

WAAESD Summer Meeting

June 22, 2023

Courtyard, Richland Washington

Attendance: Gene Kelly, Chris Pritsos, Shawn Donkin, Steve Young-Uhk, Doug Steel (guest), Eric Webster, Walter Bowen, Scot Hulbert, Chris Davies, Aufai Areta, Bret Hess, Jennifer Tippetts (recording secretary).

WAAESD Minutes

- I. **Introduction of members**
- II. **Approval of Business Meeting Agenda-** Motion to approve the agenda. Unanimously approved.
- III. **Approval of the 2023 Spring Meeting Minutes-** Motion to approve the minutes. Unanimously approved.
- IV. **Chair's Interim Actions & Executive Committee Report-** The list of interim actions and executive committee report reflects a significant amount of progress that has been made over the past two months. The executive committee only had one sign-on opportunity that was taken advantage of and one that was not signed on to. The executive committee agreed to support the America Grows Act in which Senators Durbin and Moran propose to increase funding for agricultural research by 5% annually over a 10-year period. The sign-on opportunity that was declined was to direct USDA's ERS to analyze financing gaps to support manufacturing and processing capacity for new or improved food and agricultural technologies, which would have involved establishing a loan program for small businesses working on development of new technologies. Discussions from the spring meeting led to: inviting John Phillips to join WAAESD at our fall business meeting; applying to be listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as an independent third party reviewer of grazing plans for producers operating where the lesser prairie chicken is listed as an endangered species; designing a survey to collect information on possible reasons being successful (or not) with Western SARE grant applications; refinement of WAAESD's Farm Bill priorities; submission of WAAESD Farm Bill priorities to regional partners, agriculture committees on both sides of congress, as well as several congressional offices and; requests for messages to develop a regional voice; co-signing a letter to the Western Region Development Center (WRDC) Board Chair indicating the association's desire to open a competition for hosting the WRDC; and opening bank accounts for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists and the Western Region Administrative Officers. The Executive Committee also agreed to serve as the fiscal sponsor for agInnovation to roll out a marketing plan—expenses incurred will be reimbursed. The final item on the list that the Executive Committee has agreed to is having WAAESD serve as the event planner and contractor for the 2025 National Extension & Research Administrative Officers Conference. The seconded motion to approve the chair's interim actions and executive committee report was approved unanimously.
- V. **Treasurer's Report-** Gene reviewed the profit & loss and the balance statement from January through the end of May. The WAAESD bank account balance at the end of May was \$219,090.66. Gene reviewed the process of setting up and receiving funds for IYRP and establishing a new bank account for WRAOM funds. Donations for IYRP received thus far are mostly from

individuals. There have been commitments from the University of Nevada, University of Arizona, and Texas A&M, but those checks are still in the mail. The WRAOM account was established with the \$6,087.23 that was carried over from the 2022 Western Region Administrative Officers Meeting. The seconded motion to approve the Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

VI. **2024 Officers and Committee Assignments-**

Chair Elect- Shawn Donkin

At Large- Jodie Anderson & Walter Bowen

Treasurer- Gene Kelly

Secretary- Leslie Edgar

No nominations from the floor.

Chris Davies moved to approve the slate of officers as presented. Chris Pritsos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Scot Hulbert will become the past chair and Sreekala will become the chair.

Aquaculture Center- Shawn Donkin

Western SARE- Milan Shipka as Director Emeritus

Western Region MRC: Adrian Ares (last term), Eric Webster, Mary Burrows (Mary took a position in the NC, but will finish this year), Holly Neibergs

Western Rural Development Center- Need two members to serve on the technical review committee in addition to Chris Pritsos who is already on the committee as a WAAESD representative to the WRDC Board. Shawn Donkin nominated Leslie Edgar to serve on the WRDC technical review committee. Chris Davies seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Glenda has already expressed interest in serving on the technical review committee. The committee agreed to have Chris Pritsos, Glenda Humiston, and Leslie Edgar. Bret will confirm if nominees are interested in serving. Scot moved. Gene seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Bret suggested reaching out to John Greene, who serves as a current director in the southern region to also serve on the technical review committee.

Chris Pritsos' term is up at the end of the year. Members of WAAESD deferred a vote to the Fall meeting.

Diversity Catalyst Committee- Adrian asked to be replaced due to the time challenges. Gene and Shawn both agreed to serve.

Western IPM Center- David Gang agreed to continue serving.

VII. **Western SARE Survey Results-** Members reviewed the current results. Please complete the survey if you have not done so yet.

VIII. **Non-Profit Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations-** The concept of establishing a non-profit to serve national needs of agInnovation and to support regional association needs was presented by Chris Pritsos at last year's summer meeting. Subsequently, an ad hoc committee was formed with membership including a representative from each region and each of the regional offices. Gene served as the WAAESD representative. Chris shared a brief background and recommendations that will be brought forward to the Joint COP's Meeting in July. Gene and Chris reaffirmed that this model is not in competition with other foundations.

IX. **Join CARET-** Thanks to Leslie Edgar through her connections with Senator Lujan's office, the WAAESD Executive Committee prepared a list of recommendations for the upcoming Farm Bill.

Those recommendations were included on pages 44 through 48 of the meeting packets. To summarize, the intent was to provide agricultural experiment stations with greater access to broadband programs, conservation programs via branch stations being added to the list of eligible sites in EQIP and multistate committees being eligible for Conservation Innovation Grants, and removal of the 5% restriction on capacity funds being used for retirement. Those recommendations were shared with the various offices listed in the interim actions report. Attendees of the session with CARET reviewed the new agInnovation website.

Jake questioned how to strengthen the linkage between the organizations. Attendees mutually agreed that a key to working together is understanding the role of CARET. Bret asked how to best share information with CARET representatives? Can we get our CARET representatives to have on-site visits at the agricultural experiment stations? Shawn shared that by design they have members on the committee that represents each experiment station. Chris Pritsos shared concerns about the current communications—AES express their concerns but as the message makes its way up it continues to be diluted.

Ivory shared that we need to make sure that we represent all three branches of LGU's.

Scot shared some of the differences in funding structures.

The group discussed different communication strategies between CARET, AES, Extension, AHS, and APLU including frequency, content, and recipients.

- X. **AES-ARS Partnership-** Staci Simonich joined WAAESD for the meeting. Larry Chandler agreed to join via Zoom to continue the conversation we started at the spring meeting in Denver. Those involved with this effort thus far prepared a few questions (listed immediately below) for Larry to initiate today's conversation. The first of those questions was asked to break the ice.

1. What is ARS' perception of ARS and LGU scientists being co-located? Larry shared that there have always been good relations between the two organizations. ARS is still interested in partnerships. There are mutual interests and that keeps the relationship going. There is always room for growing the partnership.
2. What are possible solutions to financial challenges to departments and other units who provide space to ARS scientists due to university budget models?
3. Due to high administrative fees at some of our institutions and the requirement for a cash match for some ARS agreements, entering into ARS agreements can be very costly. Could ARS help defray this financial burden by contributing to the payment of administrative fees and consider an in-kind match for ARS funds provided for collaborative research?
4. How can scientists who work in ARS buildings gain broader access to ARS facilities?
5. What are the best approaches to co-advising/mentoring between ARS and LGU scientists of graduate students and postdoctoral scientists?
6. Are there opportunities and benefits for university and ARS scientists to participate on ARS Unit and LGU Advisory Committees/Boards?
 - a. What are possible issues with participation either way?

Staci asked what it looks like to pursue co-funding for building new buildings that host both organizations. Larry shared that many times it is a case-by-case situation, but it is usually easier for a university to build with less restrictions. The key is partnering. We need strong advocates and stakeholders. ARS struggles with sharing facilities. If ARS builds the building, there are very strict security measures that affect students and faculty use. Staci shared that it would be good to see how other universities have navigated the process.

Larry asked if University expectations could be shared, as that would help ARS as they move forward. Larry shared that many situations may need to be addressed individually at each university depending on the specific situation.

Scot brought up cost-sharing for when ARS gets funding and hire university faculty and their funding is cost-shared.

Larry shared that funds can be provided for grad students or support staff. ARS can have staff come into their buildings. Having ARS in university buildings is more of a one-on-one discussion. ARS is flexible and continues to try to be accommodating as possible. Many of the challenges are around ethics and security.

Bret questioned if ARS could share what their plan is for each state so states could be more aware and try to reach out with opportunities. Larry shared that the criteria are made on two factors: a) ranking on priority system and b) do those facilities need improvements. The next tier is the relationships with universities. Larry encouraged any university interested in partnerships to reach out to their ARS area directors for guidance on where they are on the list. A key is to have enough congressional support to obtain the funding to complete a project.

Aufa'i asked how to obtain ARS presence on the islands. Larry shared that the first step is to invite ARS out to the island. The next step would be identifying a research topic that could be focused on.

- XI. **WAAESD to agInnovation-West?** Bret provided a brief background on the concept. Continuing with agInnovation, Bret would like to hear initial thoughts about changing the name of the Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors to agInnovation-West. Chris Pritsos made a motion to explore the option of changing the association's name to agInnovation-West. Aufa'i seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
- XII. **agInnovation Annual Meeting Reminder-** Save the date for September 24-27 in Grand Rapids Michigan. The opening reception is on the 24th and regional business meetings will be the morning of the 25th.
- XIII. **Western Water Network Progress-** Bret included a Letter of Intent that was submitted to the NIFA SAS program. NIFA has invited a full proposal. The Western Water Network hosted a workshop in Fort Collins last week. Bret shared that there is intent to submit as a WERA, five-year integrated project.
- XIV. **NERAOC 2025 Meeting-** The executive committee has reviewed and agreed to sign a contract with Grand Sierra Resort for the NERAOC Meeting in 2025. These dates are similar to the WAAESD spring meeting, should we hold the 2025 WAAESD business meeting in conjunction with NERAOC? Gene made the motion to host the WAAESD spring meeting in conjunction with NERAOC in 2025. Aufa'i seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.
- XV. **Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully submitted by Leslie D. Edgar, Secretary, July 15, 2023

