

2012 NSAWWA Retreat Notes:

The retreat started at 0935 on August 17, 2012. It was held at the offices of the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District in Lincoln, Nebraska, 3125 Portia Street.

In attendance for the retreat were Rob Pierce (NSAWWA Board Chairman), Teresa Konda (NSAWWA Past Chair), Rick Melcher (NSAWWA Trustee), Doug Woodbeck (NSAWWA Secretary), Marc Rosso, Eric Lee (NSAWWA Chair-Elect), David Lathrop (NSAWWA Vice Chair), John Keith (NSAWWA Education Committee Chair), Mary Poe (NSAWWA Trustee), Ben Day (NSAWWA Treasurer), Nick Lammers (Fonatnelle Hybrid), Glen Johnson (LPSNRD), Paul Zillie (LPSNRD), and Jane Griffin (Groundwater Foundation).

Rob Pierce provided a short opening address, following which the group immediately started in with discussion of the Strategic Plan and SOP's that need to be reviewed and, if necessary, modified.

In the Strategic Plan under Goals 1 second bullet, we need to determine how to quantify our assistance to PWS for improvement of their Technical, Financial and Managerial capacities (Capacity Development). In Goals 4 first bullet, we have the same quantification need. Goal 4 second bullet, we need to develop a method of keeping track of and building the list of licensed water operator retirees who maintain their licenses and would be willing to assist PWS's in need of an operator. The assistance agreements would be between the PWS and the licensed retiree. Goals 4 sixth bullet will be stricken. Goals 4 seventh (will be sixth) bullet, we need to quantify this activity also. No other changes or recommendations were made for the Strategic Plan.

For the Audit SOP, we will add language to clarify that an audit, when done, is for the calendar year previous to the year in which the audit is being conducted. The next audit will need to be done for one of the years in the 2013 to 2015 timeframe. There was a typo in the Standard Procedures part of the Audit SOP regarding the three year audit periods. That will be corrected (2012-2014 will be changed to 2013-2015). The revision year for the SOP will be updated to 2012. The next audit for the section is due in 2013 for calendar year 2012. The Audit Committee is usually made up of the current Chair, the Director and any other interested members.

The Awards SOP will be changed to reflect that in May of every year all award nominations from all committees will be forwarded to the Awards Committee Chair, except for the Fuller Award. In June of every year, the Awards Committee Chair will be required to contact all other committee chairs who will be presenting awards at the fall conference to coordinate these activities at the banquet. In September of every year, the Awards Committee Chair will contact the families of those award recipients who normally are invited to attend the banquet to arrange for meal tickets and any other arrangements that may need to be made. In November, the committee chairs who provided nominations will present their specific awards at the fall conference banquet. In the

Deliverables/Activities area of the SOPO it will be pointed out that budgeting for awards is the responsibility of the award committee in coordination with the various other committees who submit award nominations. We should provide a link on our webpage to the AWWA National webpage for awards.

The Budget SOP will include clarification that the Treasurer (Budget Committee Chair) shall secure planned budgets from the year end committee reports for the previous year.

Some wording in the Deliverables/Activities portion of the Education SOP will be changed: “Coordinate with LWS and MUD for the biannual implementation of the pipe-line specialty workshop ~~scheduled during alternate years.~~” A note was made to work with Mike Wentink to fully utilize the annual bookstore allotment.

The Fuller Award SOP will be updated to reflect the current committee members (add Dennis Watts, City of Norfolk and remove Glenn Dostal, HDR inc.). This needs to be updated every year that a Fuller Award is presented. As time was short, we did not make it through all of the SOP’s. All of the above are the only changes that were decided on during the retreat. The remaining SOP’s will be taken up at the next board meeting on September 14, 2012 at the League of Nebraska Municipalities Office at 1335 L St. #A in Lincoln, Nebraska at 0900 hours.

Nick Lammers with Fonatnelle hybrid gave a very good presentation on the Aqua View soil monitoring and control system. This is a system that uses a ground probe which senses soil moisture and using that information can tell how much an irrigation system needs to run and can control how much water is put on any portion of a crop. One sensor can control up to 130 acres. In demonstration fields, they have been able to demonstrate that farmers can get better yields using less water while lowering their operational costs (fewer pivot cycles) by using this system. The system runs about \$1,300.00 per field and is well worth the investment. This could be a great tool to promote water conservation in the agricultural community and potentially in city parks and cemeteries, or any other landscape that normally uses a lot of water to keep the grass green. The Section should be promoting this technology.

Jane Griffin talked about the Groundwater Foundation and their role in educating about water conservation and protection. One of their main focus points is to promote a “consequences” mindset with regard to water conservation and protection. They are getting the word out through youth education and community based action such as the Children’s Groundwater Festival, Groundwater Guardians and other similar activities. Their emphasis is quality over quantity. They have started the “Groundwater Green Site” designation program for activities undertaken by others to promote groundwater conservation and quality protection by reducing contamination (i.e., application of chemicals, etc.). Jane’s statement “Education is the mission” pretty well sums up their overall focus. Jane can be reached at jgriffin@groundwater.org. We should place a link to the Groundwater Foundation on our webpage and see if they would link to ours on theirs.

Paul Zillie with the Lower Platte South NRD gave a presentation about what the NRD is doing to protect water quality. One of their main focuses is to work with the agricultural community to promote the scientific use of farming chemicals to prevent over-application and timely application so as to reduce the potential for introducing contaminants to the aquifer. They also are doing work to control and protect watershed areas. Paul was asked what the NRD was doing or planned to do to help public water systems that have wells which are being impacted by crop irrigation. It was pointed out that State Statute places the responsibility of ensuring both quality and quantity to groundwater users on the shoulders of the NRD's, and that the order of importance places human/domestic first, agricultural second and industrial third. Paraphrasing, Paul said that the NRD's didn't have any authority that could be used to help PWS maintain their ability to deliver water to their citizens from their wells, even though their well production and/or water levels is being depleted by agricultural irrigation.

A few closing comments were made at the end of the retreat. One is that we need to keep the SOP's up-to-date with a routine review, and modification if necessary, at least on an annual basis. We should put more emphasis on increasing membership. Some good ideas are needed as to how to approach this issue. A review of the Section's "Strategic Plan" should be taken up at each yearly retreat. We need to bear in mind the printing costs for Wise Water Words and the Section Directory, as National will not be doing these after this year.

The retreat was adjourned at 1600 hours.