



Date: July 15th, 2023

President's Report on Western Dredging Association Activities - July 2023

On behalf of the Board of Directors for the Western Dredging Association (WEDA), we welcome you to Las Vegas for the *2023 WEDA Dredging Summit & Expo*. As we enter this year's summit and expo, we find ourselves at the brink of historical changes and challenges in our industry. We've emerged from a years' long impact of COVID only to find a world changed by new and different challenges, constrained only by the limited number of highly skilled talent. However, the challenges we face today also present us with our greatest opportunities.

We are all aware workforce talent is scarce and in demand, regardless of industry. That said, the projects we deliver each day ensure our economy moves and provides for a sustainable environment, which is just the type of purpose-filled work that's attractive to younger generations. The technology and techniques we employ are in many ways leading edge, regardless of industry. And the jobs we provide, from the welder who builds our equipment to the engineer designing work, from the deck plate to the captain's chair, all require highly skilled people and compensate well.

The world, our economy, and the challenges of our work are changing and if our businesses are going to answer the call, we must advance faster than the rate of change. When we look towards the future of WEDA, the opportunities for contributing to our industry have never been greater. Our mission to advance science, engineering, and collaboration that leads to innovation will drive the high standards to which we hold ourselves accountable when it comes to safety, sustainability, and building our future workforce.

As we come together in Las Vegas, we do so at a time when education, technical papers, and networking provided by WEDA is more critical than ever. WEDA has never been stronger from a financial and membership standpoint—providing a solid foundation from which we can serve our industries. Thank you to all who have made the trip to attend the *2023 Dredging Summit & Expo*. A special thank you to Tom Cappellino, our WEDA Board of Directors and Board Executive Committee who put in the long hours in not only making this summit exceptional, but also helping make WEDA a strong organization. And finally, a very special thank you to our sponsors, sustaining members, membership at large, and exhibitors. WEDA has grown because of your dedication to this industry; we all have a bright and growing future because we work hard to ensure we leave it better than it was handed to us.

WEDA Strategic Plan 2023-2024: Advancing People, Science, and Engineering on behalf of America's Dredging Community

WEDA Board Members are elected to three-year terms; officers likewise serve for three years. This past year we installed a new WEDA Executive Committee to oversee and lead the board and organization through our World Dredging Association (WODA) Summit in 2025. The tri-annual turnover presented an opportunity for our board to revisit our strategic plan, which was last updated in 2017. This past January the board met for a two-day retreat in Atlanta, GA, to chart WEDA's future and update our strategic plan. The product of our meeting in Atlanta was the development of a four-pillar plan founded on membership, publications, education, and governance.

We believe this updated plan will continue supporting the growth of our organization, just as the 2017 version accomplished. Additional highlights from our strategic plan include the following:

For the first time in our organization's history, we created statements for our organization's mission and vision.

The mission of WEDA focuses on safety and sustainability.

- *The Western Dredging Association promotes safe, sustainable dredging practices that support economic development and environmental stewardship by advancing engineering and facilitating communication between industry, government, consulting professionals and stakeholders in the dredging community, providing networking and educational opportunities.*

The vision of WEDA builds on the advancement of science and engineering.

- *WEDA's vision is to advance science and engineering to solve the industry's in-water construction challenges through the sharing of knowledge to inspire efficient, innovative, and sustainable dredging practices.*

The pillars that serve as our organization's foundation: Membership, Publications, Education and Governance, each detail how we intend to strengthen and grow the organization by creating greater value for our membership. If there is one point to take away from this report, it's that our strategic plan is focused on supporting industry in facing down the challenges ahead. We want WEDA to continue as the "hub of knowledge," a forum for collaboration and a gateway that engages and attracts young talent to our industry.

Additionally, as part of our strategic plan, we will recognize and act to increase our professional staff. Our organization has grown to the point where our annual budget now exceeds \$1M. As we further think about expanding our mission, particularly through the goals of this strategic plan- assuring we have the professional staff overseeing and leading the necessary functions on a day-to-day basis is a critical aspect to consider. The move to increase our professional staff was not taken lightly or without close review of our organization's balance sheet. We have ambitious goals ahead of us and adding staff is warranted for an organization of our size, as we diversify duties and provide backup functions in case of unexpected events.

As a final note on our updated strategic plan with respect to the goals we want to accomplish. We are re-launching a Website/ Social Media Commission and the Membership Sponsor Commission along with creating a new commission entitled the Sponsor and Vendor Commission.

We hope you can join us for a special webinar in August, where we detail the full plan. The full plan will also be available on the WEDA website after August's webinar.

WEDA Finances and Balance Sheet

There is an old saying that goes, "no margin, no mission." When it comes to our organization, it's no different. Sound financial principles and control are an absolute necessity. The need for high financial acumen, forecasting

and budgeting became increasingly important as we weathered the COVID storm, cancelling two of our summits and exhibitions in 2020 and 2021. Today we can be proud of WEDA's financial health. At the close of the second quarter, the end of June, we measured more than \$1.3M in assets and year-to-date net revenue of nearly \$600,000. June is typically a high point for our organization when measuring assets as it is the most active time for collection of sponsorships and registration fees. In the months ahead, as we receive invoices post summit, our cash position will expectedly decrease. That said, it is reasonable to project year end assets between \$500,000 and \$700,000, given our present position.

This past year we engaged an independent accountant to review our financials and while not an audit, this review by Clifton, Larson, Allen (CLA) provided additional fiscal transparency and is considered a best practice for an organization of our size and sophistication. The review is attached to this report and the CLA's conclusion stated:

"Based on our review, we are not aware of any material modifications that should be made to the accompanying financial statements in accordance with the cash basis of accounting."

As we consider expanding our organizational value proposition, know that it is done so with an eye equally focused on how we grow our balance sheet and use our resources to build on our mission. In the years ahead, you can expect cash growth and strategic spend as we build a long-lasting organization.

As a final note on financials, I would like to highlight the good work by Tom Cappellino and our treasurer, Walter Dinicola. Their efforts in managing our finances, working with CLA, and forecasting and budgeting are essential to our organizational financial health.

WEDA on the Move in 2023

In addition to our work updating the strategic plan, we pursued many other endeavors throughout last year that have helped achieve our planned objective in extending WEDA's reach through partnerships. As you know, these partnerships have been an ongoing focus for us and are reflected in our strategic plan.

This past year, after many months of discussion and drafts, we completed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the US Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC). The MOU aims to create collaboration and cooperation between WEDA and ERDC on mutually beneficial projects related to dredging, dredge material management, and engineering with nature initiatives.

We are excited about this new partnership as it places WEDA at the forefront of an industry opportunity—that of the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) mandate to beneficially reuse 70% of its dredged sediment by the year 2030. The USACE's goal is a lofty one and will take some of the brightest minds in our country and industry to solve, the type of minds we have in our WEDA membership.

Our Technical Papers Committee (TPC), under the leadership of Shelly Anghera, has been busy working on the technical program for the Las Vegas summit and, most importantly, looking towards the future in how we create

“value-add” programming for our attendees and members. This year the TPC, in conjunction with the Education Commission and Events Committee launched a programming and education evaluation initiative, reviewing all annual summit programming. At this year’s summit, we’ve released an enhanced education tract— this is one example of how we’re working to add membership value. And in the years ahead, you’ll notice more programmatic changes as we plan to host the World Organization of Dredging Associations Conference (WODCON) in 2025.

Other initiatives either in progress or completed in 2022 and 2023 include the following:

- Creation and board ratification for standards of professional behavior while attending WEDA functions. As part of this year’s registration process, we are requiring event attendees to review and acknowledge these ratified professional standards.
- The Education Commission, under the leadership of Kathryn Thomas, has continued developing and maturing the WEDA webinar series through content enhancements.
- As part of our education outreach, we started a pilot program in conjunction with the Jacksonville, FL Sheriff’s Department to introduce formerly incarcerated persons to our industry and to give basic levels of training that will allow individuals to transition to the workforce. This program is part of our larger strategic effort of introducing our industry to populations we haven’t connected with before. We are currently developing a program budget and curriculum and hope to open enrollment in Fall 2023.
- The WEDA Environmental Commission announced its latest initiative to highlight our industry’s sustainability practices entitled, “How the Dredging Industry Contributes to our Communities’ Resilience, Sustainability, and Adaption in Response to Climate Change.” This endeavor will initially highlight WEDA-member companies, sharing successful sustainability stories and the positive impact they’re having on our nation and world.
- Both WEDA and the Environmental Commission would like to recognize the work and leadership of Craig Vogt. Craig is retiring from the WEDA Board of Directors after 33 years of service. He began his board career in 1992. The idea that dredges and dredge work could sustainably and responsibly carry out environmental work was a new concept at the start of Craig’s tenure. Of course, today the environmental aspects of our work are nearly as pervasive as the work we do for navigation. We thank Craig for his years of leadership and look forward to welcoming him back as an attendee to future summits as he plans to continue his contributions to WEDA in a different capacity.
- The WEDA Safety Commission continues its efforts in making a safe work culture a foundational piece of the information we share with industry. Just this past year the WEDA Safety Commission began working with our European friends from the Central Dredging Association (CEDA), under the combined organization known as WODA or the World Dredging Association, on global safety best practices. This collaborative effort brings together some of the sharpest professional minds on safety and best practices throughout the world. We look forward to evaluating the innovative ideas conceived from this global collaboration.
- Under the leadership of Julie Hile, the Safety Commission also presented multiple webinars and held several roundtables at chapter meetings to further our safety awareness goals. During the summit’s Safety Plenary Session, the Commission will present innovative safety strategies in the “Integrated Safety Mindset.” And in September, the Commission will host the webinar, “Man Overboard Awareness

and Mitigation Practices.” Because of WEDA member companies’ commitment to safe work, we are seeing increases across our industry in heightened safety awareness and importance. The Safety Commission continues its commitment in making safety the focal point of any WEDA gathering.

Membership

Please see the attached membership report.

Chapter Meetings

One can hardly think of a time when our chapters were stronger. Stronger WEDA Chapters mean a stronger national WEDA organization. In the months ahead, WEDA Chapter meetings will be held in the following locations:

- Eastern Chapter Meeting: Jacksonville, Florida, October 10–12, 2023
- Pacific Chapter Meeting: San Diego, California, October 25–27, 2023
- Gulf Coast Chapter Meeting: Galveston, Texas, Nov.6–8, 2023
- Midwest Chapter Meeting: Cleveland, Ohio, March 12th-14th 2024

Many thanks to our chapter boards and leaders for keeping WEDA chapters strong. One of the most positive developments over the last few years is the direct impact chapter leaders are having at the national level through dual positions. For instance, WEDA Eastern Chapter President Walter Dinicola serves as a national board member and treasurer. Former WEDA Midwest President, Stan Ekren, serves as a national board member and WEDA Pacific President, Kimbrie Gobrie, serves on our WEDA Events Committee. Walter, Stan, and Kimbrie are just three examples among many who serve in dual positions. Their work and that of other WEDA members serving at both national and chapter levels has brought our national and regional organizations into clear alignment.

Governance

For many years, we’ve focused on organizational governance, ensuring we have a “working board” as an important aspect in WEDA’s growth. As part of their leadership commitment, all board members serve on the WEDA Board of Directors and on either one committee or commission. For clarification, a committee is made up of board members only and a commission includes both board members and WEDA members at large. Many, many thanks to all our board members for their time in making WEDA what it is today.

As we do each year, the Nominating Committee proposes renominations and new nominations to the WEDA Board of Directors. Board members commit to a three-year term and are able to serve for three consecutive terms, for a possible total of nine years on the board.

This year, the Committee puts forward the re-nomination of the following board members:

- Carol Shobrook, WEDA Board Member and Vice-President; Contractor, Weeks Marine, Inc.
- Chuck Broussard, WEDA Board Member; Contractor, Weeks Marine, Inc.
- Julie Hile, WEDA Board Member; Consultant, Hile Group
- Lori Brownell, WEDA Board Member and Secretary; Port/Government, Port of Houston

- Mike Warwick, WEDA Board Member; Contractor, Manson Construction Co.

The nominating committee further puts forward the new candidates for election to the WEDA Board of Directors:

- Andrew Timmis, WEDA Board Member; Contractor, J.F. Brennan Company, Inc.
 - Term through 2024
- Tori White, WEDA Board Member; Government, USACE
 - Term through 2024
- Steve Garbaciak, WEDA Board Member; Consultant, Foth Engineering
- Burton Suedel, WEDA Board Member; Government, USACE

Unless noted otherwise, all proposed terms are through 2026.

Finally, a thank you to all WEDA Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee is comprised of the following individuals who meet monthly and act on the full board's behalf, ensuring day-to-day operations are completed and longer-term strategic items remain on track:

- Alan Alcorn—Past President, Ex Officio
- Lori Brownell—Secretary
- Walter Dinicola—Treasurer
- Carol Shobrook—Vice-President
- Matt Binsfeld—President

Closing Remarks

WEDA is strong and growing—in 2023 we're fortunate to have strong financials, a growing membership, and a working board; all of which allow us to execute our strategic plan. As we started this update, the changing world and necessity for the work our industry produces were noted as both existential threats and our greatest opportunities. The technical and human capital challenges we face are the greatest risks we have ever seen. They also hold our greatest opportunities—our mission is to educate, bring knowledge together, and create innovation through collaboration. WEDA is a unique organization as it is solely dedicated to furthering the science and people working in dredging and marine construction. Take pride not only in what our organization is doing, but also in the good and purpose-filled work we all do.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president. J.F. Brennan Company has been a long-time member company and supporter of WEDA because our company values align with its core values. My primary objective in these last two years of my term is to be the type of steward that leaves WEDA stronger and better. Please feel free to reach out to me directly at any time with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Matt Binsfeld
President / Chair

