

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2014

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Baton Rouge Office, Louisiana Room

1 PM

I. Call to order

Brenda Nixon called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Commission members present: Judith Miranti, Ann Wilson, Alex Appeaning, Kelley Templet, Angela Capello, Brenda Walkenhorst, Dean Blackett, Dinah Maygarden, Jennifer Roberts, Cole Ruckstuhl, Connie Conner, Melanie Dupre, Dianne Lindstedt, Brenda Nixon, Mindy Brooks.

Coordinators: Venise Ortego, Thomas Gresham

III. Minutes from last meeting

After review of last meeting's minutes Angela Capello made a motion to approve them and Dianne Lindstedt seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

IV. Financial Report

Venise Ortego reported that a minimal amount of expenditures have been made in the past quarter. The EPA grant has \$6800 remaining funds, some of which will be moved to UNO's Quantifying Debris subcontract for field trips.

V. Coordinator's Report

Venise Ortego provided a written summary of the Coordinator's Report. She reported verbally only on those items that were not included in the body of the report:

- **EPA Sub Grants:** Venise is still waiting on several grant reports. Some had extensions due to bad weather. One included a prescribed burn in Oklahoma.
- Venise submitted a **NOAA BWET grant proposal**. It includes a website that builds on the USGS Streamer interactive watershed mapping tool. It allows the user to embed data in the map. The theme is marine debris and watershed connections. Venise and Thomas met with USGS and received a high level of interest. In addition, UNO Computer Science Department is designing a website for LDWF. The proposal also includes field trips within watersheds and fits NOAA's interest in data sharing.
- **Public Outreach:** Thomas co-hosted the LDWF annual Hunting and Fishing Day at Waddill Outdoor Education Center in Baton Rouge. Thomas also presented at the Keep Louisiana Beautiful Conference and Thomas and Venise presented exhibited at Louisiana Science Teachers conference in Shreveport and Ocean Commotion in Baton Rouge.

VI. Old Business

A. Outreach Program

- **Sponsorship Packet:** Dean Blackett presented a prepared packet of Commission sponsorship materials, including a draft letter to potential sponsors for review by the Commission. Suggested sponsorship levels include Platinum (\$10,000), Gold (\$5000), Silver (\$1000), and Bronze (\$500). Funds would support the Symposium, EE school grants, and professional development workshops.

- Discussion included suggestions for changes in language, such as the use of the term “non-formal” consistently.
- Dean challenged the Commission to reach out to ALL schools to promote the symposium, including meeting with school boards, to increase attendance.
- **Brochures:** Thomas has created the brochures, which were included in Commissioners’ packets and are ready for distribution.
- Discussion took place on how to best give recognition to donors/ sponsors, including giving plaques in recognition of donation. Also, providing an EE license plate to donors, larger calendars, etc.
- Brenda Walkenhorst raised a question about whether it would be possible to ask New Orleans Pelicans for sponsorship and perhaps ask them to exhibit. She mentioned the team’s interest in coastal issues and the use of Pierre the Pelican mascot and a wetland game App.
- Alex Appeaning suggested a 1-pager to use as a standardized tool for asking for sponsorship including a pledge form. Venise said they would work on creating one.
- Ann Wilson requested a 1-paragraph “blurb” to present to potential sponsors.
- Alex made a motion for a recognition plaque to be used to show appreciation for sponsorship. Ann seconded motion. Suggestions were made on the sponsorship levels to be recognized. Discussion on the levels of sponsorship: any donation greater than \$500 will be recognized with a plaque. The motion was passed unanimously by the Commission.
- Angela suggested that donations below the \$500 level should receive recognition in a list of “friends of the symposium” (or similar) on the website.
- Alex suggested a short video advertising the symposium to be made in-house at LDWF. Connie mentioned that alternatives to You Tube are needed to reach schools as You Tube is blocked. Thomas commented that there is a tool for embedding video or linking to You Tube.
- Further discussion included ways to encourage sponsorship via news release, video sound bites, etc.

B. 2015 Symposium Committee Reports

1. Promotion, *D. Blackett*: See above.
2. Audio Visual, *D. Maygarden*: Dinah reported that A/V is on track and there is little to report.
3. Door Prize/Hospitality, *C. Conner*: Connie reported that her daughters will be able to help. She mentioned that the word needs to get out early as many places need a lot of lead time for donation. Judith is planning to make baskets.
4. Evaluation, *C. Ruckstuhl*: Cole reported that the evaluations are ready and he is creating a system for attendees to access the evaluation via the website or QR code. Venise mentioned that previously, in order to encourage turning in evaluations the grand door prize was used as an incentive, but doing online means that people who need to leave can still do evaluation electronically.
5. Exhibitor, *A. Capello*: Angela reported that she has received one paid exhibitor registration so far. Lists are being compiled to send out to potential exhibitors (from Earth Day and Ocean Commotion). Electronic payments can now be made via Thomas. Need to encourage exhibitors to send in registration before agency cuts the check.
6. Finance, *G. Balsamo*: See coordinator’s report.
7. Keynote, *V. Ortego*: Nancy Rabalais sent a report: She has invited bob Thomas, but has not yet received a confirmation. Brenda Walkenhorst offered to be a backup speaker on the topic of her summer travels related to biodiversity.
8. Program, *J. Roberts*: Jennifer reported that there is a need for 20 presenters and Thomas has sent a link out via email with information for presenters. Ann Wilson said she would email LEEA members.

9. Registration, *B. Walkenhorst*: Brenda reported that she has received one registration so far.
 10. Short Course, *D. Maygarden*: Dinah referred to the brochure and Thomas's and Venise's work in lining up the full complement of short courses.
- C. **Environmental Literacy Plan**: Venise reported that Nancy Rabalais sent a note to say that the appropriate changes as per the Governor's Office have been made (after changes made by Heather Szapary and graphics changes by Thomas), and preparations need to be made for the 2015 legislative session. Discussion took place about finding individuals who can help to bring it to the attention of legislative leaders. A line of contact for a resolution is needed. Alex suggested that legislators should be invited to Symposium to garner support. The final version will be sent out to the Commission this week.
- D. **Art & Language Arts Contest updates**: Thomas reported that the calendars are ready for distribution and can be taken by LEEC members today. The boxes each contain 150 calendars. Thomas would like to see an increase in participants this year from last year.
- E. **2014 Grants Committee update**: Brenda and Venise discussed an upcoming professional development biodiversity workshop that will be held in the Lake Charles area in 2015 and will be sponsored by Alcoa. Potential topics may focus on coastal prairies, the red-cockaded woodpecker, and diamond-backed terrapin.

EPA "Sustainably Yours" sub-grants program – Quantifying Debris: UNO (Dinah) was contracted to host two professional development workshops and did five follow-up students field experiences. Funds for up to two more field trips for students were available. These were offered to the teachers who participated in workshop in June 2014, but the teachers were not able to schedule a field trip this semester.

VII. New Business

LEEC Vote of Officers

- Chair-Elect: Alex made a motion to close the nominations. Judith seconded; Commission voted to close; it passed.
- Secretary: Ann made motion to close nominations; Judith seconded; motion passed by commission.
- Chair-Elect: Brenda Walkenhorst and Angela Capello were nominated for Chair-Elect. Both gave a short speech about their qualifications for the post and a vote followed.
- Brenda Walkenhorst was elected Chair-Elect by the Commission.
- Secretary: Dinah was the only nominee for this post and therefore will continue as secretary.
- Cole Ruckstuhl will be Chair in 2015. He will move into Chair position on January 1, 2015. He made a statement to the Committee.
- A discussion was held of the bylaws, which state that the Chair-Elect cannot be the chair of the symposium. The Chair-Elect, however, becomes chair of the event shortly before the symposium. It may make more sense for the Chair-Elect to automatically chair the symposium from the beginning. It was decided that a review of the bylaws as they affect the current situation need to be reviewed and a vote will be held at the next meeting.
- Dianne is the bylaws committee chair.

VIII. Announcements

Dianne Lindstedt announced that Susan Testroet-Bergeron has been chosen to be the Executive Director of BTNEP.

Brenda Nixon announced a professional development workshop on astronauts to be held at LRCE November 20. She will send out an invitation.

IX. Next Meeting Dates

February 27, 2015 (at Symposium in Baton Rouge – time to be determined), May 12, 2015, August 11, 2015

X. Adjournment

Ann moved to adjourn. Jennifer Roberts seconded; All voted to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.