TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary
November 4, 2015

1. Roll Call

Directors	Present
Jordan Adelson	
Aaren Alger	X
Steve Arms	X
Justin Brown	X
Scot Cocanour	X
George Detsis	
Zonetta English	
Jack Farrell	
Keith Greenaway	
Myron Gunsalus	X
Sharon Mertens	X
Judy Morgan	
Lara Phelps	
Patsy Root	
Alfredo Sotomayor	X
Dave Speis	X
Elizabeth Turner	X
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	X
Carol Batterton	X
Ken Jackson	X
Jerry Parr	X
Ilona Taunton	X
Janice Wlodarski	X

2. Approval of October 2015 Minutes

Correction: Program Reports, page 10, 2nd bullet. Change language to read: "…FoPT tables as initially suggested."

Motion to Approve: Aaren Algers
Second: Scot Cocanour
Approved: Unanimous

3. FEM Letter

Based on feedback from the Board in October, the letter to FEM was revised as follows:

- A background paragraph about TNI added to the cover letter.
- An introductory brief summary added to beginning of the report. (Note: After looking at a bulleted list in this summary, the authors decided not to include one.)
- Significant accomplishments highlighted throughout the report.

Jerry, Sharon, Carol, & Steve reviewed and revised the document. This report was provided as a separate document. Are we making this available to the general membership? Yes, part of the process was to share this after it was provided to the EPA. It could be sent out as an eblast to membership as well as be provided via webinar and other avenues of distribution.

Change to document: Revise "36 states" to "35 states".

Motion to approve FEM letter, with editorial change above: Steve Arms
Second: Dave Speis
Approved: Unanimous

4. Potential TNI Reorganization

Marlene Moore had an interesting suggestion that the Board should consider.

- TNI currently has four core programs (PT, NELAP, NEFAP, CSDP) and two other efforts that are not yet classified as core programs, SSAS and the new NGAB recognition effort. The NEFAP, PT and the NGAB efforts all have or will have AB recognition efforts that developed independently. TNI's current organizational structure is currently based on core programs, and SSAS and NGAB do not have a clear organizational home within the TNI structure.

- Another way to organize TNI would be to center around regulated versus non-regulated programs. NELAP and, maybe SSAS, would be classified as regulated programs since their requirements do end up in regulation. The NEFAP, NGAB and PT efforts all involve activities that are not specified by regulation and could be included under a non-regulated program structure. CSDP would continue to be separate.

- We could establish an Executive Committee that manages the NGAB, NEFAP and PT programs. Thus, one process could be established for recognition (one recognition committee made up of representatives from all stakeholders).This new recognition could be broader in scope but allow all NGABs to undergo one application, evaluation and recognition process.

- Note: This approach might have issues if a state agency decided to became a NEFAP AB and put the NEFAP standard into regulation.

If this is a concept that we want to investigate further, then maybe a Task Force should be created to study this more.

While we appreciate the input and ideas, what we have set up right now for the SASS and NGAB is unusual but it's working. We don't feel we need to do anything about this right now, and should postpone further action until a later date, such as our next strategic planning session.

5. EPA Grant Application (Attachment 1)

After reviewing the application package in detail, we submitted one $300K application under Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems to Achieve and Maintain Compliance with the SDWA. The Technical Approach is shown in Attachment 1.

We submitted a proposal for one grant for small public water systems, focused on training and the handbook for the sum of approximately $300,000.

6. Program Reports (Attachment 2)

Attachment 1
EPA Grant Proposal (Technical Approach only)

2.0 TECHNICAL APPROACH

As discussed in the subsections below, TNI proposes to focus its efforts on a narrow, but critical element of compliance with the SDWA, namely laboratory testing of drinking water. EPA and states authorized to carry out environmental programs rely heavily on information that facilities submit to determine their compliance with the SDWA. However, facilities may not voluntarily invest the time and money required to obtain accurate data. In a review of the drinking water program, the US General Accounting Office (GAO) found that some self-reported sampling data at water systems were inaccurate, either because operators had made errors or because the data had deliberately been falsified. Because laboratory testing is a specialized and highly technical activity, TNI is proposing non-traditional approaches to identifying those small systems in greatest need of additional training.

2.1 Training on Laboratory Test Requirements for National Primary Drinking Water Regulations

On July 13, as part of the National Environmental Monitoring Conference, James Morgan, an attorney with EPA's Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics and Training gave a presentation on Analytical Test Method Requirements: An Enforcement Perspective. In this presentation, he highlighted numerous examples on non-compliance by water systems performing analyses required by the drinking water regulations in Part 141 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These examples included improper substitution of test methods, failure to meet required procedures and fraudulent activities.

Many state agencies through their laboratory accreditation programs have observed similar incidents over the years. To address this concern, TNI proposes to develop a comprehensive training program to train water systems on the requirements in Part 141 and the methods referenced therein. Many water systems are also unaware of a key document referenced in the regulation, Technical Notes on Drinking Water Methods. This document contains a number of required activities laboratories should follow when testing drinking water.

TNI will make this training available nation-wide using a remote learning process TNI has developed over the last 5 years. TNI has successfully used this process to reach out to over 2000 individuals in water systems to provide training on a number of technical topics related to testing drinking water.

For each training event, TNI identifies a qualified instructor that participates either as a volunteer or a contractor. TNI works with the instructor to ensure learning outcomes are included with each course and provides a test at the end of the class that is used to grant Continuing Education Credits (CEUs).

TNI has a database of accredited drinking water laboratories from the National Environmental Laboratory Program and uses this database to provide information about upcoming classes. TNI also has close ties to a number of regional organizations such as the Florida Society of Environmental Analysts and the Virginia Water Environment Association and uses these groups to help promote our education efforts. Finally, through the state agencies that implement the accreditation program in their state, TNI has a direct conduit from the state responsible for enforcing drinking water compliance within the state. The non-traditional modes of communication ensure information about TNI's training courses have a high degree of exposure to the intended audience.
Under this agreement, TNI would propose to supplement the existing communication pathways with direct communications to the project officer and appropriate regional and tribal coordinators. TNI will work with the Technical Services Center of OGWDW to identify the appropriate regional and tribal contacts.

Under this effort, TNI will provide a quarterly report on the training courses offered and the number of attendees.

The specific classes will be developed in cooperation with the project officer, but would include topics such as these:

- Testing Requirements in Part 141,
- Testing Requirements in Technical Notes on Drinking Water Methods,
- Proper Collection and Analysis of Total Coliform/ E. Coli Samples for Compliance with the Total Coliform Rule,
- Proper Collection, Preservation and Analysis of Lead and Copper Samples, and
- Documentation and Chain of Custody.

2.1 Handbook for Good Laboratory Practices

In 1979, the EPA Office of Water published an excellent guidance document, the Handbook for Analytical Quality Control in Water and Wastewater Laboratories. This document described many fundamental principles of laboratory measurement and remains a valuable resource. However, it suffers from two major flaws. It is not widely available, and after 35 years, is very out-of-date. For example, the section on reporting laboratory data discusses the use of keypunch cards, a technology that disappeared with the introduction of the personal computer.

In 2013, in discussion with analysts at a water utility in Texas, TNI learned of the concern that many operators at water systems lack the technical knowledge to correctly perform the testing expected of them and that no textbook or other resource existed as a reference to assist these individuals. As a result of this discussion, TNI decided to develop a "Handbook of Good Laboratory Practices," using the 1979 EPA Handbook as a starting point. To date, TNI has outlined the new document and recruited over 20 volunteers, including many from laboratories in water systems to help write one of specific chapters listed below.

Chapters in the Handbook of Good Laboratory Practices

- INTRODUCTION
- REGULATORY OVERVIEW
- IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY CONTROL
- LABORATORY SERVICES
- SAMPLE HANDLING AND PREPARATION
- INSTRUMENT SELECTION
- GLASSWARE
- REAGENTS, SOLVENTS, AND GASES
- QUALITY CONTROL FOR ANALYTICAL PERFORMANCE
- DATA HANDLING AND REPORTING (INCLUDING STATISTICS)
- SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TRACE ORGANIC ANALYSIS
- SKILLS AND TRAINING
- SAMPLE COLLECTION
- MICROBIOLOGY
- LABORATORY SAFETY
- WASTE MANAGEMENT
- AQUATIC BIOLOGY

As part of this agreement, TNI would propose to complete this effort and then create a series of nine training courses to cover the information in each chapter and make these courses available to water systems using the process described in Section 2.1

2.3 State Outreach

Because laboratory testing is such a specialized and highly technical aspect of work done at a water system, many laboratory analysts employed by water systems have organized themselves into state associations either as an independent organization such as the Oregon Environmental Laboratory Association, or as a Laboratory Practices Group within an organization affiliated with a trade organization such as the Water Environment Association of Texas. These groups generally have an annual meeting where presentations on key technical issues facing these analysts are presented. For example, at the May 2015 meeting of the Florida Society of Environmental Analysts, Ray Terhune from EPA Region 4 gave a presentation on the differences and similarities of the drinking water and wastewater methods.

TNI frequently sends representative to these meetings to give presentations and provide training courses. As part of this agreement, TNI would work with these state associations to hold training courses on the topics discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 above. TNI also proposes to outreach to state water utility associations to inform them of TNI's efforts.

Attachment 2
PROGRAM REPORTS

CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- The Chemistry Committee is waiting for voting to be completed (by November 10) on its Interim Standard on Detection and Quantitation (V1M4, Section 1.5.1 and 1.5.2). Meanwhile, the committee is having preliminary discussions on future amendments (2020 standard) to the initial and continuing demonstrations of capability.

- The Proficiency Testing Committee continues to consider the comments received on its Voting Draft Standards for Volumes 3 and 4, and is working on two Standards Interpretation Requests.

- The new SOP 2-100 requires expert committees to post a notice of proposed standards development and to solicit input from interested parties. This was to be done for the Quality Systems committee proposal to add a definition for "lot'. However, this definition has already been included in the EL-V3 Proficiency Testing Voting Draft Standard and voting has now been completed without any negative votes or comments on that particular item. Therefore, the definition of "lot" has already been approved in the TNI Standard, removing the necessity for it to be again voted on for inclusion in EL-V1M2. Instead, it will be included as an editorial change. The Voting Draft Standard on V1M2 Section 5.5.13.1 (Support Equipment) is out for voting through November 27.

- The Stationary Source Audit Sample Committee has received two quotations from manufacturers for M25 audit gas cylinders delivered with guaranteed analyses (±2% or less) and containing methane tracer gas along with methylethyl ketone, ethane and propane at concentrations ranging from 150-3000 ppmC. This may pave the way for the committee to meet its Federal mandate to supply gaseous audit samples.

- The Laboratory Accreditation Body Committee did not meet in October, but a few members are experimenting with the website for the completed generic application software.

- The Whole Effluent Toxicity Committee continues to work diligently to establish its goals and priorities for activities while initiating action on some of the near-term priorities.

- The Final Radiochemistry Standard is complete and has been sent to LASEC. Jan has also completed her format clean-up. The committee has started discussing tools to help with the implementation of the new standard. The committee will plan to do a training at the Winter Forum and a subcommittee has been formed to work on the Small Lab Handbook. The committee is also looking at developing Technical training that will be given in 2017.

- The Interim Standard for Microbiology is now posted for review and vote. The committee began work on the Small Lab Handbook.

- The Quality Systems Committee has circled back to a number of SIRs that have not been completed. Revised language has been sent to the LASEC. The VDS has been posted for review, vote and comment. The committee is continuing work on the Handbook using Webex to make drafting language easier. Assignments for preparation of specific sections have been made.

NEFAP Executive Committee

- The committee still needs updates to be made by William to the web pages.
- The strategic planning/marketing subcommittee has started meeting. Marlene Moore has volunteered to Chair this subcommittee and their next meeting will be early November. The committee has made progress and has started to develop a list of priorities.
- Membership of the Recognition Committee is being reviewed. One member resigned and a new member needs to be added.
- The committee has not met this month yet.

Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)

- Three FSMO tools were sent to William for posting on the NEFAP EC website, but they have not yet been posted.
- The Container Subcommittee: One container manufacturer has expressed interest in working with this subcommittee. Kevin and Justin will be pulling information together and planning a first meeting. No progress was made on this in October.
- The committee is continuing to work on the Scope Guidance document. The committee will begin work on this again in November. The committee did not meet in November.

NELAP

Accreditation Council

- Seven evaluations are complete with renewals approved. The other active six are in various stages of the process, with two site visits not yet scheduled, but four of the site reports are completed. The renewal letter for the one remaining evaluation will be sent next week, and we now expect to receive Oklahoma's application sometime in 2016. The Council continues discussing and considering changes to the evaluation process for the next cycle (beginning in December 2016).
- The Council is also finalizing its Mutual Recognition Policy 3-100 for resubmission to Policy Committee after preliminary review earlier this year.
- New Hampshire and Virginia both announced plans to move forward with the 2009 Standard.

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee (LAS EC)

- LASEC members have approved a recommendation to the NELAP AC for the Calibration Standard (Section 1.7.1 and 1.7.2 of V1M4,) contingent upon development of the agreed-upon guidance for laboratories about using the "Relative Standard Error" calculations. This will be presented to the NELAP AC later this month. Recommendations for the other modules are either in development or pending final versions of those documents.
- Planning for the Assessment Forum and Mentor Session at the winter meeting in Tulsa is well underway. Thank you to Jerry for rearranging the order of these sessions so that the Mentor Session can follow up on the Forum topics and thus be more useful to OK labs as they prepare for their initial NELAP assessments.

- LASEC is reviewing an expanded draft policy for how methods are to be selected and assessed during reassessment site visits and will shortly take up the promised "prep method" policy. Once final, these two policies will be forwarded to the AC for its consideration.

- Three new "recycled" SIRs from Quality Systems EC were reviewed by the SIR Subcommittee and will soon be posted to the AC's voting web site. Several SIR submissions were declined, but are being considered for clarifications to be posted to the SIR page.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

- Still in progress: The committee has started work on two old SIRs that were returned by the LASEC due to controversy over the response. They center around asking labs to run PTs for methods that they were not designed for. Usually a concentration issue. This was tabled for a number of months. The committee started working on this topic in October by reviewing a Draft form for labs to use to notify their ABs about these types of PT problems. Maria and Aaren had talked about this in Crystal City. The committee will look at the need to prepare a guidance document.

- The committee is starting work new procedures to collect PT data for future updates and review of future updates.

- The SOP Subcommittee has started work on addressing Policy Committee comments to SOPs.

- A new Analyte Request has been submitted by Carl Kircher to add cis-1,3-Dichloropropene and trans-1,3-Dichloropropene to the SCM FoPT Table at the low-level and medium-level concentration ranges.

- The WETT FoPT Subcommittee has approached Brian with DMR to find out if the instructions in question can be added to the DMR instructions. No update yet.

- The FoPT Table Format Subcommittee Scope is being updated by the PTPEC. The subcommittee will begin meeting again in November.

- The Microbiology FoPT Subcommittee Scope is being updated and this committee will begin meeting again in December or early January.

- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee finished review of SCM data and the committee is now reviewing its work and preparing the updated FoPT table.

- The committee worked on its charter will complete the update in November.

ADMINISTRATION

Advocacy Committee

- The Advocacy Committee will be working in coordination with the Ways and Means task force to target regional laboratory meetings for membership recruiting.

- The Advocacy Committee will begin working on a free webinar to introduce TNI and highlight the benefits of recognition and accreditation, to expand communication on the TNI standard as the "gold standard", and to explain what NELAP is today. Target audiences will be California labs and other small labs, as well as non-NELAP states.

Non-Governmental Accreditation Bodies

- Processing is continuing on recognition applications from three NGABs. The goal is to have all onsite evaluations completed by the Tulsa meeting.
- The TNRC will ask the TNI Board to appoint a replacement member for Joe Aiello who has resigned because of a change in job duties.

  Endorse from the PA DEP, Yumi Creason, to replace Joe Aiello as member on the TNRC.

  Motion to Approve: Aaren Alger
  Second: Elizabeth Turner
  Approved: Unanimous

- The NGAB working group has begun preparing an options paper for the TNI Board recommending an organizational home for the TNRC and the NGAB recognition process.
- The webcast has been sent to William for clean-up. He will be providing links to Ilona and Carol to give to people that need to finish the training or to people that want to gain the training to be an NGAB Evaluator. This still needs to be completed.
- Completeness Checklists are complete and have been sent back to ABs with a status update.
- Work has started on the Evaluation Checklists.
- An email has been sent to potential Evaluation Team members. Two responses have been received. More evaluators are still needed – especially for the December evaluations.
- Onsite evaluations are expected to be complete before the Tulsa meeting. Observations should be complete in Spring 2016.

NEMC

- The Abstract submission process is now open on the NEMC website. The database to begin review abstracts is in progress.
- Potential Plenary and keynote speakers are being approached for the conference.
- The NEMC Facebook Group page is operational (https://www.facebook.com/groups/NEMCmail/). The LinkedIn site (https://www.linkedin.com/grp/home?gid=8287434) is also operational.
- NEMC Twitter is also now operational.
- LinkedIn and Facebook have been updated with information on the conference. It looks like some chairs have begun to use the site to organize their sessions too.

Policy Committee

- Policy Committee continues to review documents and processes for internal audits that will be included in, or accompany, the draft TNI Quality Management Plan.

Training

- The updates to the Ethics and Data Integrity webcast have been sent to William, but it still needs to be updated on the website.
- NGAB Evaluator training information has been sent to William for posting.
- A new training proposal has been submitted: How to Select Laboratory Instruments for Environmental Testing. It is being proposed as a 1 hour webinar.

Membership Report

- There were 4 new committee applications that have been forwarded to committee chairs and program administrators.
- Active Members: 947