# MINUTES

## Association for Conservation Information Board Meeting

Virtual Conference Call ● May 13, 2026 ● 11 a.m.-12 p.m. CDT

**ITEM NO. 1: Meeting Called to Order**

**ITEM NO. 2: Roll Call**

✓ Aaron Meier (NV, President)
✓ Linda DiPiano (NJ, Vice President)
✓ Lance Cherry (CAHSS, Secretary)
✓ Dan Dennison (HI, Treasurer; joined late)
✓ Blake Podhajsky (OK, Immediate Past President)
✓ Brent Drinkut (IN, Board-26)
✓ Bobby Jones (NV, Board-26)
✓ Beth Quillian (OR, Board-26)
✓ Jonathan Carlucci (NJ, Board-27)
✓ Jane Gustafson (NE, Board-27)
✓ Mischelle Diaz (TX, Board-27)
✓ Devon Lindley (Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation-28)
✓ Joanne Martonik (NFAA, Board-28)
☐ Katie Paey (NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife-28)
✓ Jenifer Wisniewski (National Deer Association, Grants Committee Chair)
☐ Jason Harmon (TN, Fundraising/Auction Committee Chair)
☐ Micah Holmes (OK, Ways and Means Committee Chair)
✓ Patty Allen (AFWA, Communications Committee Chair)

**ITEM NO. 3: Approval of Minutes**

- March 11, 2026 Board Meeting minutes

Linda DiPiano made a Motion to approve the Minutes from the March 11, 2026 Board Meeting without changes. Jane Gustafson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 4: Opening Remarks**

Presented by Aaron Meier, President

Aaron noted that Nevada's big game application deadline was that day and briefly discussed the workload associated with the deadline.

Aaron reported that Natalie Andes had left the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, creating a vacancy on the Board. Jane Gustafson made a Motion to appoint Joanne Martonik to fill the vacant Board position. Lance Cherry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 5: Treasurer's Report**

Presented by Dan Dennison, Treasurer

- Treasurer's Report

Dan reported that the ACI account balance was approximately $82,000, including transfers from the conference account. He noted that New Mexico's payment was in process and that several agencies have unique procurement requirements that can delay payments.

Dan asked that ACI identify the appropriate fiscal contact for each member agency to ensure invoices reach the correct person. The Board discussed collecting this information during conference registration or through a follow-up survey.

**ITEM NO. 6: 2026 ACI Conference Update**
Presented by Blake Podhajsky, 2026 Conference Coordinator

Blake reported that conference planning remains on schedule and that the agenda is approximately 98 percent complete. The remaining work involves finalizing breakout sessions and possibly adding one or two presentations.

Twenty-one attendees had registered through Whova, with another 15 invoiced. ODWC expects to register an additional 18 to 20 staff, placing projected attendance at approximately 60 to 70 people. Rising airfare and fuel costs remain a concern for agencies considering out-of-state travel.

Sponsorship outreach is continuing. Approximately $11,000 to $12,000 had been received, with additional commitments still pending. Board members were again encouraged to share potential sponsor contacts.

The conference team is developing an Osprey backpack welcome bag that may include a small survival-themed kit. Local breweries have committed donations for the hospitality suite, and Pepsi is donating water, sports drinks, and canned beverages.

Approximately $11,000 in auction items had been secured. Additional trips are still needed for the live auction. A photo carousel featuring selected auction items has been posted on the conference webpage.

**ITEM NO. 7: Communications Report**
Presented by Patty Allen, Communications Chair

Patty reported that the April issue of the Balance Wheel was distributed and earned an open rate above 40 percent. Awards-related reminder emails achieved open rates of approximately 50 percent. She also completed several recent updates to the ACI website.

**ITEM NO. 8: Awards Committee Report**
Presented by Beth Quillian, Awards Committee Co-Chair

Beth thanked those who had completed their judging assignments and noted that additional reminders would be sent before judging closed the following week. Most categories secured three judges; two of the larger categories had two judges each.

The fisheries magazine article and hunting and fishing video categories were identified as especially time-intensive. Once judging closes, the committee will compile the winners and begin developing the awards presentation and plaques in coordination with the conference team.

**ITEM NO. 9: Auction and Fundraising Report**
Presented by Jason Harmon, Auction and Fundraising Committee Chair

No separate report was presented. Auction updates were included in the conference report.

**ITEM NO. 10: Scholarships Committee Report**
Presented by Bobby Jones, Scholarships Committee Chair

Bobby reported that at least 13 scholarship applications had been received through the SurveyMonkey account provided by Oklahoma. Because the staff member with access to the final results was out of the office, the committee could not review the completed application list during the meeting.

Joanne Martonik and Linda DiPiano agreed to assist Bobby with reviewing the applications. The Board previously authorized up to 10 scholarships and agreed that the committee should recommend the final number after evaluating the applicants, including anticipated hotel needs and organizational representation.

**ITEM NO. 11: Grants Committee Report**
Presented by Jenifer Wisniewski, Grants Committee Chair

Jenifer reported that grant opportunities are open again and asked Board members to share potential project ideas. Patty recommended having the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review draft applications before submission to help verify eligibility and completeness.

**ITEM NO. 12: Ways and Means Report**
Presented by Micah Holmes, Ways and Means Committee Chair

No report presented.

**ITEM NO. 13: New Business**
Presented by Aaron Meier, President

Aaron reported that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources had paid its dues and requested formal approval to rejoin ACI. Jonathan Carlucci made a Motion to approve Illinois DNR for membership. Jane Gustafson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Linda DiPiano reported that the hotel used for the 2024 New Jersey conference had identified an unpaid $4,644 balance for scholarship rooms. She reviewed the previous invoices and payments and confirmed that the amount had not been included in the final bill paid by ACI. Dan agreed to verify the records once more and coordinate payment. The Board noted that no formal vote was required to pay a valid outstanding invoice.

**ITEM NO. 14: Adjournment**
Jonathan Carlucci made a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Jane Gustafson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Lance Cherry, Secretary