

Committee 13 – Environment: September 22, 2020

Current Committee Leadership

Leo Thorbecke, TRC	Chair
Kari Harris, CN	Vice Chair
Peter Masson, Golder	Secretary

Attendance via Teams:

Bill James (TRC)
Leo Thorbecke (TRC)
Kari Harris (CN)
Peter Masson (Golder)
Chris Barkan (U of I)
Mark Bergeon (Golder)
Leandra Cleveland (HDR)
Chris Harvey (TRC)
Chris Hunsicker (NS)
Josh Sales (Kennedy Jenks)
Kelly Blanchard (TetraTech)
Raghu Chatrathi (CSX)
Kelly Farrell (HDR)
Janet Hill (Arcadis)
James Dutt (Shannon & Wilson)
Ken Rose (Omnitrax)
Lori Price (Jacobs)
Ryan Hartley (V3)
Martina Schlauch (Arcadis)
Trenna Seilheimer (Arcadis)
Ed Sparks (CSX)
Jennifer Uhland (Jacobs)
Matt Williams

Membership Count: 33

Major membership changes to note: continue to update email/member list as needed.

Leadership Changes: None.

Ballots Recommended for Board Approval: Environmental Review Section of Chapter 13 and Waste Section of Chapter 13. Format needs to be updated to meet current standards; Peter Masson to review and update. Currently we need 17 members to vote for a quorum.

New Assignment Request for Board Approval: None.

Ballots in Process: The Canadian section is currently being reviewed.

Next Meeting and Date: Tentatively scheduled for Spring 2021 pending COVID developments.

COMM 13 Agenda

1. Roll-call / Safety Minute
2. Committee Roster Update
3. Presentation by Ed Sparks (CSX and AREMA Past-President)

Ed wanted to provide thoughts on how things are going and where they're heading. Now he is a past president but has some thoughts on where things are going, and he will remain on the board of governors so he can take input back to the board.

He has 26 years of experience mainly focused on bridge maintenance. He works as the head bridge officer for CSX now. He feels everything relates to environmental concerns, and he works to make the environment better via projects.

The work of Committee 13 is important, and Chapter 13 is important to the engineering world. How does the committee work on relevancy to AREMA? How can we add value? Why should someone be a member of AREMA and Committee 13?

This is a unique location where we can interact with SMEs that deal with the RR industry. When it comes to the engineering aspect of railroads AREMA touches on nearly every aspect of it. With AREMA railroad staff, also academia, consultants, regulatory staff, they are all there. So we can get outside the bubble where we live and work. The railroad industry is large but compared to other industries we can be small. And AREMA is an opportunity to work with others you might not normally meet or work with. But railroad knowledge is not location dependent, and we can share and learn from other projects around the world. So there's a lot of value to be gained by participation in AREMA.

The annual conference was very much up in the air about how it would happen, and then they made a decision to go virtually. By and large the feedback was positive. Although not a traditional year it was very well received. They had 1,745 participants. During a normal conference they have about 3,400, so we had 50%, which is great. We will be back in Indianapolis next September if all goes well. All in all, it was a success.

Committee 13: The engineering services functional group are the unsung heroes of the groups, but they are the items behind the scenes that make any project function. Sometime that may not be glamorous, but it is essential for engineering work to function. We are an environmentally friendly industry, a very fuel-efficient industry. The steel wheel on steel rail is genius; with the only contact area about the size of a nickel. With less friction to overcome, it needs less fuel. It does need more distance to stop. Operation Lifesaver helps with the interaction with the public on safety issues. But from an environmental perspective, we are very efficient, and every aspect of the industry grows off of that.

One of things he tried to highlight during his term as president is value. We can spend a lot of time and effort on something that might be important but may not add value to customers. What advances the causes we're working toward? Highlighted value of AREMA to members and industry. So our challenge as AREMA is to think about how we can increase the value of AREMA to members and industry. The Committee 13 manual has a lot of good content. We have a challenge since the material is based on regulations that could be read elsewhere. So the manual needs to make the regulations relevant and give it that railroad nuance.

He highlighted that the history of AREMA is a combination of several other associations that have come together; different organizations from operations, maintenance, etc. and all had different focuses. Some were more concerned with the practical repairing of tracks. That portion of the organization is still there but sometimes they are hard to get engaged. So for Committee 13, for the frontline railroad supervisors, the railroads have a lot of resources internally. But what can Committee 13 provide that can be a quick-read type resource for perhaps a shortline they can use that might not have the resources of a Class I? While they might know the basics of housekeeping and not spilling, what are some of the key nuances that might be obvious to an environmental professional but might not be to a contractor or small railroad? For the person who's not an environmental professional, they might only try not to spill so they don't get in trouble without understanding the why. What might be obvious to us might not be to others.

So we should contemplate some succinct information sheets or cards with quick takeaways that are useful to a frontline supervisor that can provide the principles without getting into too much detail. Committee 10 Bridges provides a bridge inspection handbook, and the railroads use it. It also provides a base vocabulary that can be used across the various areas and differences in communication. Now that they have completed that "find it" handbook, they are now working on a "fix it" handbook. Our manuals are not standards but are recommended practices, but they can help!

That's how some of the other committees are working to make their content useful to the industry. Unless one is a SME, you might not get into the manual. Do the railroads rely on Chapter 13? They should, and we should encourage them to use it. If they're not, then perhaps we should quiz our railroad members as to why not and what we can do to improve it.

Peter asks how we can get that feedback on improving the product. Leo says we have about 30 members and some are from railroads. Ed suggests talking to railroad members on the committee first. Identify the ones that aren't on this committee and engage them to become active on the committee so they can provide direct input. Some of the larger committees have done surveys like through Survey Monkey. Feedback can be spotty. When Ed was on the membership committee, they did an exit survey if someone didn't renew and tried to get feedback as to why so they could identify shortcomings. AREMA learned a lot through that. So we've used surveys effectively. Given that this is a smaller committee, maybe we can handle it with just a phone call. But we can take some time to reach out to the other railroads and try to get them involved as well. In this virtual world participation is easier and no travel costs or time away. So start out with members that are railroaders, ask their honest assessment on how this committee adds value above the social and networking standpoint, and if not why not and how fix. Then reach out to non-participating RR's and larger shortlines like GWRR.

Kari ask how do we get more involved at the actual conference, e.g. presentations. The agenda tends to lack env presentations, so it's hard for railroad staff who are environmental staff to feel more engaged. And when we say to engage the railroads on the committee, we already have many of the environmental staff, so are we suggesting getting non-environmental rail staff to be willing to survey? Ed says that the environmental side at the various railroads should be asked what would add value to them from AREMA. If there are specific things with regards to other groups in the industry, then that would be very important as well. Regarding the conference, we have a robust program when it come to the annual conference. The engineering services group always has a good slate, but if the environmental side is getting shortchanged, is this from a lack of submissions or some inherent bias from reviewers? Ed will keep an eye on that for next year. He will let staff in charge of next year's program know to keep an eye out for environmental programs. Some other committees don't get represented very often either. Kari asks if we should push our way in more or wait to be invited? Should we go to them and ask what they would like to learn from us? Ed says that Trent Hudack is still chair of the functional group, and the group board is to represent the members, so it's worth a conversation to ask that question. A lot of it is based on abstracts submitted, The call for papers is coming up, but not everything has to be a paper. If have good content that might lend itself toward just a presentation that is up for consideration as well. So we can consider how to better publicize the environmental side of our projects and the benefits they bring. Kari says maybe we can even do a "who we are" presentation about Committee 13, e.g. SMEs outside of the engineering topics for example. Ed says there are a lot of other committee members out there and if they're not engaged they don't know who else is out there. Leo says that we've taken that step back to identify a mission statement and a new path forward; also use the RTS to perhaps introduce ourselves to the rest of the members. Ed recommends that if do that, we need to reach an audience that is very engineering focused. We have had some success by being more conversational in the articles. Let the friendliness of the group shine through.

Chris Barkan: He has been with AREMA for 32 years and feels that having environmental presentations at the conference is a good idea. For more than 20 years this committee has been supporting a focused environmental conference, but it is more SMEs talking to SMEs. So perhaps we need to look at presentations for the RREC, and those that have an impact beyond the environment that affect MOW staff, etc., those might be good to put forward for the AREMA conference. The other question asks Ed is about the decline in participation of Class I community in organizations. How can we encourage more participation? Ed says we have been providing railroad specific information to the railroads to show gaps and holes where they might not be on all the committees. As CSX has downsized and subbed out some of the work, there still needs to be core group at the railroad for all these topics/SMEs. Those SMEs don't always have time to take on more tasks as workload grows through attrition. While can reach out to department heads to participate more, the railroads may need to apply more encouragement to their staff to participate in more committees. If the committees have no participation from railroads then they risk their interest not being looked after; it might be only consultants and regulators, and they may take up

topics that the railroads might not want to move in a certain direction; but if they're not there they can't affect. It takes the railroad staff that are members being advocates for AREMA internally. We need to also think about railroads having backups for committees, so that if one can't make it then the other does, or they both do. But the railroads need to be advocates for the organization and help others participate.

Ed wraps up by thanking the committee for what we are doing within AREMA to add value to the organization.

4. Committee 13 Group Discussion
 - a. Mission Statement
 - b. Goals and Objectives
 - c. How to Support other AREMA Committees

Kari leads a discussion of takeaways from Ed's discussion on our focus. When we met at the RREC last fall we asked how we can get more engaged. From Ed presentation we can takeaway:

- Surveys or polls: to find out what are other committees are looking for from us
- Who are we? Start with introducing ourselves to other committees

Leo asks if this should be a working group that includes railroad staff. Kari agrees, and notes that we should start an additional subcommittee #1 for the mission statement. Kari volunteers to lead it. Leandra and Bill James volunteer for it as well. Bill says we need to figure out what the engineering departments wants to hear from us; we might need to ask, e.g. is our chapter meant for environmental departments or engineering departments? Bill also asks that when the structural staff have environmental questions will they call the environmental department of their railroad or look in Chapter 13. Leo says that while the manual serves the members, they will start internally. Chris Barkan adds the environmental staff for each railroad are hopefully fielding those kinds of question internally to their companies. But maybe part of what should happen is outreach to find out what form of information would be useful to engineering staff at the railroads who are making decisions in the field. He also reminds the committee that there was a lead for a manual for the shortlines a long time ago, and Mark Burgeon adds it was actually published by the EPA. Mark says that while the format might be helpful the information is too far out of date. Mark says that Ed also clarifies that the manual in the other committees is the standard for the industry, and maybe our goal should be that as well, and a field guide will lend the manual to being more practical. Kari adds that can also develop state-by-state information as well. Peter suggests that committee also looks at developing those materials. Matt Williams from Amtrack (formerly NS) volunteers for it.

Kari says our goal is to work out where to go for the subcommittees, have a chair to reach out to members, and then a deadline for them to meet virtually for them to work out where we stand and make some progress. Perhaps we then have a winter meeting to get back together and then see what each one has come up with.

Recommends a working group for the AREMA conference presentation. Also, perhaps combine the RTS article and webinar committees into one, and the RTS articles lead into what webinars could be. Then use the RTS articles to introduce the webinars. The first might be the who we are webinar. Ken Rose says that Chris Barkan noted the RREC is the pre-eminent conference and venue for sharing railroad specific topics; Bob Fronczak is at the top of the list for providing info relevant to the railroads. We should take abstracts from the RREC and put them forward to AREMA, and Bob's presentation should be one of those. Leo says we've used that with ARDA as well. Leo agrees the RTS and webinars committees can be combined.

5. Group Discussion on Working Group and Future Assignments & Calls

Peter reviews who volunteered for committees at the RREC, and Kari asks if there should be another committee to take charge of reviewing RREC presentations for AREMA. Peter will lead. Leandra will help. Peter will reach out to Doug Dorsey to support as well. Current committee structures

- Membership: Kelly to lead. Trena will help out along with Ryan Heartly with B3.

- Mission Statement: Kari to lead, with support from Bill, Leandra and Matt Williams
- RTS/Webinars: Janet to lead with support from Martina, Mark, Josh, and Lori
- Presentations: Peter to lead with support from Leandra and Doug

Each lead to reach out to their group and organize a call. Peter to send out minutes as to who on working group.

6. Business Updates: Chapter Updates and Post for Votes

Leo wraps up with Business: Working groups to move ahead before end of year. RREC is next month. Headcount right now is 33. Demographics are 6 from railroads (Amtrak, BNSF, NS, CN). We hope CSX will join us down the road.

There was a deadline this spring to have chapter updates voted and approved at the annual meeting. We have three chapter sections to vote on but they were pulled due to formatting. We need to update to the style guide. Peter will update to the style guide, and then we'll put them back out to vote. We will look to have that done this fall to repost for vote.

Committee Working Groups

1. **Mission Statement:** Kari (chair), Leandra, Bill and Matt
2. **RT&S Articles/Webinars:** Janey (chair), Martina, Mark, Josh, and Lori
3. **Increasing Membership in Committee 13:** Kelly(chair). Trenna and Ryan.
4. **Presentations:** Peter (chair), Leandra and Doug

Current Ballots: (Being edited to conform to Style Guide and posting for vote in 2021)

Waste Management
Water and Wastewater
Environmental Review

Canadian Section (Under development) – Ken Rose, chair: Kevin Keller has assigned HDR Canadian staff to review.

Issues: None to report

[End Committee 13 Report]