

Western Regional Panel Executive Committee

December Conference Call

December 15, 2025, at 1:00 pm mountain time

Attended by: Robert Walters, Josh Leonard, Heidi McMaster, Vanessa Salazar, Barak Shemai, Stephen Philips, John Wullschleger, Dennis Zabaglo, Martha Volkoff and Leah Elwell.

Minutes

- A) Approval of November minutes - Robert moves to approve, and Heidi seconds. All in favor.
Minutes approved
- B) Panel Business
 - Martha Volkoff – Sacramento facility overview - see below.
 - Initiating SOP Revision – With the recent revision to the bylaws, the standard operating procedures document needs to be reconciled. On the January call, a discussion will address any suggested edits. Leah will share the Word document including her initial track changes.
 - Recognition – In looking at the SOP, the recognition section flag potential folks that may not have been acknowledged in the most recent past few years. For example, Joanne Grady retired, and others. Several folks that retired were acknowledged at the annual meeting. What does it need to look like – slide show or certificate? Leah will share certificates that were done for previous folks. Revisit in January to determine if any acknowledgements should be made.
 - Tracking golden mussel research needs – Dennis – no new information.
 - Rapid Response Funds Discussion - Stephen and Leah have been staying in communication with Hawaii Division of Aquatic Resources and will talk with them on Tuesday. If we can get it under contract within the next 30-60 days, this would be ideal. With the recent government shut down, the review of environmental analysis documents for compliance has been slowed. PSMFC can get an extension on the grant if need be. Also, the other rapid response funding from this pool that was intended to go to GSARP is still frozen.
 - Updates on EDRR Framework –Molecular Lab Network are still dealing with frozen BIL funds. They are seeking funds elsewhere to move forward.
 - Query on e-commerce across the west – the Great Lakes Commission is gathering information on who is working on e-commerce. Leah will send an email to members to see if anyone in West is tackling it.
- C) Legislative update – Stephen Phillips
 - The House scheduled a committee level water resources and environment meeting – stakeholder priority day soon. Appropriations process has not seen much activity in the past few weeks. However, a process for the Dept of Interior has been identified. Both Senate and House have their APC WID amounts out into committee. PSMFC have asked Senator Merkel’s office for an amendment request to 65/35 cost share for monitoring amount in APC WID. Senate is at \$12 million and House is at \$19 million for the program. The Russian River area is coming on board soon. The hope is that Congress will pass an FY26 bill, not a Continuing Resolution.
- D) WRP Standing Committee – Roundtable for Chairs/Liaisons

- Annual Meeting Committee - Leah Elwell –2026 - The planning team is scheduled to meet in January. Martha visited the two locations that will offer federal per diem which are the Holiday Inn Downtown and Double Tree by Hilton at CalExpo. She also shared info on Lake Natoma Inn in Folsom. All locations have their strengths and weaknesses. It may not be possible to be at the CA Natural Resource HQ building downtown due to scheduling, but at this location there would be no meeting rental cost and AV would be additional. Several on the call favored a downtown location. The Folsom location would be more of a small-town feel, but the airport distance is a factor. UC Davis has provided an estimate for a meeting room, which seemed high. If the group went to Davis the attendees would have to be split across several hotels. Heidi mentioned federal employees are being advised not to use rental cars and instead use shuttle/taxi. Leah will assemble a pros and cons document on the locations and share with Ex Comm for decision making.
- Awards Committee – Chair Tom Woolf - recognition discussion.
- Coastal Committee – Chair Amanda Newsom, WDFW; Stephen Phillips/Leah liaisons. No activity.
- Decontamination Think Tank Committee – Co-Chair Chris Killian and Josh Wright; Robert Walters liaison. The committee is working on standardized specifications and protocols for the dip tank, and some updated specs for the on-demand systems. Next meeting is in January.
- Field Sampling and Monitoring Committee – Chair Kate Dukette; Tom Woolf liaison. Review of draft document for full membership review/finalization. Leah shared her suggested edits with Tom who will add additions and then provide to Kate. Robert emphasized adding details for river protocol for plankton sampling which Leah did make note of in the version to Tom.
- Membership and Communication Committee – Chair John Wullschleger. The committee will not meet until the new year.
- Outreach Committee – Chair Sara Ricklefs; Barak Shemai Liaison. The committee met last week. Regan Hill from the Ad Council presented on effectiveness of different messaging. They are at a bit of standstill for what objectives will be addressed over next year.
- Leah will distribute the committee profile document to all of the committee chairs to help guide and document 2026 objectives.

E) ANSTF

- ANSTF Activities
 - December fall meeting in WV – postponed.
 - Status/quick check in of previously submitted recommendations. Susan Pakso confirmed that a ANSTF Golden Mussel task team is exploring what the activities could be to address at a national scale. More information on that in the new year.
 - All Panels Discussions
- Standing and Ad-Hoc Committee Participation Discussion
 - Prevention - Chair Joseph Kreiger, NOAA; Barak Shemai Liaison. No new activity.
 - Early Detection and Rapid Response - Chair Wes Daniels, USGS; John Wullschleger Liaison. We met last week and discussed the next iteration of a workplan. Communication and eDNA detection were a topic that surfaced but it is not clear how the committee would assist.

- Control and Restoration - Chair Kim Bogenschutz, Iowa; Dennis Zabaglo Liaison. No activity. Kim Bogenschutz will be retiring February 26, 2026.
- Research - Chair Susan Pasko, USFWS; John Wullschleger Liaison.
- Education and Outreach – Chair Tim Campbell, Wisconsin Sea Grant; Monica McGarrity Liaison. No new information.

F) Coordinating the Coordination Update (including tribal activities)

G) Announcements – ALL

- Barak shared that the current QZAP projects have been selected and six were approved. The 6 projects are: Utah DNR \$600K, Wildlife Forever \$88K, NDOW \$297K, ISAN \$129K outreach, CAFEW prevention inspection \$267, and SD WID \$267. Now moving on for the full merit Golden Mussel funding review 6 million in requests for 500K. Next year the GM funding will not be available and will need full congressional approval moving forward.
- Reclamation has selected 12 projects for funding. Awaiting approval and announcements will be going out soon. Hoping to showcase the need for the funding to Congress. There was \$16 million in requests for 54 projects. Barak and Heidi have been collaborating back and forth on those projects.