

Minutes
Association for Conservation Information (ACI)
General Business Meeting
Cincinnati, Ohio
July 21, 2011

OFFICIAL

President Scott Ball called the meeting to order at 8 a.m. (EDT).

Vice President Don King conducted membership roll call. Those present are as follows:

- Alabama Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
- Arizona Game & Fish Department
- Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Kentucky Department of Fish & Wildlife Resources
- Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
- Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Ohio Division of Wildlife
- Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
- Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation
- South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources
- Kay Morton Ellerhoff, lifetime member

(Quorum = Simple majority of voting member agencies present at the beginning of the meeting, but no less than ¼ total membership (52 x 0.25 = 13))

Treasurer's Report (2010-2011) — Chuck Schlueter

This was a year of transition for treasurer duties and the juggling of ACI accounts from United Bank in West Virginia to BankWest in South Dakota. This process is not yet completed.

We began July 1, 2010, with \$15,613.91 in the United Bank account. We ended June 30, 2011, with \$1,432.16 in the BankWest checking account, and former treasurer Bob Wines reports that there is \$3,582.36 still to be transferred from United Bank to BankWest.

The economy has been unkind to the ACI checking account balance.

As a group, we have seen a shift from several years of very profitable membership, dues and conferences. It was almost too much of a good thing. We were on the brink of losing our Not for Profit status due to our robust account balances.

State agency budgets have been under considerable scrutiny the past 3-4 years. We have a slight decline in membership, and a considerable decline in conference attendance. The ACI

scholarships are a welcome relief to those who may not otherwise gain permission for the travel, but we must also consider the effect the additional cost has had on our checking account.

The good news, our Certificate of Deposit is in excellent health. The total stands at \$60,000, with interest deposits of over \$500 quarterly into our checking account.

We have a solid conference in place for 2011, and the final balance will wind up in the black. Kudos to Ohio.

We will vigorously pursue membership dues and payments from a successful awards competition in early August. This will bolster our account, and I expect that we will be positioned to handle all of our bills.

I do recommend we consider our options for tapping our reserves in our CD, and I have a plan in place should we need ready access to those funds.

Related documents provided separately:

- Checking Account Report
- Members in Good Standing Report
- Independent Accountant's Review Report for Year Ending June 30, 2011 (Tetrick & Bartlett)
- 2011-12 Budget

Audit Committee — **David Lane, Laura MacLean, Amanda Stroud** met and reviewed the financial report and associated documents submitted by **Treasurer Chuck Schlueter** for the Association for Conservation Information. Amanda Stroud reported the webmaster appeared to have been paid more than budgeted, as was Dottie Head for *The Balance Wheel*.

Discussion: President Scott Ball said both the webmaster (Jeff Eschler) and Dottie Head were paid the agreed-upon amount for their services, and he located the webmaster discrepancy. The Checking Account Report shows it as a \$299.40 line item payment to Hosting 4 Less for hosting the website. The additional money Dottie received was reimbursement for travel to the Louisville conference, which was higher than the \$1,000 budgeted. He pointed out that ACI's budget is a guideline for gauging expenses and revenue. Sometimes they are higher than budgeted; sometimes they are less than budgeted.

Following the discussion, the committee stated it found the records to be in good order. **Nels Rodefled**, Oklahoma, moved to accept the audit report. Motion seconded by **Kim Nix** and passed by members.

Revenue expenditure report: Lindsay Deering pointed out the Scholarship Fund expenditure of \$5,659.35 was actually deducted from the Ohio conference fund. (Refer to Lindsay's conference report below.)

Committee Reports —

2011 Conference — Lindsay Deering

The 2011 ACI Annual Conference was held in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza July 18-21, 2011.

The conference theme was Conservation Information in 3-D: Diversity, Development, Direction.

Including all speakers, there were 84 people on the registration list. There were 68 actual attendees. Ten attendees were scholarship recipients and a few were one- or two-day attendees.

A total of \$12,100 was taken in via registrations; however, \$1,500 is not actually realized as it is scholarship recipient partial registration. It is not realized because ACI does not have in its checking account the funds to cover this amount and the amount will be “deducted” from what Ohio returns to ACI as conference profits.

In addition, the hotel rooms for scholarship recipients (\$4,159.35), which are usually paid directly from the ACI checking account, will be paid from conference profits instead.

Even after these unexpected expenses, Ohio will be able to return a bit over \$3,100 to the ACI general account.

Future Conference Sites — Kay Morton Ellerhoff, chair

2012 - NCTC, Shepherdstown, WV, July 15-20. Laura MacLean, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Hoy Murphy, West Virginia Department of Commerce; Emily Fleming, Art Shomo, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources; Craig Rieben, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2013 - ACI's 75th Anniversary - Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Contact: Robin Thomas

2014 - Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Contact: Scott Bonertz

The Futures List:

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Contact: Kim Nix

Arizona Game and Fish Department (TENTATIVE CONSIDERATION).

Contact: Tom Cadden

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Contact: Jeff Williams (program support for Granite Ranch)

Granite Ranch, Jackson, Wyo. Contact: Sue Hankner, Education Director, Safari Club International Foundation

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (TENTATIVE CONSIDERATION). Contact: Kevin Baskins

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Contacts: Scott Pengelly, Gustav Axelson

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Contact: Dick Hargrave

South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks. Contact: Chuck Schlueter

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department. Contact: Judy Stokes

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. Contact: Don Cash

Stephanie Hussey (RBFF) moved to accept the National Conservation Training Center's (NCTC) invitation for the July 15-20, 2012, Association for Conservation Information annual conference. **Michael Gray** (Kentucky) seconded the motion, and the members approved.

Nominating Committee — Michael Gray, Micah Holmes (Oklahoma), Stephanie Hussey

The Nominating Committee recommended the following candidates to serve as **Officers** for 2011-12:

President: **Scott Ball** (Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission)

Vice President: **Don King** (Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency)

Treasurer: **Chuck Schlueter** (South Dakota Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks)

Secretary: **Judith Hosafros** (Wyoming Game & Fish Department)

The Nominating Committee recommended three candidates to serve on the **Board of Directors** for a three-year term beginning 2011-12. Each was given the opportunity to say {a few words about themselves}.

Scott Bonertz (Nebraska Game & Parks Commission) {**Scott** was unable to attend the conference, but **Jane Gustafson**, NE, described him as being organized, having a good sense of humor, and proficient in social media and video.}

Jamey Graham (Ohio Division of Wildlife) {**Jamey** has been with ODW for seven years and is grateful for the chance to serve on the board.}

Mark Martinez (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources) {**Mark** is involved with social media, media, print production, and he likes ACI.}

A motion was made to dispense with the paper ballot and accept the slate of officers and three new board members by acclamation. The motion was seconded, then passed, by the members.

Awards Committee — Kim Nix (Alabama)

Kim reported the following:

- There were 307 entries submitted for this year's contest (for work done in 2010).
- The new Graphics Category was popular, generating 16 entries.
- The Board of Directors amended the ACI Bylaws in March, raising the entry fee from \$20 to \$30. This resulted in revenues exceeding \$9,200 this year.

- The committee suggested doing away with the Radio PSA and Video News categories due to lack of participation. Future entries that would go into these categories can be entered as Audio Program and Video-Other entries, respectively. The Board approved these suggested changes.
- The committee recommended adding a new category: Electronic Newsletter. The Board approved.
- The committee also set a cap of \$5,000 for future entries in the Big Idea/Small Budget category.
- A room has been set up at this year's conference where most of the 2010 entries can be examined.

***The Balance Wheel* — Scott Ball, Randy Zellers, Dottie Head, editor (report by Scott Ball)**
It was a bad news/good news year for *The Balance Wheel*.

The bad news was the resignation of editor **Dottie Head** in April after five years of stellar service. Dottie's other freelance work was taking an increasing amount of her time, leading to her decision to step down as editor.

The good news was the selection of **Randy Zellers (Arkansas Game & Fish Commission)** as *The Balance Wheel's* new editor. **Randy** was chosen from a field of nine excellent candidates. The Fall 2011 issue (proceedings) will be the first under his direction.

Special thanks go to the **Search Committee – Don King, Penny Miller and Amanda Stroud** – for handling the selection process.

We produced four issues in 2010-11, including the proceedings of the 2010 ACI Conference in Louisville.

The Balance Wheel committee, made up of **Scott Ball, Jamey Graham, Nancy Herron, Penny Miller, Hoy Murphy, Kim Nix and Liza Poinier (apologies for any omissions)** continued to generate great new ideas for articles on a variety of topics of interest to ACI members. New members are always welcome on our committee, and it's a great way to "get your feet wet" with ACI.

Per tradition established by **Dottie**, the fall issue of *The Balance Wheel* will be dedicated to the proceedings of the 2011 Conference in Cincinnati. The ongoing challenge with the proceedings issue has been securing abstracts from the presenters post-conference. Any suggestions on how to improve this situation would be most welcomed.

ACI looks forward to the continued excellence of *The Balance Wheel* as **Randy Zellers** takes the reins. **Randy** encouraged everyone to send information to him for the newsletter.

Kay Ellerhoff mentioned that **Randy** has recently been elected to the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA) Board of Directors.

Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship — Robin Thomas (Utah)

Nineteen applications were submitted for the Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship in 2011. Unfortunately, eight individuals withdrew prior to the conference due to either personal conflicts or troubles with their agency's budget. The budgeted amount for scholarships was \$10,000. All applicants were accommodated within the budget. Up to four nights lodging (\$92.43 per night – taxes/fees included) and a registration fee waiver (\$150 – half the cost of early-bird registration) is viewed as the expenditure and therefore payable to the host state from ACI.

The total estimated scholarship expenditure is \$5,197.20 (40 nights lodging = \$3,697.20 **and** 10 registration waivers = \$1,500). (One scholarship recipient was able to pay the registration fee.)

Travel scholarship recipients represented nine member agencies/organizations (Alabama-1, Florida-2, Georgia-1, Kentucky-1, Louisiana-1, Nevada-1, Oregon-1, S. Carolina-2 and Utah-1). The original travel scholarship recipients represented 13 member agencies/organizations (Alabama-2, Florida-2, Georgia-1, Indiana-1, Louisiana-2, Minnesota-1, N. Carolina-1, Nevada-1, Oregon-1, S. Carolina-2, Texas-1, Utah-2 and Wyoming-1). Only persons employed by member agencies and organizations, persons employed by potential member agencies and organizations are eligible to receive a Geoffrey Schneider Travel Scholarship (Article 7(a) of the ACI Bylaws).

Membership — Scott Ball

Scott talked about distinguishing the “regular” Membership Committee from a special committee that focuses on recruiting and retaining members.

The “regular” Membership Committee keeps track of membership status and maintains ACI's online Membership Directory. The committee chair is **Chuck Schlueter**. As treasurer, **Chuck** sends the annual dues notices, and is in the best position to maintain ACI's membership list. **Scott Ball** will work with **Chuck** and ACI's webmaster, **Jeff Eschler**, to update the current online Membership Directory.

Several years ago, a special committee was formed and given the task of recruiting new members. The project was moderately successful. **Vicki Mountz (Ohio)** inquired about the status of the committee. **Scott** replied that the group was not created as a “standing” or permanent committee, and is not currently active.

Scott said ACI membership has declined in recent years, most likely for economic reasons, and perhaps it is time to re-establish this special Membership Recruitment Committee. **Josetta Hawthorne (Council for Environmental Education)** suggested that conference sponsors be given a free one-year ACI membership to “hook” them.

Auction — Lindsey Deering

- This year's auction netted a \$1,600 profit.
- **Jeff Williams (Arkansas)** offered to head up the auction in future years.
- **Jeff** reported that **Steve “Wild Man” Wilson's** father passed away. **Jeff** will circulate two sympathy cards for members to sign.

Liaison Reports

Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Judy Stokes) – No report.

Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Marianne Burke)

Don King reported that Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency hosted the conference in Nashville, October 22-26, 2011. There was lots of good information and education material presented, as well as lots of music.

Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (vacant) – No report.

Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Judith Hosafros) – No report; WAFWA conference is currently underway.

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Laura MacLean)

Laura MacLean reported on AFWA's current focus areas, which include the reauthorization of the 2012 Farm Bill, the North American Conservation Education Strategy, the 2011 Annual Meeting and the 75th Anniversary of the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program in 2012.

Outdoor Writers Association of America (Phil Bloom)

Phil could not attend the conference, but submitted the following report to **Scott Ball**:

- OWAA sold its headquarters building in Missoula, MT, and relocated to a more suitable rental space. The new office address is 615 Oak St., Ste. 201, Missoula, MT 59801.
- The 2011 annual conference was at Snowbird Ski and Summer Resort near Salt Lake City from July 8-11. OWAA's 2012 conference will be in Fairbanks, Alaska, and Lake Placid has been selected for the 2013 conference site.
- The Excellence in Craft Contest was revamped and for the first time accepted entries from non-members. Further revisions are being implemented for 2012.
- The website (owaa.org) was redesigned.
- A half-day workshop (Becoming an Outdoor Communicator) held in February at the University of Minnesota targeted young writers.
- A college student chapter of OWAA was authorized at the University of Missouri with hopes of adding chapters at other colleges and universities.
- OWAA is exploring a membership category for bloggers, including the drafting of membership criteria.
- Mike Walker was voted in as President at the Salt Lake City conference.
- The membership elected Bruce Cochran, Mary Nickum and **Randy Zellers** to the board of directors.
- The membership voted to eliminate the office of 3rd vice president.

Old Business — There was no old business.

New Business — **Scott Ball** reported that **Mark Southern** is letting go of the listserv duties. **Kristina Summers** will be taking over.

Adjournment — **Lindsay Deering** moved to adjourn the 2011 Annual ACI Business Meeting. Motion was seconded by **Chuck Schlueter**. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith Hosafros, Secretary