



**WSWS Board Meeting Minutes
PRE-Conference Board Meeting, March 10, 2025
Seattle, WA**

PRE-Conference Board Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2025
Brad Hanson, WSWS Secretary

10am. Puget Sound Room.

WSWS President Tim Prather called the meeting to order at 10:05am

Welcome and Introductions: Board members and guests present included: Lovreet Shergill, Ryan Rapp, Albert Adjesiwor, Tim Prather, Lee Van Wychen, Nevin Lawrence, Hillary Sandler, (WSSA president), Ian Burke, Ben Westrich, Wes Mann, Alan Helm, Sandra McDonald, Beth Fowers, Greg Dahl, McKenzie Barth, Curtis Rainbolt, Erik Lehnhoff, Carl Coburn, Dirk Baker, Brad Hanson, Eric Gustofson (business manager), Mirella Ortiz, Drew Lyon.

Officer Reports

- *Secretary's note: we followed the agenda as bolded below; if there was no report or no significant discussion, it is noted as "limited or no discussion"*

Secretary – Brad Hanson

- Approval of Summer Board Meeting Minutes
 - o Moved by Ryan Rapp, second by Curtis Rainbolt. No discussion
 - o Unanimous approval. Minutes approved.

Business Manager Report – Eric Gustafson

- 199 registered as of this morning. Not doing refunds as of now.

Treasurer Report – Ryan Rapp

- o Brief discussion of treasurer report as posted online.
- o Finance committee will recommend changing financial advisor to same provider WSSA. Will be discussed further under "new business".

President – Tim Prather

- o Tim outlined a few of his activities on behalf of the WSWS, including Presidents visit to Washington DC organized by Lee Van Wychen.
- o Also outlined a few of the topics he wants to discuss later under new business. Primarily guidance on WSWS sign-on to letters of support/protest and the issue of how to address

federal/state employee participation in WSWS

Past President– Curtis Rainbolt

- Retirees will be honored at reception tonight. Discussion of starting part of the program a bit earlier in the reception before conversations get too loud.

President Elect/Program Chair – Carl Coburn

- Carl discussed the extreme challenges with the CONFES meeting program software. We will discuss further under new business; WSSA and NCWSS had similar issues.
- There have been a number of papers withdrawn and a few other edits made to the program. The online, digital version is up to date and the most accurate. Will have QR code to the changes at registration desk

Education and Regulatory – Albert Adjesiwor

-limited or no discussion

Member-at-Large Public – Erik Lehnhoff

- Erik led an effort during 2024 to survey federal agency members of WSWS about needs/challenges related to attending the WSWS meeting. Survey had very limited (only 12 responses) but there were commonalities across the respondents. The main issue was they are not aware of the WSWS meeting.
- Tim will mention in his address at general session
 - Could the Western Weed Coordinating Committee be a potential link? Could we overlap with this meeting to facilitate fed/state participation in WSWS? Interest in workshops (“workshops” are in a different category than “meetings” for getting agency approvals)
- Further discussion of federal participation. Q: How is SRM affected? Erik says fed participation in SRM was also down significantly (this was held a few weeks ago). Nevin commented that a lot of Feds got their layoff emails (Trump administration mass purge during early 2025) on Friday of that week.

Member-at-Large Private – Derek Sebastian

- limited or no discussion

Research Section Chair – Dirk Baker

- Section chairs assisted Nevin with challenging program development (CONFEX issue)

WSSA Representative – Alan Helm

- limited or no discussion on Alan’s update.

CAST Representative – Greg Dahl

- CAST report is available online. He reported on activities and impressions from recent CAST meeting near Tampa FL.
- Working on a CAST paper on annual grass weeds and fire frequency (Matt Bauer from WIPMC is co-leading this)
- CAST going through lots of changes including restructuring and moving to a new facility in Ames IA.
- Thank you to WSWS for supporting CAST; it is an important voice for agriculture.
- Next CAST national meeting at Mississippi State University in Fall 2027.

WSSA President – Hilary Sandler

- WSSA President Hillary Sandler gave an update on the WSSA's activities and noted that this was her first ever attendance at a WSSWS meeting.
- o WSSA will be reviewing issues with CONFEX
- o Next WSSA meeting will be held Feb 9-12, 2026 in Raleigh NC
- o Hillary raised the issue of a potential joint meeting in 2027 with WSSWS. WSSA is considering sites in Hawaii. Will discuss further under new business.

Student Liaison – McKenzie Barth

- o Student night out organization going well; there is a better balance of mentor/student this year.
- o Discussion of mixing industry and academia and who pays the bill. Two issues discussed: one related to industry partners from different companies (can redflag internal accounting) and mix of industry and academic mentors (Need to encourage public sector folks to share the cost. But, it was also noted that academics largely do not have these kinds of expense funds).
- o Silent auction is set up but with relatively few auction items relative to other years.

Director of Science Policy – Lee Van Wychen

- o Lee sent his report recently to committee
- o Q do any of you get USGS funding?
 - o – Sandra indicated that USGS is a common source of pesticide sampling info? Odd that it comes from USGS?
- o Lee ran through some highlights of his report
 - o EPA and FWS tour re ESA was very successful in Wisconsin during 2024. Several-day bus tour. Hillary commented on positive experience as well.
 - There were only 24 folks on the bus, but there were two webinar follow-ups for agency members that was also really valuable
 - o Tim – could crop consultant groups help edit bulletins live two (bulletins)? Some of those don't use "ag language" so not great fit for label users.
 - Sandra – the "services" write the mitigations (not EPA). Tim, but the users might be able to edit with language that makes sense.
 - Lee mentioned the label standardization effort. Discussion about how label, BLTwo, PULAs, mitigations. Etc.
 - Lee – insecticide final strategy due later this month
 - o Re federal funding cuts
 - Realize now that commodities and constituencies need to fight for funds and positions (cannot just "wait and see").
 - Ian mentioned success in the PNW on herbicide resistance from Wheat commission. (esp when ARS cannot respond but Land Grants can respond faster).
 - o Q. Specificity has been really helpful (relative to broad brush)
 - Lee outlined some of the federal office space elimination and "decentralization" of offices from DC area to other areas
 - Funding issues (most grant programs still pending). IDC calcs suggestions will have impacts (target is 30% IDC, even on existing funds)
 - o BLM added 7 "new" (old) herbicide active ingredients. (Basically, took on the same list and environmental assessments of the Forest Service).
 - o New NIFA Fellow (Todd Bouman will replace Jim Kells)
 - USDA NPL position vacated recently; Marty Williams will be interim/acting

Constitution and Operating Procedures Representative – Sandra McDonald

- limited or no discussion

Committee Reports:

Publications Committee (Carl Coburn – board contact)

Proceedings – *Carl Libbey*

WSWS Newsletter – *Carl Libbey*

Website – *Eric Gustafson*

- limited or no discussion

Local Arrangements – **Rui Liu** – chairperson (Carl Coburn – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Finance – *Scott Cook* – chairperson (Ryan Rapp - board contact)

- Largely covered under treasurer report. Else, limited or no discussion

Nominations – *Caleb Dalley* – chairperson (Curtis Rainbolt – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Public Relations – *Mirella Ortiz* – chairperson (Albert Adjesiwor – board contact)

- WSWS will need to renew contract with social media contractor. Will address under new business

Fellows and Honorary Members – *Carol Mallory Smith* – chairperson (Curtis Rainbolt board contact)

- Committee report online. Fellows for 2025 will be Pat Clay and Marty Schrar. Else limited or no discussion

WSWS Rep to WSSA Finance Committee - *Rich Zollinger*

- limited or no discussion

Site Selection – *Kyle Roerig* – chairperson (Curtis Rainbolt – board contact)

- 2026 meeting will be in Tucson. Jesse Richardson has visited sites and all are acceptable and currently negotiating.
- Will discuss 2027 options further after lunch when Jesse is available to call in.

Awards – *Drew Lyon* – chairperson (Tim Prather – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Poster – *Shannon Clark* – chairperson (Carl Coburn – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Student Paper/Poster Judging – *Jake Courcamp* – chairperson (Carl Coburn – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Necrology – *Earl Creech* – chairperson (Brad Hanson – board contact)

- Two members who passed since last meeting will be honored: Roland Shirmin and Carl Bell. Else limited or no discussion

Sustaining Membership – *Ben Westrich* – chairperson (Curtis Rainbolt – board contact)

- Most companies that contributed in the past contributed this year even though budgets are tight

Legislative – Lisa Rew – chairperson (Alan Helm – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Herbicide Resistant Plants – Rui Liu - chairperson (Clarke Alder – board contact)

- limited or no discussion

Diversity and Inclusion Ad-Hoc Committee – Elizabeth Mosqueda (Tim Prather – board contact)

- DEI committee report online.
 - Sandra, remember there is a DEI reception after general session
 - We will be voting at business meeting about making this a standing committee

Invasive Species Ad-Hoc Committee – Lisa Jones (Tim Prather – board contact)

- Tim: some discussion as to whether this committee should continue as ad hoc. Will punt this to Carl for decision. Suggest either dissolve as ad hoc or giving them a more clear charge and consider making standing committee.
- Lee W suggested rolling into WSSA committee. Invasive weeds are huge issue for the West. But, some challenge due to travel \$
- Mirella: thinks the committee would like to continue and will suggest making a standing committee
- Sandra says committee will have to write a plan, get Board input/vote (in summer) then membership vote on that at next years business meeting.

New Business:

1. Proposals from board/committees

- limited or no discussion

2. Marty Schaer – Fundraising efforts

- Discussion of the importance and value of what Marty does for WSSWS funding raising (\$20-50k each year)
 - Marty’s report indicated fund raising covers 50-90% of food costs at meetings
- Discussion of whether this should be a “committee” vs “Marty”. Concern that there’s no succession planning. However, both Pete Forester before and Marty recently have expressed that they feel that this is their service to the society.
 - Sandra indicated Marty suggested having a link to the Board (Treasurer?) rather than being rolled into a committee. Personal relationships more important; a committee rotation would not be very helpful.
 - Tim – we don’t want to fix something that’s not broken.
Ryan Rapp – suggested getting Marty linked to Treasurer/Finance committee to keep him looped in.
- Ryan will come with a recommendation from Finance Committee to add Marty to this committee. (Finance meets Wednesday – WSSWS Board can vote on their recommendation at the POST meeting).

3. CONFEX Update

- Carl: was a very challenging year to build the program. Carl basically had to retype EVERYTHING manually. Hillary, Tim, and Eric were great helps but it was pretty terrible.

- Hillary. The NCWSS and then WSSA had similar challenges in the fall and winter of 2023 before WSWS.
 - WSSA will be meeting with regional societies to debrief and decide what to recommend. Debrief scheduled for March 31st.
 - Do we go with a different vendor (and start over)? We should at least get a different service person/contact.
 - Dirk – CONFEX also does American meteorological society and the TriSocieties but without the same level of challenge? Who is their point of contact? What is different?
 - Erik Gustofson – one difference is that the weed groups wanted to have the system flexible and open (rather than locked doors at each step). Same problems NCWSS, then WSSA, then WSWS. Problems were known but didn't want to explode it in the middle of the weed meeting series.
 - APMS will use this in July 2025 – will this work any better for them?
 - Will need to get feedback after the WSSA debrief and revisit as WSWS BoD to decide on action.

4. Educational Outreach/Lobby Efforts at National Level *(italics part of agenda)*

- *WSSA response to USDA cuts, current research contracts halted, effects on research funding*
- *What issues do we want to address at a national level? Mechanism to bring to Board and/or Lee Van Wychen*
- *How do we respond to requests to endorse letters, support efforts at national level*
 - *Timeline for input, signatory only or input to document?*
 - *Suggestion: Minimum 5 days to obtain vote for support, 7 days to provide input*
 - *Presidential authority for 1 or 2 support/signatory when less time is provided than mentioned above*
 - *Impact statements provided to Lee Van Wychen*
- Ian – WSSA board is still “wait and see” while federal reduction in force is still occurring. Discussion of how force reductions are similar/different from at-will employment in private sector. Ian also commented that even at individual university level there will be substantial budget impacts and layoffs.
- Tim – the strategy seems to be to confuse everything so that no one knows how to respond. Should we pick a fight and fight it?
 - Hillary – a proponent of ‘good message’ related to weed research value from commodity groups and stakeholders. Gather success stories.
- Tim will draft a WSWS letter that can be shared with BoD about concerns. Sandra agreed to provide input. (Tim says “after this week” when he rotates off as president)
 - Hillary suggested get 5-6 success stories from weeders in the western US
- Tim – what are key issues that we (WSWS) want Lee to take forward on our behalf? This is aside from current federal funding and related issues. Basically, opportunity for back and forth with Lee during the year to inform his activities on our behalf more regularly.
 - Lee – could really use those impact reports and statements.
 - Tim – we could have a standing agenda or SOP to solicit input from the BoD

- Sandra, When something pops up, we do a fairly ok job. Not sure this is a major issue; we're probably not really missing important stuff.
 - Lee – the Science Policy Fellows are doing a helpful job. See checkered spot butterfly impact from 2024.
 - Tim. How do we want to respond to requests to endorse letters etc at national level?
 - Sandra – suggested either “text” strings to speed up and/or to have a subset of the board to consult in really tight situations
 - Sometimes the time line is short. Tim mentioned one example that had “inflammatory” language that he wasn't comfortable signing off on without Board input.
 - Greg and Hillary suggested a triage approach. Handle the easy/non-controversial ones, ask for specific input if objection,
 - Erik G. said sending “high priority” email pretty good response for WSSA Board when needed.
 - Tim will draft out some “guidelines” and get input from Sandra and run it past BoD too.

5) Governmental Agency Participation: Way forward? - Erik Lehnhoff

- limited or no discussion here since we covered it earlier in the agenda

6) Site Selection Effort - Jesse Richardson and/or Tim Prather (*italics part of agenda*)

- *Hotel selection for 2027, given our current situation, do we want to consider joining WSSA in 2027 and having Tina work on 2028?*
- *Site selection support discussion, how is working with Tina going?*
- *We need to work on 2028 now in order to gain flexibility for smaller venues*
- Called Jesse for input regarding working with Tina
 - Tim reminded that Tina looked at smaller venues in central CA and most places were booked for 2027 other than Santa Barbara. Will we need to look 3-4 years out in advance if these smaller venues are more competitive.
 - Jessie. Indicated that he was not a fan of the idea of working with Tina's company beforehand. But, after going through the process he is very much a fan of the service that Tina provided.
 - Tim. We might just be a smaller society than we're used to being. That might be our new normal.
 - Jessie: Tina is a master negotiator. Played three venues against one another. He really liked the process and service.
 - Jessie. Site selection committee has a decision. But, not yet a contract signed so all three are still in the running. Two in Orange County probably still have an edge Hyatt Irvine (near airport and newly remodeled) and Hyatt Newport Beach (we've been there twice before, more beach vibe). The Hilton Long Beach is a long ways from an airport.
 - If we want to go to Irvine, this is the time to do it (newly remodeled facility will get out of our price range once discovered). But, WSSA also really liked Newport Beach when we've been there.
 - Site selection committee recommended both of these.

- Discussion of restaurant availability within walking distance of hotels. Long ride from airport vs having to Uber every time go out to dinner.
- Tim: WSSA is considering Hawaii for 2027 which could impact WSWS 2027 in CA.
 - Maybe wouldn't want to upend work that Tina did on our behalf if we joint with WSSA
 - We didn't really resolve the issue about joint 2027 WSSA meeting. Will bring up again at BoD meeting after the conference.
- Moved (Curtis) seconded (Alan) to accept site selection recommendation of Hyatt Irvine for 2027. Unanimous agreement.

What about 2028? What direction do we want to give Tina and Site Selection committee. (Tuscan in 2026, Irvine in 2027). What region/location for 2028 and behind?

- Ideas: Coeur d'Alene / Spokane. Boise. What about Montana? (Tim said Boise-Billings). What about Salt Lake City?
- What about 2029? Give Tina two years to work with. Might give Tina option to work two years with venues (e.g Spokane and SLC over two years).

7) Program Chair Elect? *(italics part of agenda)*

We work on trial by fire, perhaps we should be proactive and have our process start with a program chair-elect, then program chair, then president, then past president

- Tim's idea was to make a four year commitment instead of three. (add program chair elect), Program Chair, President, Past-President.
 - Sandra – that is recommended in the operations guides
 - Lee - WSWS is one of the only societies that has a 3-yr rotation. Most have a 4 yr rotation.
- Nevin noted that elected person finds out in ~Nov but then program stuff starts almost immediately (December).
- Curtis noted that you really need the new person present for the previous summer board meeting.
- Erik noted that an issue is the Program Chair is busy doing program stuff and doesn't get to learn how to be president. Would really be more helpful to add it in the middle (have the president elect not also be the program chair)
- Dirk wondered if the Past President could help coach the program chair elect.
- If four year term is too much, could chop off the Past President board position. That would be a constitution change, though.
 - Discussion of how much of a burden would a 4 year commitment be anyway?
- Sandra – suggested that Tim appoint an ad hoc committee (of mostly past presidents) to discuss what this might look like.
 - Curtis, Sandra, and Andrew Kniss. Ask them to develop a proposed change for discussion at the summer 2025 board meeting vote.

8) Social Media contractor

- Need to renegotiate or renew the contract with Amy at AquatStem Consulting
 - Her cost to WSWS is \$3,875/yr.
- Erik shared social media analytics. LinkedIn, X, Insta, etc.
 - Tim suggested also "Blue Sky" twitter alternative with lots of science participants

- Sandra – need to remind the membership to get WSWs info via other methods (Amy is a multiplier, not a creator of info)
- Tim called for a motion
 - Alan moved, Ryan seconded continuation of this contract.
 - Unanimous agreement.

2:00 pm Adjourn :

- Meeting adjourned 2:02.