



WEF DIRECTOR'S REPORT



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WEFMAX MEETING 2006

Since the governance changes of 2003, the Water Environment Federation (WEF) continues to concentrate on improvements within the organization. The WEFMAX (WEF member association exchange of ideas between directors, officers, and staff) discussions were non-formal and are only for consideration as to future Federation direction. Several interesting concepts are anticipated to arise in the future for WEF.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

At WEFTEC 2005 the House of Delegates (HOD) Directors participated in four workgroups targeting issues and strategies affecting WEF. Those workshops resulted in a listing of 93 items. During the WEFMAX meetings, Directors will be asked to prioritize the 93 items in anticipation of establishing the top 4-5 items, to be reflected in a strategic plan update. Results should be available later this summer. During WEFTEC 2006 (Dallas) the HOD and Committee Leadership Council (CLC) will combine and work together during the strategy sessions in addressing the top priorities.

WEF GOVERNANCE

The WEF Governance continues to experience change. Legal council is being used to review the Constitution & By-Laws to assure it is current with today's standards and regulations regarding the association's non-profit 501(c)(3) classification.

WEF is considering the potential to increase the Board of Trustees (BOT) from the current 10 members to 12. Currently the 10 members include (8) from Member Associations (MA) and (2) At-Large. Should the BOT membership be increased to 12, discussion is that (6) will be from MA's and (6) from the At-Large group. The MA representative would be a past HOD member. Additionally, the service commitment is being considered. The term would increase from 1 year to 3 years. This again provides improved continuity for the overall operation of WEF. Also being discussed is for BOT members to represent WEF at annual MA visits. This is an attempt to reduce travel time requirements for WEF officers, which currently exceeds 180 days per-year.

WEF has expressed their concern with how MA's select WEF representation. Predominately the WEF Director position

has been given to past presidents. What is at question is, "Is this in the best interest of WEF"?

Is there a benefit to allow and encourage representation to WEF prior to an individual obtaining all of the MA chair and officer positions? Opinions vary between the MA's, however, it was noted that by allowing representation prior to the chair process, it would enable MA officers to better understand the alignment to WEF and possibly maintain improved relations with WEF during their progression through the MA positions. Undoubtedly there will be opposition from some and agreement for others on how this process should or could be changed.

WEF has experienced internal challenges since the Governance change of 2003. Due to the restructuring and the level of involvement of the HOD, the critical involvement of the HOD needs to be re-clarified from WEF to the MA's so that alignment is clearly understood. WEF is clear on what they expect from Delegates. At issue is whether or not the MA's understand the role of the Delegates or even if the candidates being selected are clear on their responsibilities (as described by WEF). WEF governance is strictly done by the HOD, and the HOD is the point of contact for WEF at the MA level. WEF distributed position descriptions, roles and responsibilities for Delegates.

What requirements, if any, do MA's have for their selection criteria and process when selecting a representative to serve on the HOD, or is it simply the recent past-presidents selection? Should no specific criteria exist or, should there be such criteria established and implemented through all MA's?

WEFMAX ATTENDANCE

WEF believes that since WEFMAX attendance is required for all WEF Director's that it should be encouraged for MA Board members during their MA progression. This will enhance future related endeavors. In the case of Iowa WEA, they have a statement of commitment between their MA and Delegates that both parties sign prior to gaining such positions.

ARE WEFMAX MEETINGS WORTHWHILE?

Each year the attendees are asked if WEFMAX meetings are worthwhile and should WEF continue with the meetings? I feel these meetings are the most important for Directors, especially since the governance change. During the meetings at

WETEC the Directors simply vote on non-invasive items striving to balance the issues of WEF and their representative MA's. However it is at WEFMAX where the intimate and open discussions for the benefit of all, being WEF, the MA and total membership, are passionately addressed. The forum of WEFMAX should never be terminated, only enhanced. Should the cost of WEFMAX become an issue, a possible solution would be to centralize the meeting site and possibly reduce the number to 3-4 per year. The downside to this proposal would be the risk of losing the intimate nature of what has produced such productive meetings.

“WEF ONLY” MEMBERSHIP

The issue of WEF Only membership was addressed and discussed from all available aspects. Still no clear, precise, one size fits all answer was disclosed. However, it should be noted that WEF only memberships pose a benefit to a small sector of the overall membership. This is commonly echoed through the academia sector, where there is little to no value provided by the local MA regarding WERF and other national research organization activity.

WEF TEACH PROGRAM

The WEF Teach Program is available to all MA's and is located at the MA Management website. Some MA's have developed optional programs such as the Children's Water Festival, that Iowa & Nebraska developed (a very successful program). Additionally, Arkansas has an active WEF Teach program that they present to various schools.

WWTF DESIGN COMMITTEE

Another item brought up for discussion is the MA creation of a WWTF Design Committee. This would be a committee that addresses design, construction and inspection as well as project management aspects for the MA and its membership.

BEST OPERATOR OF THE YEAR

Another issue that addressed a possible avenue for involving operators more in WEF is to honor the “overall best operator of the year” award recipient and have the MA annually budget for attendance at WEFTEC. This is one opportunity that may be of significance for the individual and their employer. Additionally there are several Directors that felt this would certainly gain momentum and establish a goal to achieve.

Although I thought I was submitting my final WEF Director Newsletter article, I just learned that I have one more coming your way in the September issue. See you then!