Message from the Chair

As I write this, on what may be a record-setting cold day in Chicago, I think it is safe to say we are in the dead of winter. It’s rare to see signs of activity outdoors, not that most of us even want to go outdoors to look. I’m happy to say that the inactivity of the outside world contrasts completely with Global Water Stewardship right now. We’ve had a remarkably busy winter thus far:

- We were fortunate to receive multiple generous donations in late 2018 and early 2019 and will explore ways to use the income to make our operations more efficient.
- The Student Design Competition recently began and we are excited about participation from new schools and from schools that didn’t participate for a few years. We also welcome help from newer members as mentors.
- Our first blog post for WEF will be posted this winter. This is a great way to inform a large audience about the work of GWS.
- For the first time, we are preparing to participate in LatinoSan this April. This is a major wastewater treatment conference for Latin America and it will be held in Costa Rica. Members have submitted abstracts and we plan to participate in a workshop.
- Preparation for our second educational seminar in August for wastewater professionals in Costa Rica has started. We’ve connected with other groups in the U.S. that provide knowledge exchange with wastewater professionals in Central America and we hope to share resources to enhance our seminars.

Finally, I’ve been contacted by several new members over the past few weeks, seeking ways to volunteer for GWS. Among them are bilingual engineers, collection systems experts, educators, people willing to travel to Costa Rica, and most importantly, people who care about our mission. It is encouraging to see how our organization continues to grow. The dedication of our members and supporters is contagious! Stay warm and Pura Vida!

*Maureen Durkin*
Treasurer Report

The Treasurer duties have picked up steam again with year-end activities and the receipt of generous donations. As is required per the IRS, year-end tax letters were sent to all individuals, by January 31st, who made a monetary donation of over $75 and received no goods or services in exchange. Those letters were sent out by the GWS chair, so if you believe you made a donation and did not receive a letter, please let us know. Also, as required per the IRS, 1099’s are being sent out to individuals who were paid by GWS for work they performed for us. Those are also required to be sent out by January 31, 2019. Since we are a 501(c)3 charitable organization, taxes will not need to be filed until later in the Spring, after the due date for individuals in April. Therefore, after the rush of tax season has begun to slow down in mid-April, we will begin working with our accountant to get our 2018 taxes filed.

GWS is still maintaining a healthy balance in the bank account, thanks to our generous donors, and is continuing to expand upon the use of the recently purchased QuickBooks accounting software. This continues to allow for better tracking of income, expenditures, and budgeting. QuickBooks will also allow the Treasurer to create better reports to bring to the GWS board demonstrating our financial standings. As we continue to grow our use of the QuickBooks software, we welcome any individuals who are experienced using the program and would like to volunteer to assist the Treasurer in using the program to its full extent.

Finally, since GWS operates on a calendar year budget, the Treasurer has distributed a 2019 draft budget for approval at the February board meeting. This draft more accurately represents budgeted items based off what was received and spent in previous years, and predicts upcoming needs in 2019. Although the Treasurer drafts the budget, all board members have a hand in developing it, as each committee understands their unique needs.

Fundraising

As indicated above, GWS was the recipient of many generous donations from individuals and from corporations, many of whom have been donors in the past. We are grateful so many people and corporations were moved by the holiday spirit! We have also been in contact with a few corporations to explore potential new sources of support. Over the next few weeks we will follow up with these contacts to make the case for their support of GWS. Finally, we were delighted to receive a three-year grant from the Frey Foundation this winter. Without the
support of all of our donors, we could not carry out our educational and environmental initiatives. Once again, we thank you!

**Marketing & Social Media**

Our marketing and social media team has been working to continually grow recognition of the GWS name. In addition to our regular updates in the CSWater Magazine, we have also had the opportunity to be featured on the WEF “Words on Water” podcast, as well as the WEF blog.

One of the main goals of our social media efforts is to increase public awareness about our cause. Help spread the word by engaging with us on all platforms. Seek us out on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Our social media following is slowly growing, but real progress is being made. Facebook has been shown to be our number one platform. We need your engagement, so please share our posts with your friends and family. If you run across new articles or anything interesting related to the water industry, please send us a message through our social media platforms or by emailing us directly at info@globalwaterstewardship.org.

**Student Design**

In January, we kicked off the 2019 Student Design Competition. Our site this year is in the town of Monteverde. Teams from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, University of Illinois, University of Minnesota, and Milwaukee School of Engineering are confirmed to participate. Teams from Iowa State and the University of Iowa are pending confirmation. We have mentors, both seasoned and new, for all of the schools. Mentor meetings and individual mentor-team meetings have started. We are looking forward to a lively competition and some great designs this spring!

**International Programs**

Now that we are deep in the middle of a very cold winter, we are totally looking forward to the first 2019 trip to warm Costa Rica! Normally the first trip is in February, but this year Costa Rica is hosting LatinoSan on the first week of April. LatinoSan is one of the main sanitation conferences in Latin America, and several GWS-submitted abstracts were approved. This will be
a great opportunity to represent the US and educate attendees from other countries on some of the technologies that our engineers are working on. As a bonus, attendees will also get to know GWS.

Regarding projects, we have been working on the Monte Verde design and helping the Student Design group gather information with local contacts and volunteers. We are also starting to scout a new project location. La Fortuna is the top candidate. The town is a tourist destination in the north center of the country, with the Arenal Volcano as one of its main attractions. A school in this town may receive a GWS biogarden this year as well.

In the last few months, we have been in the first stages of developing workshops for the August trip. We will focus this year on primary treatment, collection systems and secondary treatment. We are lucky that the IP Committee has gained a few members with experience on these subjects. Thank you, volunteers. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Lastly, we are happy to announce that after nearly four years, we will have a new International Programs Chair. Eider Alvarez-Puras works at Baxter and Woodman and she has been a great help this past year with all responsibilities. Our current Chair, Manuel de los Santos, will be working side-by-side with Eider during the transition and will still be a big part of the IP group. We are grateful to both Manuel and Eider for their hard work.
Research & Development

Work is underway to develop the curriculum for the educational seminars to be given in August in Costa Rica. This year, we hope to incorporate more interactive exercises to break up the lectures and give participants opportunities to apply concepts during the course of the day. We have also been in contact with the Trinity River Authority in Texas, which works with Water Engineers for the Americas, to educate wastewater professionals in Latin America. Since the work of our organizations is similar, we hope to share educational materials and leverage the skills of our bilingual operators and engineers.

QA/QC

The QA/QC committee was pleased to add a couple of members this fall. The committee continues to communicate with International Programs regarding the Palmar Sur project. The committee has also reviewed the 2018/19 problem statement for Monteverde and looks forward to coordinating with the Student Design mentors this winter in preparation for reviewing the winning student design in the spring.
Closing Remarks

As you can see, it has been a busy winter for GWS. Although there is a lot to keep up with, we are grateful for the growing demand for our service, for the financial support of our donors, and for the growing list of active volunteers. Our Annual Meeting in May is approaching quickly. This is when we elect new officers and committee chairs. We invite you to consider serving in any of these roles. Feel free to contact us if you have questions about the responsibilities. In the meantime, as always, if you want to volunteer for a committee, don’t hesitate to reach out to us! For more information, or to volunteer, please email us at chair@globalwaterstewardship.org.

Stay tuned through our social media pages (@H2OStewards) and don’t miss our monthly conference calls, scheduled for the first Friday of every month at 12 pm! Call in to 224-501-3318, access 133-059-333.

Our team extends extra thanks to our donors for their continuous support.

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Monthly call, open to all: first Friday each month, 12 pm, 224-501-3318, access 133-059-333
Make a donation at www.globalwaterstewardship.org
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