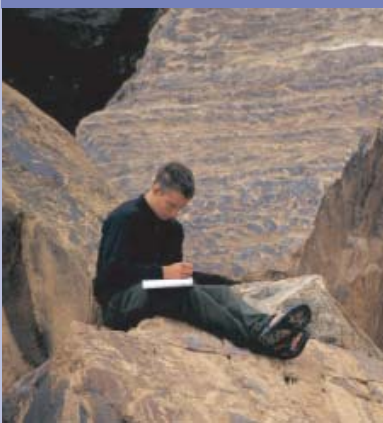


Volunteer Question Writers Make A Difference



Our volunteers rock!

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The **Certification Examiner**
The quarterly newsletter for CWEA certificate holders and wastewater industry employers

We're on the web!
cwea.org/cert

Creating a CWEA certification test question is an involved process where our volunteer Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) provide critical technical expertise at every step. Just like every other certificate holder, our typical SMEs have been through the certification process and most have worked their way up to a Grade IV. We recently spoke with Lenny Rather and Tom Herlihy who are both Collection System Maintenance SMEs. Tom and Lenny recognize that they can

use their many years of experience in wastewater collections to help others, especially those who want to learn but may not be exposed to evolving practices and technologies. This is an underlying reason for their involvement with developing CWEA's certification exams. All SMEs understand the extreme importance of contributing their expertise to developing tests by writing new questions and keeping the test relevant to the essential tasks required of any collection system professional. Their first and foremost goal is to keep everyone on task in this ever-changing field.

CWEA's volunteer SMEs are involved in almost every step of test question development. First, an outline of the subject areas that are covered on each test is reviewed and compared to the existing pool of test questions. Test question writing assignments are given to the SMEs based on subject areas where new questions are needed. SMEs typically draft their test questions using their experience and education combined with subject matter from industry publications listed as references for each test. Each question is then categorized, reviewed, and monitored for any potential problems.

Although there are numerous challenges that our SMEs have to overcome during the

process of writing test questions, they have indicated that the process of item writing is not too labor intensive. Anyone who wants to be a significant part of raising the level of respect, competency and proficiency for their profession would make an excellent SME candidate. Tom Herlihy points out that one of the challenges he faces when item writing is to examine his own strategies and assumptions in order to break through his own experiences in the field. It is important to interact with the other SMEs in order to reach a consensus on an exam question. Tom mentions that there are often just as many opinions out there as there are people, but it is a good and healthy dialogue and it needs to take place. As a result, common ground can be reached and the SMEs themselves often find that they learn a great deal about the profession from each other.

Our SMEs find that being inspired by their work is one of the most priceless things they have in their professional lives. Inspiring others and making them proud of their profession and workplace is even better. CWEA's SMEs are proud to contribute to their profession and, of course, keeping our precious water resources clean.

We Need Your Expertise

Interested in becoming an SME? We need help from certified wastewater professionals to develop and review test questions over the next few months. SMEs holding all levels of certification are needed—you don't have to have a Grade IV. Plus, you can earn contact hours. To learn more, please contact us at tcp@cwea.org or call us at 510-382-7800 x106.

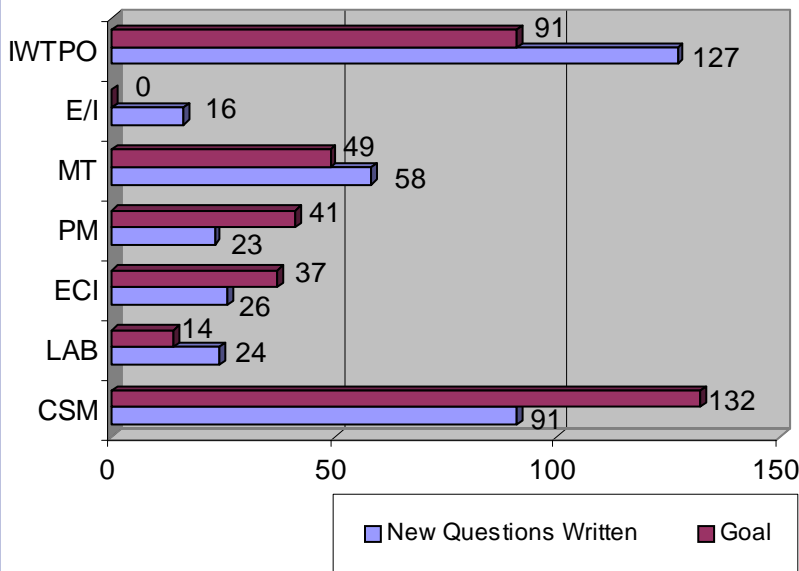
Volunteers Race to Write New Test Questions

Volunteer Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) have begun work on transitioning CWEA's paper-and pencil tests to computer-based testing (CBT). The plan is to launch CBTs January 2009. The first step is to develop additional test questions so that tests can be scheduled more frequently throughout the year.

So far, our volunteer SMEs have made excellent progress toward meeting their goals for new test items during a test question writing drive that was launched in February. Two workshops were held to train our volunteers on all they need to know to write questions that will eventually make up CWEA's computerized tests. The workshop turnout was impressive and the participants were enthusiastic. After the workshops, the item writers were organized into vocational groups that wrote questions and exchanged ideas under the guidance of their team leaders. There was even some friendly competition between the vocational groups to see which could write the most items and meet their goals more quickly.

Over 300 New Questions Written

SMEs from each item writing team have been in a race to meet their test question writing goals. The chart below shows their progress so far.



IWTPO= Industrial Waste Treatment Plant Op.; E/I= Electrical/Instrumentation; MT= Mechanical Technologist; PM= Plant Maintenance; ECI= Environmental Compliance Inspector; LAB= Laboratory Analyst; CSM= Collection System Maint.

We still need help developing additional new items. If you are interested in gaining item writing skills and helping improve future exams, contact us 510-382-7800 x106 or tcp@cwea.org.



Tony Pirondini and Norm Domingo discuss laboratory and environmental compliance test questions.



Peter Gaines and Tom Peterson work on completing test question forms at the item writing workshop in Oakland.



Vince Falzone and Phil Scott work together on new questions for the Collection System Maintenance test.

Study Session Moderators Brush-up On Teaching Skills

CWEA and Cal State Sacramento's Office of Water Programs teamed up for the second year to provide free moderator training workshops last May. Attending were 26 moderators with varying levels of study session teaching experience. Topics covered in the workshops included teaching methods, whole class instruction, adult learning principles, and using case studies as teaching tools. Moderators were also given a binder of instructional materials for their vocations and a CD with practice problems and presentation slides.

Attendees found the workshops very



valuable and time well spent. Here are some of their comments:

- ⊙ The workbook was a great tool that can be customized for my own training.
- ⊙ The workshop was a great value for the training I conduct at work, and for CWEA.
- ⊙ Great ideas were given for improving teaching and making presentations.
- ⊙ We learned methods to encourage class participation in a non-threatening environment.

Another moderator training workshop is scheduled for Spring 2008. If you are interested in participating, please contact us at tcp@cwea.org or 510-382-7800 x104. There will be workshops in southern and northern California. It is free and open to anybody, but there is a limit of 30 participants per session—so sign up early! ■

Help Coming for LS Study Session Coordinators
CWEA staff is working on tools to help local section volunteers to coordinate study sessions. A list of trained moderators and a study session coordinator guide will be available on CWEA's web site this Fall.

Can Certificate and Membership Renewals Be Combined?

Since CWEA membership and certificates are both renewed annually we often get requests to combine the renewals into one convenient billing. A combined certificate and membership renewal could save time, postage, and paper for CWEA, our members, our certificate holders, and their employers. It's a great idea, but why don't we do it?

We are able to combine membership and certificate renewals for about 55% of our renewing certificate holders. For this group, membership expires within 3 months before the certificate expiration date and they are sent a combined renewal reminder. Most of these certificate holders became members as they applied for certification. The other 45% became members when registering for a CWEA conference, through WEF, or some other way. This results in an annual membership renewal date that is far removed from the certificate renewal date and requires us to send separate renewal reminders. Further complicating our ability to combine renewals are members who

hold multiple certificates renewable in January and July. They will always have at least one certificate renewal that is not in alignment with membership renewal.

At the request of some employers, we have synchronized certificates and memberships for all of their employees. After about a year, new employees become members at different times of the year, new certifications are acquired, and many are out of sync again. These employers usually give up on trying to keep membership and certification renewals synchronized.

Although we have encountered technical difficulties with combining certificate and membership renewals, we are always exploring ways to improve the service we provide. Combining membership and certificate renewals for over half of our certificate holders and offering convenient online renewals are both designed to make life a little easier for our certificate holders and members. ■



Wondering why you get separate certification and membership renewal reminders?



Certification & Training Calendar

August through October

SSO-WDR Compliance Workshop
CSM APPROVED CONTACT HOURS!!!
Please see all locations and dates at:
[www.cwea.org/
et_attendees_conferences.shtml](http://www.cwea.org/et_attendees_conferences.shtml)

September 12-14, 2007

CWEA 2007 Northern Regional Training Conference
Fellow Pioneers of the Wastewater Profession
Redding, CA
[www.cwea.org/
et_attendees_conferences.shtml](http://www.cwea.org/et_attendees_conferences.shtml)

September 27-29, 2007

23rd Annual Seminar on the River
Primm, Nevada
Tri State Seminar
www.tristateseminar.com/registration.htm

October 13-17, 2007

WEFTEC
Up to 35 Contact Hours for all vocations!!!
80th Annual Water Environment Federation
Technical Exhibition and Conference
San Diego, CA
[www.weftec.org/AttendeeRegistration/
RegisterNow/](http://www.weftec.org/AttendeeRegistration/RegisterNow/)

CWEA Technical Certification Program

Executive Committee

Chair (2007-2008)
Michael Creel
CSDLAC

Vice Chair
Jody Allen
South Placer MUD

Southern CA Liaison
Simon Watson
Orange County SD

Northern CA Liaison
Lenny Rather
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2008 Certification Fees

Certification application and renewal fees have increased slightly for 2008. The fee changes are in effect beginning with the January 2008 certification and renewal cycle.

2008 Certification Fees*		
Certificate Grade	Application Fee	Renewal Fee
I	\$105	\$56
II	\$120	\$61
III	\$135	\$66
IV	\$150	\$71

*Fees are higher for applicants and renewers who are not a member of CWEA, HWEA, MI-WEA, or MO-WEA. For more info visit [cwea.org/
cert_howcert_apply_feeschedule.shtml](http://cwea.org/cert_howcert_apply_feeschedule.shtml)

CWEA's Director of Certification Selected to Lead New Department

Director of Certification, Chris Lundeen, has been selected to lead CWEA's newly formed Member and Leader Services department. The new department includes all member services, the *eBulletin* and *Wastewater Professional* publications, awards, local section and leader support, and CWEA's web site. A nationwide search is currently being conducted to recruit a new Director of Certification who will be appointed before the transition is complete. Meanwhile, we'll keep you posted on the recruitment and transition on CWEA.org and the *Certification Examiner*.



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