

## **Association for Conservation Information**

Board Meeting

7/13/15 Flagstaff, AZ

**Call to Order:** President Micah Holmes called the meeting to order.

**In Attendance:** Micah Holmes (OK), Kim Nix (AL), Robin Cahoon (UT), Judy Stokes Weber (NH), Randy Zellers (AR), Regina Knauer (MO), Michael Gray (KY), Tom Cadden (AZ), Phil Bloom (IN), Don King (TN), Aaron Meir (NV), Julie Hammonds (AZ, Awards), Kay Ellerhoff (MT, Futures), Marianne Burke (LA, Individual Member)

**Unable to Attend:** Jane Gustafson (NE), Rachel Piacenza (RBFF) and Kathy Garza-Bahr (OH)

**Conference Report:** Tom Cadden reported that there are about 100 people registered for the conference from 29 states. Fourteen of those are from Arizona Game and Fish.

**Approval of Minutes:** Judy Stokes Weber made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 10, 2015, meeting. Robin Cahoon seconded, and the motion passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Judy Stokes Weber said an auditor has reviewed the books for both 2014 and 2015 ACI and found no problems. Micah has a copy of the audit and a copy will go into the treasurer's files.

We currently have 47 agency members, seven individual members and one member each in the Sponsor, Supporting, Sustaining and Associate categories.

This year's expenses are in line with previous year's with exception of spending more money on scholarships and receiving no return from the Nebraska conference.

There is some discrepancy as to whether Randy Zellers was paid for producing the Balance Wheel. This will be investigated.

**Appoint Audit Committee:** Micah said he has appointed Julie Hammonds and Regina Knauer to the auditing committee. They will report on what they find at the business meeting on Thursday morning.

**Appoint Nominating Committee:** Micah appointed Marianne Burke, Phil Wilson and Don King to find new board members. These members will need to be elected at the business meeting. Randy Zellers, Rachel Piacenza and Tom Cadden will need to be replaced because of expiring terms.

Robin Cahoon announced that she has changed jobs and will be working as director of Utah's Own, a program of the state agriculture department. She would like to stay a member and be on the board if possible. The board agreed to wait and see how her job affects her service to ACI before taking any action to replace her.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Auction Committee:** Randy Zellers reported that Steve “Wildman” Wilson has been working with AZ personnel and they have done a tremendous job of procuring \$8,000 of merchandise. They will set up early Tuesday for the auction that night. There will be no games this year, but cards and raffle tickets will be sold and at least four state trips will be auctioned.

**Balance Wheel Report:** Randy Zellers reported that things are going well with the e-newsletter. There are now 480 people receiving the newsletter, which has a 35 percent open rate and 15-20 percent click-through rate. Scholarship recipients will be meeting this afternoon to talk about assignments for the newsletter. They are asked to write something on an initiative they are doing in their agency, etc. He will be doing articles on some of the awards winners for the next issue.

**Awards Committee:** Julie Hammonds reported we had a record 366 entries this year. The plaques are ready for the awards ceremony Thursday night. Some categories were streamlined and it worked well. Feedback was positive for the most part. The move to allow magazines to enter online articles has some issues because some links to the online articles did not work properly. The video categories worked well online.

Julie passed out a memo that outlined various companies that will do online entries. The upside is it makes entering easy, but right now the contest makes money for ACI and any of the options would cost money--possibly more money than ACI wants to spend. The online process would be more work for the administrator and less for the category chairs. A lot of discussion has already taken place about these options and more will be discussed at the awards meeting on Tuesday.

Julie suggested one way to further streamline the process is to not require judges to sign score sheets. The awards committee will discuss this.

ACI could have a booth at AFWA to display the award winners. It could be used as outreach to promote ACI. Discussion followed that attendees at AFWA do not really pay much attention to displays and it might not be the best way to promote ACI at that conference. Judy Stokes Weber suggested that someone make a presentation about the awards to the outreach committee.

**Travel Scholarship:** Robin Cahoon reported we had initially had 10 scholarships this year; on May 8, the board agreed to do a second round of scholarships. We ended up with 20 approved applicants. (see attachment)

There was some discussion on the scholarship process. The same people are applying every year, but if not for the scholarships, these people may not be able to attend.

Robin has had the scholarship duties for seven years and she would like to have a replacement. Michael Gray and Phil Bloom volunteered to co-chair this committee next year.

**Website:** Micah reminded everyone to send any web updates or changes to Jeff Eschler, ACI webmaster.

**Future Conference Sites:** Kay Ellerhoff asked Aaron Meier if there is any info on the Nevada conference in 2017. He reported that his agency is the host state for this year's Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting, and he hopes to glean some information from that experience. Both Tahoe and Reno are being considered as host cities. Kay also reported that ACI is scheduled to go to Alabama in 2018, Pennsylvania in 2019, and she will have more announcements at the business meeting.

**Discussion of National Conservation Outreach Strategy Grant:** Micah Holmes said the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) has reached out to him regarding a grant application. AFWA is applying for a multi-state grant and wants ACI to be a supporter of this effort. This may be an opportunity to raise the visibility, name recognition and influence of ACI.

Judy Stokes Weber made a motion for ACI to support this grant application and Phil Bloom seconded. Motion passed.

**Membership:** In the discussion on membership, Judy recommended forming a membership committee that would develop a membership packet that outlines the benefits of membership. Judy will support the committee in any way she can, but feels it needs to be an agency member. Micah asked that anyone who is willing to chair to take the lead on this to let him know. No action was taken.

#### **Liaison Reports:**

**OWAA:** Phil Bloom was elected Second Vice President of OWAA and gave a report on their conference in Knoxville, Tennessee. Next year's meeting is July 16-18 in Billings MT. Lisa Densmore is their new president. Phil will be planning program of billings conference, so he may not be attending ACI in MO.

**Preview of Annual Business Meeting:** Micah Holmes has submitted a budget for review to board members that needs to be approved at the business meeting.

Micah asked for a discussion on the president attending AFWA and the North American Wildlife and Resources Conference. The ACI bylaws allow ACI to reimburse the president's expenses to attend these conferences. Judy said that a past president who attended reported on the meetings for the Balance Wheel so members would know what happened. She has been to these meetings and there are advantages to attending as lots of important information is shared there. She will be add these proposed expenses to the budget.

Micah also asked for some discussion on a gift for Steve "Wildman" Wilson, who will be retiring at the end of this year. He has served as auctioneer for many years. Micah would like to honor him by doing something special. The board authorized a \$100 gift card for Steve in appreciation for auctioneer services.

**Lifetime Membership Nominations:** Micah asked people to think about lifetime memberships that could be nominated at business meeting. He will put together a slate. Judy Stokes Weber has nominated Judith Hosafros and Marianne Burke has nominated Steve Wilson.

**2016 Conference Invitation:** Regina Knauer reported that the Pope and Young conference is coming to Springfield the same week they had had planned so she is looking at a change of dates. She has a letter of invitation from her director.

Springfield is located in the southwest region of the state and situated on a plateau at the edge of the beautiful green and rolling hills of the Ozark Mountains. As a centrally-located state, Missouri offers easier access from adjacent states and many flight opportunities for conference attendees. Springfield-Branson National Airport (20 minutes from the center of town) is served by four airlines (American, Allegiant, Delta, and United) and seven major onsite car rental companies. It has connecting flights through the Kansas City and St. Louis International airports as well as through all major airport hubs throughout the Midwest. The Branson Airport is 30 miles south of Springfield and served on site by three major car rental companies.

Regina reported that they are working with the University Plaza Hotel and Conference Center for lodging, the Monday afternoon board meeting, the Monday evening welcome event, evening hospitality events, and Thursday's business meeting breakfast and break-out sessions.

Space for the opening plenary session speakers and for Tuesday breakout sessions has been made available to us at the Bass Pro White River Conference Center and the Wonders of the Ozarks Learning Facility (WOLF School) classrooms. Plans for Wednesday include breakout sessions at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and sessions in and on the resource with Department staff. Thursday's breakout sessions will be held at University Plaza.

This will be the third time the Missouri Department serves as host to an ACI conference. They hosted at Bennett Springs in 1940 and in Springfield in 1970.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned.

*Submitted by: Kim Nix, Secretary*

## **Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship ACI 2015 REPORT**

Prepared by Robin Cahoon – July 13, 2015

Initially, 10 Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarships were available for the 2015 conference in Flagstaff, Arizona (based on the \$5,200 budgeted by the ACI Board). A second round of 10 scholarships was approved by the ACI Board and announced May 8. Preference for the second set of scholarships given to applicants who would be attending ACI for the first-time and those not able to attend last year. The original application period began April 1 and ran thru May 15, but the announcement of the second round extended the application deadline to May 22. Twenty-four individuals applied for a Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship, but only 20 were eligible for consideration due to multiple applications received from member agencies/organizations and a withdrawal. The scholarships were allocated on a first-come, first-served basis with a one-per member agency/organization limit. The scholarships cover the registration fee and four nights lodging at the conference hotel. The ACI Treasurer sent the host state \$10,400 (via two \$5,200 checks/payments) to cover scholarship costs.

Scholarship recipients are required to take notes for at least one conference session and complete one article in the next year for The Balance Wheel. Randy Zellers will meet with the scholarship recipients and divvy out assignments during the conference.

### **\*Scholarship Recipients**

#### **Round 1**

- David Allen - Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources
- Phil Bloom - Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
- Jonathan Carlucci - New Jersey Div. of Fish and Wildlife
- Dan Dennison - Hawaii Dept. of Land and Natural Resources
- Bonnie Holding - Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
- Michael Gray - Kentucky Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources
- Aaron Meier - Nevada Dept. of Wildlife
- Abe Moore - Texas Parks and Wildlife Television
- Jessica Sall - Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
- Amanda Stroud - South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

#### **Round 2**

- Kevin Baskins - Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources
- Laura Cardon - Great Outdoors Colorado
- Barb Gigar - Aquatic Resources Education Association
- Gabe Griffin - Louisiana Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries
- Raleigh Holtom - Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- Brittany Howell - Pennsylvania Game Commission
- Nadia Marji - Kansas Dept. of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism
- Cory Maylett - Utah Div. of Wildlife Resources
- Karen Parker - Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Christine Schwerin - Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources