

OWTF Sustainable Model—What's Missing?

The Open Water Task Force plan for a sustainable financial model is a worthy effort to resolve a difficult dilemma. The Open Water Committee is supporting this proposal because it is more equitable than what we have today. So—what's the problem?

A revenue plan for USMS without looking at business considerations of the event host and LMSC is an incomplete plan and has potential for failure. Even with the effort to distribute fees equitably, this solution (following the previous plan that resulted in a 50% reduction in events) is not necessarily friendly to event hosts. The plan increases the average sanction fee by over 20% and in some cases will triple sanction fees without providing any improvement in services. USMS must improve services to events and swimmers to justify these new financial requirements if we want to remain a relevant player in open water swimming events.

The Open Water Committee is asking the Board of Directors to support the following 2016 initiatives as steps to maintain the continued existence of USMS Open Water Swimming.

Open Water Education Initiatives

The OWC has made a request for \$10,000 in the 2016 budget. Planning will take place post convention and should include a plan that covers multiple years. The education will be aimed at USMS/LMSC Administrators, Event Hosts, Officials, and Swimmers. It will include training for people who provide the safety for the swims (includes Safety Directors, Referees, and Independent Safety Monitors), people who provide the fairness for the swims (includes event officials) and people who provide the structure/operation for the event (includes Business/Financial management for OW events, event management and administrative oversight by LMSCs).

Support Needed: Support approval of the budget request and other logistical support needed for successful implementation.

IT and Publication Needs

USMS has had a programmable and database capable web site since the year 2000. The intervening years have seen virtually no IT development for open water and open water has been invisible on usms.org since 2004. IT and Publication Needs include: Visible presence on usms.org, development of an Event Results Database, creation of the already defined swimmer awards systems (National Rank, National Challenge), development of a documents management system for all USMS documents and editorial assistance to make USMS documents easy to use and literate.

Support Needed: Move the OWC IT initiatives (visible presence on usms.org, ERDB, documents management, swimmer awards) up to the active status for 2016 and assign editorial assistance for documents development.