Each member may serve on multiple working groups.
- A Steering Committee member said they have had positive experiences working within an open structure that allows people to focus on what they can contribute to each topic.

The Steering Committee was encouraged to think about potential modifications that they would like to propose for the document while remaining within the structure of decision-making authority outlined in the draft Charter table. Once the Steering Committee agrees on the Charter it will be presented to the Board for approval, per the Consortium's Bylaws.

Steering Committee Collaboration and Decision-Making

Ms. Ambruster shared a suggested collaboration and decision-making structure, including potential elements of a set of agreements to guide how the group will work together and a decision-making approach called "gradients of agreement" that may help participants clarify their thinking and find common ground. The Steering Committee could use this approach as it develops its consensus operating procedures.

The Consortium's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative – Introductory Discussion

Joya Banerjee, Board member and Senior Program Officer in the Environment Program at the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, discussed the Consortium's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiative, which is guided by the understanding that water policy impacts all Californians, so decision-making should reflect California's diversity. Steering Committee members were asked to share feedback about the importance of DEI to the Consortium:

- It is important to clearly define terms, for example what kind of diversity, and to create space for nuance in how these terms relate to the work of the Consortium specifically. For example, in this context, equity might mean supporting individuals or groups to take advantage of an opportunity.
- The Consortium should consider how diversity, equity, and inclusion are achieved both within the Consortium (i.e., recruitment and outreach, who is participating in its process) and in the external impacts of the work.
- A bridge is needed between defining words and the tasks the Consortium aims to accomplish. It is important to ask to whom the work is accessible and useful, and it is important to hear from those who we aim to be inclusive of.
- Different communities will likely have different abilities to utilize the data due to differences in network, knowledge, language, and computational infrastructure availability.
- Be clear about defining terms as well as how they will be carried out, including related to the people we are trying to attract to our work. Equity in that context means fair and transparent,

having clear goals and objectives, and including underrepresented groups in development of those goals and as decision-makers.

- Open and transparent access to data will require care in the method of outreach to communities, including engaging with trusted messengers.
- DEI requires engagement on the personal level of understanding one's own biases.
- We will come to better decisions by having diversity of experience and thought represented.

Steering Committee members shared ideas about how to put these values into practice:

- This work is taking place within a context of inequality and it is important to consciously explore how the Consortium might be perpetuating inequities in everything it does, asking who was missed, what unfair assumptions are being made, and exploring where there might be blind spots.
- The Consortium's work touches on multiple dimensions related to DEI, including ensuring that data is available that can help ensure protections (for example, water quality data), ensuring that the data is usable, and identifying and filling data gaps.
- Consider that there may be communities who are wary of being represented in data due to issues around confidentiality, for example tribal knowledge or information about undocumented communities.
- Data can be essentializing, for example if the datasets use boundaries that do not meaningfully align with communities' boundaries.
- The idea of subjectivity and objectivity should be used with care; what gets measured, where, and at what scale are subjective decisions.
- Consider including in metadata not only what *is* in a dataset but also what the gaps are and what is *not* represented.
- Emphasize that the Consortium's work is not entirely technical; the user side is critical to the process. Address barriers to participation by those without technical expertise.
- Create a Water Users Working Group.

Steering Committee members suggested next steps to move the conversation about DEI forward:

- Consider this group's role: what is the Steering Committee uniquely positioned to offer in terms of equity and inclusion, for example highlighting data equity gaps?
- Consider how the Consortium can play a strategic convening role, synthesizing gaps and opportunities.
- The work of the Consortium spans four components of data, tools, decisions, and outcomes, and it is important to address diversity, equity, and inclusion within each of these components.
- In order to build relationships, the Consortium needs to ask what is important to communities and address how this work is relevant to and will address their concerns.

Working Group Co-chairs

Dr. Moran shared a draft job description and application process for working group co-chairs and asked Steering Committee members to share suggested edits by November 3, 2020.

The Consortium is to create two working groups, the Data Users Working Group and the Technical Working Group. Each working group will include one State agency representative co-chair, selected by the Partner Agency Team, and one non-State co-chair, determined by the Steering Committee. The final co-chairs will be announced during the Steering Committee meeting on December 8, 2020.

Steering Committee members indicated no concerns about the proposed co-chair selection process.

They gave the following suggestions about the job description:

- Clarify whether the positions are volunteer roles; if so, the language used in the Steering Committee application could be added
- Incorporate language related to DEI

Steering Committee members were invited to volunteer to form an ad-hoc subcommittee that would review applicants and make a recommendation to the full Steering Committee and Board. Nick Martorano, Martha Davis, Joaquin Esquivel, and Drew Atwater volunteered to serve on the ad-hoc subcommittee.

Dr. Moran said that the co-chairs posting would be up by November 4, 2020, and prospective co-chairs would have two weeks to apply, by November 18, 2020. The volunteers for the ad-hoc subcommittee agreed to meet on November 20, 2020, to review applications. The subcommittee would share its recommendations to the full Steering Committee and the Board during a joint meeting on November 23, 2020.

Overview of Pilot Projects

Ms. Franco; Eric Averett, Board member and General Manager of Rosedale-Rio Bravo Water Storage District; and Glen Low, Co-Founder of Earth Genome, presented overviews of three pilot projects already ongoing as part of the Consortium's work.

- Lidar roundtable
- Groundwater elevations
- Water use efficiency

Ms. Franco noted that the Working Groups will support future work on these projects.

Participants discussed the water use pilot project, sharing the following comments:

- Data streamlining efforts need to address the definitions used across data sets to ensure that inconsistent naming conventions do not get conflated
- Data usefulness is a key criterion when streamlining data

Dr. Moran asked the Steering Committee to give input on other projects that could tie in with the earlier discussion about DEI, for example doing sector-specific outreach meetings to hear about needs and then tailor programmatic content accordingly. The Consortium needs to consider and define the processes through which community feedback will inform decision-making. A Steering Committee member shared the following comment and question:

- It is important to be able to clearly communicate what role community participants will have in processes before they become involved. For example, will they be able to set goals or make decisions?
 - Dr. Moran said that these decisions have not yet been made and the input of Steering Committee members will be important to making these determinations.

Dr. Moran asked Steering Committee members to reach out to her to share their interest in supporting the pilot projects, saying she would connect them to the projects they are interested in.

- Mr. Atwater volunteered to join the urban streamlining pilot project and said that other staff from Metropolitan Water District would likely participate in the groundwater elevations project.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Dr. Moran encouraged participants to share ongoing feedback about the topics discussed during the meeting, including sharing interest in participating in the pilot projects.

Meeting Attendance

Participants who called in to the virtual meeting via telephone only are not included in this list.

Steering Committee Members

- Deborah Agarwal
- Mike Antos
- Drew Atwater
- Christina Babbitt
- Joy Bonaguro
- Martha Davis
- Joaquin Esquivel
- David Harris
- Nick Martorano
- Chris McCready
- Susan Tatayon

Board Members

- Eric Averett
- Joya Banerjee
- Debbie Franco
- Meredith Lee
- Joone Lopez
- Mike Myatt

Consortium Staff, Volunteers, and Consultants

- Hannah Ake
- Ariel Ambruster
- Johnathan Cruz
- Rachelle Echeverria
- Glen Low
- Amanda Miller
- Tara Moran
- Nancy Saracino
- Warren Teitz
- Julia Van Horn

Other Participants

- Andrea Abergel
- Andrew Altevogt
- Andrew Edstrom
- Betsy Lichti
- Donald M. (no last name provided)
- Marielle Pinheiro
- Frank Prewoznik
- Abe Serrano
- Ryan Shepherd
- Thomas Wong