

Much has happened since our last AGM and it has been a year of exponential growth for OWB. One year ago, we were still in COVID lockdown mode and wondering when we might be able to resume in-person activities. COVID enabled us to recognize how successfully we can utilize the virtual world to deliver more capacity building activities than we might generally be able to and we will continue to deliver many on-line programmes. However, we have resumed in person training which is almost always more effective and have delivered many in person workshops. Much was reported in the Chair's 2022 Year End Report and is brought forward to this report with additional items that have taken place since then.

So much has happened in the last year that memory may fail to remember all we have done. If so, it is not a diminishment of any initiative. What follows is a recap of some of our volunteer led achievements.

- For the first time, OWB was successful in obtaining funding from the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Caribbean Regional Environmental Programme's Caribbean Regional Fund for Wastewater Management + ([CReW+](#)) initiative. The CReW+ is a partnership funded by the Global Environment Facility ([GEF](#)) and is being co-implemented by UNEP and the Inter-American Development Bank ([IDB](#)) in 18 countries in the greater Caribbean region. This was done under the auspices of and in collaboration with our steadfast partner the Caribbean Water and Sewerage Association ([CAWASA](#)). We received funding for the travel expenses to deliver both Level 1-2 Exam Preparation Training in both Wastewater Treatment and Wastewater Collection in four countries: Belize, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Grenada. In addition to the one week of treatment and one week of collection technical training we are funded to deliver Train the Trainer workshops in each country. A thank you to our instructors, Stacy Passaro, Ron Enns, Ian Mcilwham, Chris Kerman, Shantelle Clark, Jim Courchaine and Skylar Lipson. Our thanks also to Suzanne Joseph at CAWASA for all her organization and to the EOCP for contributing to EOCP members Chris Kerman and Ron Enns travel.
- The IDB granted funding for Greg Solecki to deliver Incident Command System (ICS) trainings Levels 200, 300 to Jamaica, Belize, and the Bahamas. In addition we provided Level 100 and 200 ICS training to Trinidad and Tobago. Participants overwhelmingly rated the training as "Excellent" and of great benefit to their organizations and have requested further training. ICS is the systematic tool used for the command, control, and coordination of emergency response. This critical training builds capacity for our trainees to respond to more readily to natural and human caused disasters.
- OWB provided numerous speakers for CAWASA's [weekly webinars](#). Thank you to all who gave virtual talks to the Caribbean operators from around the Region.



- Board member Madeleine Butschler continues to take a lead role in our collaboration with Rotary International’s [HANWASH](#) (Haiti National Clean Water, Sanitation and = Hygiene Strategy) initiative to bring safe drinking water to all Haitians. Madeleine has assisted on the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee and is a member of teams working on various initiatives including community engagement in hygiene/sanitation, as well as early explorations of community science development related to Recharge Mapping for Aquifers. She is also working with a resource panel on seeking what may be culturally effective templates for Standard Operating Procedures and other technical documentation.
- HANWASH in Pignon implemented District Metered Areas following a training programme by OWB’s Carl Yates. Within a matter of months Non-Revenue Water (NRW) was reduced from 80% to 42%. A tremendous achievement with the goal to reach 30%. There is still too much unrest and violence to deploy personal and we hope for better times ahead.
- OWB was honoured to be named one of three Charities of Choice by the Water Environment Federation ([WEF](#)), and the Charity of Choice by the Environmental Operators Certificate Programme who have been supporting us from the Water Professionals International ([WPI](#) formerly ABC); the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association ([CWWA](#)); the Western Canada On-Site Wastewater Management Association; Wastewater Education Organization and the Water Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show.
- In addition, the global [Isle Utilities](#), with head office in the United Kingdom, runs “The [Water Action Platform](#),” “[The Water Network](#),” who put out the best podcasts, named OWB as their Charity this Christmas. They generously matched donations up to 10,000 Great Britain Pounds for which we are extremely grateful.
- We are now registered on the UN Partnership portal with our completed profile. Madeleine Butschler, Chair of OWB’s Governance Committee is pleased to relay on behalf of the Committee



Figure 1 Robert Haller and Skylar Lipson representing OWB at ACE

(EOCP) start;

&



(Carl Yates, Ian Mcilwham and Janine De Boer) that this application process helped confirm how far we have come with the needed policies and procedures for OWB’s success. In completing the UN application and profile we were able to provide all required documentation for this kind of submission. A big thank you to our Governance Committee team!

- Nakuru, Kenya Wastewater Training and Certification: Nakuru Water and Sewerage

Company (NAWASCO) was selected as the pilot for Kenya for Exam Prep and Certification as part of our collaboration with the Global Wastewater Initiative ([GWI](#)) which is part of UNEP, headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya and Water Professional International. Volunteer Stacy Passaro delivered two virtual sessions to determine the

Figure 2 Participants in the Nakuru pilot wastewater training Kenya

depth of participant knowledge in order to customize the training.

Volunteer Ian Mcilwham joined Valerie Jenkinson to deliver in person Exam Preparation workshops – one week of wastewater treatment training and one week of wastewater collection. At the end of the training, participants sat the Certification Exam. For most of the 16 participants the exam was considered a practice test as they came from the water division and had no previous experience in wastewater. Two participants passed their Wastewater Collection Exam to become the first (to the best of our knowledge) operators to be certified in Africa. We will be delivering further water and wastewater training in Nakuru and then plan to roll out to other major utilities in Kenya and Uganda.

- While in Kenya, GWI set up two stakeholder meeting at which Valerie presented. The first meeting was for UN staff and the second with a wide variety of water stakeholders such as the African Development Bank, UN Habitat and UNICEF. The presentation was very well received with many stakeholders expressing a desire to partner with OWB and GWI in capacity building initiatives.
- OWB thanks WEF for providing funding that was used to purchase training material and to fund Ian's travel expenses. We also thank WPI for funding the travel expenses to Kenya for Valerie.
- WASH Cluster Ukraine and Water Quality Advisory Committee; Ian Mcilwham sits on the Water Quality Technical Advisory Group as they come up with recommendations for Ukraine Water Standards in the war situation. We are working very closely with these Committees. Ian Mcilwham authored a paper on Decentralized systems which outlines the Pros and Cons of these systems and what to look for when purchasing. This will guide Ukraine water utilities who are hoping to utilize these systems in the future. The big initiative that OEWB is undertaking, led by Greg Solecki and Ian Mcilwham, is an initiative an initiative to develop a strategy and training workshop for water quality issues in the case of chemical warfare, nuclear contamination. As of this date the agenda has been approved and Greg and Ian are developing content which will then need to be translated. We also need to hire translators for the actual workshop. We are working closely with the Ukraine Water association and the Centre for Disease Control in the US. The workshop should be delivered within the next month.

- Valerie is working with the Canadian Trade Commission to put on a workshop showcasing technologies. This was scheduled for January 2023 but has been postponed due to the bombing escalation.
- Last summer Valerie met with many Polish and Ukrainian water utility colleagues in Poland as well as the Deputy Mayor in Gdansk. A plan was formulated on how to best assist Ukrainian water utilities. Again, this has stalled somewhat with the increase in bombing but we remain ready to move as and when conditions improve. Valerie is an invited guest and speaker at the Polish Water Association conference in Poland in May.



Figure 3 With Polish colleagues Ryszard and Yuri in Gdansk putting together plans to assist Ukraine

- After almost two years' hard work the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Committee, ably led by last year's OWB Volunteer of the Year award winner Marcel Misuraca, launched at the Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association Conference ([CWWA](#)) over 225 SOPs. Already two utilities, Nakuru and PROVO have requested access to the SOPs they need.

Presentations and Conferences

OWB was invited to speak at numerous conferences over the past year some of which are documented below. Ian Mcilwham, Jason Mank, and I were joined in many presentations by our colleagues from Poland and Ukraine who gave first-hand accounts of how the war is affecting Ukrainian Water Utilities and our plans to help.

- **American Water Works Association (AWWA) ACE (Annual Conference and Exhibition):** Our dynamo, Skylar Lipson, attended the conference and manned the booth provided by [AWWA](#) at no charge. Robert Haller also lent a hand. Skylar developed and displayed some excellent promotional material. The same has been promised for ACE in Toronto in 2023.
- **WEFTEC (Water Environment Federation's Technical Exhibition and Conference):** We were given a free booth at WEFTEC, New Orleans and Skylar once again answered the call for duty and manned the booth along with Robert and I. I also made two presentations at the conference.
- **WETT (Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show):** We have been given two speaking spots as well as a free booth at this 2023 conference which is the world's largest annual trade show for wastewater and environmental service professionals. They have also pledged a monetary donation. I was interviewed for their "[WWETT Making Waves](#)" podcast.

- **Western Canada On-Site Wastewater**

Management Conference: Greg and Valerie made presentations at the conference. We were also given a booth and made new contact which will be of use for smaller systems training. An honorarium was issued to OWB.



Figure 4 from GWOPA at the UN headquarters in Bonn With Shobana Srinivasan

- **EOCP Conference:** I had the opportunity to make a 45-minute presentation and they continue to financially support our volunteers.
- **World Non-Revenue Water Conference:** I presented at this event held in Prague.
- **Water Conference Krakow.** Valerie was invited to the water conference put on by the University in Krakow which was held at one of the water treatment plants.

- **Provo Water Company Water Management Program Webinar:** Skylar Lipson, Ronald Enns, Ian Mcilwham, and I provided online training to this utility located in the Turks and



Figure 5 Presenting OWB at the Water Loss conference in Prague

Caicos as part of their 11th Annual Drinking Water Week. We covered Water Management Program, Preventative Maintenance Program, Wastewater, Commercial Buildings Water Treatment, Chlorine Residual, Workforce Development: Training & Certification, and SOPs.

- **Caribbean Water and Wastewater Association (CWWA) Conference:** Beyond the session where we launched over 225 SOPs, I attended the High-Level Forum (HLF) of Water Ministers which are the highest appointed water sector representatives in their respective countries. This year's HLF included a more engaged dialogue that resulted in one of their most successful meetings. Some of their priorities include strengthened resiliency to disasters. Kevin Carter and I also participated in part of the

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) [WASH](#)/The Bahamas National Emergency Management Agency ([NEMA](#)) Disaster Preparation Workshop for The Bahamas which included leaders from all societal sectors working to develop a national emergency plan. We also shared a booth with CAWASA in the Exhibition Hall.

- **WASH LAC** – We were invited to participate in a workshop on Hurricane Preparedness. As part of the panel Madeleine provided a presentation on Standard Operating Procedures development.

Other

- Received Certificate in Training of Facilitators Course for SDG 6.5.1 from GWP and UNEP.

- Received Course Certificate for Water Supply and Sanitation Policy in Developing. Countries Part 1: Understanding Complex Problems from University of Manchester.
- Attended the CoP Sanitation, Wastewater and Utilities: Wastewater Treatment and Monitoring in LAC Workshop.
- Set up travel insurance policy for volunteers on deployment.

I would like to thank all of our members, volunteers and donors for their generous support, We could not do any of these many initiatives without you. I also thank our Board of Directors, Madeleine Butschler, Kevin Carter, Robert Haller, Jason Mank, Kathy Obad and Carl Yates for all their hard work and our esteemed Advisory Panel, Ton Vlugman, Patricia Aquing and John Joseph for their sage advice and help. I also thank our Communications and Marketing Committee – Nicole Austin, Paul Bishop, Skylar Lipson, Patricia, Kevin, Madeline, -for an excellent first year and look forward to more growth in 2023.

I express my deep gratitude to you all volunteers, members, donors and sponsors and hope you feel proud of what has been accomplished because of your support.

Valerie Jenkinson
Chair OWB