

**FY2013 Water Data Exchange (WaDE)
Project/EN Grant Recipients Conference Call**

Minutes – September 6, 2013, 11am MDT (10am PDT, 12pm CDT)

Attendees:

WSWC - Sara Larsen

Texas CEQ - Jurgen Koch (Grant Manager / Project Manager), Beth West (Legal); Wendy Cox, Madison Finley, Jeanette Vrabel (Purchasing & Contracts); Gloria Castillo (IRD Contract Specialist); Trela Cook (OAS Budget Liaison); Suzy Valentine and Becky Kurka (Office of Water)

Idaho DWR – Bruce Tuttle, Mathew Weaver, Helen Harrington, Glen Gardiner, Mike Ciscell

Washington ECY - Miles Davis, Ann-Marie Sweeten

Oklahoma WRB - Kent Wilkins, David Hamilton

Oregon WRD - Ken Stahr, Ken Smith

Introductions and Background/Refresher: Sara welcomed everyone to the webinar and listed the attendees and their respective water agencies. Using a Powerpoint presentation, Sara provided the group with a timeline of what led to this data sharing initiative over the past five years (Dept. of Energy grant, etc.) and also what types of data that the states may be generating that is within the scope for the WaDE project. She presented the “big picture” goals and also the project’s more immediate milestones. A conceptual diagram of how the WaDE framework is intended to function was shown, as well as some of the desired data outputs. Some of the reasons why the Western Governors’ Association (WGA) and the Western States Water Council (WSWC) believe this to be an important project were presented – to answer regional questions, to maintain state control of information while also getting it published, to be proactive about answering customer concerns about water availability and uses given greater competition, drought, etc.

During outreach visits in 2012, a great deal of support was generated for the project, but some states lacked funding for any activities that were not described as “mission critical.” This is why the Exchange Network partnership grant was submitted to the EPA. Four other states have volunteered to pilot the WaDE project without any additional funding (UT, NM, WY, NE), and much of the deployment work has already been initiated by these volunteer states. This is favorable to the partners on the grant, as many obstacles will hopefully be addressed and resolved through their deployments. Lessons learned should help the grant partner agencies in their deployment efforts.

Current Status: Since the EPA approved the full \$500,000 requested in the grant application, Sara asked that the states review their initial cost estimates and timelines. Jurgen discussed engagement with the legal departments and accounts payable/accounts receivable staff members within the states. Jurgen needs to ensure that the terms and conditions of the contracts adhere to EN legal requirements, as well as those at TCEQ, and the individual state agencies. They anticipate using a reimbursement model, so the costs need to be evaluated and, as work proceeds the state agencies would likely invoice TCEQ on a mutually agreed upon schedule (e.g. monthly). Draft contracts will be distributed, and TCEQ will

coordinate with partners to make sure that they are acceptable before tackling any of the technical tasks or requesting funds/reimbursement.

Jurgen reminded the group that they have three years to complete the tasks identified in the grant workplan, which provides a lot of flexibility. For example, TCEQ will be upgrading one of the databases that WaDE will rely upon for data, so they will likely not begin some implementation tasks until Fall 2014 or later.

A steering committee is one of the tasks listed in the grant workplan, and will be comprised of state partner staff members; therefore, a charter needs to be developed to define the governance for that committee. Sara and Jurgen will solicit the various roles to be named within the state agencies, including a steering committee member, legal representation, contract individual(s), billing individual(s), etc.

Jurgen presented the “Visual Communication Diagram” .pdf to the group, which has a diagram of the potential roles and also has a diagram of how the funding will be distributed to the different partners. Members of the steering committee will oversee how funds are allocated through the states to their respective contractors to avoid duplication of effort.

Questions: Bruce Tuttle asked Jurgen if Windsor Solutions would be used to create and/or administer any of the nodes. Jurgen said that if a state wanted to evaluate a virtual node approach and/or use Windsor Solutions, they are welcome to do that, but it is not prescribed. Each state should evaluate what is the best technical approach for their organization.

David Hamilton asked whether the WaDE Document Type Definition (DTD) for the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) schema had been built and released. Sara answered that these were available on the WaDE website and the XML and schema for version 0.2 could be reviewed using XMLPad, a free viewer. The current WaDE workgroups had already worked through one iteration of the schema. David asked if a process would be developed for versioning. Sara answered yes. Jurgen said that the WaDE has been under development for a couple of years. One governance task will be to determine how the existing WaDE workgroups that have brought the product to its current level of maturity will interact with this EN grant steering committee, and make sure that versions aren’t implemented too quickly or in a haphazard way.

Ken Smith asked whether the SQL database that they’d received last year needed an update. Sara said yes, that the newer database would reflect version 0.2 and its accompanying functions and web services.

Bruce asked if WaDE would be documented and maintained by the Exchange Network site/framework, etc. Jurgen said that it was possible that they might create a WaDE Integrated Project Team (IPT) group within the EN governance structure to increase visibility and integration with the EN framework. Bruce said that this would benefit the project if WaDE had that well-established approach.

Next Steps / Action Items: Jurgen said the next steps were for TCEQ to complete the internal review of the draft contracts and to distribute them through the Steering Committee to the appropriate members of each partner agency. He will also draft a project plan and distribute for the partner agencies to update and provide their cost estimates and timelines (when that information is available). He also proposed that the Steering Committee initially meet on a monthly basis.

Helen asked about federal agency participation. Jurgen said that at this point their involvement is very minimal. Sara mentioned that part of the earlier outreach effort involved visiting several of the federal agencies and while they were open to incorporating more data sharing, it would take several years to incorporate those tasks into their respective federal workplans. Sara also mentioned that Dwane Young was back at the EPA and is continuously working on federal data sharing and publication. Ken Stahr mentioned that they share a lot of other agency data web services and have those websites handy. Sara said they would likely make use of those and pull the relevant URLs into the WaDE portal.

Sara went over the Action Items from the meeting and agreed to send out links to the WaDE website draft files, the Powerpoint presentation and other materials to the group.

Action Items:

	Description	Assignee
1	Finalize internal review of draft contracts and distribute to grant partner agencies	TCEQ
2	Identify/confirm staff for participation on Steering Committee	All partner agencies
3	Identify/confirm legal, contracting, and accounts receivable staff for administrative tasks identified in grant workplan	All partner agencies
4	Identify/confirm technical staff (tech lead) and programmatic staff (water SMEs) that will perform more technical tasks identified in grant workplan	All partner agencies
5	Draft project plan (.mpp) and distribute to partner agencies	TCEQ – Jurgen Koch
6	Draft Steering Committee Charter and distribute to partner agencies	TCEQ and WSWC
7	Identify location (website) for project collaboration and documentation – e.g. meeting minutes, links to project documentation, Powerpoint presentations, Action Items, etc.	WSWC