

Western Regional Panel Executive Committee

May Conference Call

May 18, 2026, at 1:00 pm mountain time

Minutes

Josh Leonard, Tom Woolf, Robert Walters, Barak Shemai, Heidi McMaster, Stephen Phillips John Wullschleger, and Leah Elwell.

- A) Approval of April minutes. Stephen motioned to approve and Heidi seconded. All in favor. Minutes approved.
- B) Panel Business
 - Mid-Year Webinar agenda check in – reschedule plan. The ANSTF charter is still unsigned. No midyear reschedule but instead will just have a virtual business meeting prior to the annual meeting. Leah will contact committee chairs and other presenters.
 - Rapid Response Funds Discussion - All 3 projects are under contract and moving forward. It is anticipated that the Hawaii team will present their preliminary work as part of the annual meeting.
 - Updates on EDRR Framework - DOI testing InSERT during a tabletop exercise to inform a decision-making process. The Molecular Lab Network is in holding pattern due to funding, but some elements are in process where the multiple labs are going through proficiency testing, protocols, and markers are being validated.
 - BLM access point risk assessment with CDD stations Sharmila Jepsen, BLM has requested WRP input into locations for prioritization. This is in conjunction with access location assessment project done by Wildlife Forever in 2023 where waterbody access points were identified for signage and CD3 stations. At this point that assessment is not current. The Ex Comm suggests that BLM coordinate directly with state coordinator for specific location, preferably working with local BLM contact – consider working with the Regional BLM office. Signage should comply with most current state materials. Funding for maintenance and recurring technology costs should be considered to make sure they are supported. Leah will contact her ASAP.
 - Newest USFWS Mountain-Prairie region contact – Lacey Hopper; Lacey_Hopper@fws.gov
- C) Legislative Update – Stephen Phillips
 - This week House Appropriations Committee is actively working on FY2027. The Energy and Water Bill have been released, but there is no detail. Department of the Interior budget will be released this week and report will follow.
 - State Boating Act similarly introduced to the House which will allow the states to charge sticker fee and not conflict with Coast Guard interpretation of fee use.
 - Rep Fong's (CA) community funding project of \$5M was secured this week for WID in San Joaquin area. This was generated from FY207 Energy and Water Development funds.
 - There is no new information on when the Dept. of Interior will be releasing FY26 funds, such as state AIS plan funding or QZAP funding.
- D) WRP Standing Committee – Roundtable for Chairs/Liaisons

- Annual Meeting Committee - Leah Elwell – All agreed that Leah can put downpayment on the charter bus now to lock in the rate. Josh suggested that the award ceremony could be built into the agenda during the lunch. Update on current sponsorship next call. If need be, if ANSTF charter is not resolved by September then the WRP may be able to shift meeting to “Friends of”.
- Best in the West Committee – Chair Tom Woolf; updating documents/website. Leah will announce this week. Double check with Susan of okay to share.
- Coastal Committee – Chair Amanda Newsom, WDFW; Stephen Phillips/Leah liaisons. Bug Amanda on when she plans to meet following charter completion.
- Decontamination Think Tank Committee – Co-Chair Chris Killian and Josh Wright; Robert Walters liaison; on hiatus
- Education and Outreach Committee – Chair Sara Ricklefs; Barak Shemai liaison – no meeting.
- Field Sampling and Monitoring Committee – Chair Kate Dukette; Tom Woolf liaison – no meeting.
- Membership and Communication Committee – Chair John Wullschleger. Met last month and there are items for follow up in June.

E) ANSTF

- ANSTF Activities
 - Charter approval
 - Status/quick check in of previously submitted recommendations
 - Golden Mussel Task Team
 - All Panels Discussions
- Standing and Ad-Hoc Committee Participation Discussion
 - Prevention - Chair Joseph Kreiger, NOAA; Barak Shemai Liaison.
 - Early Detection and Rapid Response - Chair Wes Daniels, USGS; John Wullschleger Liaison.
 - Control and Restoration - Chair Ceci Wiebert, Michigan DWR; Dennis Zabaglo Liaison.
 - Research - Chair Susan Pasko, USFWS; John Wullschleger Liaison.
 - Education and Outreach – Chair Tim Campbell, Wisconsin Sea Grant; Monica McGarrity Liaison.

F) Coordinating the Coordination Update (including tribal activities)

- WISCE – Lake Oroville, CA is backing out of WID, references used in the decision making were discussed. Claudi worked on a report which characterizes the threat to the infrastructure which is highly influenced by the reservoir water temperature. The infrastructure is so deep in the water that will not be affected potentially by golden mussels. They also put together survey regarding indirect costs on APC WID.

G) Announcements – ALL

- Colorado rapid response exercise – good as a reminder how complicated the system difficult to keep the conversation isolated to no talk about downstream.