



May 27, 2021 | 2:00 – 4:30 pm ET
Social Event 4:30 – 5:00 | Atlantic Canada
Participants 61

WELCOME

- **Dave Galbraith, WEF Delegate** from Atlantic Canada WWA – Opening host welcome. ACWWA is happy to host WEFMAX 2021 and hope as we rehost in two years to see you all in-person and we will have lobsters. Dave introduced the key ACWWA volunteers who help plan this WEFMAX: Cathy Cameran, John Lam, Julie Stokes, Dr. Jennie Rand, Lindsay Anderson and Clara Shea.
- **Ifetayo Venner, WEF Vice President** – Opening Welcome: Thank you WEF Staff and WEFMAX committee for putting on these 4 events. Very insightful and a lot of learning from each other. Regarding WEF: The Board just approved a new DE&I policy at WEF.org and what it means to WEF and what we are looking to implement. We are also planning for the next leadership series regarding implementing DE&I and what the MA's and WEF are doing. We are busy at WEF kicking off strategic planning. We had a refresh in 2018 and we are getting ready to select a consultant. WEFTEC is on in October and will have an online component. Also look at the monthly HOD updates, highlighting an HOD delegate every month.
- **Mike Milius, WEF House of Delegates WEFMAX Committee chair** – Welcome/Program: Atlantic Canada has done a great job today. There has been a lot of work behind the scenes work and a special thank you to Dianne. Planning has started for 2022 WEFMAX and we are going to be in-person, SC, May 11-13, 2022 & North Dakota, June 1-3, 2022. There may be some changes with our format, and we want to be informative to the MA's.

SESSION I – Host Topic

IDE Survey Report

Atlantic Canada WWA – Dr. Jennie Rand (Professor at Acadia University)

- Diversity in the Atlantic Canadian Water Industry – We did implement the IDE committee a couple of years ago. We initiated a study overview which had two parts: Quantitative and Demographic Survey (Fall 2019) and Qualitative Survey (Summer 2020).
- Objectives: Produce, Identify, Evaluate, Determine & Establish.
- Surveys : Affective, Continuance & Normative Commitment
- Demographic Results: gender gap decreases under the age of 45, lack of ethnic diversity in the water industry.

- Quantitative Results: Sense of Belonging and Corporate Social Responsibility differed between men & women. There are differences in commitment which is age-related.
- Qualitative Results: Strong sense of personal relationships and professional networking, Time in industry = better fit., increased diversity caused someone to feel they belonged more. There is a perception that the industry is dominated by white, middle-aged men. More can be done in certain areas within the industry, specifically within the LGBTQ community.
- Leadership was a central theme which has a great impact on an individual.
- Recommendations: Sense of belonging, scholarships, mentorship, appropriate networking opportunities, training for members on EDI issues and Employee resource groups.

Breakout Session

Questions: Do you have a DE&I committee, what caused you to create that committee, and what is that committee doing?

Report Out:

- KY-TN, PA, Rocky Mountain does not have a DE&I committee. AZ has a committee, but Patty Kennedy (AZ Water) does not know a lot about it. She added, how can we be more inclusive and who should be bring on our Board. DE&I Is a separate committee now and we had some assistance regarding what areas where we needed to be more inclusive. We did a survey with our membership which provided a lot of information. To become more diverse, we need to attract more diverse people.
- Leanne Scott (Clean Water Professionals): The demographics are changing. I was a President of KY-TN and more women are participating. We need more Officers who are women/more diverse. We have a bit of work do still. We need to have our leadership look more like the larger demographic.
- Jeffrey Berlin (Rocky Mountain): I am with the HOD DE&I and there are 3 subcommittees, and we need to determine if we need to create a DE&I committee. He asked Patty Kennedy to assist his MA. We have an in-person leadership meeting this summer and we are going to be spending a couple of hours doing visioning exercises. We have come up with there are some decisions which need to be made and is this something we need to address in our MA and how do we do that. If we decide to do something, what do we do? We need to define what DE&I means and we're using the WEF definition. We plan to introduce starter kits which will assist you to determine if this is something you want to do. It is going to be a long process.
- Michael Sedon (PWEA): We try to have a balance, but it just happens that our next 3 Presidents are going to be female. We have a bit of work to do still.
- Laura Oakes (Chesapeake WEA):

1. Do you have a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee?

CWEA - does not

NEWEA - DEI started this past year;

BC Water - 2 years ago
Ontario - getting a committee going; young professionals helping.

2. If so, what prompted your MA to create a DE&I Committee?

NEWEA - Following WEFs leadership
BC Water - Sponsor brought out dancing girls.
Ontario - Felt necessary

3. What is your DE&I Committee doing?

New England WEA - session at annual conference and WEF participated; partnering outside of organization to be more inclusive; Webinar on empowering folks that are disabled.
BC Water - Board gender equal; worked on industry representation; jurisdictional areas.

Establish achievable goals based on geographical area.
Need to consider - nonvisible; geographical, background LGBTQ.
Communication and how we communicate DE&I will be important and demonstrate openness of industry.

- Christina Smith (Central States WEA):

1. Do you have a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee? - Yes 3/6, No 0/6
No, however, there is building momentum toward one with subcommittees in place. One has the desire and drive in their strategic planning has a benefit goal in mind 3/6

2. If so, what prompted your MA to create a DE&I Committee? To support the community and reflect the communities we are serving. Recruitment problem as the places used for candidates are not panning out. Retaining the team members once they are in place and working in the field.
Business Driver. What is your DE&I Committee doing? Inclusive Video for Marketing, Membership building, Book Club 5 languages of Appreciation in the workplace and establish a Diversity Calendar.

- Catherine Cameron (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): Our group was a mix - we have NJ who must get started and are awaiting working group feedback.

- Frederic Smith (Ohio WEA): 1. Ohio, Western Canada, and Alaska do not have a committee yet. Texas and Atlantic Canada do have a committee. 2. Texas/Atlantic Canada were reviewing their board and did not match the community they were serving, so they wanted to make a board more representative of the communities they serve to help expand the workforce and make it more diverse. 3. Atlantic Canada stated hardest part was creating a diverse DE&I committee from their membership and finding a diverse group to serve on the committee.

- Scott Foley (Missouri WEA): Regarding Missouri -

1. Do you have a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee? Yes
2. If so, what prompted your MA to create a DE&I Committee? Was discussed with various folks and Exec committee okayed an ad hoc committee then voted to make it a permanent

committee. Rebecca may have more in sight on this answer.

3. What is your DE&I Committee doing? Developed Vision and Mission Statement, set bi-weekly 30-minute meetings, developing a survey to send out to MA members, working on a scholarship opportunity, Writing DE&I newsletter articles in our current, Looking into a DE&I workshop or presentation for our MA members

- Catherine Cameron (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): Ifetayo at her level has many moving parts and will have more information forthcoming. Deb Smith from NL says they are the Hawaii of Canada and are finding their way.

SESSION II

Making the most of your virtual conference

AZ Water – Tom Galeziewski (AZ WEA WEF Delegate) & Patty Kennedy (WEF Delegate-at-Large)

- Hosting a Ninja Water Conference: AZ water established in 1928 which serves WEF MA and AWWA Section for AZ. 1824 members (301 are WEF members). We have 4 paid staff.
- Annual Conference Planning Led by the conference Chair (Past President) and planning committee chair. Pre-Covid, our conferences were in April in a Sun-Thursday event. We had 5 tracks running simultaneously and offered 19 PDH's where the cost was \$395 members and \$495 for non-members.
- In 2020, we were ready to go until COVID.
- In May of 2020 we decided to go virtual. Decisions: Format, Registration cost, Training for moderators, sponsor packages and exhibitors?
- What did we do? Combination of pre-recorded sessions and live events. We used the CVENT platform and GoToWebinar to access live content. On-demand content was available one week prior to live events.
- 2020 Virtual Conference: 5 live event days featuring 2-hour sessions from 11:00 am -1:00 pm. We had live evening events (Awards and Brave Blue World).
- Financials: Big unknown. We set registration cost at \$100 which worked out very well. All our sponsors stayed committed to their funding and ½ of exhibitors will roll over their fee until 2021 instead of providing refunds.
- We had over 900 registrants with a 67% participation rate. 599 people viewed the opening presentation and Keynote. \$89K in sponsorships and revenue was about ½ of what was budgeted.
- Feedback was very good.
- 2021 Conference Planning – We wanted to hold to the April timeframe. We considered a hybrid format and wanted to tweak sponsorships and get close to the 3-day event format.
- End Result: We went to a 100% virtual event due to COVID “hanging on”. We had 3-day events, live training sessions, incorporated exhibit booths and meeting spaces and limited content access for PDH for 21 days.
- Registration: \$250-member, \$350 non-member (877 registrants/738 logins/ 85% virtual participation rate).
- What does this tell us: Virtually we can do anything. Our membership showed they will use virtual programming.

- Our 2022 annual conference is being planned as an in-person event, but it will incorporate virtual components. Sponsor loyalty is essential to financial success – treat them well!

Breakout Session

Questions: 1. Hybrid is here to stay. What aspects of the past year will your MA continue to do in a virtual or in-person setting? And 2. Share Pros and Cons.

- Khris Dodson (NYWEA): NYC is expensive but due to that we will have to have a hybrid model as well. We know the virtual person will get the short end of the stick. We may do in-person training events in town halls/fire houses as we have done in the past and then maybe do something 100% virtual. We are so excited to get back to the way things were but may not be the way things are going to be. We are also learning that the virtual component is something people want.
- Jackie Jarrell (NCWEA): The tech. piece is very important. We are looking at the technology which will assist the virtual pieces of these meetings. I was in Alaska a couple of years ago and noticed that in Alaska people were traveling long distances for educational training. Another benefit of the virtual component.
- Leanne Scott (Clean Water Professionals of KY-TN): We kicked this into high gear and had so many operators who needed professional education. We had to shift from in-person and converted some events into a webinar. We will be in-person in August, but we will record some of the stuff and intend to continue with webinars and continuing education, so they get value.
- Matthew Feige (Western Canada WEA): in the beginning we had to try to figure things out and almost had webinar fatigue. It was hard to plan for this and it took a lot of planning to get your membership to buy in. You must make it worth their time. The virtual side of it is important to distant and small communities.
- Peter Garvey (NEWEA): Many folks may not be vaccinated so having a virtual component is crucial considering their personal situation.
- Lindsay Anderson (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): Conference going live in July with some virtual options for folks who could not make it. Registration is currently ahead of last in person conference. People are taking vacation so they can attend! Some virtual aspects will remain for those who cannot make it (at a discount). Some challenges in monitoring contact hours (staff required to monitor attendance etc.).
- Christina Smith (Central States WEA): Hybrid is here to stay. What aspects of the past year will your MA continue to do in a virtual or in-person setting? Nebraska just transitioned three events to virtual and received feedback an overwhelming in person push moving forward. In-Person vs Online.... the third Hybrid option is Live. This allows people unable to attend all the events

involved. Exhibitors should be the focus, so they are getting the best bang for the buck. Pacific north west – Lunch and Learns are sponsored, advertised, and pulled around 50-60 people online. This is an activity that is here to stay. In lieu of a conference, they did a series over several days.

- Share Pros and Cons.
Combine the live and in person or two separate events?
Being cognizant of an in person potential drawback, low vaccination with certain pockets of African Americans should be considered.
- WEF 365 – how do we reach our members and stakeholders on a regular basis and subsidize cost. YouTube channel, etc. poses the question: Content vs Content delivery.
- Chris Schmit (South Dakota WEA): Pros - Weekly webinars were created to serve demand and they have been successful and will continue; High satisfaction of the participants; Strong participation of virtual events.
- Alondra Hernandez (WEA of Texas): I forgot to mention that when Texas had our annual conference, we had promo codes/discounts for restaurants, apparel, entertainment, and swag for our attendees. My favorite: We had yummy discounts from Texas restaurants!
- Jeffrey Berlin (Rocky Mountain): Pros: reaching broader audience/those who cannot travel. Cons: Most conference centers do not have AV and network capabilities for streaming and may reduce attendance. Separate virtual events >> hybrid.
- Rajendra Bhattarai (New England WEA): New England - Not decided yet. Probably some online component will continue.
- Chris Schmit (South Dakota WEA): Cons - Cost for audio-visual services in a hybrid environment; Exhibitor satisfaction is difficult with virtual; Permission to issue CEUs to operators in New Jersey was difficult to get.
- Christina Smith (Central States WEA): Group 7 continued - WEFTEConnect – Negative feedback from the manufacturers. However, some feel they manufactures were not aggressive and engaging with the conference attendees. Created CEUs at the exhibitors which was great for both the operators and exhibitors. Surveys to find the interest in in person. Spread out groups benefit from the virtual component. Recordings of the live can be sent out after as needed.
- Peter Cavagnaro (Michigan WEA): Not sure which room we were in. We hope that a virtual component is here to stay as part of a hybrid event. Virtual training has been a success. There are questions about live vs. pre-recorded. All agreed that the social aspect of face to face is beneficial to building relationships and informal problem solving. Virtual/hybrid will facilitate coming out of the pandemic. Virtual is more accessible to regional organizations. Virtual capability will facilitate innovation in the future. It will also facilitate meeting in poor weather.
- Erin Longworth (WEA of Ontario): Ontario – cancelled 2020 conference in April, Postponed 2021 conference to November and will hopefully have in person conference. Currently discussing

options for back-up plans for virtual or hybrid. Hawaii – virtual conference last year. Next year will be in person. Not a lot of travel to get to in person conference, everyone is close on the island.

- New Jersey: Usually May. 2020 postponed to July and then scrapped all together. Cancelled this year. Technology transfer multi day event in September – hopeful to have this in person. Webinar sessions mitigated financial hit. Membership signups are increased at in person conferences. Rocky Mountain, September 2020 virtual. Next year, hybrid – technical sessions virtual, operator attendance increased. Hoping to have golf tournament. Long term – will likely have the technical sessions in person and virtual combination. Allows more remote operators to attend as well.

Cons – lose volunteers? Lose camaraderie of getting together with other committee members.

- Chris Schmit (South Dakota WEA): Seems like most of the MAs were virtual and will be moving to hybrid.
- From Scott Adams (Georgia WEA): Georgia is doing in person conference in July. Hybrid option not being provided. Logistics to stream sessions not feasible. Also, vendors who pay for exhibit space not in favor of hybrid options that does not get people to the conference.
- Rajendra Bhattarai (New England WEA): Room 2- Atlantic Canada - Balance between in-person and online events. Do not want live conference to suffer. Some hybrid component will probably stay.
- Atlantic Canada - Extra cost for virtual event, will its revenue cover it? Sometimes virtual and hybrid events require more work than live in-person events.
Texas - Decision has not been finalized yet but hope 2022 will be a live in-person event with some hybrid component.
- Atlantic Canada - Didn't have social hour last year. This year's conference postponed from Oct to Dec. Planning to include a social hour, with a virtual magician. Also, a virtual tour of a WRRF.

SESSION III

MA Engagement with Academic Institutions

New York WEA – Patricia Cerro-Reehil

- We are non-profit, founded in 1929, 25 committees, 2500 members.
- We publish a quarterly magazine (Clear Waters), 400 volunteers and a budget of 1.5 million.
- \$50K is awarded to students annually in scholarships.
- DE&I needs to be part of everything we do.
- Here is the catch: We saw “it” coming. Large number of retirements and fewer operators entering the sector and few schools offering programs and utilities not offering succession plans.
- Genesis of the Work in Water Program – (Work in Water): Engaging Schools, Classroom Experience, Internship & Teacher Resources.

- How do we engage with students: Use a flyer for HS students and reach out to guidance counselors?
- What is NYWEA Doing? Interfacing with CITI (exposure water careers to HS & College students), Career Fairs (HS & College), InFlow Program (exposure to minority students), Civil Service, Contacting Veterans (fill jobs) and DE&I (created a committee).
- How do we connect with students & community: Communicate and get out there and share the value with the service(s) we provide (In-school activities, plant tours, ad campaigns, job fairs & events).
- If not enough, offer a beer, bouncy house, or a hotdog!
- Communities prosper when all people have access to clean water, jobs, and access to viable economic opportunities.

Breakout Session

Questions: What initiatives are underway by your MA to engage more young professionals in the water industry?

Report Out:

- Lindsay Anderson (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): We are trying to diversity our target audience for our YP's and need to bring in more HS students into YP's. Much of our board has come up through the YP program.
- Mike Seymour (British Columbia WWA): We have a YP committee at Uni of BC, Thompson Rivers and Victoria University. Two members of our Board are committee chairs of the YP group. We are well-active and engaged.
- Kam Law (Illinois WEA): We have a YP community, events, student design competition and have a YP on the Board who may be the president in a few years. InFlow is a great program for bringing students in.
- Scott Foley (Missouri WEA): We have chapters in a few schools, which goes into YP's. Many of our officers have come up through the YP chain. We have YP nights out (bowling, socializing). We also have mentoring programs. How can we show value of WEF to business/companies and to YP's.
- Rob Lee (PNCWA): Atlantic Canada – individual champion and engagement at the University level (SYP virtual events, WFP). Mentorship. Encouraging more SYP engagement at events, such as opportunities to practice presenting. Sponsors can give conference registration to students. PNCWA – Creating roles for SYP at conferences. InFLOW program that has shifted from just the annual conference to a year-long program. Rocky Mtn – partnership with high school geared toward trades, connected them with 3 different utilities who committed to bring those students on part-time for a semester (Utah MA has really good ideas about how to engage kids in conference). AZ – Active SYP event, poster competition at conference, scholarships, students brought through exhibitor halls. Research committee that engages students at universities. “The Challenge” program where students focus on specific topics. NV – Tours-to-Brews

program. Strong partnerships with universities (poster competitions, work with professors to posters a part of the university classes

- Lindsay Anderson (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): What initiatives are underway by your MA to engage more young professionals in the water industry? MAIN POINT: All MA's have very active YP committees; main flow of young people into the organization. Fifteen years ago, YP committees were in their infancy, and now those YPs are moving up the chain. Networking and access to information are key selling points to encourage YP participation. Firms/organizations need to make investments in YPs. YP's are "lifeblood". SPECIFICS TO EACH MA: YP committee is active in Vancouver - UBC, University of Victoria, SFU, etc. Active water program in BC. Two board members are past committee chairs. In AC many of our board members have come through the YP program. One YP sitting on each committee. In Illinois, YPs organize events for YPs (student design competitions, YP on board will be on track to become president in a few years). Missouri: YP committee established, has student chapters throughout Missouri. Many officers come through YPs. YP nights out pre-COVID, with mentorship.
- Chris Schmit (South Dakota): Global water stewardship (CSWEA) is a non-profit that uses a student design project to engage students in design competitions coordinated with Costa Rica. The program has created many active members that have filled leadership roles throughout the association territory. NYWEA – Work in Water Program; Student YPs will get together for cleanups and social events. Mentorship programs tend to work well. Western Canada – YPs tend to be tied to the cause as opposed to the organization. This must be recognized in any initiatives. CSWEA have had success with social events (baseball game) that include both young and seasoned professionals.
- James Wancho (New Jersey WEA): We discussed the following: scholarships.
- James Barsanti (New England WEA): Good with YP engineer's engagement, struggling with young operator engagement, YP events at annual conference, SJWP, design contests, YP board position.
- Jennie Rand (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): Texas – YP is a strong group with a lot of activities, and they get involved with student outreach; senior members act as mentors for YPs; sessions for YPs at conferences; Community environmental improvement / team building events for YPs; Some uneven success in establishing student chapters but have a university forum for paper presentations and design competition with awards that is well-attended. Michigan – a grant has been established and given to a grade schoolteacher that gets involved in teaching about water and wastewater – the teacher presents on the last day of the conference. Engagement of YPs for committee work. ACWWA – good partnerships with regional universities (across 4 provinces) – large utility has a formal Chair relationship with a university research group; great points of contact with students, technical sessions, grad students fill roles; involvement of YP mixer acts as a mentorship opportunity. Less successful at junior/high school level with some successes (art projects)

- James Wancho (New Jersey WEA): Let me try this again: scholarship programs; YP engagement; presentations at High schools and involvement in science fairs; exhibit at county and related events; intern programs & partnering w/colleges & universities.
- Jennie Rand (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): WEF – active in engaging YPS – started student design competition; YP events leading up to the conference – help with resumes. YP engagement with the community to mentor and give feedback on designs - YPS that have been hired have been involved in these events. Engaged YPs in creating water fact sheets and paired them with senior mentors to help with technical aspects.
- James Wancho (New Jersey WEA): We also discussed that having a "recruiting" video from WEF to support this would be great.
- Dallys Serracin (Atlantic Canada Water & Wastewater Association): Not too many initiatives underway for our MAs but it was discussed that funding was a factor and having that person/champion to get YPs engaged is very important.

Adjourn WEFMAX.

Host Social Event Follows