

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2017

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
Baton Rouge Embassy Suites, LA Capitol Room
4:15 PM

I. Call to order

Brenda Walkenhorst called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Commission Members Present: Jada Lewis, Jessica Dixon, Jill Cowart, Angela Capello, Jonathan Dearbone, Brenda Walkenhorst, Deepak Bhatnagar, Dean Blackett, Dinah Maygarden, Cole Ruckstuhl, Connie Conner, Dianne Lindstedt, Heather Egger, Brenda Nixon, Heather Niemic

Commission Staff Present: Venise Ortego, Thomas Gresham, Brian Gautreau

III. Minutes from last meeting

Jill suggested a rewording of Brenda Nixon's comments regarding testing issues. She stated there were talks; however, nothing had been decided as of yet. Jonathan moved to accept the minutes with noted corrections. Cole seconded. All voted in favor.

IV. Financial Report

Venise presented the report. She pointed out the benefits portion related to Brian's salary. The \$617,000 amount represented monies from the Keep Louisiana Beautiful grant program. She explained the \$146,000 amount was budget authority for the NOAA grant with \$90,000 awarded. The remaining NOAA budget was approximately \$60,000 as of the meeting.

V. Coordinator's Report

Symposium General: Venise reported that the symposium was given \$5000.00 from Shell; however, no money had been received as of yet. She then discussed issues with the online registration system. Discussion led to needing to either find something better or solutions for different problems. One issue was the name of registrant not matching to name associated with PayPal to have proper records.

Symposium Sessions: There are 15 different concurrent sessions. This year, a panelist discussion on endangered species was added. This is a topic all are interested in to have attend.

Symposium Participants: There are 20 exhibitor tables which is the capacity for the venue. There are 6 research students - 5 here with posters and the 6th graduated. There are 2 school groups in attendance - 1 for a poster session and 1 presenting. There are 128 registrants at the time of the conference and 12 registrants receiving lodging assistance.

Symposium Activities: Venise explained two activities that will engage registrants during the conference. Trading cards (28 total) will be utilized to educate on species. Registrants will be asked a question and try to answer. With the correct answer, they get to keep the cards and receive a flashlight. This results in receiving something of value and something educational. During the lunch, there will be cutouts of endangered species. These can be put together for an activity book. Larger cutouts will serve as centerpieces for the luncheon tables. Venise concluded by stating she attended the Restore America's Estuary Conference.

VI. Old Business

A. Symposium Committee Reports/Needs

1. Audio/Visual - Heather Niemic reported that all was ready to go, but they may need help setting up.
 2. Door Prizes - Connie stated they were ready.
 3. Evaluations - Cole said they were ready.
 4. Exhibitors - Angela stated they were all showing up and setting up. The only issue was the fact they had to have everything broken down by 11:30.
 5. Finance - Deepak stated that last numbers were still needed for the hotel cost. Breakfast numbers were unknown due to numbers as well. Tickets would be issued for breakfast to keep track. Originally, 8 foot tables were planned with the Marriott, but this hotel had 6 foot tables. Due to the difference, 8 foot tables were rented and the cost split with the hotel. Also, LSU location on Essen had to be rented out at the university rate of 450.00.
 6. Keynote - Kelley reported all was set.
 7. Programs - Brenda Nixon showed the program. It was noted that we liked the smaller size as well as the symposium "retro" bags.
 8. Public Relations - Dean stated that the Northern part of the state is great and to see the ULM booth. He had 6 employees to go out for grants/school outreach. There were several programs underway. He stated due to time, he would discuss further at a later date.
 9. Registration - Jonathan stated all was going good.
 10. Short Courses - Dinah reported that all went great during the day.
- B. Symposium Volunteer Assignments - Venise stated that they would need some help setting up for luncheon, etc. as well as passing out CLU stickers.**
- C. Art/Language Art Contest - Thomas said there would be a need for volunteers approximately the end of April for judging.**
- D. GS Youth Summit - Brian stated that registration was good. There were 6 exhibitors so far. They were having trouble with the students going through the online system. They were working on getting a keynote lined up.**
- E. Green Ribbon Program - Brian said that on Feb. 1 these Green Ribbon School nominees were submitted to the U.S. Department of Education - Mayfair Lab School, Belle Chasse Academy, and LSU. They should hear back around April 24 for confirmed winners.**
- F. 2017 Grants Program - The grants are ready to roll out for spring. We need to get the word out. They will be due on March 17. For the research grants, still feel we need to get the word out to the universities.**
- G. Watershed Webs - Opelousas High School had a good workshop/field trip at Wildlife and Fisheries in November on debris analysis. Diane and Dinah worked with Jefferson Elementary on school-based experiences. They let them put their ideas into practice (watersheds, data collection from Opelousas High). They had 4 groups of 3rd graders. They are behind on the number of student experiences. Venise said they were asked about joining with Lafayette Parish with a \$5000 grant. It would include an overnight at Palmetto Island State Park and Watershed Webs beach sweep at Rockefeller. They will host another 4-day workshop in June at Grand Isle. Jill Cowart stated there may be possible conflicts in June with teacher workshops for the La. Department of Education. Jill then stated the adoption of standards was proceeding and going great. They were just finishing up. It was going to committee in a week and a half and then to BESE in March.**

VII. New Business

A. 2018 Symposium

1. Dates and Location - Dates were established for 1st choice (Feb. 23-24) and 2nd choice (March 2-3). Locations were discussed. The numbers are better in Baton Rouge. Marriott

- wouldn't be finished with renovations; it goes to lowest bid. There was a concern of the variety of short courses in the same area. It was suggested to have a repeat of the Eagle Tour due to the interest. Also suggested to start soliciting for course options earlier. There were 89 participants registered for the short courses. Cole motioned and Jonathan seconded for the dates and location to be accepted.
2. Theme - It was suggested to start throwing out theme ideas. Green Stem was suggested - jobs that are science/engineering based, focus on technology, focus on careers (What do you want to be?). Thomas stated that it could be interesting to see what they came up with using that theme. Jill suggested that it shouldn't be narrowed to careers; keep it broad as just green stem/steam. Cole suggested we vote on theme and table the name for the time being. Thomas stated that it could be done through a group email.
- B.** Installation of New Chair - The new chair is Angela Capello. Tomorrow is the public transition. The group welcomed Angela to the helm. Bylaws were presented by Cole.

VIII. Next Meeting Dates

May 9, 2017; August 8, 2017; November 14, 2017

IX. Adjournment

Cole motioned to adjourn. Jennifer seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.