

California Water Data Consortium Steering Committee Meeting Notes

December 8, 2020
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Meeting Goals

- Discuss Steering Committee role, needs and process going forward
- Appoint Steering Committee Co-Chairs
- Meet Working Groups Co-Chairs and discuss their roles
- Discuss Upcoming Steering Committee Meetings

Meeting Documents

Item 1. Agenda

Item 2. [DRAFT] Steering Committee Pilot Project Decision-Making Process and Criteria

Item 3. Steering Committee Co-Chair Job Description

Item 4. Working Group Co-Chair Job Description

Item 5. Proposed Closed Meeting Criteria

Action Items

- Tara Moran and Steering Committee Co-Chairs will support formation of an ad hoc committee to operationalize (and revise, as needed) the Steering Committee's Pilot Project selection framework. Ad hoc Steering Committee Members: Susan Tatayon, Mike Antos, Martha Davis, and Nick Martorano.
- Consortium staff to update Steering Committee and Working Group Co-Chairs job descriptions to reflect the changes discussed during the meeting.
- Consortium staff to update Executive Session language.
- Dr. Moran and Steering Committee Co-Chairs will develop a project overview for each the existing pilot projects to be shared with the Steering Committee and Working Groups
- Dr. Moran will follow up with Steering Committee members to ensure they have access to Consortium files on SharePoint
- Dr. Moran, Steering Committee Co-Chairs, and Working Group Co-Chairs will schedule and plan the next Steering Committee meeting. Agenda items include:
 - Share information related to the resources the Consortium has available for programmatic activity
 - Approve the Steering Committee Charter

High-Level Meeting Summary

Welcome, Meeting Logistics, and Agenda

Tara Moran, President and CEO of the California Water Data Consortium (Consortium), welcomed participants to the third meeting of the Consortium Steering Committee and reviewed the meeting goals, which focus on ensuring that the Steering Committee is prepared to successfully carry out its duty. She also gave an overview of the meeting agenda.

Ariel Ambruster, facilitator from the Consensus and Collaboration Program at California State University, Sacramento, reviewed suggested meeting agreements to support a collaborative meeting.

Where We Are Going: Steering Committee Roles, Needs & Process

Mike Myatt, Consortium Board Chair and Program Officer on the Water Foundation's Healthy Watersheds team, provided context for the meeting, which focused on confirming key items related to Steering Committee process and structure. During the next Steering Committee meeting, the Committee will provide input on new and existing projects that the Consortium may undertake.

Dr. Moran reviewed the proposed process for the Steering Committee to make decisions related to pilot projects, as presented in Agenda Item 2, Draft Steering Committee Pilot Project Decision-Making Process and Criteria. She noted that this draft version had not yet received Board approval and the Steering Committee was not being asked to adopt it but requested feedback about the proposed process and criteria. The goal is to test the process and criteria at the next Steering Committee meeting, then evaluate and modify the process as necessary before more formally adopting it.

Steering Committee members and Consortium staff provided the following questions and responses, respectively:

- Is the Steering Committee or the Board in charge of monitoring the Consortium's overall impact, for example by assembling information about the full set of projects that the Consortium engages over time?
 - Dr. Moran said that project evaluation will be part of the ongoing Steering Committee meeting process, but the Consortium, as whole should think about how best evaluate its overall impact. The Consortium will be undertaking a strategic planning process in the new year. Developing metrics track impact will be part of that process.
- Is the Consortium's programmatic activity intended to fit within the framework presented in the Decision-Making Process and Criteria document?
 - Dr. Moran said that this is the intention, but that the document is a draft, and the framework will be tested and modified as needed.
- What level of resources does the Consortium have available to it?
 - Dr. Moran said that the Board would be discussing budget during its December 9, 2020, meeting and more information would be shared with the Steering Committee during the next Steering Committee meeting.

Dr. Moran gave an overview of the proposed agenda for the next Steering Committee meeting, noting that the first portion would focus on the budget and resources available for programmatic activities. This portion of the meeting would therefore be held in executive session. The second part of the meeting will provide an opportunity to test and provide feedback on the decision-making framework as the Steering Committee reviews existing and new pilot projects.

Dr. Moran invited Steering Committee members to share what other information they need from the Board, beyond programmatic budget and staff resources. She proposed that the Steering Committee Co-Chairs form an ad hoc committee to evaluate the proposed framework, both ahead of the January meeting and after.

Steering Committee members and Consortium staff provided the following questions and responses, respectively:

- What are the criteria that the Board uses to evaluate potential projects, and what are the criteria the Board will use to consider projects that are beyond the scope of existing resources?
 - Dr. Moran affirmed she would share this information with the Steering Committee.
- How will project impact be evaluated?
 - Dr. Moran said that the quarterly evaluations should include an evaluation of project impact.
- A Steering Committee member suggested defining success in addition to impact, focusing on how value can be demonstrated as well as how to build synergies between projects.
- A Steering Committee member suggested adding language to project criteria related to who a project will impact.
 - Dr. Moran said that the Consortium is working to advance a diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative and welcomed additional suggestions about how to make it more central in the decision-making framework.

Dr. Moran invited Steering Committee members to participate in an ad hoc committee to work on the decision-making and criteria document; the following Steering Committee members volunteered:

- Susan Tatayon
- Mike Antos
- Martha Davis
- Nick Martorano

Steering Committee Co-Chairs Selection

Dr. Moran reviewed the role of the SC Co-Chairs, who will help connect the Steering Committee with the Board and the rest of the Consortium’s governance structure, support effective processes, advance the Steering Committee’s work, and help identify resources to advance projects.

The Steering Committee selected one State and one non-State Co-Chair. On behalf of the State representatives on the Steering Committee, Debbie Franco, Board member and Senior Advisor for Water and Rural Affairs in the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, nominated Chris McCready, Steering Committee member and principal engineer with the California Department of Water Resources, as the State representative Co-Chair nominee. Non-State representatives were invited to submit Co-Chair nominations ahead of the meeting; Mike Antos, Steering Committee member and senior Integrated Water Management Specialist at Stantec Consulting, offered to serve in the role. No further nominations were made.

Ms. McCready and Mr. Antos accepted the nominations to serve as Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee. Discussion ensued regarding the importance of the Steering Committee as a whole voting to approve the Co-Chairs even though they were nominated by the State and non-State sectors.

Steering Committee Action: Mr. Atwater moved to approve Ms. McCready and Mr. Antos as Steering Committee Co-Chairs. Mr. Esquivel seconded the motion and the motion passed 10-0-0.

Dr. Moran presented the Steering Committee Co-Chair job description, inviting Steering Committee feedback and noting that it could evolve over time to align with actual practice.

A member suggested changing the wording of the description of the process by which Co-Chairs are nominated such that it states that the Co-Chairs *can*, rather than *should*, each be nominated by the subset of the Steering Committee that they are part of (State or non-State), and that the full Committee would approve both Co-Chairs.

Steering Committee Action: Mr. Antos moved to approve the Steering Committee Co-Chair job description with the proposed revision to reflect the requirement that the Steering Committee vote to approve both Co-Chairs. Ms. McCready seconded the motion. The motion passed 10-0-0.

Working Group Co-Chair Introductions and Roles

Dr. Moran introduced the four Working Group Co-Chairs, one State agency and one non-State agency representative for each Working Group, appointed during the November 23rd Steering Committee meeting. The Co-Chairs introduced themselves and shared goals for their respective working groups.

Mahesh Gautam, Co-Chair for the Data Users Working Group, said that his short-term goals for the Working Group include identifying pilot projects that give the CWDC momentum, support multiple objectives, and address issues on which Consortium members can leverage prior experience. Mr. Gautam's long-term objectives include building networks and partnerships to leverage the work that others are doing related to water data and support the Consortium in becoming self-sustaining.

Sadie Gill, Co-Chair for the Data Users Working Group, said that her goals are to establish a positive and inclusive culture within the working group, mobilizing data to shape the future of water in California.

Rafael Maestu, Co-Chair for the Technical Working Group, said his ultimate goal is to remove technical obstacles that keep data from being useful and usable, developing protocols for data sharing, data requirements, data dictionaries, and use cases for prioritization.

Rich Pauloo, Co-Chair for the Technical Working Group, said that his vision is to live in a data utopia where users can access high-quality data and the underlying infrastructure is automated so that scientists can dedicate more time to utilizing the data.

Dr. Moran invited the Working Group Co-Chairs to share any questions they had about their roles as the Working Groups get underway.

- Does the Co-Chair role have a defined term length?
 - Dr. Moran said the term length is one year; the job description will be updated to reflect this information.
- Is there a timeline of milestones that the Working Groups should aim for?
 - Ms. Davis said there are no milestones defined yet, but the Steering Committee hopes to work with the Working Group Co-Chairs to set Working Group milestones after the January 2021 Steering Committee meeting.
 - Mr. Myatt emphasized seeking a mix of projects, with some that will bear results more quickly as well as others that will require longer-term investment before seeing results. He said that the Working Group Co-Chairs should help right-size expectations and timelines for the Working Groups' work.
- Are there existing projects already underway which the Co-Chairs should consider in scoping for their Working Group's work?

- Dr. Moran agreed that the Working Group Co-Chairs should consider the existing projects as they plan their work and said that she would provide an update on the existing pilot projects at the next Steering Committee Meeting. She also said she would include the Working Group Co-Chairs in planning for the next Steering Committee meeting.

Steering Committee members shared comments and questions about the Working Groups and the role of the Co-Chairs.

- One resource that will be key to the Working Groups' success, yet not require significant Consortium staff time or funding, is participation from members of other organizations.
- How do the Working Groups form? Who recruits members?
 - Ms. Saracino said the draft Steering Committee charter includes guidance about the process for establishing Working Groups. Per that guidance, the Steering Committee establishes and populates the Working Groups, however membership is not fixed and can adapt as current project structures evolve.
 - Dr. Moran said that a first step for the Working Group Co-Chairs is to define the job description for Working Group members.
- It is important to track who has already expressed interest in the Working Groups.

Steering Committee Action: Susan Tatayon moved to approve the Working Group Co-Chairs job description; Drew Atwater seconded the motion. The motion passed 10-0-0.

Governance Advice for Steering Committee Meetings

Nancy Saracino, General Counsel to the Consortium, presented process advice for the group, including meeting minutes approval and use of closed meeting/executive session. Steering Committee members shared questions and comments, including the following:

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- The confidential issues and decisions that would require a closed meeting, such as contracting terms, seem to fall under the purview of the Consortium Board rather than Steering Committee.
 - Ms. Saracino said that while the final decisions are part of the Board's scope, the Steering Committee may want to advise the Board on these issues and may need to therefore have confidential deliberations. These circumstances are likely to be infrequent yet are anticipated to arise at various points.
- Is the Steering Committee bound legally to hold public meetings or is it done voluntarily to improve transparency?
 - Ms. Saracino said that as an advisory committee to the Board, the Steering Committee does not have specific requirements how and when it meets; these rules are being established to support efficiency, predictability, and transparency related to the Steering Committee's operation and decision-making.
- Can the Steering Committee move between open and closed session or must two completely separate meetings be held?
 - The Steering Committee can choose to move from open into closed session during a meeting, should the need arise, and this can be clarified in the Executive Session Criteria.

- Does the Steering Committee have the authority to make decisions via email-based vote, in addition to ad-hoc meetings?
 - Ms. Saracino said that this could be an option, but a rule has not yet been drafted to formalize this as a Committee process.

Ms. Saracino noted that the Steering Committee had not yet agreed upon its Charter, which will ultimately require Board approval under the terms of the Consortium Bylaws. The intent is that the Committee take this up early in 2021.

Steering Committee Action: Deb Agarwal moved to approve the executive session criteria as amended to include language regarding how executive sessions are convened. Mr. Atwater seconded the motion. The motion passed 10-0-0.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Dr. Moran reviewed the action items and closed the meeting. The action items were:

- Dr. Moran and Steering Committee Co-Chairs will support formation of an ad hoc committee to operationalize (and revise, as needed) the Steering Committee's Pilot Project selection framework. Members: Susan Tatayon, Mike Antos, Martha Davis, and Nick Martorano.
- Consortium staff to update Steering Committee and Working Group Co-Chairs job descriptions to reflect the changes discussed during the meeting.
- Dr. Moran and Steering Committee Co-Chairs will develop project overviews for the existing pilot projects, to be shared with the Steering Committee and Working Groups
- Dr. Moran will follow up with Steering Committee members to ensure they have access to Consortium files on SharePoint
- Dr. Moran, Steering Committee Co-Chairs, and Working Group Co-Chairs will schedule and plan the next Steering Committee meeting; agenda items include:
 - Share information related to the resources the Consortium has available for programmatic activity

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
- David Harris
- Nick Martorano
- Chris McCready
- Susan Tatayon

Working Group Co-Chairs

- Mahesh Gautam
- Sadie Gill
- Rafael Maestu
- Rich Pauloo

Board Members

- Debbie Franco
- Joone Lopez
- Mike Myatt

Consortium Staff, Volunteers, and Consultants

- Ariel Ambruster
- Johnathan Cruz
- Tara Moran
- Nancy Saracino
- Julia Van Horn

Other Participants

- Andrea Abergel
- Ian Castillo
- Edward Hermann
- Mike Hollis
- Betsy Lichti
- Frank Prewoznik
- Abe Serrano
- Brent Vanderburgh