

WAEF Meeting Minutes
9/9/06
Schmeekle Reserve, Stevens Point

In Attendance: Tanya Zastrow, Jeremy Solin, Joey Zocher, John Huesinkveld, Jeremy Higgins, Betsy Parker, Amy Workman, Rebecca Westphal

- I. Meeting called to order: 11:35am by Jeremy Higgins

- II. Agenda revised to move up Public input guest, Jeremy Solin
(Co-chair of the 2007 MEEC conference)
 - A. MEEC 2007 – Conference schedule provided: Oct 18-20 in Stevens Point. Richard Louv is the chosen keynote speaker; not confirmed yet. Country Springs Suites provides the entertainment – conference participants admitted no charge. Theme: “No Child Left Inside” – several activities along the theme (skit, nature journaling, storywall). Friday night fish fry; emphasis on local foods. Saturday panel discussion – researcher cited by Louv (connection between behavior and ADD/ADHD/autism). Saturday night microbrew/homebrew fest and beer/brat dinner (WI focus). Draft Conference budget provided – Louv main conf expense (\$7500). Fundraising \$7,950 so far – more large donors expected. Four tracks: outdoor classrooms, families/communities in the outdoors, teaching the outdoors inside & dimensions of wellness. Expected attendance: 75-90% from Wisconsin. Jeremy S. & Sterling have connections to recruit attendance from MN & IA. Urban inclusion under families/communities track. Jeremy S. also suggested combining a PLT/Project WILD/WET, LEP, LEAF WS as part of the conference. Tanya is WAEF liaison to the MEEC Committee.
 - B. School Forest program: (School Forest coordinator for LEAF.) 195 school districts have ~360 school forests. Some are well developed, others are just starting out. Jeremy S. working to raise awareness of the program and provide incentives for greater utilization. Two topics:
 1. School Forest Awards Program (began in 2004 at WAEF conference)
Awards program well received: 7 awarded in 2005 out of 20 candidates. Idea to merge School Forest Awards program with WAEF awards program. The School Forest plans have taken the place of environmental education plans mandated to school districts by DPI in the 1990’s. Many of the School Forest Awards are to the teachers developing plans for four categories: community members, resource professionals, teachers, students. Would like to maintain those categories. Joey voiced support for this idea and inquired how set the WAEF Award categories are. Jeremy S. said that financially it is easiest for the School Forest Awards to be a subset of the WAEF Awards. Betsy inquired how WAEF would benefit and suggested Jeremy become part of the Awards committee and provide incentives for award recipients to become members of WAEF. Jeremy S. said he could look into his program paying for an annual WAEF membership for award recipients. Jeremy S. said more people getting involved with school forests don’t know about WAEF, but award winners

are likely to already be WAEE members. Rebecca mentioned idea discussed of moving awards banquet out of WAEE conference as a fundraiser – make it fancier. Jeremy S. discussed idea of presenting award at several profession-specific conferences (i.e. administrators/principal conferences, science teacher conferences, etc.) to raise awareness of program to different audiences. Jeremy H. requested a bulleted list of the proposed relationship of the WAEE and SF awards.

Action Item: Get the Awards committee together which consists of Michael Ring. Rebecca said she'd help Jeremy S. coordinate a meeting.

2. School Forest Summit: 60 participants attended last year. Interest in continuing meeting every other year. Will be held next year in association with MEEC, Wednesday night; Summit will be the conference itself. Purpose is to network school forest stakeholders. Joey suggested every other year coordinating the WAEE conference with the School Forest Summit- Jeremy S. said he's open to considering adding the pre-conference school forest meeting to the conference on a regular basis. Joey said WAEE has nothing to lose from the merger. Jeremy H. offered kudos for not holding MEEC Halloween weekend. Board members okayed Jeremy S. going ahead with writing up a proposal for how the Awards programs would be combined and how the pre-conference School Forest meeting would be tied to the WAEE conf.

C. EE Advocacy: Meeting held in April to discuss how school funding formula is tied to funding cuts in EE and School Forests. Jeremy S.'s goal to broaden awareness outside of the traditional EE base to create strong support for EE in WI. Teachers he's worked with have little understanding of EE and its importance. Jeremy S. is currently working with Carol Weston to add more background info on WAEE website about EE. Also working on broad EE community survey to gauge status of EE in WI – Carol and Sunshine working on a draft with the goal to submit the survey in Sept. with the incentive of drawing entries for free admission to the conference. Joey suggested adding sections on general awareness of EE programs and financial questions, i.e. how much money nature center staff make to counter the idea money is poured into EE staff costs. Jeremy S.'s goal is to I.D. trends in EE before setting strategies for addressing the issue. Joey suggested utilizing grad students to compile the results. Jeremy S. suggested WAEE taking the role of calling the next EE Advocacy meeting to sidestep accusations of the University playing an improper role in advocacy. The proposed meeting would be after the survey is done and returned. Jeremy S. suggested perhaps a pre-conference meeting before Winter Workshop. Rebecca suggested compiling preliminary results to present at the Fall conference. Betsy cautioned that presenting the bad news w/o solutions may be counterproductive and the time frame is tight. Jeremy S. suggested Winter Workshop could be a better presentation forum, or Betsy suggested MEEC.

Another goal would be to post results on the WAEE website to be used for grant writing.

III. Administrative Assistant Report

Carol Weston presented a written report. Conference doing very well compared with this time last year. Need help with registration table during peak times 7-9 am, 11:30am-1:30 pm and 4-6pm each day. Jeremy brought conference brochures for Board members to take and distribute. Online payment switched to PayPal – cheaper than current provider and will be the online method for becoming a member of WAEE. Membership stands at 364. Carol noted that the conference registrations do not include membership. Have four award nominations. The Leopold award needs an updated picture of the Shack.

Action Item: Jeremy will contact Treva Breuch to obtain a Shack picture.

The award nomination deadline has been extended to Sept. 30. End of year budget was in the hole: \$3,341. Insurance issues: NAAEE recommended Aeon as a carrier of insurance for Board members which would protect individuals from financial harm if someone were injured at the conference and sued WAEE as an organization. Hartford currently provides liability coverage for the Board's financial assets. Carol recommended that each field trip participant needs to sign a waiver – all agreed.

Action Item: Carol will add a Board elections flyer to the conference packet. Carol and Jeremy will follow up on obtaining the Aeon insurance at an annual cost of \$45/year.

IV. Review and Approval of Minutes

Tanya motioned to approve the minutes; Joey seconded. The minutes were approved without revision.

V. Amy motioned to suspend the rules and revise the agenda; Joey seconded. Motion passed. Jeremy created the “Hot Topics” list through input from members.

VI. Elections

The one-year vacancy created by Heidi Conde's resignation will be filled by Rebecca Westphal under Article 7, section 6 of the By-Laws, which states that “Vacancies in the Board of Directors may be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors. The appointed Director shall complete the term of office of the Director replaced.” Tanya made the motion to appoint Rebecca Westphal to fill the 1-year vacancy of Heidi Conde; Joey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

For Fall elections there are three 3-year vacancies. Current Board terms are as follows:

<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
Joey	Heidi (resigned)	Betsy
John	Michael	Jeremy
Amy	Tanya	Rebecca

Action Item: All members are directed to approach fall conference participants and encourage them to run for the Board, specifically members from the NW section of the state.

Student Elections

Action Item: Betsy will follow up with the two students who indicated interest in becoming Student Board members. If either accepts, she will set up a pre-conference meeting with the student members, herself, and Jeremy to plan for a Student meeting at the conference.

VII. Fall Conference Member Meeting

Board members agreed that they should be visually designated at the conference. Multiple ideas followed. Meeting will include a formal presentation which introduces Board members and gives committee reports:

Membership: Tanya & Amy

Finance: Carol

Management: Jeremy

MEEC Conference: John

Networking: Betsy

60-second time limit per presenter. Idea of a clinking pewter beer mugs or glass beer mugs in between. Another idea a skit at the end of the formal presentations on how you got on the Board. Take questions after the formal presentation as a united front with Jeremy as time keeper. John suggested handing out a formal Board report at the door that is the substance of the presentations. Also hand out a “Treasure Map” of fun questions for redeemable prizes that help people get to know members: numbered bottle caps to enter in a raffle for a prize (Jeremy suggested “Get Yer Booty On Board” t-shirt, with “Ask me How” on the back).

Discussion on changing the time of the Board meeting. Board meeting changed to lunch on Saturday. Joey suggested putting a sign up on the door to notify members of the change.

VIII. By-Laws

All passed- however, the first By-Law amendment (retirement age) unfortunately had no change from the existing By-Law, so a second By-Law vote will be posted on the website.

IX. Awards

The committee (Michael and Jeremy) and Board members are in charge of setting up the banquet. Discussion followed on how to change the awards program. Comments came up that nominating is too difficult, reducing the number of categories or changing the criteria of the award form, the Awards committee making a lead contact to nominate someone, who should be on the Awards committee and who should make the award determinations.

Action Item: Tanya will contact RRC and WAV who both have awards programs to see how they do it. Rebecca will work with Michael & Jeremy Solin to come up a proposal on the submission of awards before the next Board meeting. All other Board members will think about potential Awards committee volunteers. Joey recommended tabling the discussion; Betsy seconded.

X. WEEB grant & Fundraising brainstorming session: Tabled

XI. Miscellaneous

Board members agreed to leave a donation to Schmeekle to cover the cost of the room and the coffee. Betsy added that this was the second Board meeting where public input consisted of someone saying EE in Wisconsin is in dire peril.

Action Item: Split up the list of sponsorships to call to cover the Fall conference.

XII. Move to adjourn made by Betsy, seconded by Jeremy. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.