

WAEF Board Meeting May 21, 2005

Aldo Leopold Nature Center

Board Members Present – Carrie Hembree, Jeremy Higgins, Karla Lockman, Ben Bishop, Betsy Parker, Mary Hollenbeck, Tanya , Amy Workman, Rebecca Westfahl, Heidi Conde
Not Present – David Kuckuk

Meeting called to order 12:07 pm (Carrie)

Review Agenda/Additions – None

March Meeting Minutes Review – Minutes will be reviewed again by the board and approved electronically before the next meeting. There will be a strong effort to get minutes out two weeks after the meeting. Also, an effort will be made to get the agenda out a week early. Discussion over what level of formality is appropriate for minutes. Procedure clarified that minutes are not posted until being revised and approved by the Board. The March minutes were not approved; will be revised by Chair and resubmitted to Board for approval.

Public Input – No public members present. Admin. Asst. has been sending out membership reminders, and the chair reported receiving several positive comments from members about the frequency and professionalism of communications from the WAEF office.

Finance report and Administrative Asst. report (no written report, but given verbally by Board Chair) – 10 page budget report passed out to board members. Board chair noted that costs for all budget categories will be reviewed and may be changed. Admn. Asst. had been working with Ian Goldberg, fiscal officer for the CNR, to review WAEF's budget history. Bank and office financial records have been BALANCED, down to the transaction. Taxes are up to date and will be submitted in November. Discussion that for several years financial records were not kept stringently; bank records indicated that WAEF had more money (\$5,000) than WAEF incomplete records indicated. Admn Asst. has been preparing for possible membership drive (if Board votes to begin one) and online credit card memberships. Discussion about method of payment followed (paypal, secure website, etc.)

Committee Reports – First order of business, finalizing committee chairs. Board members encouraged to think of WAEF members outside the Board who may have interest in several as committee chair. Chair noted some committee chairs are set, i.e. management committee.

Committee chairs to discuss: Networking, Membership,

At the work weekend meeting, possible committee chairs were discussed.

Networking tasks discussed were: mentoring program, strengthening liaisons, partnerships, publicity for WAEF. Jeremy Higgins volunteered to chair the Networking Committee.

Membership tasks discussed were mentoring, surveying membership, increasing member benefits, facilitating contacts between members, increasing and diversifying membership, increasing communications with members. Heidi Conde volunteered to chair the Membership Committee.

Website newsletter committee. This is a new committee discussed at the retreat. Sunshine Kapusta has served as the webmaster of the WAEF site to this point. The contents of the website are the task for this committee. The Admn Asst. has volunteered to work consistently on an e-

newsletter, but the exact duties up for discussion. Discussion that perhaps a committee not the best format to provide content for the e-newsletter. Questions of newsletter being new material or recycled material (i.e. NAEE announcements, notices, articles). Consensus that an established process for managing the newsletter is the key (for gathering content, distributing, etc.) Consensus that anyone ought to be able to contribute to the newsletter, but that one person ought to be receiver of all info ought to be kept consistent. Admin. Asst. discussed as being this person. Decided that a chair is not necessary for this committee; by default, the 2004 Board set the precedent that the Chair approves all content on the website.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Networking Committee: Given by new chair Jeremy Higgins. Communicated with Kathe Crowley-Conn, director of Nature Net to tap into NN as resource. Chair reported that member database has been divided into subsets for targeting messages. Key members (who have history of active involvement) have been identified. Admin Asst has been reviewing dates of membership renewals to identify key times of activity, and suggested that perhaps having regional meetings or outings in geographic areas may help with membership and networking. Jeremy discussed notifying other organizations with crossover to WAEE (Audubon Society, WSST, etc.) to get buy in from the leaders of this orgs when planning/co-hosting events or drawing potential members.

Membership Committee: Given by new chair Heidi Conde. Discussion of email communications regarding history of membership drives, need for member survey, etc. No consensus reached yet. Membership survey and drive on agenda for later discussion.

Updates from Office – Given by Chair. Past new member packets discussed. Format may be unsustainable (high quality paper folded into fancy packets). Past fancy new member packets were budgeted for by the membership committee. That money has all been spent (\$872) and would need to be budget for again this fiscal year if member committee decides to do this. No old member packets left. Disk exists with digital brochure on it. Chair suggested talking to Admin. Asst. directly about what is currently being sent out to new members.

Student Committee – Given by co-chairs Ben Bishop and Karla Lockman . Budget report prepared and will be submitted. Karla located four WI schools hat have good environmental programs (UW-Madison, Fox Valley Tech (Appleton), UW-River Falls, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Green Bay) that could be tapped into for helping with fall conference, recruiting student members, and attending EE club meetings, particularly in Sept/Oct and Jan/Feb. Goal set to visit two colleges per semester. Discussion of organizing field trips between programs. Suggestion to organize student party for fall conference, coordinating with campus advisors of student organizations to help organize/plan networking event. Suggestion to have student groups or organizations be able to join, instead/in addition to individuals. Karla presented draft WAEE student tri-fold brochure, including “spring breakaway” idea for EE/Outdoor related spring break.

Conference Oversight committee – Given by chair Mary Holleback. Written report distributed. WEEB grant for fall conference was denied, but budget submitted for conference did not include WEEB \$ in any case. EU grant is pending. Currently have 18 session proposals & 8 workshop

proposals. Submissions accepted until the end of May. The committee goal is to have 30 sessions total. Still in process of deciding on keynote speaker. Four speakers being actively considered: Jackson Gilman, Bill Cronan, Harry Boight and Carmen Saranini. Field trip activities set. Chris Platta selected as musician (tex-mex).

Winter Workshop needs additional financing. Goal set for 20 additional people at Winter Workshop. Organizer Steve Sandstrom needs help getting grants to subsidize keynote speaker; if not successful, cost of attendance may need to be raised. Suggestion that changing dates may increase attendance. Reasons for not having done so are competition with Superbowl, and that WAEE is slated at Treehaven, the traditional meeting place. Tradition of WW being held the last weekend in Jan. Jeremy volunteered to help find funding.

The 2006 Fall conference planning is proceeding very productively – committee has been very active in recruiting keynote and garnering funding.

MEEC committee discussed having an over the summer conference. Question for Board: do we host MEEC in July 2007 and WAEE conf in October 2007, or a combined conf in July or October 2007? Unanimous vote that Jeremy to take to the MEEC committee that the Board would prefer a combined conference for October 2007. Suggestion made for Board members to think about co-chairs to the combined conference committee, if MEEC accepts the combined conference idea. Betsy reported on behalf of the NAAEE conference co-chair Kathe Conn's plea to host the 2006 NAAEE conference in Wisconsin. Board agreed this not feasible.

Liaisonships – In bylaws, WAEE members supposed to be liaisons to other organizations, some of which are defunct. Liaison discussion tabled for two years already. Decision that if time permits to discuss at the end of this meeting or through email between now and end of August.

Unfinished Business – Membership database discussion – suggestion that membership database should be shared with membership committee for purposes of networking, recruiting volunteers, getting feedback on our organization, or increasing membership. Suggestion to examine membership to look for gaps where a membership drive could target. Member database contains all information, but subset could be created just of pertinent information. Policy set by past board governing outside use of the member database, but no set policy for board members use of database. Suggestion that because Board members are elected by members, level of trust is sufficient to share member info with all board members. Another suggestion that database could be used to pair mentors with mentees. Discussion ensued about procedure of setting up mentor program. Jeremy described in his position of membership coordinator for NAAEE creating reports of membership breakdown for informational purposes. Suggestion made to ask Admin. Asst to compile database to distribute to Board giving name, affiliation, address, phone, email of members. In the past, member databases were not distributed to Board members because there was not a well organized database to distribute.

Heidi Conde moved that the membership list, limited to name, affiliation, address, phone, email of members be shared with all Board members who request it on an annual basis. Request to be made through the Chair and cc'ed to the Admn Asst. Motion seconded by Amy Workman. Motion passed unanimously. Database will be distributed in the format requested (paper or electronic).

Member Survey – Draft created by Heidi Conde. Historical perspective given that in the past, member surveys were kept in draft form so long that they were never actually sent out. Discussion ensued on whether or not a survey is necessary. One suggestion that survey be kept to questions about what the members think the main goals of the organization ought to be. Another comment that surveys can lose their usefulness if no Board member is willing to lead the efforts suggested by the members. Comment that through the survey, Board members could limit the options presented to the members to ideas that they would be willing to follow through with, and members could help prioritize the efforts of the Board. Heidi went through the draft survey, describing the goals of each section and the thought process that went into the draft. Suggestion made to allow for write in suggestions in the survey. Chair noted that regarding the umbrella website, WCEE was going to take leadership on this issue, with cooperation with WEEB and perhaps WAEE. Suggestion that given the overlap, WAEE should have a say in what goes into the website. Question of whether or not EE Link already serves as the umbrella website. Suggestion that umbrella website is another topic entirely to discuss later, so should be removed from the survey. Suggestion to add section to the survey asking members to rate how the Board is performing on current projects. Suggestion that the umbrella website should be a separate survey. Discussion followed on the extent of specificity of volunteer opportunities should be, and the procedure for follow up. Discussion on whether or not survey should direct individual Board members activities, and what the timeline ought to be to report results to the members. Suggestion made to put the survey under the supervision of the membership committee. Suggestion to finalize the timeline for producing, revising and distributing the survey. Suggestion to have a separate survey or separate section for students. Karla and Ben both volunteered to work with the membership committee to create a student survey or student section. Suggestion to have the survey focus on member talents, followed by suggestion to have a paragraph explaining how that info will be used. Chair has final say on what goes into the survey.

Action Item: By June 4, Board members should submit survey suggestions to Heidi, as well as comments (add in/take out) of what is in the draft. Heidi will send out revised draft survey by July 2. Second round of suggestions due to Heidi by July 23. Second draft distributed by August 13. Discussion of second draft to be discussed at August 28 Board meeting and voted on. Plea to adhere to the deadlines as closely as possible, and empowerment for Heidi to continue if no suggestions are given.

Membership Drive – Admin. Asst. is the point person for this project. Suggestion that the membership committee meet with Carol to provide assistance and guidance, and to recruit non Board members to volunteer in the process. Board gave approval for a membership drive.

Action item: Jeremy and Student Committee should forward database info to Carol. Membership committee should meet with Carol.

WAEE Newsletter – Newsletter project started under previous Board. Last Board approved a format for an E-Newsletter. The hindrance has been finalizing the process: who decides what the final content is before being sent. Betsy Parker volunteered to be the point person to receive suggestions for content and pass them on to the Chair, Admin Asst., and Webmaster. Suggestion to amend the bylaws so there's a Newsletter committee to ensure continuation. Goal set to send the newsletter out four times/year to start, then ideally once/month. Suggestion to not limit who receives the newsletter for promotional purposes. Discussion that if we do not limit who

receives it, it loses the value as a member benefit. Decision reached to send the newsletter to members only, but put it on the website as an archive when the new issue comes out. The first newsletter will go out in the next two weeks. Next newsletter out right before or after Fall Conference. Suggestion to include an editor's note on the newsletter.

Regional Networking Update – Regions (DNR) delineated by Kathe and Jeremy. Kathe is set to poll WAEE Nature Center members on what they would like to see in a regional network setting. Note that used to have many more member outings at nature centers.

FY06 Budget – Highlights provided by Chair: 1000's & 1100's are income; 1200's are expenses. Last year, total membership income expected to be \$7,460; year to date amount is \$6,134. This is very close to where we've been in previous years. In general, we've expected to get more from WW than we actually got (In '04, expected \$13,592; got \$9,448). Organizer Steve Sandstrom has ideas on how to deal with this. Fall Conference in '04 expected to make \$40,000; actually made \$24,000. This is actually very good because the \$40,000 number does not have a rationale to anyone's knowledge. Several grants were included in the last budget; none in progress for the 06 budget.

Expenses: Expected to spend \$1,786 on membership; to date, expended \$221. Discrepancy in part due to purchases made where receipts were never turned in for reimbursement. Suggestion made to send a formal letter to purchaser giving timeline for submitting reimbursement request; if not done in 30 days, considered a donation.

Administrative costs include payments to University for Admin. Asst time (expected to spend \$17,391; spent \$13,547 year to date – this is on track), work study time, fringe benefits, services and supplies. Services and supplies (\$7,000 approx.) is an upper limit; if don't expend it, aren't charged it. LTE payment rate changed, and fringe benefit rate changed (both increased). Suggestion for management committee to examine the Admin. Asst. position description and designation. Discussion to increase other perks to Admin. Asst. position. Also budgeted more for mileage reimbursement than spent.

Conference expenditures: line items 1207 & 1208. For Fall 04 conference expected to spend \$27,950; actually spent \$21,033. Spent less than expected to spend, but didn't draw as many participants as expected either.

Organizational membership dues: \$ WAEE would pay to belong to another organization.

Networking committee budget: line item 1227; very little spent out of this budget.

Committee budgets submitted by conference committee and student committee; no budgets submitted by membership committee & membership committee; awards committee said last year's budget was sufficient.

Discussion of student committee proposed budget: \$3073. Willing to write grants to cover some costs. Suggestion to estimate how many new student members would join as a result of student outreach efforts, and to set a goal. Chair suggested that some items be contingent upon receipt of grants; also laptops and projectors can be loaned out by CNR; question if this applies to students as well. Chair offered KEEP's AV supplies as well, UW-Ext offered display boards.

Suggestions made of companies to ask for \$/supplies for. Student committee budget discussed and well supported.

Committee Budget report: Goal to attract 250 attendance because of location; reason for \$48,000 expected income. Registration \$80, \$69 meal packet, WS \$20, lodging not included.

Average \$170 not including housing. Question if expected income or expenditures are realistic.

Suggestion to get Mayor of Madison as a keynote. Suggestion that expenses for entertainment and speakers be reduced (\$11,000 not feasible). Speaker number based on George Lakoff, which fell through. Committee chair feels budget is ambitious, but feasible. Connections on the committee are excellent; they are working hard to get outside support. Comment that did not see marketing line item in budget. Suggestion to have Garrison Keiller, Edward Norton, or Harrison Ford for keynote. Entertainment suggestion: Willie Porter, Nattie Nation, Jim Brooks. Decision that budget discussion needs to be continued via email, and committees who have not yet submitted a budget need to do so to Chair.

Motion to adjourn at 6:10 pm by Rebecca Westphal, seconded by Ben Bishop. Motion carried.