



Operators Without Borders Year - AGM 2021 Report of the Chair

The last year was a challenging one for organizations around the world as we all had to adjust to the reality of the long-term effects of COVID 19. Despite the fact that COVID curtailed our ability to send volunteers to assist in disaster there has been a silver lining. Switching our focus to virtual capacity building has enabled us to build partnerships throughout the world and deliver services to a much broader geographic area. This Report summarizes details from previous reports along with updates including additional services we have provided.

Developing Our Organization.

On the administrative front there were some big wins. OWB succeeded in obtaining Charitable Status through efforts of our Secretary, Madeleine Butschler, who worked on the unenviable task of filling out all the forms and chasing government officials working from home to access our application in an emptied-out office to make this happen. A vote of thanks to Madeleine.

Our Treasurer, Kalpna Solanki, took over the oversight of the website redevelopment. Signing up as a volunteer or member and donating to the cause can now all be done over our web portal. Thank you Kalpna to you, Heather Reynolds and Lachlan Manser from the EOCP for making these connections to each of our groups work.



Marsh Harbour Abaco was totally destroyed. OWB deployed 5 teams to Grand Bahamas post Hurricane Dorian

The Board is also working under Madeleine's stewardship to ensure our bylaws and policies comply with the mandate approved with our Charitable status - and that we comply with the bylaws and policies – hence the proposal to the AGM for a Governance Committee and November's strategic planning session on "Supporting at a Distance" policies. All Board Members, along with Ian Mcilwham, Co-Chair of the Policy Development Guide Committee (ad hoc) and Carl Yates (inaugural Committee Member) have been writing policies on Operational Oversight, Health and Safety, Finance and Committee ToRs. Someone once said bylaws are like sausages, we want and need them, but nobody wants to know what goes in them! Very true words and a mundane, though necessary job. Thanks to all!

We have also been setting up committees to assist our Board. (Check out our Org Chart on the website.) We have a Deployment Committee on which volunteers Marcel Miscuraca and Jason Mank serve. They were deployed on disaster missions in both Dominica and Grand Bahamas. They will help evaluate the skills needed on future assignments where they will lead teams. We have also set up an Advisory Committee and are delighted that the following individuals have volunteered:

- Adrianus (Ton) Vlugman) recently retired from the Pan American Health Organization in Barbados who has spent most of his career working in the Caribbean on health and disasters. Ton knows just about everyone in Caribbean Regional organizations and will bring great insight .



- Patricia Aquing, Past Executive Director of the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association, as well as the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute. Pat has worked tirelessly in the water and wastewater sector for many years and, like Ton, will bring her knowledge and contacts to assist OWB.
- Greg Solecki is one of Canada's leading disaster experts and will be invaluable providing his expertise when we deploy post-disaster. Greg has already given generously of his time to provide free Level 100 Incident Command System workshop in the Caribbean for OWB.
- Kevin Carter is the dynamo behind OneWater Academy and the Caribbean One Water Conversation. He is Assistant to the Director of Broward County, Florida Water and Wastewater Services and has been helpful already with setting up presentations in Florida on behalf of OWB.

We welcome each to the Committee and look forward to their advice.

Treasurer

It is with regret that we accept the resignation of Kalpna Solanki as Treasurer, as she has to step down from that role due to other obligations as of the AGM in May. Both personally and on behalf of the Board we wish to thank her for all her contributions since the start of OWB. Through her efforts the EOCP has become a valuable partner. Luckily, she is still retaining her position on the Board so we won't lose her altogether.

Fundraising

Patricia Aquing has had a conversation with the IDB about a possible grant and is compiling a proposal. We are seeking monies to send Operators to disasters and to deliver additional higher-level ICS training, as well as for translation of material to Spanish and French.

Adapting our Services & Programs.

When COVID started appearing as a big threat we had a team from Ohio set to travel to Grand Bahamas to continue helping the water utility there post-Dorian, as well as Ron Enns set to leave the next day to deliver safety training in Antigua. We had no problem getting our volunteers there, but getting them back was considered too risky as borders started to close. So, we scrambled and made last minute cancellations. We quickly switched focus to assisting utilities in developing countries with capacity building opportunities.

Training is often very expensive and quite difficult to obtain in the Caribbean in the quantity needed. OWB's goal is to work with the Associations, as well as directly with utilities to provide free training to improve the sustainability of the industry. The plus is that the work we do now to set up these relationships using online approaches can form part of our long-term offerings. The following outlines some of the services and partnerships we have developed in the last year.

Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association (CAWASA)

We have worked in partnership primarily with the Caribbean Water and Sewerage (CAWASA) since the beginning of COVID restrictions and recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with them. We express our thanks to Ignatius Jean their Executive Director and a long-time friend from St Lucia for working so closely with us. In conjunction with CAWASA we have, since May 2020, put on many webinars and training sessions that have all been very well received. The following webinars were delivered and we thank each of the presenters for both their time and excellence of their presentations:



Ron Enns leading a training webinar

- Ron Enns – Safety Training; Disaster Management lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina; and Occupational Health & Safety
- Greg Solecki and Ian Mcilwham – Disaster Within a Disaster
- Mike Ippen – Preventative Maintenance
- Carl Yates – Water Loss Control
- Neal Klassen – Conservation and Communication
- Carl Yates – District Metered Areas

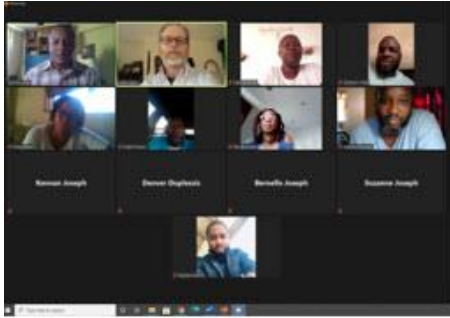


Greg Solecki delivering ICS training people to Caribbean water operators

We were very fortunate this year to have Greg Solecki, one of Canada’s foremost disaster experts volunteer time with OWB. Greg has been involved, and in many cases, led Canada’s response to all disasters over the last 14 years. He is an Incident Commander and qualified to teach all levels of Incident Command Systems both in Canada and by FEMA in the US. In conjunction with CAWASA, Greg delivered two Incident Command System Level 100 workshops with almost 200 participants. He also delivered one specifically for the Belize Water Services and has committed to more sessions in 2021.



We delivered two 12-week exam prep courses. Mike Ippen volunteered to teach Water Distribution Level 1 and Mike Firlotte Water Treatment Level 1, (a 5am start before heading to his day job at the City of Penticton!). CAWASA was very grateful for the excellent instruction they provided. We will be starting the Wastewater Exam Prep course which will be instructed by Mike Gosselin the third week of May.



Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA)

As well as working with CAWASA, we also partnered with the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association. Mike Ippen delivered a one-day workshop on *Preventative Maintenance*. It is a sorely needed process in the Caribbean where many utilities work in reactive mode.

Wastewater Education Organization

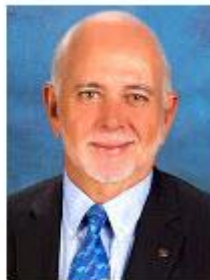
Valerie was put in touch with the Wastewater Education Organization. We have developed a close partnership. Their Executive Director, Dendra Best, is exceedingly helpful in providing their Zoom.

Haiti, HANWASH Initiative



"Our dream is to bring potable water and good sanitation to the entire country of Haiti. Water is essential for good living conditions and the people of Haiti deserve to have it."

-Barry Rossin
Rotary International President 2018-19



A very exciting new project is our partnering with the Rotary HANWASH initiative in Haiti. During the next five years (the "Pilot Phase"), the target is drinking water service coverage for more than 700,000 people living in seven pilot communes: Cavaillon, Croix-des-Bouquets, Ferrier, Leogane, Les Cayes, Pignon, and Terre-Neuve.

There is also: The challenging matters of sanitation and hygiene behavior change to set targets for as well as identifying and training viable candidates for

professional Operators of municipal systems serving Haiti's secondary cities and small towns.

Board member Carl Yates along with Stephane Barbarie, who has the advantage of being a French speaker, Aisha Niang, Assistant Director – Water Wastewater Operations for the City of Houston Public Works, Madeleine Butschler and Valerie are working with the Haiti team on a pilot project in Pignon. It's focus: To cut leakage by at least 30% (presently at 84%) and restore water service from wells that are either non-functional or have e-coli. Madeleine and Aisha are also working on, SOP and checklist templates as part of knowledge capture to build a sustainable practice that can be replicated as the project moves across Haitian communities over the next 10-20 years.

We have also agreed to work on a second programme in Ferrier. HANWASH and District 5060 are working with the Haitian government to develop a sustainable, safely managed water supply solution for the village of Artaud (Nord-Est Department - Commune of Ferrier). Freshwater is not available in Artaud. There is no existing public water system in the area. Instead, private water trucks deliver potable water to local residents. For other uses (washing and cleaning), residents transport brackish water in buckets and jugs from hand dug wells and surface water sources. We will work with the HANWASH team to deliver training programmes to support the local Operator.

OWB is delighted to assist HANWASH in these major initiatives which include, by way of support, sitting on the Project and Technical Committee.



Laboratory Training

Another important project has been to assist DOWASO, the water authority in Dominica, to set up a training programme for their new lab. Volunteers Ian Mcilwham and Janine DeBoer, both who work for the Region of Durham, delivered a 10 week, virtual, training programme which was gratefully received.

SOPs

Standard Operating Procedures and Checklists are sorely missing in many utilities in developing countries. Mike Gosselin and Marcel Misuraca agreed to co- chair an SOP Committee. They have assembled around 200 SOPs and posted them into content specific folders for ease of use. A consistent format has been chosen. Janine DeBoer is also contributing SOPs for Labs which should prove top of equal value. Once we have vetted all content, the SOPs will be given to CAWASA, which will be the repository. Caribbean Utilities will be able to access SOPs that they need. They may have to be customized and the Committee will offer assistance to any utility who needs assistance in doing so. Madeleine and Aisha, as mentioned, are working on customized SOPs for the Haiti programmes that include visuals. A long-term goal would be to update all SOPs with videos and other visuals in a similar manner.

Latin America

On May 6th we delivered our first training session to Latin America. Working with AySA, the largest Water and Wastewater Utility in Argentina, which serves approximately 14million customers, and the Canadian Embassy, Greg Solecki delivered a Level 100, ICS session to utilities in 12 Latin American countries and did a fantastic job that received extremely positive evaluations. There was tremendous interest in the training with over 120 registrants. We believe this to be the start of a fruitful partnership with AySA delivering our capacity building services to the region.

Carl Yates also took part on a panel for the Latin American Utilities Congress, speaking on District Metered Areas and Leak Detection, which was very well received.

We translated all the material for both Greg and Carl's presentations into Spanish and used Spanish translators provided by the organizers.

Other Partnerships and Associations

Western Canada Onsite Wastewater Management Association (WCOWMA)

The Western Canada Onsite Wastewater Management Association held two conferences, one in BC and one in Alberta. At each Valerie and Jason Mank delivered a presentation on OWB and Valerie, Ian Mcilwham and Greg Solecki delivered the Keynote address on Disaster Planning. There were many questions about OWB and a pledge for future support.

Alberta Water and Wastewater Operators Association (AWWOA)

Thanks to Kalpna's diligent effort, OWB was given a free booth at the March Conference and Trade Show. Valerie wrote and filmed a script to go alongside the PowerPoint presentation for viewing by Conference participants. Thanks to Kalpna and Madeleine for taking time to be available to engage with participants in the "Booth" after which we saw some increase in membership.



Water Environment Federation (WEF)

WEF has been an active supporter of OWB and recently sold Water Operator T-shirts that resulted in a \$2000USD donation. On January 13th Jason Mank and Valerie presented a 45-minute Podcast about OWB for them. We will continue conversations as WEF has indicated they wish to continue to support what they see as a great cause and this will assist with their mandate to do more for Operators.

Water Environment Association of Texas (WEAT)

Jason Mank and Valerie made a 1,5 hour presentation with Q&A in November to WEAT in Texas. It was very well received and resulted in a donation to OWB and new volunteers. In addition, WEAT has done fundraising and has continued to send donations for which we are most grateful.

Isle Utilities UK

Isle Utilities is located in the UK and has a large database of companies and individuals willing to assist in disasters in the water sector. We will likely be showcased in their December webinar. They may also help raise funds when we are again able to deploy teams to go to disasters

CARIBDA

We continue to work with CaribDA who raised money for our work in disaster relief in the Bahamas. We will be presenting at their conference in June.

South Florida Utilities -Workplace- Caribbean

Kevin Carter organized a joint Caribbean -South Florida meeting in recognition of World Water Day on May 6th. Valerie was invited to participate as a panelist on the Disaster Planning, Response and Capacity Building session. OWB was handed many accolades from our partner agencies throughout the presentation.

Recognition

We wish to thank all our volunteers and those who signed up as members this year. You are making a difference. To all the volunteers mentioned in this Report we owe our gratitude. To our talented Advisory Committee thank you for your guidance and expertise. To our partners at the EOCP, WEF and others mentioned in this report we appreciate the support you continue to give us. Most of all gratitude is extended to OWB's wonderful Board of Directors without whom none of this would have happened. To Kalpna Solanki, Madeleine Butschler, Robert Haller and Carl Yates a heartfelt thank you.

Valerie Jenkinson
Chair

For more information, to sign up as a member or volunteer or make a donation go to our website <https://operatorswithoutborders.org/>