The Final Reports and Recommendations for the 2014 Planning Session topics are summarized below.

**Topic 1 - Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement**

The following documents are attached.

- Planning Session Topic Description – Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement
- Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement Session notes
- Draft Volunteer Promotional Program (Volunteer Registration Discount Program and Committee Recruitment Fair)
- Draft Ambassador Program
- Potential Ambassadors
- 2015 AC Ambassador Poster.

The two items that advanced from this session were the Committee Recruitment Fair and the Ambassadors Program. The status and recommendation of these programs are as follows.

**Committee Recruitment Fair**

The committee fair was planned for two days at the 2015 AC but was held for only one day due to the blizzard on Tuesday of the AC. The Monday event was deemed a success and there are plans to hold the committee fair again for two days at the 2016 AC. The committee fair has been organized by the Conference Arrangements Committee and the Meeting Management Council Director.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the fair be held and organized every year at the AC or every other year at the AC (based on the results of the 2016 AC) and at the discretion of the Conference Arrangements Committee and the Meeting Management Council Director.

**Ambassadors Program**

The Ambassador Program was planned for the 2015 AC with generally positive reviews but the judgement of its success clouded by the 2015 weather event. The program did not take place at any other NEWEA events though the 2015 calendar year. Based on the lessons learned from the 2015 AC, the Ambassadors program will be tried again at the 2016 AC. The Ambassadors program has been organized by the Meeting Management Council Director.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the success of the program be evaluated (based on the results of the 2016 AC) by the Meeting Management Council Director and reported to the SMT and modified as deemed necessary for subsequent events/years.
**Topic 2 - NEWEA Certifications Programs**

The following documents are attached.

- Planning Session Topic Description – NEWEA Certification Programs
- NEWEA Certification Program Session notes
- November 2014 NEWEA Certification Program Summary
- Task Force Initiatives Survey Results
- June 2015 June ECM NEWEA Certification Task Force Summary
- December 2015 Laboratory Analyst Certification Exam Transition Memorandum of Understanding

A task force was advanced from the effort of the planning session to advance and improve the policies and procedure of the NEWEA Certification Programs with potential long term goals of improving the marketing of the programs and consideration of training. The first initiative of improving the policies and procedures were outlined and broken in to three categories.

- Proctor Application and Guideline
- Exam Content and Administration
- Exam Sustainability

These categories were broken down into a number of subtopic that was identified as being areas where improvement to one or both certification programs could be made but needed further investigation, evaluation and discussion before any recommendations for change or no change could be made. The Task force conducted a survey of the many subtasks to prioritize which of the many items should be addressed. One item that was advanced was the development of some general slides for the NEWEA Certification Programs Exam Proctors to use to introduce NEWEA to those taking the exams. In addition a memorandum of understanding for the transition of the laboratory certification exam was developed with the primary exam authors to lay the ground work for the future transition of the exam.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Task Force continue their efforts for another year to address the priority and other subtasks laid out to improve the NEWEA Certification Policies and Procedures. This task force should report their progress at each Executive Committee Meeting in 2016 and provide recommendations at the November 2016 ECM on how they should proceed in 2017. Interim progress reports provided or requests for guidance requested thought 2016 as needed at monthly SMT calls.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Formica

NEWEA President 2015
Topic 1 - Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement Attached Documents

- Planning Session Topic Description – Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement
- Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement Session notes
- Draft Volunteer Promotional Program (Volunteer Registration Discount Program and Committee Recruitment Fair)
- Draft Ambassador Program
- Potential Ambassadors
- 2015 AC Ambassador Poster.
NEWAEA VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

NEWAEA exists to serve its industry and its members and must therefore strive to remain relevant and provide recognizable value to our members (current and future). Our strong history and successes have demonstrated our association’s ability to adapt and continually improve. In this tradition, it is important to look at what is working and what can be improved. Throughout the planning session discussions, please remain focused on the following driver to keep us on track:

What does NEWEA need to do to improve the quality of its offerings to stay relevant and provide value to our current and potential members both now and in the future?

As a volunteer organization NEWEA’s strength and direction come through its volunteers (committee members and leaders). NEWEA’s mission is to promote education and collaboration while advancing knowledge, innovation, and sound public policy for the protection of the water environment and our quality of life. Volunteers are the life of the association and are critical in meeting our mission. Active and happy volunteer members stay active in the association and are retained as members. How can NEWEA improve and strengthen its ability to attract volunteers and keep the existing volunteers engaged in meaningful ways in the association.

With this in mind, please work together to answer the following:

a. What strategies/programs have been or could be used to attract new volunteers to the association?
b. How can we identify the interests of potential volunteers?
c. How can we identify the desires of our existing volunteers to keep them engaged?
d. How can we better communicate the value of volunteering in NEWEA?
e. What types of tools programs could be helpful to committees struggling with membership?
f. Are the appropriate strategies or programs for current volunteer engagement or new volunteer recruitment one size fits all, grouped by committee type or specific to each committee?
g. How can committees, council directors, state director and officers help in volunteer recruitment?

Tuesday morning assignment:

Identify no more than three priority initiatives from your Monday session. Develop recommended implementation (action) steps including the potential assignment of responsibility (committee, task force, Executive Committee, staff, etc.) proposed completion date, and measures to evaluate success (value) of the initiative.
NEWEA PLANNING SESSION
VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT SESSION
MARCH 10-11, 2014
The Westin Portland Harborview Hotel, Portland, ME

Participants:
Jim Barsanti, Leonard Blanchette (Mon. only), Pricilla Bloomfield, Clary Coutu, Peter Goodwin, Jenn, Lachmayr, Brad Moore, Mike Moreau (Tues. only), Dave Polcari, Dennis Polombo, Jerry Potamis, Aubrey Strause (Mon. only), Meg Tabacsko (Facilitator), Ron Tiberi, Ray Willis, and Adam Yanulis.

Background:
As a volunteer organization NEWEA's strength and direction come through its volunteers (committee members and leaders). **NEWEA’s mission is to promote education and collaboration while advancing knowledge, innovation, and sound public policy for the protection of the water environment and our quality of life.** Volunteers are the life of the association and are critical to meeting our mission. Active and happy volunteer members stay active in the association and are retained as members. How can NEWEA improve and strengthen its ability to attract volunteers and keep the existing volunteers engaged in a meaningful way in the association?

**Issues Discussed/Brain Storming (Day 1):**
Meg began with a review of last year’s planning session that focused on Member Engagement

Initial discussion included several questions and comments...
- How many volunteers are active? Matt F. estimated 300 committee members out of 2200 members
- Jen mentioned that we should discuss/revisit Ambassador Program that came up during the 2013 Planning Session
- Dave mentioned that NEWWA has an Ambassador Program and offered to share language/documents
- Adam suggested we further develop the Mentoring Program, not just YP mentoring Program
- Brad suggested that each committee assign a committee member to be responsible to reach out to new members and determine if they have an interest in a particular committee

**Group determined that there are four groups of potential volunteers**
1. New young members that are YPs
2. Other new members
3. Long-time members that have not (or haven’t lately) volunteered or been engaged
4. Existing volunteers that we are seeking to retain

**Other topics discussed:**
- Priscilla suggested a possible topic - committees that don’t have vice-chairs or not very active committees and how can we insure or encourage improvement. What is a strategy or mechanism for this?
- Leonard supported the need to re-connect with long time members, some members as their careers advance may have more time to volunteer than they did in the past
- Talk about having letter got out from NEWEA office with membership renewal identifying recent accomplishments and seeking volunteer needs. It was pointed out that membership renewals go out through WEF, not NEWEA.
- Talk about identifying other opportunities to volunteer aside from committee work such as assisting with office work at NEWEA Office, writing op-ed pieces, doing a presentation at a local school. These are opportunities that may not require significant time commitment.
- Jim B. indicated that A&D could develop a webinar on committee volunteering
- Ray suggested that we have a "Committee Fair" at the Annual Conference
- Meg suggested that maybe the Committee Appreciation Committee could take on additional role of volunteer recruiting and retention
- Priscilla suggested a "mixer" type event that had committee booths set up...suggestions included a sundae salon at the AC or maybe better at the Spring Meeting, or would it be better at the Member Appreciation event?
- Do we need to reach out to Council Directors and therefore the Committees to determine what the needs really are? We need to do homework on areas of need.
- It was pointed out that the most active committees are the ones that have hot topics but, other committees are just as important
- We want every member to feel empowered and involved
- We want every committee to be active with a chair, vice-chair and strong working group
- What are the tools needed to empower the membership?
- Should we set engagement goals?
- Leonard mentioned that a road block to membership and possible engagement is that financially, some facilities or organizations cannot afford WEF memberships for more than a few employees. Talk about offering just a NEWEA membership without joining WEF. Dave indicated that NEWWA has a membership that allows for this.
- Is there something we could do such as a "conference volunteer" offering a reduced or complimentary AC rate that would require a minimum numbers of hours of volunteer services? Offered first come/first serve and limit the number that could participate

Recap of Ideas...
- Ambassador Program
- Social Engagement (beer tasting, sundae, mixer, etc.)
- Session at AC or SM about committees
- Committee Fair
- Use the website more effectively for promoting both general and specific needs for volunteer engagement
- Need to call and communicate with new members
- Opportunity to sit in on committees before committing to one
- Reduced or complimentary rate for AC for volunteering
- Establish Committee Mentor Position
- Volunteer 101 Webinar

Issues Discussed/Decide on Top 3 Initiatives (Day 2)

- Session started with quiz/work sheet to get people focused on why they are active and engaged members.
Adam provided examples of what NEWWA did years ago...several ECM and/or SMT visited consulting/engineering firms, contractors, state agencies, vendors, etc. to thank them for their membership in the organization and allowing their staff to participate and volunteer and remind them of the benefits of being part of the organization.

Reviewed list of potential initiatives form Day 1 and voted on 3 top initiatives to pursue

Initiatives
- Implement an Ambassador Program
- Committee Fair at Annual Conference
- Reduced and/or Complimentary Registration Fee at AC 2015 in exchange for Volunteering at AC

Initiative 1 - Ambassador Program
- Past President to be Ambassador Program Leader (APL) who will be responsible for reaching out to potential Ambassadors and be in charge of calendar of events once Ambassadors are selected

Suggested Ambassadors (names have been added/deleted since Planning Session)
- Matt St. Pierre, Deb Mahoney, Stacey Depasquale, Jason Turgeon, Roger Janson, Mike Wilson, Charlie Tyler, Erin Mosley, Doug Miller, Any Fish, Phyllis Rand, Norton True, Lenny Young, Vonnie Reis, Ken Carlson, Dan Bisson, Ed Rushbrook, Paul Dombrowski, George Harrington, Sue Sullivan, Russ Adams

Guidelines for Ambassador Program
- Ambassadors to attend a minimum of 3 events/year (AC, SM, Specialty Conference, Golf Outing, Membership Appreciation Event, etc.)
- Need to provide noticeable clothing (vest, sash, etc.) to be easily identified by new members
- Outgoing and knowledgeable/familiar with NEWEA Organization
- Invite Ambassadors attending AC and/or SM to also attend ECM
- Term of 3 years with renewal option offered by APL
- Budget for APL and Ambassadors for attire and drink tickets
- Continue to review and improve guidelines
- Develop Ambassador business cards for follow up contact
- Introduce Ambassador Program at SM 2014

Action Items
- Meg to set up call with Mike Bonomo (Past President/APL) (call held on 3/21)
- Dave to provide NEWWA guidelines for review and assistance in development of NEWEA Ambassador Program (forwarded on 3/21, see attachment NEWWA Welcome Comm Proposal)
- Set up conference call with potential Ambassadors, invite to go out from APL
- Develop goals and objectives
- Set up Calendar

Initiative 2 - New Volunteer Incentive Rate Pilot Program for AC 2015
- Conference Committee Arrangements Chair, Ron Tiberi, to lead program
- Budget...Pilot Program to allow for up to 20 volunteers
- Must be new members that have not volunteered at AC previously
- Recommended to be open to non-NEWEA members
• Sept. deadline for posting application on website, asking Committee members to promote program within their own company/organization

Action Items
• Pricilla to draft application form that includes needs that are identified non-committee volunteer needs and experience (forwarded on 3/13, see attachment NEWEA Volunteer Incentive Rate Application)
• Jim and A&D to draft list of volunteer needs
• Need to develop “time sheet’ to document hours spent volunteering, assign certain people to sign-off time sheets
• Ron and Meg to develop timeline (work from Sept. backwards)

Initiative 3 - Committee Fair at 2015 AC
• Set up in one of the ballrooms similar to job fairs and college recruiting fairs
• Shooting for 2 days (2 hours/day) and flip flop AM/PM times
• Council Directors to communicate with Committee Chairs
• Every Committee needs to be represented/must have 2 committee representatives present during the event
• Not intended to be an annual event, if successful repeat again in 3-5 years

Action Items
• Ron to work out budget, coordinate event, and develop “draw”
• Committee Chairs to come up with 1 page fact sheet about their committee
• Develop marketing/promotion campaign (hats, buttons, stickers for those who attend the fair)

Meg to give report during Discussion Items at April EC

Note – according to the NEWEA Office, approximately 280 new members have joined NEWEA in the past 12 months. Our challenge is to get as many of these new members to become active and engaged volunteers! Who is up for the challenge?
MEMORANDUM

To: NEWEA BOARD

Fr: Ronald Tiberi P.E. Chair- Conference Arrangements

Dt: January 18, 2016

Re: Draft Volunteer Promotional Program

Summary of delegated initiatives based upon the outcome of the March Planning session:

A. **New Volunteer Registration Discount** - The establishment of a discounted rate for Annual Meeting registration based upon earned credit for volunteered hours.

B. **Committee Recruitment Fair** - The establishment of Committees Fairs at the Annual Meeting

The following Implementing Details are as follows:

A. Volunteer discounts program for the annual meeting will consists of the following components.

1. Sign up program (example sign up sheet attached)
2. A review of delegates (both member & non-member) and they’re proposed voluntary assignments, by the Director and Chair of appropriate committee.
3. Number of volunteers is limited to 20 – and requires performing minimum 8 hours of documented time for the association needs.
4. Compensatory Rate will be set at $20/hr for 8 hours to a grand total of $160 against a $245 Daily registration - 65% against full charge
5. This is a one time offer
6. Approx Costs $1280

B. Volunteer Fair

1. Two time periods during the annual conference will be set –AM Tuesday and PM Monday, likely.
2. The fair will resemble a college or job fair with each committee provided a table top – 47 total in a aisle configuration.
3. Each committee shall “man” the “Booth” during the fair times
4. Sign up sheets required at each booth
5. Food and entertainment, cash bar, DJ? AM Continental (NEWEA Cupcakes), PM Snacks
6. Promotion- Hats or Pins? $? Drink ticket $8/signature  
7. Budgets $1500/event-  
8. Total Approx Costs-

These items are to be implemented in-conjunction with other initiatives to promote the overall drive, including early promotion by the Association, Webinars, and the Ambassador programs.
DRAFT Proposed NEWEA Ambassador Program

Goal of Ambassador Program:
- Personally welcome all new members and encourage active participation.

Structure of Program:
- Past President to assume role of Ambassador Program Leader (APL) the Wednesday of Annual Conference
- Immediate Past President to become an Ambassador and will take over role of APL the following year
- APL responsible for inviting NEWEA members to be Ambassadors
- APL advises Ambassadors of their responsibilities
- APL distributes calendar of events where Ambassadors are needed
- APL assigns and/or recruits Ambassadors to attend events
- Need to develop training/guidance for consistent message as well as identify budget
- Need to advertise Ambassador Program via NEWEA staff and registration process
- Need to make Ambassadors easily identifiable to new members (sash, vest, special lanyard, ribbon, etc.)
- Need to produce Ambassador business cards

Requirements/Responsibilities of Ambassadors:
- Outgoing and knowledgeable/familiar with the NEWEA Organization
- Willing to serve a 3 year term with renewal option by current APL (AC to AC)
- Able to attend a minimum of 3 NEWEA events each year acting as an Ambassador (AC, SM, Specialty Conf., Golf Outing, Member Appreciation Event, Ops Challenge, etc.)
- Call new members (frequency and method tbd.) to follow up on staff mailing
- Ask questions and identify new member’s area of interest
- Provide guidance, information on events and committees, and share personal experiences with NEWEA
- Invite them to attend NEWEA events or meetings
- At events, Ambassadors meet new members near registration area, guide them for 10-30+ minutes through NEWEA materials, ask and answer questions, suggest opportunities/future involvement based on interests
- Introduce them to other NEWEA members
- Provide new member with your Ambassador business card
- Note – Ambassadors are not intended to be mentors and/or chaperones for the entire event
### Potential NEWEA Ambassadors

1. Russ Adams  
2. Dan Bisson  
3. Andre Brousseau  
4. Janine Burke  
5. Ken Carlson  
6. Howard Carter  
7. Stacy DePasquale  
8. Paul Dombrowski  
9. Bob Fischer  
10. Andy Fish  
11. George Harrington  
12. Roger Jansen  
13. Deb Mahoney  
14. Fred McNeil  
15. Doug Miller  
16. Erin Mosley  
17. Phyllis Rand  
18. Ed Rushbrook  
19. Sue Sullivan  
20. Matt St. Pierre  
21. Jason Turgeon  
22. Charlie Tyler  
23. Lenny Young
What is an Ambassador?

- Are you new at NEWWA?
- Do you have Questions about an Event or a Committee?
- Wondering about ways to get Involved?
- Looking to Network?

Ambassadors are here to help you! We are active members and are very excited about welcoming you the Association and helping you get the most out of your membership.
- Planning Session Topic Description – NEWEA Certification Programs
- NEWEA Certification Program Session notes
- November 2014 NEWEA Certification Program Summary
- Task Force Initiatives Survey Results
- June 2015 June ECM NEWEA Certification Task Force Summary
- December 2015 Laboratory Analyst Certification Exam Transition Memorandum of Understanding.
NEWEA CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

NEWEA exists to serve its industry and its members and must therefore strive to remain relevant and provide recognizable value to our members (current and future). Our strong history and successes have demonstrated our association’s ability to adapt and continually improve. In this tradition, it is important to look at what is working and what can be improved. Throughout the planning session discussions, please remain focused on the following driver to keep us on track:

*What does NEWEA need to do to improve its quality of its offerings to stay relevant and provide value to our current and potential members both now and in the future?*

**Certification Programs:**

NEWEA’s voluntary certification programs have successfully provided a means for professional development for NEWEA members and non-members alike. Maintaining, improving and potentially expanding these programs now and into the future are an important component of NEWEA’s mission “to promote education and collaboration while advancing knowledge, innovation, and sound public policy for the protection of the water environment and our quality of life.” Additionally these programs currently offer NEWEA positive exposure to the New England state regulatory agencies, municipalities/utilities, and water quality professionals. Improvement to the visibility, transparency, prestige, and professional recognition of these programs offers the potential for increased exposure of NEWEA to all of these stakeholders for their benefit and the benefit of the association.

How can NEWEA maintain and improve on its existing certification programs?

With this in mind, please work together to answer the following:

a. How should the sustainability of these certification programs be addressed?
b. How can NEWEA improve these programs to increase our exposure with:
   a. State Regulatory Agencies?
   b. Municipalities/Utilities?
   c. Water Quality Professionals?
c. Can the documentation of the policies and procedures of these programs be improved in order to provide some consistency between programs and/or to advance their recognition in the industry?
d. How can NEWEA better coordinate with the training providers to improve the programs? Should NEWEA expand its role in these programs?
e. What can NEWEA do to improve the prestige and value of these programs?
f. Should NEWEA endeavor to expand the certification offerings (ex. safety, industrial pretreatment inspection, industrial pretreatment operation, etc.)?
g. Should the governance of these programs be modified from the current state (Collection Systems Certification as separate committee and laboratory practices under the Laboratory Practices committee)?
h. How can NEWEA get the state certification agencies to the table to provide a forum for discussion and improve these voluntary certification programs?
Tuesday morning assignment:

Identify no more than three priority initiatives from your Monday session. Develop recommended implementation (action) steps including the potential assignment of responsibility (committee, task force, Executive Committee, staff, etc.) proposed completion date, and measures to evaluate success (value) of the initiative.
NEWEA PLANNING SESSION
VOLUNTEER CERTIFICATION SESSION
MARCH 10-11, 2014
The Westin Portland Harborview Hotel, Portland, ME

Participants:
Tom Groves (Facilitator), Linda Austin, Dan Bisson, Mike Bonomo, Howard Carter (day 1), Elizabeth Cutone, Scott Firmin, Andy Fish, Leeann Hanson, Don Kennedy, Greg Kidd, Virgil Lloyd, Mary Lee Santoro, Peter Sherwood

Background:
NEWEA’s voluntary certification programs have successfully provided a means for professional development for NEWEA members and non-members alike. Maintaining, improving and potentially expanding these programs now and into the future are an important component of NEWEA’s mission “to promote education and collaboration while advancing knowledge, innovation, and sound public policy for the protection of the water environment and our quality of life.” Additionally these programs currently offer NEWEA positive exposure to the New England state regulatory agencies, municipalities/utilities, and water quality professionals. Improvement to the visibility, transparency, prestige, and professional recognition of these programs offers the potential for increased exposure of NEWEA to all of these stakeholders for their benefit and the benefit of the association. How can NEWEA maintain and improve on its existing certification programs?

With this in mind, the group worked together to address the following:
1. How should the sustainability of these certification programs be addressed?
2. How can NEWEA improve these programs to increase our exposure with:
   - State Regulatory Agencies?
   - Municipalities/Utilities?
   - Water Quality Professionals?
3. Can the documentation of the policies and procedures of these programs be improved in order to provide some consistency between programs and/or to advance their recognition in the industry?
4. How can NEWEA better coordinate with the training providers to improve the programs? Should NEWEA expand its role in these programs?
5. What can NEWEA do to improve the prestige and value of these programs?
6. Should NEWEA endeavor to expand the certification offerings (ex. safety, industrial pretreatment inspection, industrial pretreatment operation, etc.)?
7. Should the governance of these programs be modified from the current state (Collection Systems Certification as separate committee and Laboratory Certification Subcommittee under the Laboratory Practices committee)?
8. How can NEWEA get the state certification agencies to the table to provide a forum for discussion and improve these voluntary certification programs?

Overview of Programs (Day 1):
Tom Groves began by presenting an overview of the two existing NEWEA voluntary certification programs for the whole group prior to breakouts (refer to attached PDF of presentation attached). This overview showed how each of the two certification programs are similar and are different. It provided everyone with a basic understanding of how the programs work. In the last 5 years, there have been
approximately 1,200 individuals who took the Collection Systems exam and about 200 individuals who took the Lab Practices exam.

The Collection Systems Certification Committee outdates the Collection Systems Committee. It came out of certification efforts that NEWEA used to be involved with to certify operators prior to states taking over mandatory certification programs. The Lab Practices Certification exam is a subcommittee within the Lab Practices Committee.

**Issues Discussed/Brain Storming:**
The group began a brain storming session and discussed all issues related to the NEWEA certification programs. They were all thrown out on the board and then categorized into the following topic areas:

**Governance:**
- Need consistent policies and procedures for all NEWEA certification exams.
- What is the process for updating the exam and question pool?
- What makes the NEWEA program valuable when compared to others?
- Should we consider removing “Voluntary” from the name? Does that make it seem less valuable?
- Is a standalone committee or subcommittee the better structure?
- Should there be an ad-hoc certification committee or council? Create new Council Director position with lab, collections, and possibly new MS4 and maintenance certification.
- Should trainers be able to administer the exam or should they be kept separate?

**Marketing:**
- Is this a marketing problem - what is the value, why a NEWEA voluntary certification?
- Should we consider dropping “voluntary” from the name? Does “Voluntary” take away from value?
- How often are the NEWEA exams offered and where? Right now, only marketing that is occurring for theses exams is being done by those doing the training and offering the exam – NEIWPCC, NEWWTA. No real science to where training is being offered and if needs/desires are being met – just best guess.
- Consider to target for exams: state WW associations, regulators, municipalities, small communities, engineers, etc.
- Should the exams be regularly scheduled in each State? In conjunction with state WW shows?
- How are the exams planned and promoted currently? (Through NEIWPCC, NEWWTA, and on NEWEA web site.)
- The exams should be branded with NEWEA’s new branding strategy.
- Marketing success stories of those who pass exams. (Recognize those who pass, etc.)
- Post names of passing individuals on NEWEA web site or newsletter, send to state WW associations, profile some who pass the exam, etc.
- Underutilized database with all the names of those signing up for exam. Majority of those who pass are not NEWEA members. Good opportunity to recruit members.
- Should include NEWEA literature and info at all trainings by training providers that are offering the exams.
- Some utilities offer incentives to those that pass the exam. Can NEWEA offer some incentive to those who participate/pass?
- Can NEWEA sponsor exam prep course? (Currently, NEWEA is not a training organization.)
• Should NEWEA explore virtual or online training options?
• Should NEWEA even maintain these programs or explore other national certification agencies, such as Association of Boards of Certification (ABC)?

State Certification:
• We need better involvement of state agencies for certification. How do we get more involvement?
• Can NEWEA/NEIWPCC engage state certification officials? (NEIWPCC has a wastewater certification workgroup of state regulators.)
• Most state regulators are not NEWEA members. (They have to pay for their own memberships and some elect not to belong to avoid possible conflict of interest.)
• How can we get regulators to belong? (WEF currently undertaking Regulatory Membership program review.) Regulators can be included on a NEWEA Council even if not a member.
• Certification renewals and TCH requirements – Consistency within states is difficult. CT does not currently have certification requirements.

Sustainability:
• Should NEWEA require re-certification, TCHs, credit hours vs. the one-time exam and fee that they are right now?
• Challenge for NEWEA to track all past certified operators if no way of updating their information (i.e., recertification for fee or not).
• Are the programs sustainable? ($35 per application.) If not, how do make the program sustainable? Increase cost - member and nonmember. Does it cover the cost of the program?
• Who will train or give the exam in the future?
• Who is certified to train and administer exam?
• How should NEWEA address training? How will they complement or conflict with existing training organizations?
• ABC has national certification exam, should NEWEA compete?

Other Miscellaneous Thoughts from the Group:
• What are other MAs doing?
• Other possible certifications – stormwater, safety, maintenance, small wastewater systems, NERBA biosolids, etc.

Issues Discussed/Decide on Top Initiatives (Day 2):
As the group reconvened for day 2, the issue of whether or not NEWEA should even stay involved with certification programs was brought up again. The group felt that there may be competition from ABC and whereas they are a national organization with more resources and expertise, maybe NEWEA should not further pursue these programs. With that, the group decided to undertake a SWOT Analysis to evaluate continuing with the program. The results are listed below:

SWOT Analysis - Should NEWEA continue to pursue certifications or should NEWEA defer to ABC?
**Strengths**
- Regional focus
- Control exam composition
- Target our specific/unique needs
- Relevancy
- Cost is lower than other test options
- Local admin, review and responsiveness

**Weakness**
- Don't have solid/consistent documentation, policies, or committee structure
- Lack of bench depth for trainers and proctors
- Exams not regularly scheduled and the process is not clear for the exam. Coordination could improve.
- No online testing
- Poor marketing
- Psychometrics - question design of exams

**Opportunities**
- Potential to unify profession
- Potential to use database for marketing
- Coordinating with regulators
- Implement online testing
- ABC is too removed and does not offer training
- Could we collaborate with ABC to supplement offerings we don't have?
- Educate regulators and utilities on the value of the certification
- Branding training specific to NEWEA members.
- Create NEWEA training team
- Increase membership

**Threats**
- Competition with others co-opting program (NY State)
- ABC certification process w/many strengths (national subject matter experts, market dominance, etc.) - how many exams does ABC give in New England?
- Other certifications are available from ABC
- ABC does have some respect amongst regulators
- Online testing available from ABC now

*The group voted to recommend that NEWEA continue with the program.*

With that decision made, the group proceeded to identify the top initiatives to proceed with for this strategic planning session.

**Initiatives**
- Policy and Procedures
- Marketing
- Training

**Initiative 1 - Policy and Procedures**
We currently have lab practices procedures, application guideline, and proctor guidelines. We need to collect what we have and compare those to best practices and procedures. We should also collect and review ABC and others policy guide for certification.

**Items to address in a Policy and Procedures document:**
- Is the fee enough to be sustainable?
- “In training” category if there is not enough experience yet? OIT, provisional, etc.
- How long to wait for exam retake?
- Looking for consistency between certification committees.
- Statement on ADA
- Content of test - T/F, multiple choice – right now mix of all including short answers/essays
- Appeal process
- Exam review, how many exams are offered?
- Exam locations and frequency? Offer at NEWEA Office as-needed or scheduled, at Annual State WW association conferences, at NEWEA Spring Meeting, at NEWEA Specialty Seminars (especially the biannual NEWEA Collections Seminar), NEWEA Annual Conference, etc.
- Security of exams – where are they housed, stored, maintained, etc.
- Grading practices, who can grade?
- Proctor policy – who can proctor the exam? How can proctor pool be expanded but maintain integrity of the exams? Can NEWEA reimburse travel expenses for proctors?
- How often to review policies that are developed?
- Grading and notification. People call for results - how to handle?
- Review term certification and liability for NEWEA. Keep term “voluntary?”
- Renewal/TCH – should NEWEA consider making this a renewable certification?
- What is the process for the certification program - will have to be developed
- Develop committee or review structure

**Who is on the group?**
(Council Directors that oversee certification exam committees/subcommittees, NEWEA ED, and Chair of Committees.)
- Andy Fish
- Greg Kidd
- Mary-Lee Santoro
- Tom Groves
- Don Kennedy
- Virgil Lloyd
- Priscilla Bloomfield (not present in session, but nominated due to Council Director position)
- NEWEA ED - Elizabeth Cutone/Mary Barry (new ED)

**Action Items**
- Set up initial conference call with members of group. Review the scope above, identify if others need to be part of this group, identify documents that need to be collected/gathered for review. – Tom Groves to coordinate. Call to take place – late April.
- Develop Policies and Procedures document outline - group
- Meet in via in-person or conference calls – schedule to be determined

**Timeline**
June 30 - draft
Sept - final for ECM
Nov – recommendation to EC

**Initiative 2 - Marketing**
Specific to certification - this will have to follow the new NEWEA branding policy. How do we get a handle on all of the elements related to marketing? There are many roles for NEWEA to play as well as many opportunities for membership benefits and growth.

**Items to Address for Marketing:**
- Promotion plan for exam offerings
- Review and analyze existing information. Understand document manage needs.
- Social media to promote certification.
- Reach out to State MAs
- Reach out to State regulators to promote the certifications
- Reach out to utilities to promote the program
- Reach out to individuals
- Marketing materials, website, etc.
- Reach out to private labs
- Cost of the exam? Evaluate the cost of the program to NEWEA? Same price to members and nonmembers? Offer a membership option (at discount) when signing up for the exam (i.e., $35 for exam, $105 for both exam and 1-year membership)?
- New member link to NEWEA membership and certification renewals.

**Who is on the group?**
- Clary Coutu
- Mike Bonomo
- Dan Bisson
- John Troffater (suggested - Membership comm.)
- Priscilla Bloomfield
- Others????

Need to develop a budget for the marketing effort.

**Action Items**
- Set up initial conference call with members of group. Review the scope above, identify if others need to be part of this group to coordinate. Call to take place – late April.
- Need to develop marketing plan document for these programs.
- Need to develop a budget for the marketing effort.
- Meet in via in-person or conference calls – schedule to be determined

**Timeline**
June 30 - draft
Sept - final for ECM
Nov – recommendation to EC

**Initiative 3 – Training**
The delivery of the NEWEA certification exams has relied solely on training by the few training providers who offer courses specifically designed for these exams as well as proctoring the exam at the course conclusion. Whereas the exams bear the name NEWEA, is there a more active role that NEWEA should play in these programs?

**Items to Address for Training:**

- Who should be allowed to do the training?
- Should training providers be certified for the NEWEA exams?
- Should NEWEA target training?
- Should NEWEA contract with trainers?
- Are there other partnerships for training to explore?
- Should NEWEA provide training standards or outline?
- List resources for training on the web site.

**Who is on the group?**
- Andy Fish
- Greg Kidd
- Tom Groves/Don Kennedy
- Howard Carter
- Elizabeth Cutone/Mary Barry
- Ray Willis
- Others???

**Action Items**

- Set up initial conference call with members of group. Review the scope above, identify if others need to be part of this group, look at what California WEA does – ?????? to coordinate. Call to take place – early/mid-May.
- Need to identify issues and determine if this can proceed right now or needs to wait for Policies and Procedures initiative to be finalized first. This could be a topic at next year’s Strategic Planning session.
- Meet in via in-person or conference calls – schedule to be determined

**Timeline**

Sept - draft for ECM
Nov – recommendation on how to proceed
What does NEWEA need to do to improve the quality of its offerings to stay relevant and to provide value to our current and potential members both now and in the future?
NEWEA Voluntary Certification Programs

- Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

For background information, these slides will give an overview of each program’s:

- Committee/Structure
- Committee Makeup
- Exam Makeup
- Application Process
- Miscellaneous
Committee/Structure

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- Is its own standalone committee
- Established in 1979
- Came out of Ad-hoc Committee on Operator Collection System Certification

Committee/Structure—Con’t

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- Preceded Collection Systems Committee
- NEWEA had previously conducted Voluntary Plant Operator Certification prior to the mandatory requirements of the states in the 1980’s
- Why the need? – safety, professionalize the industry, etc.
Committee/Structure

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

– Is a Sub-committee of Lab Practices Committee
– Established in 1990
– Based on VT 42 hour Lab class final exam
– Why the need? – Professional recognition, safety, etc.

Committee Makeup

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification

– Currently 6-8 members
– Meet 3 to 4 times/year
– Only committee members can proctor the exam
– Exam usually only offered with a sponsored training (NEIWPC, NEWWTA, NHWPCA)
Sub-Committee Makeup

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification
- Currently 5 - 6 members
- Meet 2 - 3 times/year
- Only Sub-committee member can proctor the exam. Must be Grade II.
- Exam usually only offered with a sponsored training (NEIWPCC, GMWEA, VRWA, NHRWA JETCC, others)

Certification Exam

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- Grades I — IV
- 100 questions
- Original exams housed and held by NEWEA
- Combination of multiple choice, fill in blank, & short answer
- Breakdown (multiple choice)—70/30% for I & II, 30/70% for III & IV
Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- Passing score = 70%
- Must wait 6 months if fail for retake
- Retake uses same exam
- Exams proctored by Committee member
- No official proctor guidelines or forms

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- Exams sent to NEWEA office for grading
- Exam results sent out by NEWEA office (instructors CC’d)
- Audit? – No formal appeal process
- Exams updated — every 5 years, tweaked as needed
Certification Exam—Con’t

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification

– Grades I—III = last updated March 2012
– Grade IV = last updated November 2013
– Question Pool = total number of questions on exam

Certification Exam

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

– Grades I – II
– 100 questions
– Original exams housed w/Subcommittee Chair
– Passing score = 70%
– All multiple choice
Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

- No official waiting period for retake
- Retake exam usually different
- Exams proctored by Sub-Committee member
- Has official proctor guidelines and form

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

- Exams graded by Proctor then results sent to NEWEA office
- Exam results sent out by NEWEA office (instructors CC’d)
- Audit? – No formal appeal process but will allow questions at time of exam (after exam is over)
Certification Exam—Con’t

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification
- Exams tweaked annually, rewritten every 5 years
- Grade I = last updated June 2013
- Grade II = last updated June 2013
- Question Pool = 200 – 300 per exam, not all with qualifiers

Exam Application

Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification
- $35 fee for exam
- Applications submitted to NEWEA, sent to proctor for determination of Grade level prior to exam
- Point system to determine Grade I—IV
- Exam not sequential
- One-time certification—doesn’t require subsequent renewal or TCHs
Exam Application

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

- $35 fee for exam
- Applications submitted to NEWEA, sent to proctor for determination of Grade level prior to exam based on experience in field/education
- Exam not sequential
- One-time certification – doesn’t require subsequent renewal or TCHs
Voluntary Wastewater Collection Systems Certification

- Why do students take the Collections Exam?
  - Beneficial when posting for new positions
  - Stipend or pay raise
- Approximately 95% of training class takes exam
- 2-5 outside come to take exam (usually past fails)
- NEWEA members? – Unsure, but expect low %

Voluntary Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Certification

- Why do students take the Lab Exam?
  - Beneficial when posting for new positions
  - Stipend or pay raise
- Approximately 95% in training class take exam
- 2-5 outside come to take exam (usually past fails)
- NEWEA members? – Unsure, but expect low %
Collection Systems Exam – Last 5 Years

FROM 01-01-09 - 12-31-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade I</th>
<th>Grade II</th>
<th>Grade III</th>
<th>Grade IV</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
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<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 199</td>
<td>Total: 573</td>
<td>Total: 157</td>
<td>Total: 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Fail: 17%</td>
<td>%Fail: 18%</td>
<td>%Fail: 33%</td>
<td>%Fail: 29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This period total exams given, all grades: 1160
This period total passes, all grades: 904
This period total failures, all grades: 256
This period total fail % rate, all grades: 22%

EXAMS:
2009 269
2010 243
2011 182
2012 270
2013 186
1160

Lab Analyst Exam – Last 5 Years

FROM 01/01/2009 - 12/31/2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade I</th>
<th>Grade II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 159</td>
<td>Total: 64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%Fail: 8.81%</td>
<td>%Fail: 17.19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This period total exams given, all grades: 223
This period total passes, all grades: 186
This period total failures, all grades: 25
This period total fail % rate, all grades: 11%

EXAMS:
2009 54
2010 56
2011 7 (year of the flood in VT)
2012 64
2013 42
223

NEWEA 2014 Strategic Planning Meeting
What does NEWEA need to do to improve the quality of its offerings to stay relevant and to provide value to our current and potential members both now and in the future?

Strategic Planning Meeting
March 10-11, 2014

Time for Breakout Sessions !!!

Strategic Planning Meeting
March 10-11, 2014
How can NEWEA maintain and improve on its existing certification programs?

a. How should the sustainability of these certification programs be addressed?

b. How can NEWEA improve these programs to increase our exposure with:
   a. State Regulatory Agencies?
   b. Municipalities/Utilities?
   c. Water Quality Professionals?

c. Can the documentation of the policies and procedures of these programs be improved in order to provide some consistency between programs and/or to advance their recognition in the industry?

d. How can NEWEA better coordinate with the training providers to improve the programs? Should NEWEA expand its role in these programs?
How can NEWEA maintain and improve on its existing certification programs?

e. What can NEWEA do to improve the prestige and value of these programs?

f. Should NEWEA endeavor to expand the certification offerings (ex. safety, industrial pretreatment inspection, industrial pretreatment operation, etc.)?

g. Should the governance of these programs be modified from the current state (Collection Systems Certification as separate committee and laboratory practices under the Laboratory Practices committee)?

h. How can NEWEA get the state certification agencies to the table to provide a forum for discussion and improve these voluntary certification programs?
GOAL: NEWEA’s voluntary certification programs have successfully provided a means for professional development for NEWEA members and non-members alike. Maintaining, improving and potentially expanding these programs now and into the future are an important component of NEWEA’s mission. Additionally, these programs currently offer NEWEA positive exposure to the New England state regulatory agencies, municipalities/utilities, and water quality professionals.

The goal of this initiative is to identify and recommend options for improving NEWEA’s voluntary certification programs to include consistent policies and governance to improve the visibility, prestige, and professional recognition of these programs to the organization.

The Strategic Planning session identified three main Initiatives:

1- Policies and Procedures
2- Marketing
3- Training

This document addresses Initiative #1 – Policies and Procedures, as it was determined by the ad-hoc committee that this piece was essential to the overall success of the initiative before the second two pieces could be undertaken.

**Initiative #1 – Policies and Procedures for NEWEA Certification Exams**

NEWEA currently has lab practices procedures, application guideline, and proctor guidelines. We need to collect what we have and compare those to best practices and procedures. We should also collect and review other policy guides for certification.

This task was subsequently broken down into three subtasks as listed below:

A. Proctor Application and Guidelines
B. Exam Content and Administration
C. Sustainability

**Initiative #2 – Marketing for NEWEA Certification Exams**

Specific to certification - this will follow the new NEWEA branding policy. How do we get a handle on all of the elements related to marketing – not only marketing the exams, but also marketing the
organization? There are many roles for NEWEA to play as well as many opportunities for membership benefits and growth. Most individuals who take the exams are non-members.

*To be completed at a later date.*

**Initiative #3 – Training for NEWEA Certification Exams**

The delivery of the NEWEA certification exams has relied solely on training by the few training providers who offer courses specifically designed for the preparation for these exams. These training providers also proctor the exam at the course conclusion. Whereas the exams bear the name of NEWEA, is there a more active role that NEWEA needs to play in these programs with training and/or coordination with training providers?

*To be completed at a later date.*
Task 1.A: Proctor Application and Guidelines

In order to have a standardized and respected certification exam process, there needs to be standardized procedures/goals for the application and guideline process for proctors. This section will describe what is recommended as a goal for proctor guidelines for the NEWEA certification exams.

1.) Administration:
The proctor application will be managed by the NEWEA office in conjunction with the appropriate certification committee. A standard proctor application should be produced combining the best practices of both existing applications documents for the two existing NEWEA exams.

*Action Item:* A standard Proctor Application Form needs to be produced for all NEWEA exams. The application is to be based on the existing Lab Practices proctor application.

2.) Approval:
The appropriate certification committee reserves the right to accept or reject proctor applicants based on their application; and will require all proctor applicants to include a signed copy of an Exam Integrity Form (to be developed). Ethics and/or conflicts of interest should be addressed and covered in the exam integrity document with all questions or issues addressed to the NEWEA Senior Management Team for approval.

*Action Item:* An Exam Integrity Form needs to be produced for proctors for all NEWEA exams.

3.) Proctor Qualifications:
In order to properly review and control proctor applicants to preserve the integrity of the exam(s), all applicants for proctoring must be willing to preserve the integrity of the exam and must sign an Exam Integrity Form. In addition, the following important points are recommended minimum requirements for proctor approval:

a) It is recommended that proctor applicants possess the highest level of the exam they are administering, or

b) Proctor applicants should be a member of the appropriate certification committee, an officer of NEWEA, or an employee of NEWEA.

*Possible Issue:* There was disagreement among the ad-hoc committee on what should be the minimum requirements in order to be a proctor. These two options were agreed upon as the general basis for proctoring an exam along with the proper application and exam integrity form.

4.) Custody of the Exam(s):
Exam(s) should be housed on a secure server within NEWEA office and released to the approved proctor via a secure method, i.e., FedEx. When sending the exams, the package should be sealed with a Chain of Custody form, list of contents, and proctor instructions. When the exam
is complete, the entire package, including unused exams and Chain of Custody form, should be returned to the NEWEA office via the same secure method for scoring and storing for record keeping.

*Action Item:* Chain of Custody Form needs to be produced for all NEWEA exams.

5.) **Role of the Proctor:**

The proctor shall follow the approved guidelines for proctoring the exam(s) as outlined in the approved application. This will include procedures for protecting the exams prior to the exam, keeping a log of examinees, verifying examinees identification, proper administration of the exam, collecting test and scrap materials, completing the post-exam proctor report, and receiving/shipping all test materials back to the NEWEA office.

*Action Item:* A standard list of Proctor Rules and Guidelines for all NEWEA exams needs to be produced.
**Task 1.B: Exam Content and Administration**

In order to have a standardized and respected certification exam process, there needs to be standardized procedures/goals for the content and administration of the exam. This section will describe what is recommended as a goal for the NEWEA certification exam content and administration. Whereas both current exams are different, it is not expected that the certification committees will be able to change the existing certification exams immediately. Instead, the committees should move towards this standardization over time (as soon as reasonable, but ideally no longer than 12 months). If NEWEA were to create a new certification exam, the new exam should follow the model program described below.

1.) **Storage/Location:**

It is recommended that the master electronic copy of each version of a NEWEA certification exam be located in NEWEA’s office on a safe, secure, and properly backed up network/server. In addition, all electronic versions of question pools, answers, previous versions of the exam, etc. should also be stored and backed up in the same manner. The protocol for network and server security and backup should be shared with the respective committees. Additional paper copies of the exams may be in circulation from time to time. A process should be installed and implemented to track each version of the exam (i.e., numbering system) and to account for all exams. Any copies of exams or old exams (including draft copies), should be returned to the NEWEA office and destroyed or shredded when no longer needed unless a copy is required to be part of an applicant’s file. There may be a need for committee chairs or committee members to have paper or electronic copies of the exams and question pools periodically. These copies should be protected, appropriately stored/locked up, and/or destroyed. All paper versions of the exams and/or question pools should be stored at the NEWEA office and locked in secure files.

The protection of the exam materials and questions is of paramount importance. Many hours of volunteer time and resources have been put into these materials and their security, restricted circulation, and protection are extremely important to the organization as well as to the respectability of the exam to insure they are not compromised in anyway.

*Action Item:* A protocol needs to be developed for handling, storage, tracking, and shredding of exam and/or question information.

*Action Item:* A protocol for network and server security and storage needs to be developed (if not done so already).

2.) **Exam Questions:**

It is recommended that each NEWEA certification exam be of similar and consistent formats. Ideally, this would be a multiple choice exam with a 2:1 ratio of question pool (with answers) to the number of questions used on each exam. This may take a while to convert some of the existing examinations, but needs to be a goal for each exam within 3 years. The use of “fill in the blanks”
and short essay answers is discouraged. By converting all exams to a multiple choice format, NEWEA will have increased flexibility on consistent grading of each exam (i.e., no interpretation of the grader). In addition, with the development of a 2:1 question pool, the exams could be created and randomized by software packages and/or standardized testing administration agencies. This would allow for additional flexibility in scrambling questions and answer order. The use of multiple choice examinations also allows the potential for transformation from paper-testing to computer-based-testing or online testing. This should be a long-term goal for NEWEA and each exam committee/subcommittee.

**Action Item:** All exam committees to convert current exam questions and answers into a multiple choice format. In addition, each exam committee needs to develop additional questions in order to increase the exam question pool.

**Action Item:** Examination preparation/scrambling software and/or service providers should be sought out and investigated as long-term solutions for exam administration.

3.) Updating Questions/Answers:

It is recommended that each NEWEA certification exam committee/subcommittee review questions as a full committee/subcommittee annually (if not more frequent) and set a schedule for adding, editing, and eliminating questions. Also, the review of all potential answers should be done annually as well with the committee/subcommittee making any needed corrections to misleading or incorrect answers. If full conversion to a multiple choice exam is undertaken and complete, statistics can be obtained from the testing agency to determine the breakdown of answer selection. This can be a valuable tool for the committee in evaluating correct and incorrect answers.

4.) Question/Answer Referencing:

A standard format should be developed and utilized for the referencing of all questions and correct answers in the exam pool. All detailed referencing should be in a standard document or format and provided to the NEWEA office for permanent storage and protection. This documentation is critical to the exam appeal process as discussed later in this section.

**Action Item:** Referencing format needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.

5.) Updating Exams:

Once a complete exam pool is established as stated in paragraph 2 above, it is recommended that each level of a NEWEA certification exam be updated annually. Ideally, each level of exam will have two versions at any one time (i.e., A and B). This will provide an opportunity for a retake of the exam that will be different from the one previously taken by the applicant. In addition, the exam application form should note which version of the exam that each applicant takes at any time with that information entered into a master tracking database by NEWEA. When a 2:1 question pool to exam questions is completed, the creation of additional versions of the exam can be done simply by utilizing software or a testing administration agency.
**Action Item:** A NEWEA database for certification examinees needs to be developed (or an existing database expanded) that can track all examinees with relevant information, such as date of exam, version of exam, grade, etc.

6.) Grading Exams:

It is recommended that the grading of each NEWEA certification exam be as easy and standardized as possible. By converting to all multiple choice exams, the individual grading the exam can do so with a simple answer key and remove any chance of misinterpretation. Additionally, if an outside testing administration agency is utilized, answer sheets can be directly sent to the testing agency for grading. Testing agencies can also provide answer trends and reports for the individual that may be useful to NEWEA and the applicant showing their strengths and weaknesses (i.e., X correct out of XX math questions, etc.).

If in-person grading is done, it is recommended that the grading be done by a committee/subcommittee chair, NEWEA staff person, or an officer of NEWEA. Security and confidentiality of the exam and answers is important here as well. All graders should be required to sign an affidavit protecting the integrity of the exam.

**Possible Issue:** There was disagreement among the ad-hoc committee on who should be eligible and/or allowed to correct the exams. Some committee members believe that proctors and/or trainers should not be involved with grading the exams.

**Action Item:** Examination preparation/scrambling software and/or service providers should be sought out and investigated as long-term solutions for administrating and correcting exams.

7.) Exam Results Notification:

The notification of exam results to any applicant should only be handled by the NEWEA office. Notification should only be directly with the applicant and not with their employer, co-worker, spouse, etc. Prior to sending the official exam results to each applicant, the results are to be shared and reviewed by the committee/subcommittee chair and any appropriate committee member for confirmation. Results should not be given over the phone unless verification can be done to assure that the caller is the applicant. All notification is recommended to be done by U.S. Mail and ideal notification time is 2 weeks.

**Possible Issue:** There was discussion among the ad-hoc committee about the rights of an employer to demand and receive exam scores on an applicant vs. the solely notifying the applicant.

**Action Item:** The exam application form needs to be revised to include information on who will receive the results of the exam. An additional check box needs to be included to allow results to be made available to another individual(s).

8.) Appeal Process:
An appeal process should be developed to give all applicants the proper opportunity to appeal an exam result if there is a question or answer error. This process should identify what are the grounds for an appeal, what questions can be appealed, what minimum score will be allowed to appeal, etc. For example, an appeal may only be entertained for an applicant within 3 or 4 points of passing an exam. This would discourage multiple appeals and the wasting of time on applicants who were not close to passing the exam. It will also protect the integrity of the questions and answers. Any appeal should be done in a scheduled one-on-one with the appropriate committee/subcommittee representative and done within a timely manner. Appeal questions should be forwarded to the appropriate committee/subcommittee to be addressed. In the event there is a scoring change, NEWEA will correct the records and contact the Examinee regarding their status. A set time frame should be established for entertaining appeals (i.e., no later than 30 days after the exam). After that point, appeals should not be entertained. This protocol should be established and provided to all applicants prior to the exam. At no point in time should applicants take copies of either exam questions or answers with them. Exam questions that are frequently challenged should be removed or edited after review by the appropriate certification committee.

Action Item: Appeal process protocol needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.

9.) Reciprocity:

A policy needs to be established and accepted by all NEWEA certifications to address the issue of reciprocity if an individual has a certification from another state or association. The exam committee/subcommittee would be responsible for reviewing and determining if reciprocity can be issued based on the approved guidelines. A reciprocity fee should be considered by NEWEA as a way to include the individual in the database and issue them a NEWEA certification.

Action Item: A reciprocity protocol needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.

10.) Exam Retakes:

A process is recommended to be developed and provided to all applicants in advance informing them of the exam retake policy, including any minimum waiting period. It is recommended that some type of waiting period (i.e., 3 months, 6 months, etc.) be instituted as well as a maximum number of attempts per calendar year (i.e., 2, 4, etc.). This type of policy is needed since multiple retakes of the exam will compromise the confidentiality of the questions and answers. The NEWEA exam applicant database should be able to track all pertinent information include date exam taken, version of exam taken, exam results, etc.

Possible Issue: There was disagreement among the ad-hoc committee about the need for a waiting period in order to retake an exam. Some members believed that a period was necessary to protect the integrity of the exam whereas others did not believe it was necessary.

Action Item: Exam retake protocol needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.
11.) Exam Security:

A policy needs to be developed that protects the integrity and security of the exam questions and answers as many hours of volunteer time has been spent developing these exams. This policy should include guidelines, and if appropriate, confidentiality forms to be signed by all individuals who may come in contact with the exam – i.e., applicants, proctors, committee/subcommittee members, NEWEA officers, and NEWEA staff. In addition, a policy should be developed that discusses the ramifications and next steps to be taken if a security breach with the exams and/or questions is encountered.

**Action Item:** An *Exam security policy and signature form needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.*
Task 1.C: Sustainability

In order to have an ongoing, successful voluntary certification program, there needs to be agreed upon goals for the long term administration of the existing examination programs as well as any new potential programs. The development of the current programs relied heavily on several NEWEA volunteers who have been with the organization for many years. In order to maintain these programs, the administration and sustainability of the programs should be established so NEWEA can rely on these well-respected programs to continue well into the future once the current volunteers have retired. This section will describe what is recommended as a goal to maintain the current NEWEA certification exams as well as a guideline for any new certification programs. Whereas both current exams and their committee/subcommittees are different, it is not expected that the certification committees will be able to change immediately. Instead, the committees should move towards this sustainability model over time (as soon as reasonable). Any new certification exam program within NEWEA should follow this model.

1.) Voluntary Certification:
It is recommended that the term “voluntary” be removed from the terminology when referencing these NEWEA certification exam programs. The term “voluntary” indicates an optional program that may not hold the same attractiveness or respect for the applicants or their supervisors. Whereas the existing programs are well respected and established already, and whereas many supervisors recommend their staff obtain this certification, it makes sense to drop the term “voluntary” and just refer to the program as “NEWEA Certification.” This may make it more marketable as well.

Possible Issue: There was disagreement among the ad-hoc committee about dropping the word “voluntary” from the certification.

2.) Committee Structure:
It is recommended that a consistent committee structure be established for any certification examinations within NEWEA. Currently, two certifications exist. One certification is overseen by standalone committee and the other one is overseen by a subcommittee under the related exam topic. Additionally, a concern exists with subcommittees within NEWEA as they currently are not included in the bylaws or organizational manual so their governance role is uncertain. An alternative scenario would be to include a certification committee for all examinations or a council that would oversee all certification committees. In either case, there are pros and cons of each structure that should be evaluated with a determination to be made by the SMT and committees adjusted accordingly.

Possible Issue: There was disagreement among the ad-hoc committee about the different structures and ultimate recommended structure for certification committees.

Action Item: The role and procedures for subcommittees needs to be investigated and recommendations made.
3.) Exam Cost:
It is recommended to review the application fee for the certification exams to make sure that all costs associated with the exams are covered, i.e., printing, mailing, copying, proctors, etc., if they need to be. In addition, other fees may be encountered as the programs move forward with some of the items discussed above in Exam Content, such as enlisting a testing administrative agency, proctor fees, etc. Whereas there is oftentimes training associated with the preparation for these exams and those are conducted by outside agencies at a fee, careful consideration should go into what is the maximum fee that can be charged for the exam without discouraging applicants. The value of the certification should be emphasized in order to justify the exam application fee. Also, retake exam fees should be established, if not done so already.

Action Item: The examination fee for all NEWEA certification exams needs to be investigated and reviewed and recommendations made.

4.) Membership:
It is recommended that consideration be given to including an option for a trial NEWEA membership with the exam application fee. Currently, approximately 95% of those taking the exams are not, or have never been, NEWEA members. This is a great opportunity for the organization to attract additional new members. Membership fees may need to be reduced slightly in order to attract the applicants whereas they will already be paying an exam application fee (currently $35) as well as a training fee. If membership fees are not included with the application fee, follow-up correspondence should be done by NEWEA to solicit membership. Literature on NEWEA membership and benefits should also be part of any materials that are sent to the applicants either before or after their exam. And if NEWEA approved training is provided prior to the exam, a brief overview of NEWEA along with membership materials should be required to be distributed.

Action Item: Materials need to be developed to include as part of any training that will administer the NEWEA certification exams. (i.e., literature, benefits of membership, PPTs, etc.)

Action Item: Look to provide incentives for membership to NEWEA for exam applicants. This item can be included in the second task of this initiative – Membership.

5.) Exam Location Offerings:
Currently, the certification exams are only offered at the conclusion of a training program that is done by a third party training provider. The locations that are selected for training and the offering of the exam has traditionally been at the discretion of the training provider as well. It is recommended that a regular schedule of exam offerings be established that can assist in driving the training locations as well as offering equal geographic coverage for the NEWEA states. Consideration should be given for publicizing and scheduling the offering of NEWEA certification examinations at the NEWEA Annual and Spring Conferences as well as any related NEWEA specialty seminars (i.e., Collection Systems). NEWEA could also offer regularly scheduled offerings of exams in the NEWEA office. In addition, NEWEA should work with the state directors to coordinate the
offering of certification exams at one of the state wastewater association events each year. In order to accomplish this, proctor guidelines and procedures need to be established as discussed in section 1.A. It is recommended that a set schedule for exams be developed and the exams are offered at least once per state per year. It is not recommended that NEWEA respond to individual requests for exams outside of a set schedule. Once a schedule is developed, promotion needs to include email notices as well as postings on the NEWEA web site with all regional exam offerings.

Action Item: An annual schedule for exam offerings needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.

6.) Recertification/Renewal:
For true program sustainability, a recertification or renewal of certification program should be considered for anyone taking and passing a NEWEA certification exam. Currently, once someone passes a NEWEA certification exam, they are certified for life. If funds were needed to help sustain a certification program, a nominal renewal fee could be established to help maintain the program. Even if no fee is instituted, it is highly recommended that NEWEA establish some form of certification renewal without taking another exam. By instituting a renewal program, NEWEA will be able to track and maintain who has their certification and all of their contact information. This can be useful for committee, membership recruitment, and/or notification of upcoming events such as seminars and conferences. Current contact information on past certification exam participants is inadequate with no way of obtaining updates. A renewal program could also consider adding a continued training education requirement (i.e., 10 hours per 2 years, etc.). This is typically done to insure that the certified individual brushes up on their skills and is still worthy of the certification. It may also be an opportunity for NEWEA to expand its training role, but it may also include a substantial level of effort and support to track and record training hours. All certified individuals, their renewals, any training hours, etc. should be entered and tracked in an established NEWEA certification database.

Action Item: A recertification protocol needs to be developed for all NEWEA certification exams.

Possible Issue: The institution of a renewal program and associated costs may have a negative impact on the attractiveness of the NEWEA certifications.

It should be noted that this full document is proposed by the Ad-Hoc committee and would need full approval and endorsement of the NEWEA SMT and/or EC.
Voluntary Certification Policies & Procedures

Question #1
Proctor Application and Guidelines (Task 1.A) - PRIORITY  Please rank each of the following as to its PRIORITY. These items were all identified as action items by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee in the draft Policies and Procedures document for NEWEA Voluntary Certification.

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Answered question 11
Skipped question 0

Question #2
Proctor Application and Guidelines (Task 1.A) - ABILITY  Please rank each of the following as to our ABILITY as a task force to complete each task in a timely fashion (i.e., low hanging fruit).

- Standardized Proctor Application Form
- Exam Integrity Form
- Proctor minimum requirements
- Chain of Custody Form
- Proctor Rules and Guidelines

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Answered question 10
Skipped question 1

![Question #1 - Proctor Application and Guidelines (Task 1.A) - PRIORITY](image1)

![Question #2 - Proctor Application and Guidelines (Task 1.A) - ABILITY](image2)
Voluntary Certification Policies & Procedures

Question #3

Exam Content and Administration (Task 1.B) - PRIORITY

Please rank each of the following as to its PRIORITY. These items were all identified as action items by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee in the draft Policies and Procedures document for NEWEA Voluntary Certification.

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Question #4

Exam Content and Administration (Task 1.B) - ABILITY

Please rank each of the following as to our ABILITY as a task force to complete each task in a timely fashion (i.e., low hanging fruit).

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Voluntary Certification Policies & Procedures

Question #5

Sustainability (Task 1.C) - PRIORITY Please rank each of the following as to its PRIORITY. These items were all identified as action items by the Strategic Planning Subcommittee in the draft Policies and Procedures document for NEWEA Voluntary Certification.

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Question #6

Sustainability (Task 1.C) - ABILITY Please rank each of the following as to our ABILITY as a task force to complete each task in a timely fashion (i.e., low hanging fruit vs. longer term).

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Question #5 - Sustainability (Task 1.C) - PRIORITY

Question #6 - Sustainability (Task 1.C) - ABILITY
### Voluntary Certification Policies & Procedures

**Question #7**

**Any other additional comments or suggestions?**

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<td>Mar 25, 2015 12:06 PM</td>
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Voluntary Certification Policies & Procedures

Question #8

Are you a Task Force member?

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Please include your name (optional)

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Are you a Task Force member?

- Yes
- No
Voluntary Certification Policies & Procedures

Question #9

If not a current Task Force member, would you be interested in joining?

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If so, please include contact information

1 answered question
0 skipped question

If not a current Task Force member, would you be interested in joining?
NEWEA Voluntary Certification Task Force

June 3, 2015

Submitted by Tom Groves, Task Force Chair for the June 7, 2015 ECM

Activities since the last ECM:

The recommendations from the November 2014 Voluntary Certification Policies and Procedures draft document were pulled out and put into an online survey. This survey was generated to gauge from the Task Force members how much of a priority each item is, as well as our ability to complete the task.

The survey was done using Survey Monkey and was sent out on March 20, 2015 with Task Force replies due by April 3, 2015. After the close of the survey, a conference call was held in early May of the Task Force members to review the results and prioritize the next actions. The call wasn’t overwhelmingly attended, but we had a good core group that proceeded to review all recommendations. Our plan was to chip away at some of the lower hanging fruit while beginning to prioritize and devote resources to some of the larger, underlying issues that may need more time to develop/flush out. The survey results showed the trends of what we were hoping to accomplish – some quick, relatively easily accomplishable tasks (i.e., standardizing forms, applications, protocols, etc.) that will keep the momentum moving forward while charting a long-term strategy. There is still a lot of work that needs to get done.

Meetings Held:

Conference call held on May 11, 2015 with some members of the task force. Also had some phone call discussions with individual SMT and TF members on some of the potential roadblocks, i.e., exam ownership.

Action Plan:

Beginning to work with task force members to move ahead some of the items, including forms, applications, etc. One item that was quickly suggested to begin work on was to contact the Collection Systems Certification Committee and ask them to begin to work towards the transition of the exam to multiple choice. This isn’t as easy as it seems as you need to convert fill in the blank or essay answers to multiple choice, but also need to provide the correct detractor answers. Members of the Lab Exam subcommittee offered to work with the CS Cert committee on this.

An additional item that we’d like to move ahead is the development of a standard NEWEA PowerPoint that can be used (required) for all training providers who are training then administering a NEWEA Voluntary exam. I have reached out to Public Education Committee on this and plan to meet with Elena at the Spring Meeting. This might not be the best committee for this as membership, public awareness, and others may need to provide input. This would be a good question to float to the ECM – what committee can take this item on? Obviously input would be provided by multiple committees.

Other Activities:
General Comments:

One item that is consistently coming up is the issue of Certification vs. Certificate. This may take the place of “Voluntary.” Our program may be more of a certificate than a certification. This needs to be discussed more.

I am still looking for and welcoming members to this Task Force. We identified a lot of work and with people’s existing commitments, we could definitely use some more help. If anyone is interested, contact me by email at tgroves@neiwpcc.org. There are also two other parts of the original strategic planning recommendation that are waiting to move forward – Marketing and Training. We will need to make more progress with the Policies document before we can move them forward.
Memo of Understanding – Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Voluntary Certification Exam Transition

Between

New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA)

And

Andy Fish, Tim Loftus, Paul Fitzgibbons

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms and understanding between NEWEA and Andy Fish, Tim Loftus, and Paul Fitzgibbons to Transition the Wastewater Laboratory Analyst Voluntary Certification Exam and associated materials to NEWEA.

Background

The NEWEA organization is looking to improve the voluntary certification process for both the Laboratory Practices and Collection Systems programs.

Purpose

This MOU will serve as an agreement made on October 13, 2015 at the NEWEA Executive Office in Woburn between the NEWEA Laboratory Practices Certification Sub-Committee Members: Andy Fish, Tim Loftus and Paul Fitzgibbons (now known as the Committee) along with NEWEA Executive Committee and Task Force Committee Members: Mary Barry, Tom Groves, Matt Formica and Brad Moore. The agreement includes following items without exception:

1. Paul Fitzgibbons will provide a copy of the recent 2015 Copyright Certificate and Application to Mary Barry for review by NEWEA’s lawyer.
2. The Committee Members: Andy Fish, Tim Loftus and Paul Fitzgibbons will recruit members (based on the Committee’s written criteria) to continue the development and proctoring of the exams. Andy Fish will contact Nora Lough, NBC and Paula Drouin, Lewiston Auburn WPCA as possible recruits. All new exam, training and question bank material generated as a result of these efforts will not be part of the current Copyright held by the committee.
3. The Committee will participate in the 2014 Planning - Certification Task Force lead by Tom Groves including documenting in writing their current practices for exam security, proctoring requirements, exam results distribution guidelines, etc.
4. NEWEA Executive Office will include Lab Patches in the certifications mailed. The Office will order new patches with the new NEWEA logo.

5. The Committee will consider recertification options and possible expansion to include sampling and equipment processes.

6. The Voluntary Lab Analyst Certification Copyright and all associated materials (i.e., current and future Voluntary Lab Analyst Certification Exams, training materials, bank of questions and answers) will be turned over to the NEWEA Office through the Executive Director by November 1, 2018. At this time, Andy Fish as the original author of the Lab Practices Exam will be allowed to use the materials as needed for training purposes.

7. NEWEA will not turn over any parts of the exam or answers to the ABC.

8. Upon the completion of turnover of the Copyright and test materials as noted above, the Committee will be formally recognized for their contributions and will, as available, receive priority consideration regarding training and/or proctoring of the exams.

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Date: 12/30/15
Matt Formica, NEWEA President

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Date: 12/30/15
Mary Barry, NEWEA Executive Director

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Date: 
Andy Fish, NEWEA Lab Certification Committee Member

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Date: 
Tim Loftus, NEWEA Lab Certification Committee Member

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Date: 
Paul Fitzgibbons, NEWEA Lab Certification Committee Member