

ITRC February 18, 2021 Board Call

11:30am-1:00pm

Attendance: Naji Akladiss, David Asiello, **Douglas Bacon**, Nathan Barlet, Paul Beam, Michelle Brown, **Randy Chapman**, **Rebecca Higgins**, Thomas Holdsworth, **Keisha Long**, Richard Mach, Lisa Matthews, Deborah Morefield, Jeremy Musson, **Sara Pearson**, Hugh Rieck, **Richard Spiese**, **Melinda McClanahan**, David Tsao

Guests: Angela Shambaugh, Cherri Baysinger, Ben Holcomb

ITRC Staff: Evan Madden, Patricia Reyes, Carolyn Sistare

1. Harmful Cyanobacteria Team Closeout Report

Ben started with a close-out presentation on HCB, **Angela** covered for him due to audio troubles; she highlighted the overall goal of the team as well as the team's work. The document is scheduled for release in March, and training will follow as well. Overall, the team saw excellent state participation, with strong communication across team members. Now that the team is moving toward an extension for the coming year, a large amount of the prior year's team will be moving over. In terms of setbacks, the team saw a little bit of platform confusion between use of Free Conference Call and Zoom for use in calls. There was some difficulty in using the team calendars; updates to the team calendar don't notify other team members, and events don't update for everyone with changes in links.

Angela highlighted additional challenges seen by the team, including COVID, stagnating progress due to many members being in the field during the summer algal bloom season, and the overall scope of the document. Lessons learned included using more synthesized graphics within the document, and onboarding new ITRC contractors prior to working with the team, as well as cooperation between team members and contractors.

Patty asked Angela to speak about the structure of the training. The HCB training will be split into 5 different training modules, each representing a different section. Richard asked about how the original HCB document and the Benthic documents are going to be associated with each other. Angela said that while she's not a member of the benthic team, she believes that the benthic document will be added as an appendix to the prior guidance.

Rebecca asked Angela to speak to what needs to be included in development of the new website; Angela said that the biggest concern for addressing in the development of a new website is overwriting capabilities within team files, and that it would be ideal to incorporate file sharing into the new website to prevent version control issues.

2. Approval of January Minutes

Richard brought up the meeting minutes for approval. **Patty** noted a pair of changes: the spelling of Keisha's name within the document and a clarification in the notes relating to

environmental justice, and its implementation in future ITRC documents. **Doug** asked for clarification as to whether the EJ Tables should be sent to the POCs for review - he wants to know what specifically to send and when; **Patty** responded that it is too early since the document is an early draft. She clarified that after the March Board meeting the EJ document would be revised for external review in April.

Richard asked for a motion to approve the minutes, **Doug** motioned to approve, **Rebecca** seconded, and the board voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes.

3. Co-Chair Election/Open Board Position

Richard gave the election update - voting is ongoing with the process slated to end in early March. One person is running for the position, with another option to write-in. Whoever wins the vote will be subject to ERIS approval, and will be an approved co-chair by the April meeting. **Patty** mentioned that since **Randy** is the only candidate, he will more-than-likely win, and that being said, there will be an upcoming vacancy on the board. The vacancy for Team Leader Liaison will be appointed by the 2 Co-Chairs. **Richard** mentioned that he's reaching out to POCs for nominations and support for the upcoming vacancy, and encouraged other board members to do the same.

4. SEP 3 P's Survey

Doug gave an update on the state survey. 300 state environmental staff are currently on ITRC teams, with 22 POCs on ITRC technical teams. The SEP has seen changes in involvement due largely to retirement and the ongoing pandemic. Fact Sheets and technical tools have been found as most valuable among the states - short videos were listed as well-received formats. VI, PVI, ISM and LNAPL are the top-listed items that states refer to in development of technical guidance. The survey found that about 30% of states have onboarding training for employees, while 90% of respondents stated that managers encourage ongoing education. A large theme gathered through the extent of the survey is of the value that the QUEST project will have for the SEP. The next survey will be released two years from now, after **Doug's** tenure with the SEP, but he will encourage the upcoming representative to take this on.

Richard asked for questions, and **Rebecca** used the time as an opportunity to commend **Doug** for his work with the 3P Survey. **Patty** noted that the QUEST project is slated to begin on July 1, and that ITRC is excited to start a dialogue with potential team leaders and members about getting the project started.

5. Closeout Report of 2020 Funds

Carolyn Sistare presented the 2020 budget and closeout report. ITRC's 2020 actual revenue was \$2,014,356. On the October board call, expected revenue was presented as \$2,129,444, and this included \$180K FY2020 end-of-year funds from DOD, which was not fully spent. The difference between the *projected* revenue and the *actual* revenue is \$115,856, and this difference due to grant revenue will be added to the 2021 budget.

Actual expenses in 2020 were \$1,723,446 - largely due to the cancellation of ITRC's Annual Meeting - as opposed to the October projection of \$1,824,390, resulting in a decrease in

expenses of \$100,944. This resulted in a net closing cash balance of \$1,204,905. Compared to the 2020 budget approved in February 2020, ITRC's closing balance reflects a net increase in revenue of \$660,530.

Carolyn also reviewed the 2021 budget, noting that the only change to the budget presented on the October meeting is the addition of the \$115,856 unspent grant funds. ITRC is slated to have nearly \$1.2 million to carry over into 2022, assuming expenditures are constant, and ITRC is currently meeting its obligation to have at least \$500,000 of hard cash reserve in the bank to serve as a rainy-day fund.

Patty mentioned that as the auditors finished up 2020 and they requested that ITRC move to a federal fiscal year budget to operate within the constraints of ERIS's tax year. David asked if this would influence IAP membership times, and Patty responded that the IAP will remain on a calendar year. This change will only affect the presentation of the current ITRC budget. The new FY21 budget will be shown at the March Board meeting.

6. Environmental Justice White Paper Discussion

Keisha led a run-through of the most recent version of the draft EJ White Paper. Patty clarified that this paper in no way represents policy, and was written to provide teams with references, guidance and checklist of considerations for environmental decision-making. The paper has come about as language intending to be broadly applicable to environmental projects, rather than a consideration addressed only by specific teams; helping regulators in the field "check the box,".

Randy reiterated that this project is intended not to represent policy, and noted that ERIS is okay with this project moving forward, provided that ERIS is kept in the loop with further work on this issue. **Patty** asked whether the board felt that this project was too controversial, and, if so, whether this project should be cancelled. **Rebecca** said the project should proceed, explaining that it would look far worse if ITRC stepped away from the project at this point, given the timeliness of Environmental Justice today. Jeremy Musson agreed.

Richard Mach responded stating that the language within the checklist's text implies that the white paper serves as policy. If the intent of this document is to serve as a checklist to help team leaders consider environmental work and EJ implications in guidance development, than it is acceptable, but if the intent of this paper is to direct compliance in environmental projects in the field, the paper is not acceptable. **Michelle Brown** noted that while she does agree that the white paper is a useful document, it needs to better clarify that the document is suggestive in nature, rather than explicit policy and the content of the document doesn't fully address what its intent is.

Doug stated that he'd be willing to pass this document along to the POC network, and that it would serve as a good source of reference - especially detailing various EJ policies - but remarked that there would likely be some sensitivity to this subject matter. **Doug** added that ITRC needs to be cautious with messaging within the paper, given that there may be some political sensitivity among states related to the topic. **Rebecca** noted that the document represents what her GSR team was initially looking at and developing, and that this paper should be pushed forward for comments and edits to promote consideration of EJ in environmental decision-making.

Keisha asked for clarification that the document is good to move forward, but should be subject to further revision and review. **Rebecca** and **Randy** both agreed, stating that the paper should be reworded to not imply any sort of policy. **Richard** agreed as well, and mentioned that the intent of this paper should be to utilize fact-based sources and information in a way that doesn't push any sort of policy.

Richard Mach suggested pushing the current existing checklist to ASTSWMO for consideration and their policy, and starting fresh with a series of guidelines and checklist that is geared toward Team Leaders. **Michelle** agreed that this could be an option, but **Keisha** mentioned that she wasn't sure whether ASTSWMO was working toward EJ guidance or policies.

Sara mentioned that she shared this paper with her EJ staff within the state, and that the report was generally received well; **Richard** agreed, but mentioned that ITRC should consider policies and guidance listed in the tables, and ensure that they are less reflective of policy.

7. Survey Results of Environmental Priorities for 2022

Patty presented on the Environmental Priorities Survey, which sets the stage for requests for proposal in ITRC's proposal process. The survey asked only two questions: (1) *What are your top 5 environmental Priorities for 2022?* (2) *What additions would you make to existing ITRC projects moving ahead?*

Top responses out of 412 were **Chemicals of Emerging Concern**, **Drinking Water Treatment Technologies**, and **Waste - Advancements in Brownfields Cleanup**. These responses were consistent across groups surveyed. ECOS sent out a similar survey in conjunction with EPA, and saw the same results, with the addition of **Climate Change**. Based on these results, **Patty** said that ITRC will make an overt effort to include these high subjects of concern throughout ITRC's proposal solicitation process for 2022. The most widely identified documents for potential additions were **PFAS** and **Vapor Intrusion**.

Doug asked to compare the environmental priorities survey with the 3P survey to see how responses matched up between the two surveys, and **Patty** responded that ITRC will follow up with that.

8. Other Business

No other business to report.

9. Adjourn

Keisha requested a motion to adjourn, **Doug** motioned, **Rebecca** seconded, and the board voted unanimously to adjourn.