



Executive Committee Year End 2019 Update

Environment and Sustainability Committee

Date: December 5, 2019 EC Meeting

By: Matt Huggins (Vice Chair)

Committee Personnel Changes

Michael Thompson has been the Chair of the committee for several years, where he has served as an advocate and conduit between our chapter's environmental issues and sustainable practices. He has provided great leadership for the committee and its members but will be looking to transition his role onto Matt Huggins in the ensuing year. Matt has served as the Vice Chair of the committee for the past year under the mentorship and exemplary leadership provided by Michael.

Reid Wronski stepped down from the committee this year following his retirement. Reid was not only an active member within the committee, but also within the chapter serving as the out-of-state liaison. Commuting all the way from the River Falls, Wisconsin for committee meetings, Reid provided a unique perspective on storm water and sustainable water quality practices in Minnesota by drawing from his experience in Wisconsin. Our committee and the rest of the chapter wish Reid the best of luck in retirement and hope to see him soon at future events.

Tim Olson volunteered to serve as the APWA representative on the 2019 Operation and Maintenance Conference Committee (www.omswconference.org).

Eric Nelson volunteered to serve on the behalf of the committee's interests on the Conference Planning Committee.

Tyler McLeete volunteered to serve as the Chapter's Sustainability Liaison with other chapters around the country.

Eric Nelson volunteered to serve on the selection panel to review applications for the Metropolitan Council Stormwater Grant Process.

Roles and Responsibilities Summary

Michael Thompson – Chair

Matt Huggins – Vice Chair

Tyler McLeete - Chapter Sustainability Liaison

Eric Nelson - Conference Planning Committee (Representing interests of E&S Committee)

Tim Olson – APWA Representative on the Operation and Maintenance Conference Committee

Committee Work in 2019

The Committee met five times this year (February 19, June 12, August 14, October 29, and December 3), and the following is a brief overview of activities and discussions:

1. Environmental Service Event

- Committee members Michael Ryan and Ben Scharenbroich continue to coordinate our successful Adopt-A-Highway events. The first event was held on May 2nd, where our chapter had the unique opportunity of being cast in the new MnDOT Adopt-a-Highway Training video. MnDOT camera crews were on-hand filming volunteers who demonstrated Oscar-worthy performances while keeping TH 100 pristine as usual. The second event was held on October 10th. The committee anticipates renewing the chapter's 2-year commitment to MnDOT in fall 2020. Below are photos from the fall event.



October 2019 Adopt a Highway Service Event

2. Conference Planning Committee Environmental Topics

- Eric Nelson has been the point person for the committee ensuring timely environmental topics are represented.

3. General Information from 2019

- The committee discussed several projects and initiatives within the chapter that had a focus on conservation and sustainable practices. These ranged from the City of Brooklyn Park's solar power facility to recent improvements at French Regional Park.
- The committee invited representatives from MCES to discuss chloride impairments within surface water and wastewater facilities. The discussion shed light on the unique relationship between permit regulations for wastewater facilities, water softening requirements implemented by cities, and the economical challenges communities have trying to maintain storm water BMPs and TDMLs with chloride impairments. The committee and MCES had an insightful discussion that will lay the groundwork for future discussions on how to start addressing chloride issues.
- The committee continued to follow the progress of the MPCA's MS4 General Permit. The committee was in contact with the Minnesota Cities Stormwater Coalition who was a conduit for initial comments from communities during an internal comment review period. The MPCA has recently opened a comment review period to the public at which time the

committee intends to issue a formal response that represents the Chapter's position on proposed changes to the permit. The comment period closes on January 11, 2020.

- The committee continues to develop relationships with other chapters around the country as part of the Center for Sustainability (C4S) quarterly discussions. The quarterly call provides insight into sustainable practices and programs around the country.

4. Advocacy

- The committee was involved in reviewing applications for the Metropolitan Council Stormwater Grant Application process, promoting sustainable stormwater management and water quality practices. 15 project applications were submitted, and 7 seven projects received funding as part of the process.
- The committee has been active in providing comments on the MS4 General Permit and advocating for the best interests of the chapter and its members as the permit is being revised by the MPCA.
- APWA was identified as a key stakeholder in providing feedback for the 2020 EQB Water Plan. The Committee had four representatives (Dan Ruiz, Michael Thompson, Ron Leaf, and Pete Willenbring) attend a meeting with Met Council staff leading the effort with various stakeholder groups in gathering feedback. The 1.5-hour discussion was held on October 30th at the Met Council's Metro 94 offices in St. Paul. The Met Council has begun the process in developing "the next generation of the State Water Plan." According to the Met Council, "The purpose of the 2020 EQB Water Plan is to present a clear vision for water action in response to climate change in the coming decade. The report will address a 'gap' of comprehensive statewide planning on climate change and actions to achieve sustainable water management. As a part of this effort, EQB staff are gathering input from stakeholders and water implementers about how we can best prepare our state's water management systems to effectively address climate change."

5. Past Successes

- The committee successfully advocated chapter members to submit applications for the Environmental Stewardship Award. There haven't been any submissions in recent years.
- The committee was a key player in moving towards the establishment of the MAWSAC technical committee which began with the water supply discussions in partnership with local public works officials and the Met Council.
- Successful continuation of the APWA Adopt-a-Highway Program which provides the MN Chapter with visibility along the Highway 100 corridor north of Interstate 394.

6. 2020 Initiatives Summarized

- Invite members from agencies outside of public works to share a different perspective on environmental and sustainability issues that impact the chapter as a whole.
- Continuing to be the voice of public works through advocating for our members on topics such as environmental regulations (MS4 Permit).
- Partner with the MCES and other agencies to lay the groundwork for identifying sustainable strategies to manage chloride impairments in surface waters.

- Involvement in education through supporting the planning committee and promoting environmental and sustainable topics at community service events.
- Continue to advocate strong support to the Awards Committee in recruiting applicants for the Environmental Award Category to ensure local awards can translate into applications for APWA National.

Committee Membership

Chair: Michael Thompson

Vice Chair: Matt Huggins

Members: Ron Leaf, Pete Willenbring, Dan Ruiz, Eric Nelson, Michael Ryan, Tyler McLeete, Eric Nelson, Tim Olson, Ben Scharenbroich

EC Liaison: Michael Thompson or Matt Huggins

Mission

The Environment and Sustainability Committee keeps the Chapter membership informed and advocates for the membership on current environmental resource issues and approaches to sustainability in public works.