

## California Water Data Consortium Steering Committee Meeting Notes

February 16, 2023

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

### Meeting Goals

- Provide a venue for Steering Committee members to update one another on their water data-related work and potential opportunities for collaboration or coordination
- Provide an update on Steering Committee seat vacancies
- Discuss Consortium projects and potential decision points
- Jointly vision the next steps for the Putting Data to Work report and recommendations

### Action Items

- If you would like to participate in a governance ad hoc committee, alongside Mike Antos, Martha Davis, and Nick Martorano, let staff know.
- Martha Davis volunteered to lead an ad hoc selection committee to fill Deb Agarwal's future vacant seat and Drew Atwater agreed to join. If you would like to join, please let staff know.
- Tara Moran will follow up with Joy Bonaguro about lessons learned on their analytics accelerator to see if there are applicable lessons to the Consortium's Urban Water Reporting project.

### Welcome, Goals, and Agenda Overview

Nick Martorano, Consortium Steering Committee Co-Chair, opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and confirmed quorum. Nick Martorano and Martha Davis, Consortium Steering Committee Co-Chair, expressed their excitement for their first Steering Committee meeting as Co-Chairs. Nick Martorano reviewed the agenda.

### Updates from Steering Committee Members

- Steering Committee members gave updates on a variety of topics, including:
  - Mike Antos suggested that a recent paper, [The Data Treadmill: Water Governance and the Politics of Pollution in Rural Ireland](#), could have relevance to the Consortium's work.
  - Mike Antos also discussed work he is currently doing with Los Angeles County to build a database of community voices and referenced a [report](#) he co-authored on ways to make more equitable infrastructure investments.
  - Drew Atwater gave updates on the California Data Collaborative. He indicated that the CA Data Collaborative was part of a United Nations Foundation study on data collaboratives across the globe. There is a [case study](#) on the CA Data Collaborative as part of this work.

- Martha Davis highlighted the newly updated [Open and Transparent Water Data Implementation Journal](#) She highlighted how wonderful the Journal is its importance in communicating the progress being made.
- Nick Martorano updated that the State Water Resources Control Board finalized its first iteration of their [racial equity action plan](#). There are several data related topics within this plan.
- Chris McCready shared that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has developed an internal open data newsletter. They are currently working on a special issue which will feature the Consortium. This special edition will be shareable outside of DWR.
- Joy Bonaguro shared that the new Office of Data Innovation (ODI) just closed the first round of applications for a new round of data services that ODI will offer to state departments.
- Rafa Maestu shared the updated [Needs Assessment Dashboard](#) which now it uses live data. He added that it looks the same but under the hood it has dramatically improved and could be a model for data publishing to the data portal.
- Mahesh Gautam shared work that DWR has been doing on data management curriculum and on a new community of practice “Open Data Informational Working Group” which brings together different programs at DWR.

### **Approval Items**

#### *Approve: Consent Items*

Martha Davis asked if there were any changes suggested to the draft meeting minutes from Nov 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022. No changes suggested.

**Steering Committee Action:** Mike Antos moved to approve the meeting minutes from Nov 9th and Nick seconded. The minutes were approved -0-0.

### **Informational and Discussion Items**

#### *Steering Committee Member Seat Updates*

Chris McCready shared that the Partner Agency Team has developed a list of eight nominees and will be narrowing the list down to two nominees to fill the two empty state agency representative Steering Committee seats. Chris McCready confirmed that the Partner Agency Team should have their recommendations in time for the Consortium’s March Board meeting.

Martha Davis announced that Eddie Ocampo from Self Help Enterprises has agreed to join our Steering Committee. Unfortunately, today’s meeting was a conflict, so he wanted to share his apologies for not being able to join today. He will join us at our next Steering Committee meeting.

Deb Agarwal had asked Tara Moran to announce that she will be retiring this summer and as a result will be stepping off the Steering Committee. Tara Moran and Steering Committee members shared that will be sorely missed. The Steering Committee brainstormed some potential candidates for the non-state seat that will become empty when Deb Agarwal retires. Martha Davis volunteered to lead an ad hoc selection committee and Drew Atwater agreed to join.

### *CEO Update*

Tara Moran provided updates on the following topics.

#### IoW Coalition Meeting

- In late January, Tara attended a virtual Internet of Water Coalition meeting. The meeting focused on two main topics: 1) diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as it relates to the IoW and water data more broadly and 2) proposals for the development of affinity groups.
- The group expressed a strong desire ensure that DEI is considered in the work of the IoW coalition. Recommendations from the meeting will be shared out with members of the IoW coalition and may help inform the Consortium's DEI efforts.
- The coalition also recommended forming several affinity groups focused on: GeoConnex Public Agencies, and IoW membership. As an organization supporting public agency implementation of AB 1755, the Consortium has been recommended to join the Public Agencies affinity group. No affinity group meetings have been scheduled.

#### Budget Change Proposal funding

- Consortium staff are currently working with DWR (the grantor) and the Consortium's Board to determine the appropriate contracting mechanism and define the scope of work for the funds allocated in the Budget Change Proposal, now referred to as the Advancing Essential Open Data for Transparency and Water Resilience.

#### Governance updates

- In parallel with the Steering Committee vacancies currently being filled, the Board of Directors is currently conducting outreach and interviews to fill two existing Board vacancies and a pending third vacancy.
- Finally, the Consortium currently has two non-state Working Group Co-Chair vacancies.
- Consortium staff would like to flag the ongoing resources required to manage the inevitable transitions accompanying the Consortium's large governance structure. Tara requested volunteers from the Steering Committee to work with the Board to form an ad hoc committee to meet and develop governance recommendations.
- If you would like to participate in a governance ad hoc committee, let staff know.
  - Mike Antos, Martha Davis, and Nick Mortorano volunteered. Mike Antos indicated that he has been helping to write a paper on how organizations and

networks work and how they need to be managed differently than other organizations. This resource could be helpful in this conversation.

*David Harris joined at approximately 2:05 p.m.*

### *Overview of Existing Consortium Projects and Programs*

#### Groundwater Accounting and Data Reporting

- Project updates
  - Hannah Ake, Senior Program Manager for the Groundwater Accounting and Data Reporting Project, provided updates on the Groundwater Accounting Platform (Platform) work. In November the Consortium executed a contract with DWR for funding for phase 2 of this work.
  - This resulted in outreach including a:
    - [DWR press release](#)
    - [Joint EDF /Consortium blog post](#)
    - [Podcast with MyAGLife](#)
    - [Joint Data for Lunch / Lunch MAR presentation](#)
  - The project has added a fifth pilot partner – Merced Groundwater Subbasin.
  - The project is continuing to build platform functionality based on feedback from our pilot partners and our quarterly working groups
- Upcoming challenges

The project team needs to begin thinking about subscription models to support the Platform long-term. Hannah Ake requested that Steering Committee members contact her if they have expertise on this topic that they are willing to share.
- Mahesh Guatam, Consortium Working Group Co-Chair, reported on the data reporting formats portion of the project.
  - The project team has built a network of interested parties to get feedback and will continue learning conversations.
  - The consulting team has been developing a draft format for groundwater elevation format which will be discussed at next quarterly technical meeting.
  - The project will include two additional data types. Through quarterly project meetings and targeted outreach persistent well IDs and well characteristics have been identified as the data types that will provide the highest value Mahesh Gautam discussed some of the challenges both state and local agencies face because there is not a consistent process for assigning unique IDs to wells in California. While solving this issue will not be easy, there has been broad support from both state and local agencies, consultants, and other data users. People recognize that having unique well IDs is crucial to enabling the discoverability of well data in CA.

## Urban Water Reporting

### Project updates

- Tara Moran provided an updated on the Consortium's Urban Water Data Reporting Project. The Consortium hosted an in-person meeting in Sacramento last summer with urban water suppliers, program leads from state agency reporting programs, State agency executives, and data users to discuss challenges and potential solutions to better align urban water use and supply data across regulatory programs.
- The work that the Consortium is now doing focuses on two of solutions identified during the workshop. These are unifying metrics and aligning definitions.
- In partnership with San Francisco Public Utilities, Western Municipal Water District, and Metropolitan Water District, the Consortium has been hosting an urban water working group focused on developing a report highlighting the challenges in using a metric like residential gallons per capita per day to drive conservation decisions. The report would also highlight the opportunities to align data definitions underlying the metric.
- The goal is to have this report serve as the basis for aligning key definitions related to water use and supply data across urban water reporting programs.
- On January 1 of this year, the State Board enacted Drought and Conservation Technical Reporting Order, which requires community water systems to report information on water shortage, water sources, water demand and other data to the state Board through the newly developing SAFER clearinghouse. This is a new reporting requirement for larger water suppliers.
- In response to the roll out of the requirement Tara received many phone calls and emails, the Consortium hosted a listening session to hear concerns from urban water suppliers and data users and to consider opportunities and next steps.
- The Consortium has shared key findings from this meeting with State Board and DWR and have a meeting scheduled the State Board implementing team for later this month.

### LiDAR

- Amanda Miller provided an update on the LiDAR working group, which will continue to meet monthly. This working group in now a partnership between the Consortium and the Water Solutions Network.

### *Steering Committee Budget Process Update*

Tara Moran shared that the Steering Committee and Working Group co-chairs continue to be critical roles in guiding the Consortium's programmatic work. The Board of Directors would like to ensure that the Steering Committee can continue to provide feedback on programmatic

priorities to be considered during budget development. Staff is proposing a process that we will test during fiscal year 2023-24 budget development.

- Steering Committee Co-chairs will collect feedback from Steering Committee members on programmatic priorities.
- Steering Committee Co-Chairs will report the top two to three programmatic priorities from the Steering Committee and provide that feedback to staff and the Organizational Committee – the committee that develops and recommends budgets to the full Board.
- Interested in hearing about programmatic priorities outside of our current projects which will help inform the Board’s planning and decision-making process.

*Joya Bonaguro left the meeting at approximately 2:45pm.*

A few suggestions were made during the meeting:

- The Consortium should consider work to update and engage with the Consortium’s governance structures (Board, Steering Committee, Working Group Co-Chairs) as it’s own project or project with it’s own staff and resources.
- Consider public facing communications and Data for Lunch as a program or project
- Community engagement funding would be interesting to allow for engagement with community voices who should have some compensation for their time

#### *Putting Data to Work Conversation*

Consortium staff provided an overview of the Putting Data to Work report, which was released on February 15. Tara Moran indicated that the discussion with Steering Committee members should focus on understanding how this report could dovetail with work their work or the work their organization is doing, as well as what next steps with this report could or should be. This discussion may be used to inform a blogpost that Tara would write, there would be no individual attributions, it would just reference the Consortium Steering Committee.

Steering Committee Co-chairs invited Andrew Fahlund, Senior Program Manager at the Water Foundation, and Les Spahn, Consultant at the California State Assembly, to join the discussion. Tara Moran thanked Andrew and the Water Foundation for funding for this work.

- Tara Moran gave an overview of the six challenges identified in the report, including:
  1. Data Gaps
  2. Insufficient Data Quality
  3. Insufficient Data Resolution
  4. Inaccessible and Siloed Data
  5. Poor Communication and Lack of Trust
  6. Technical and Financial Resource Constraints
- Tara Moran gave an overview of the report recommendations:
  1. Invest in water data infrastructure

2. Continue empowering cross agency / organization collaboration
3. Create open data standards and protocols
4. Automate data collection and reporting of critical water datasets
5. Streamline procurement processes to enable innovation
6. Expand public awareness and accessibility of water data

Discussion:

- The discussion was facilitated using a [Mural board](#).
  - The discussion focused on report next steps, including: providing a presentation on this report at the Consortium's Data for Lunch series.
  - Educating legislative staff
  - Using the report as the basis for legislative hearings to advance water-data related bills and funding to support them
  - State agency Steering Committee thought the bill would be useful in continuing to advance AB1755 work.

*Drew Atwater left at approx. 3:45pm.*

*Wrap Up and Next Steps*

Amanda Miller reviewed the next steps.

**Nick Martorano closed the meeting at 4:00 pm.**

## Meeting Attendance

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

### Steering Committee Members

- **Deb Agarwal**, Department Head and Senior Scientist, Data Science and Technology Department, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- **Mike Antos**, Senior Integrated Water Management Specialist, Stantec Consulting
- **Drew Atwater**, Deputy General Manager, Moulton Niguel Water District
- **Joy Bonaguro**, Chief Data Officer, Office of Data & Innovation
- **Martha Davis**, Retire Assistant General Manager / Executive Manager for Policy Development for Inland Empire Utilities
- **David Harris**, Enterprise Chief Data Officer, California Natural Resources Agency
- **Nick Martorano**, Director, California Water Quality Monitoring Council
- **Chris McCready**, Manager, Technical Support and Integrated Data, CA Department of Water Resources

### Working Group Co-Chairs

- **Mahesh Gautam**, Senior Water Resources Engineer, CA Department of Water Resources
- **Rafa Maestu**, Economist and Chief Data Scientists, CA State Water Resources Control Board

### Board Members

### Consortium Staff, Volunteers, and Consultants

- **Hannah Ake**, Senior Program Manager, California Water Data Consortium
- **Amanda Miller**, Senior Operations Manager, California Water Data Consortium
- **Tara Moran**, President and CEO, California Water Data Consortium

### Other Participants

- **Andrew Fahlund**, Senior Program Manager, Water Foundation
- **Les Spahnn**, Consultant, California State Assembly