

# Western Regional Panel Executive Committee January Conference Call

January 20, 2026, at 1:00 pm mountain time

Attended by: Stephen Phillips, Barak Shemai, Tom Woolf, Robert Walters, Vanessa Salazar, Heidi McMaster, John Wullschleger, Dennis Zablag, Josh Leonard, and Leah Elwell

## Minutes

- A) Approval of December minutes. Stephen motioned to approve, and Dennis seconded. All in favor. Minutes approved.
- B) Panel Business
  - SOP Revision Discussion – Some comments have been provided. Leah will create a clean copy for final review and distribute.
  - Tracking research needs (Golden mussel) – Dennis is talking with Martha next week.
  - Rapid Response Funds Discussion - Two of the contracts for the projects are in place. The project with Hawaii still has some federal compliance requirements but is successfully working through those. It is anticipated that PSMFC will be able to get them under contract in the next month or two.
  - Updates on EDRR Framework - no new news
- C) Wrap up recognition – Going forward we shall do comprehensive job. Any recent past recognition will not be revisited as not to overlook anyone.
- D) Legislative update – Stephen Phillips.
  - National Defense Authorization Act passed in December which included the Coast Guard Authorization Act. Of note is that the CGAA included language that the agency must respond to requests and share data on ballast water.
  - The president needs to sign the appropriations bills. Interior and EPA are on the president’s desk. USFWS is flat funded in their AIS program. Additional areas on AIS that have funding are Tahoe and Alpine Lakes. AIS State Plans are flat funded. BIA and USGS have funding related to EGC funding.
  - PSMFC is putting together a NISAW trip at the end of February to meet with federal agencies and do some hill visits.
- E) WRP Standing Committee – Roundtable for Chairs/Liaisons
  - Committee template completion. Leah will send templates to John and Tom for completion. The Decon Think Tank and Outreach and Education Committee have provided completed ones which Leah shared just prior to the call. When all of them are complete Leah will collate for the record.
  - Annual Meeting Committee - Leah Elwell –2026 Planning team has met and is developing a theme to guide the meeting. The goal is to launch abstract announcement in February. Leah requested a contract with the Holiday Inn Sacramento Downtown. There are few language changes that need to be added including an “impossibilities” section and a promised discount on AV services. Leah shared with Sara Ricklefs at ISAN for her awareness and signature when ready. Sara will provide the downpayment.
  - Awards Committee – Chair Tom Woolf plans to take some of the materials on awards description and make written evaluation on criteria and share with Ex Comm. Hauler of the Year came up at CRB meeting. Are there other entities that should be recognized?

- Coastal Committee – Chair Amanda Newsom, WDFW; Stephen Phillips/Leah liaisons. Committee meets this week.
  - Decontamination Think Tank Committee – Co-Chair Chris Killian and Josh Wright; Robert Walters liaison. There is a meeting on Thursday.
  - Field Sampling and Monitoring Committee – Chair Kate Dukette; Tom Woolf liaison.. The draft document has some major revisions and will go back to Kate. Tom will suggest that it should go back to the committee for another look and then back to Ex Comm. The goal is to have a solid document not just an update, so it makes sense to take the time to accomplish that. Tom will bounce back to Kate.
  - Membership and Communication Committee – Chair John Wullschleger – plan to assemble in next month.
  - Outreach Committee – Chair Sara Ricklefs; Barak Shemai Liaison. No new information.
- F) ANSTF
- ANSTF Activities
    - As an alternative to rescheduling the December 2025 ANSTF meeting, the Task Force Subcommittees will be holding a series of virtual strategic planning sessions to maintain momentum and support development of the next ANSTF Strategic Plan. These sessions will provide input that will shape the draft plan for discussion at the next full ANSTF meeting (targeting May/June 2026).
    - Status/quick check in of previously submitted recommendations – golden mussel working group is meeting this Friday.
    - All Panels Discussions – no new info
  - Standing and Ad-Hoc Committee Participation Discussion
    - Prevention - Chair Joseph Kreiger, NOAA; Barak Shemai Liaison. No activity.
    - Early Detection and Rapid Response - Chair Wes Daniels, USGS; John Wullschleger Liaison. No new info.
    - Control and Restoration - Chair Kim Bogenschutz, Iowa; Dennis Zabaglo Liaison. A meeting is in the works as it relates to the strategic plan. Kim is retiring so a new chair will be needed.
    - Research - Chair Susan Pasko, USFWS; John Wullschleger Liaison.
    - Education and Outreach – Chair Tim Campbell, Wisconsin Sea Grant; Monica McGarrity Liaison. No new news.
- G) Coordinating the Coordination Update (including tribal activities)
- WISCE meeting in Phoenix in early February. It will include hatchery inspection training.
  - Reclamation has received final approval of the Sec. Water and Science spend plan. Announcement for the project funding selected is forthcoming. Hope to have 2026 budget soon. Unrelated to the spend plan, various regions received cuts on a broad stroke to the monitoring. This will mean cutting back on PNW monitoring.
  - Barak shared that the USFWS golden mussel project review is happening this week to select for funding.
- H) Announcements – ALL
- I) Leah will poll the Ex Comm for the WRP Mid Year Webinar – March, April and May at 1 pm mountain.