

California Water Data Consortium Steering Committee Meeting Notes

May 18, 2023

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Goals

- Welcome new Steering Committee members
- Provide a venue for Steering Committee members to update one another on their water data-related work and potential opportunities for collaboration or coordination
- Jointly vision water data-related outreach and support for community-based organizations
- Discuss Consortium projects and potential decision points

Action Items

- Please complete the Doodle for the Consortium's October meeting Steering Committee meeting by tomorrow.
- Let staff know if you are interested in providing feedback or being interviewed about the Consortium's governance structure.
- If you have any ideas of organizations or grants that may be a good fit for Consortium funding, please let staff know.
- Eddie Ocampo would like to review the Consortium's Groundwater Project materials because his team is also working with Merced ID on a well inventory project.
- Staff is considering next steps for the Urban Water Reporting Project, please let them know if you would like to participate in those conversations.

Welcome, Goals, and Agenda Overview

Martha Davis, Consortium Steering Committee Co-Chair, opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

Martha Davis welcomed the four new Steering Committee members and led introductions. She noted that Laurel Larson is not able to join us for this meeting but has provided feedback on today's discussion items in writing in advance.

New Steering Committee members:

- **Greg Gearheart**, Deputy Director, California State Water Resources Control Board of the Office of Information Management and Analysis
- **Eddie Ocampo**, Program Director of the Community Sustainability Department, Self Help Enterprises
- **Newsha Ajami**, Chief Strategic Development Officer for Research in the Earth & Environmental Sciences, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
- **Laurel Larson**, Associate Professor at UC Berkeley and Delta Lead Scientist at the Delta Stewardship Council

Updates from Steering Committee Members

Nick Martorano asked Steering Committee members for updates and let them know that we are going to trial providing updates from the Steering Committee members with the Consortium listserv along with Consortium updates.

- **Mike Antos** is the coauthor of a [white paper](#) on networks that is now posted as a supporting document of the CA Water Plan update 2023. The paper includes a how to guide if you are interested in building a network.
- **Chris McCready** shared that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) is developing data training materials and curriculum (8-9 at present, goal is to have ~13). The goal is to increase internal data literacy/expertise.
- **David Harris** shared that the data repository for AB1755 has had 183,000 downloads of water data, which dwarfs the consumption/downloads of other repositories of data.
- **Nick Martorano** shared the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has been working with the Big West Data Hub working on the California Water Data Challenge and this year's challenge is coming to a close and the [closing event](#) is coming up. The event will feature the projects presenting and allows the judges to hear from the project submissions. Tara Moran will be one of the judges. The second day will have panels across water data. Hoping to attract some new partners to help with the water data challenge next year.
- **Martha Davis** shared that she is a member of the Steering Committee for the Localizing CA Waters Conference. Coming out of the Nov 2022 conference, there was a great deal of interest to put together a workshop to look at the tools we are using to quantify multiple benefits form landscape transformations. A work group has formed that is starting to look at this. If people are interested in this space, please contact Martha Davis.
- **Newsha Ajami** has a student who is visiting from Berlin, who is working with some researchers. The student was working on a data set on wastewater releases but the dataset had a password. How can we make this data public so people can access this important data? Greg Gearheart asked to follow up.
- **Greg Gearheart** shared that he is working on a workshop to advance racial equity at the annual Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) conference in June in Oakland. Will share materials if/when available.
- **Chris McCready** shared that the CA Water Modeling forum in April, had an open data forum with presentations from Mahesh Guatam, Tara Moran, and Peter Colohan. The speakers were well received and the presentations were recorded. Chris McCready will see if those recordings can be shared.
- **Drew Atwater** shared that the [Data Summit](#) will be on Sept 7 and 8. Event has just been posted on the website. Reach out to Drew Atwater or Chris Tull for registration information.

Approval Items

Approve: Consent Items

Martha Davis asked if there were any changes suggested to the draft meeting minutes from February 16th, 2023. There were no changes suggested.

Steering Committee Action: Nick Martorano moved to approve the meeting minutes from Feb 16 and Mike Antos seconded. The minutes were approved 6-0-3. Three new Steering Committee members abstained as they were not members or present at the last meeting.

Informational and Discussion Items

Governance Update

Nick Martorano gave an update on the Consortium's governance structure. The Consortium's governance structure is now about two years old and we have an opportunity to think about if the Consortium's Governance structure is functioning as needed and intended. Recently some Steering Committee members met with some of the Board of Directors for an initial conversation about governance assessment. We anticipate that this process will include interviews with Steering Committee members, Board members, Working Group Co-chairs and evaluation of external governance models to assess the existing governance structure and make recommendations. Let us know if you are interested in providing feedback or being interviewed. We made some great progress and are just looking to refine the structure and to do that effectively we need feedback from all of you.

Chris McCready provided an update that Joy Bonaguro has left state service. The Partner Agency Team is still seeking a successor for Joy Bonaguro's seat on the Steering Committee. There is general agreement that the seat will be offered to the Office of Innovation Data and Chris McCready will be having conversations with them. Chris McCready reminded us of the process the Partner Agency Team uses to select and nominate new Steering Committee members.

Mike Antos asked for a brief overview of the current Consortium governance structures. Tara Moran gave an overview:

- Nine Board of Directors who focus on fiduciary responsibilities, policy, etc
- 11 Steering Committee members who represent the state / non-state partnership and oversee the programmatic work
- Several working Groups which are currently functioning differently than originally envisioned. Right now, the Consortium has project specific working groups instead of data users or technical work groups.

CEO Update

Tara Moran welcomed the new Steering Committee members. Staff are working on an announcement to send to the Consortium's list serve. Relatedly, today the Consortium sent out this [announcement](#) for the three new Board members who recently joined the Consortium's Board.

Tara Moran provided updates on the following topics:

Funding

- When the Consortium was formed, it received funding from two main sources – philanthropy and water agencies. The intent was always to have funding come from a variety of sources, including state and non-state entities to reflect the unique partnership and governance of the Consortium. In the past year have been very successful in securing state and federal funding. We will be working to develop a variety of funding streams. If you have any ideas of organizations or grants that may be a good fit, please let staff know.

Data for Lunch

- The next Consortium Data for Lunch will be on May 23rd and people can register on Eventbrite [here](#).

Mike Antos added that there was an article put up recently by Stantec that comments on the Consortium which can be viewed on LinkedIn [here](#).

Community Outreach on Water and Water Data-Related Priorities

Martha Davis introduced Maria Doerr, who supported the Consortium to collect community-based feedback. Martha Davis then introduced the work and memo. The Consortium knows that it needs to do more to deepen outreach and engagement with underserved communities and mitigate against the biases inherent in data and data collection. The Consortium's leadership has prioritized this work, as many of the agencies and orgs that the Steering Committee members represent. We are hoping to received your feedback on: 1) solicit feedback on the recommendations included within the document; 2) hear about work that your or your home agency or organization are doing that align with the recommendations and elevate existing work; and 3) prioritize some recommendations that may be tenable for the Consortium to undertake in the near-term (next year) and longer-term and provide you with an opportunity to engage in those recommendations.

Maria Doerr provided a summary of the work to date. These are recommendations that she synthesized from conversations with community-based organizations and listening sessions. These can be seen in the draft [Community Engagement memo](#).

Amanda Miller invited Steering Committee members to participate in a discussion focused on both near term and long-term goals. Discussion questions included:

- Identifying where Steering Committee members were aware of ongoing or planned work to support any of the recommendations outlined in the report
- Identifying where the Consortium could potentially amplify that work
- Identifying recommendations that the Consortium would be best suited to advance
- Reviewing staff proposed near-term recommendations and adding comments / suggestions.
- Groundwater Accounting Platform outreach – the platform has reached a point where we are taking the project for demo and for community outreach. We have listed some of the organizations on our outreach list. Are there any others, or places you have connections?
- The Consortium will synthesize this feedback from the Mural board and reach out to SC members to have additional discussions on long-term priorities.

Overview of Existing Consortium Projects and Programs

Groundwater Accounting and Data Reporting

- Hannah Ake gave an overview of the Groundwater Accounting platform. The platform was developed to make water budgeting more straightforward under SGMA.
- Project Updates
 - The project is currently working with five pilot basins.
 - The team is working on planning for an upcoming Landowner / Grower workshop for Merced Subbasin on June 14.
 - The platform has a new URL live at www.groundwateraccounting.org
 - Upcoming outreach
 - The team will be presenting on May 31st on GRACast
- Mahesh Guatam provided an update on the Data Reporting Format process and timeline.
 - Plan to provide documents and outreach materials to raise awareness and use of the data reporting formats.
 - The team has developed draft groundwater elevation data reporting format and crosswalks and sent this to the Groundwater Technical Quarterly Working Group for feedback.
 - Have evaluated complimentary data reporting formats and based on this work and advice from the technical working group we are focusing on persistent well IDs for our additional data types and developing a fact sheet to describe the importance of this effort.
- Hannah Ake shared a [factsheet](#) on the Groundwater Accounting Platform, which is publicly available and can be shared.

Urban Water Reporting

Lindsay McPhail and Martha Davis provided updates:

- The Consortium hosted an in-person workshop last summer where state agency leaders and employees, urban water suppliers, and data users gathered to focus on solutions to align data reporting and improve data quality and usability. 5 solutions were identified with momentum.
- Attendees from the workshop were invited to join a joint working group co-lead by Metropolitan Water District, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and Western Municipal to develop a report that highlights Residential Gallons Per Capita Day (R-GPCD) as an opportunity to align urban water reporting.
 - This work group has been meeting for several months, focused on R-GPCD.
- This project is dealing with an evolving situation. In January, as the group was starting to dig into the data definitions related to R-GPCD, the State Board issued a Drought and Conservational Technical Reporting Order effective Jan 1, 2023. This requires community water systems to report monthly data to the State Board on a quarterly basis. For systems at risk, they may be required to submit data more frequently, weekly or monthly.
- This new report also introduced a new reporting system. There was the intent that this would help streamline the reporting of Electronic Annual Report (EAR).
- Due to the new report, Consortium staff met with DDW staff to understand the new reporting order and did interviews with the working group to provide feedback to the state.
- The Consortium has conducted a listening session with our working group, shared finding from that session with both DWR and State Board, and had meetings with staff at both agencies to better understand the context of both the [Drought and Conservation Technical Reporting Order](#), as well as the SAFER Clearinghouse and are now in the process of looking for ongoing opportunities that serve both agencies in this arena and having internally discussion of the R-GPCD report and how we can best add value in this process.
- Consortium staff intend to continue discussions with the working group in the context of the evolving situation on how to best finetune this project.
- In progress of considering next steps of this work, please let us know if you would like to participate in those conversations.

LIDAR

Amanda Miller provided an update:

- The LIDAR working group has now transitioned to a partnership with the Water Solutions Network and will continue to meet monthly.

Telemetered Data Project

Tara Moran provided updates on the Telemetered Data Project:

- The Consortium has submitted a scope of work to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and has received preliminary drought exemption approval. The Consortium is still waiting for final contract approval.
- There will be opportunities for Steering Committee members to provide feedback throughout this project.
- Request: Staff will be writing a job description for a role to support this work and would request that you 1) advertise it broadly through your networks and 2) recruit / encourage strong candidates to apply or send us their information.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

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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

- **Newsha Ajami**, Chief Strategic Development Officer for Research in the Earth & Environmental Sciences, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
- **Mike Antos**, Senior Integrated Water Management Specialist, Stantec Consulting
- **Drew Atwater**, Deputy General Manager, Moulton Niguel Water District
- **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
- **Greg Gearheart**, Deputy Director, California State Water Resources Control Board of the Office of Information Management and Analysis
- **Nick Martorano**, Director, California Water Quality Monitoring Council
- **Chris McCready**, Manager, Technical Support and Integrated Data, CA Department of Water Resources
- **Eddie Ocampo**, Program Director of the Community Sustainability Department, Self Help Enterprises

Working Group Co-Chairs

- **Mahesh Gautam**, Senior Water Resources Engineer, CA Department of Water Resources

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
- **Lindsay McPhail**, Associate Resource Specialist, Metropolitan Water District

Other Participants