

Minutes

OFFICIAL

**Association for Conservation Information
Board of Directors
Meeting – July 13, 2009
Baton Rouge, La.**

Call to Order, Roll Call –

The meeting was called to order by President Nels Rodefeld at 4:36 p.m. (CDT).
The following Directors were present:

Officers

President – Nels Rodefeld (Oklahoma)
Treasurer – Bob Wines (West Virginia)
Secretary – Scott Ball (Florida)

Board Members

Michael Gray (Kentucky)
Thomas Gresham (Louisiana)
Micah Holmes (Oklahoma)
Stephanie Hussey (RBFF)
Monica Linnenbrink (South Carolina)
Kim Nix (Alabama)
Robin Thomas (Utah)

Others

Tom Bennett (National Archery in the Schools Program)
Phil Bloom (Outdoor Writers Assoc. of America, Indiana)
Kay Ellerhoff (Future Conference Sites Committee Chair)
Dottie Head (*The Balance Wheel* Editor)
Judith Hosafros (Wyoming)
Leslie McNeff (Oklahoma)

Review of Unofficial Minutes from April 30, 2009 Conference Call

We did not have a quorum at the April 30 meeting. Therefore, no official action took place, and there are no minutes to approve.

Nels reviewed the April agenda, most of its items are on today's agenda. In particular, he recounted a request from Ellie Horwitz (Massachusetts) regarding compensation for a presenter at the 2007 conference. The presenter was willing to be taken on a fishing trip in lieu of monetary payment, but no action had been

taken to make that happen. The issue was added to today's agenda, under Old Business.

Treasurer's Report (Bob Wines)

Bob provided the Fiscal Year 2009 report as an Excel spreadsheet and highlighted the following:

- Our PayPal account costs \$30/month. Bob will leave enough of a balance in that account so that the fee will be deducted automatically. Previously, he had zeroed out the account, and he had to write a \$30 check each month for the fee.
- We have \$60,000 in CDs, but they will not mature until Dec. 25, 2011.
- Last year at this time, our total assets were ~\$102,000; this year they are ~\$98,900.
- We had to file a 990 return with the IRS even though our balance had dropped below \$100,000. Once we file a report like we did last year, we have to do so for 3 consecutive years.

Nels made a motion to approve the Financial Report, Thomas seconded, and the Board approved.

2009-10 Budget (Bob Wines)

Bob referred to the proposed budget he'd distributed, and highlighted the following:

- Does not expect Louisiana to return the \$5,000 advance for the 2009 conference.
- Our CD is averaging ~\$510 per quarter in interest.
- He asked Scott to check minutes from earlier meetings for discussion and/or decision about increasing the Awards Program budget. He said actual Awards expenditures this year were \$5,000.
- The proposed budget is balanced, but he did not expect it to stay that way after discussion.

2009 Conference Costs

Thomas Gresham reviewed expenses and revenue associated with holding the 2009 conference (report submitted separately). Estimated expenses total \$35,000; revenue to date totals \$22,550 – for an estimated net loss of \$12,450. He said Louisiana will not be able to return the seed money.

Bob stated the Board had committed to cover the difference. He said we should bear that in mind when we discuss spending proposals later in the agenda, and we should not count on using money from the CD before the maturity date of Dec. 25, 2011.

Audit Report

Bob distributed a copy of the annual audit report and gave the following highlights:

- Per auditors' recommendation, Bob writes all checks and his secretary handles all deposits.

Nels asked if there was a point at which we should be concerned about the balance in our operational account. Bob said he would become concerned if the balance dropped below \$10,000.

Membership Dues Waivers

The only request for a waiver Bob had received was from New Hampshire, which is in the second year of its requested two-year waiver. Bob then received one from North Carolina.

Bob made a motion to approve the waivers for New Hampshire and North Carolina; Stephanie Hussey seconded.

Discussion: Thomas asked if there was a limit to the number of agencies that could apply for a waiver. Nels responded that there was no limit. Kay Ellerhoff asked if there was concern about setting a precedent or abusing the waiver policy. Nels said the policy's intent was to encourage as many agencies as possible to be members.

The motion passed.

Appointing Auditing and Nominating Committees – Nels Rodefeld

Nels reported that Scott Ball had agreed to chair the Auditing Committee, with Leslie McNeff and a third member to be appointed by Scott and Leslie.

Nels reported that Stephanie Hussey will chair the Nominating Committee, with Thomas Gresham and Michael Gray as the other members.

Nels told the Board that Lydia Saldaña (Texas) was stepping down as Vice President, adding that Scott was willing to be considered as her successor. If that were to happen, the Nominating Committee would need candidates for Secretary as well as the three Board of Director positions that will expire at this conference. Scott added that officially, all officer positions are open for election each year.

Committee Reports

Membership (Bob Wines for Jon Charpentier, New Hampshire)

New Members:

- Sponsoring Member – National Bowhunters Foundation
- Agency Members – The Wildlife Society, Pennsylvania Game Commission, National Archery in the Schools Program
- Individual Member – Marilyn Bontz
- Associate Member – Ducks Unlimited (Andy Cooper)

Micah Holmes made a motion to accept the new members, seconded by Robin Thomas. The motion passed.

Departing Members:

- Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection
- U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
- Mississippi Dept. of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
- Missouri Prairie Foundation
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- XONTV
- Izaak Walton League of America
- Michael Warner, Arkansas Heritage Foundation

Awards (Thomas Gresham)

- 291 entries in this year's contest (vs. 305 last year)
- \$5,100 – cost of trophies
- Awards Committee will meet July 14. If the committee has any recommended changes for the Awards Program, it will present them to the Board at a future conference call.

Future Conference Sites (Kay Morton Ellerhoff)

Michael Gray said Kentucky is looking forward to hosting in Louisville in 2010. He currently has 4 candidate hotels but needs to finalize a date. After a brief discussion about conflicting conferences, Michael said July 19-23 is the best option and that 2 hotels are available then.

He then asked for discussion about whether shortening the conference would increase attendance. Result of the discussion was consensus to leave the conference length unchanged, as long as each day was filled with worthwhile sessions, whether on-site or off-site.

Judith Hosafros asked what "rank" of employees typically attended meetings like AFWA or the regional FWAs. Several replied that it was usually higher-level positions. Tom Bennett suggested that ACI hold its meetings in conjunction with one of those groups. The benefit would be that our agency leaders could see us in action and be available to speak during a session.

Nels made a motion to accept Kentucky's invitation for the 2010 ACI Conference, seconded by Stephanie. The motion passed.

Kay reviewed her list of sites for conferences through 2012 and possibilities for future years (see separate report). She said Ohio (2011) asked about the possibility of meeting in June, to which she replied that she understood our bylaws required us to meet after June 30.

For 2012, we plan to meet at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), with assistance from West Virginia. Whether Virginia will assist is still unknown. Perhaps we should reach out to Maryland or Pennsylvania for assistance. We also need to apply to NCTC after January 2010.

Possible future hosts include Alabama, Iowa, Oregon, South Dakota, New Hampshire and Granite Ranch (Wyoming). She hopes a few other potential hosts will volunteer after the General Business Meeting.

Nels spoke about how the new Conference Content Committee assists the host state in developing the conference agenda, which relieves much of the burden on the host state. Stephanie added that she is chair of that committee; other members are Nels (as President), Marianne Burke (as Immediate Past President and as current host), Lydia Saldaña, Don King (Tennessee) (as previous host), Judy Stokes (New Hampshire), Bob Wines, Rick Hargraves, Robin Thomas, Michael Gray, Judith Hosafros and Thomas Gresham.

The Balance Wheel (Dottie Head)

Dottie reported that she published four issues this year. The fall issue, as it was last year, will be the Proceedings issue. She is working with Marianne to get abstracts from the session presenters, which is always a challenge. She had three new members on her committee last year and will recruit more new members at the July 16 business meeting.

Web Site (Jeff Eschler)

Jeff could not attend the conference and did not submit a report. Bob said that the online member directory is now up to date.

Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship (Robin Thomas)

Robin reported there were 23 applicants, but two subsequently withdrew (Marc Sommer, Ohio; Al Ivany, New Jersey), so 21 scholarships were awarded. Value of the scholarships was \$4,725 for registration and approximately \$10,000 for lodging. She said nearly 50 percent of those attending the conference took advantage of the scholarship. There was no sponsor funding for scholarships this year.

ACI Spending Proposals (Monica Linnenbrink)

Monica (leader), Micah Holmes and Bob Wines formed a committee that sought and evaluated proposals for projects that would address ACI priorities. They received six proposals, two of which were similar and merged into a single proposal (Conference Planner).

Before giving her PowerPoint presentation, she said it didn't appear likely that the Board could afford to fund any proposal until our financial situation improved. Proposers were given a \$10,000 maximum target, and she said three proposals

appeared viable. One proposal overlaps the Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship program.

She reviewed the proposals in ascending order of rank, concluding with the highest-ranked proposal.

#5 – North Carolina: Update the agency’s outdoor education exhibit. This does not support ACI’s mission on a national scale. (Perhaps North Carolina misunderstood the guidelines.) Funding not recommended.

#4 – Florida: Adapt Florida FWC’s photography guidelines for nationwide use, and encourage outdoor publications to adopt them. The committee believes this is a good idea, but suggested working with RBFF to accomplish. Funding not recommended.

#3 – (?): Waive registration fee for the first 50 applicants for the 2010 ACI Conference. The committee feels this is duplicative of the Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship program already in place. But if any extra money were to be available, use it to augment the existing travel scholarship program.

#2 – (?): Conference Coordinator. The committee received two similar proposals. The main difference between them is that one proposed hiring an ACI member part-time to perform this job for all future conferences; the other proposed having the host agency fill the position locally for that particular year. The committee did not recommend one scenario over the other.

#1 – Louisiana: Student Mentor/Conference Planning. Give selected students \$1,000 each to work with host agency in planning, attending and facilitating sessions at the conference. The committee sees this as a creative way to recruit students from the fish and wildlife field into ACI before they graduate.

Monica summarized the committee’s recommendations:

- Provide some funding for #1 - Mentorship, based on available funds;
- Decide on scenario for #2 - Conference Coordinator, and negotiate an appropriate stipend.
- Give remainder, if any, to the scholarship program.

The Board discussed the committee’s recommendations and variations to the proposals. Originally, the plan was to present the recommended proposals at the General Business Meeting, and the Board would select one proposal for funding at a future conference call. Given ACI’s current financial situation, the Board reached consensus that it would not fund any of the proposals for the time being; but it expressed its desire to revisit the issue when more funds are available.

Liaison Reports

- **Northeast** – No report
- **Southeast** – No report
- **West** – No report
- **Midwest** – No report
- **OWAA** – Kay introduced Phil Bloom as ACI's new OWAA liaison. Phil is with the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources and Past President of OWAA. He reported that OWAA is selling the condominium it owns and converting its publication to an online-only format. The latter should save the organization at least \$20,000/year. OWAA recently streamlined its awards contest. He said its recent conference in Grand Rapids, Mich. was a success, and next year's conference will be June 2010 in Rochester, Minn.

New Business

Scott said that due to the lack of a quorum for the April conference call, the Board has not yet been able to approve the minutes from the November 2008 call. Bob made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Nels. The motion passed.

Old Business

Bob said he would contact the Ellie Horwitz to resolve the matter of compensating the presenter from 2007 with a Massachusetts fishing trip.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. (CDT)

Respectfully submitted:

Scott C. Ball, Secretary