

WAEE Conference Meeting Notes  
29 October 2005

Comments on the Conference:

Tanya enjoyed Thursday night speakers

Heidi liked the walk through Muir Woods yesterday.

Karla enjoyed Wisconsin Nature Mapping and talking to all the students.

Mary says the conference has been running fine and it's just too bad that there aren't many people here at the conference.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:12am by Carrie.

Present for at least part of the meeting: Dave, Rebecca, Heidi, Tanya, Karla, Betsy, Mary, Amy, Ben

Absent: Jeremy

Review of Reports/Additions to Agenda - none

August Meeting Summary

There were only 4 people in attendance and not enough to make a decision.

Amy and Tanya made plans for the member meeting. Carrie thanked them.

Public Input

There is no public input. We may be interrupted with public input throughout the meeting.

Finance report will be reported at the December board meeting

There is \$5,000 in savings and \$27,000 in checking and \$8,200 in money market account  
WAEE will be dipping into savings at the end of this year due to lack of participation at the Fall Conference. Carrie reminds us that this is only preliminary report. Carol Weston is the employee that does most of the financing and other conference logistics.

Special Unfinished Business Discussion

\*Membership Survey by Heidi

Heidi reports that Mary, Rebecca, and Jeremy commented on the survey draft. Rebecca suggested adding a skills survey for volunteering, etc. and Mary suggested \_\_\_\_\_

Jeremy agreed with Rebecca and wants it to be electronic. Heidi reported that the introductory paragraph was reworded a little to take suggestions into consideration. There are a lot of questions that are simply yes/no or Likert type questions for a chance at a better response rate.

The mentor question was left on the survey because Heidi is willing to take it on and initiate the mentor program. The reasoning for doing the mentor program is to pair up a mentor with a mentoree and basically give them their email/phone number as a networking resource person that they could call if they want to you. Heidi finished going through the survey to explain the changes. The next round of changes will be due to Heidi one week before the next meeting (December).

**Action Item: Get some comments and suggestions for changes to Heidi one week before the December meeting**

Membership committee: Tanya, Amy, Carrie, Heidi, and Carol Weston updated the membership list to do the membership drive. The membership drive went out last summer... it was a letter or electronic asking people to join WAEE as an individual or as a nature center, etc. "What were the results from it?" asks Rebecca. The most success was getting returning individual members (who forgot to renew) and also organizational members. We currently have 306 entered member entries.

Back to the survey...

Rebecca – Will the questions on the first page make sense to the membership and aren't these things already being done?

Betsy – I think it is good we have our pulse on these bigger issues, even though other organizations have more funds and time to address some of these bigger issues.

Amy motions to move forward with the survey (second round of comments and the deadline is one week before the board meeting for comments) and final draft should be due by the next board meeting. Tanya seconds. Rebecca opposes.

Betsy suggests that a week after the board meeting there would be action items emailed to us instead of waiting for the board minutes. If there is no final draft at the board meeting, there will be no member survey. There are no more comments from the board or public at that time. There will be a final vote and NO discussion.

Committee and Liaison Reports

Management – no official report

Tanya asked if Carol is going to be getting a Thank you gift or any off time. Carrie said that yes she is taking some time next week off. This would be a phenomenal time to give her a gift for everything she has put into the conference. Rebecca suggested a gift certificate to the Wellness Spa. Karla loved that idea. Tanya suggested that everyone gives \$5 to Carol for a total of \$45 for a gift certificate to the Wellness Spa. Please give money to Carrie and she will pick up the certificate early this week to give to Carol on Wednesday.

Networking – no official report

Carrie noted that Jeremy is the chair-elect and might not be able to chair the networking committee next year when he is the chair.

Membership committee – no official report

Rebecca suggests that we revisit the 306 membership enrollment issue

Tanya hopes to increase the Rock County membership

Carrie gave us some historical perspective with enrollment from the late 1970's.

Betsy suggests giving WAEE a facelift and a new image, and a fun image.

Dave was depressed when he found out the membership was only 306.

Carrie and Rebecca have discussed to look at other states and how they do their membership drives and keep their members. How do you get more friends of Maywood? For example, can we

do that? Dave said he gets more Friends of Maywod through programs. As you increase your programs and size of your programs, you need more sponsorship which increases membership as well. Betsy suggested not fundraising, but people raising. Mary reported the South East Regional nature center meeting and that it was a great night for networking. Dave suggests asking not only educators to be WAEE members, but also nature center volunteers and people just interested in volunteering at nature centers, etc.

Rebecca suggests that the whole weekend for the Board Retreat is raising membership. Every meeting put that number on the board and by the end of the year reach a goal. Make the whole retreat and every meeting membership-focused. Our goal for 2006, for example, would be to increase membership by 100%.

Carrie said we need to decide whether the spring meeting will be a Board Retreat or a Membership Work Weekend.

Dave would like to see membership increase not by only naturalist and teachers, but others because they love the nature center in their community. We need the average citizen to be interested in WAEE just like people are to Sierra Club. Mary agrees but we need to

**Action Item: Come with suggestions for the Board Retreat by the December meeting. Do we have past board members come to give input? Do we open it up to any members? What are the other ideas?**

**Action Item: Contact an effective regional liaison to come to the Board Retreat. Betsy offered her tie and resources to accomplish this action item.**

The membership drive survey has been getting responses. Carol will be putting together the numbers on how effective that letter and postcard reminders were. A thanks for being a member, tell your friends. How about a challenge to the members that they need to get one new member or someone to come to the Fall Conference and get 10% off of their Fall Conference registration or membership, etc.

**Action Item: Betsy will design a winter solstice card, happy holidays, remember WAEE, etc. We would like to have the solstice card out by the first of December. There should be a draft done by November 9<sup>th</sup>, comments to Betsy by November 23<sup>rd</sup>, go to press by November 30<sup>th</sup>, and will be sent out to members by December 7<sup>th</sup>.**

Board took a 5 minute break

Awards –

Mary Pardee is no longer the awards chairperson because she picked up for Susan Simonson on program. She is not interested in doing awards anymore. Betsy asked what is all involved in the awards chairperson. Rebecca suggests for it not a board member. There are ten available awards for WAEE to hand out. It takes good marketing, it is administrative, ordering of plaques, a check, recognition, promotional materials, deciding who wins, making nominations, etc. Awards started in 1979 and teacher awards were added in the late 1980's. Is the prize item something that

needs a facelift? Rebecca and said there was talk about having an additional Awards Banquet similar to, for example, to Ducks Unlimited.

Dave asked the benefits to WAEE of handing out awards. Is it worth the effort? Although there are few nominations for awards, the membership loves them. Dave asks “how can we make the awards work for us now?” Rebecca had mentioned sending articles to local papers reporting that a local educator has received an award. Mary said we may need to streamline the process of nominating someone for that award. You currently need to be nominated by 1 person and 3 letters of recommendations. Carrie is looking for someone to head up awards for next year.

**Action Item: Give suggestions for people to be the Awards Chairperson for the Fall 2006 conference to Carol by one week from today. It will also go out on the WAEE Bulletin as a request for this volunteer opportunity.**

Conference Committee –

Mary thanked the board for their help in planning in this conference whether it was up front or behind the scenes. Also as a reminder, the conference committee also has families, jobs, etc. and the Fall Conference has had its problems, but if they wouldn't have initiated, it would be up to the board or conference oversight to pull it off. So, thanks to them and to the board.

Winter Workshop

Treehaven is the location again for the second of three years. It is being held on the third weekend in January. Northland College and Steve Sandstrom will be the committee chair and this is their second year of planning. A call for presenters just came out and the theme is “Making our schools green and healthy.” We need to get this year rolling and Steve should ask the board for assistance as needed.

**Action Item: Ask people to present and to attend Winter Workshop. In the past it has been hard to find presenters to Winter Workshop than Fall Conference. Brainstorm ways we can get more presenters to the event.**

**Action Item: Mary will call John Heusinkveld from Treehaven, get a list of possible corporate sponsors by the end of this week, and phone calls should be made by November 24<sup>th</sup>. Each board member will be responsible for calling business and asking for a sponsorship.**

Fall 2006 Conference

Mary reports that it is going well. Reservations, theme and budget has been made for Sheboygan, WI October 26-28, 2006. The theme is The Great Lakes: Where Woods Meets Water. Again, the idea of the facelift for WAEE. Make it more fun and exciting. There is a lot of enthusiasm from the conference planning committee for the conference

MEEC 2007

MEEC and WAEE will be the same conference. Jeremy is chairing the networking committee and representing WAEE in MEEC. A location has not yet been decided. Carrie says that Jeremy is not interested in chairing the MEEC conference.

NAAEE 2006 conference will be October 10-15 in St. Paul, MN. WAEE could make a presence and present on behalf of WAEE and strides that we are making as an organization. (membership... huh?)

Carrie suggested an unofficial vote to extend the meeting by ½ hour. It passed.

Ben had a side note that in June 2006 there will be an EECO and sustainability fair at UWSP.

Student Committee –

Ben and Karla are sorry for not visiting universities. Ben suggested having there be a independent study for the student board position. Also, the idea came up for a 9 month student position during the school year instead of calendar year that would coincide with the work for credit opportunity. The outgoing members would need to make an action list and directions for the incoming student board members. Remember these are just ideas. A short discussion on student scholarship raised two questions. Do we offer scholarships to someone who applies two years in a row? Do we better promote the scholarships?

**Action Item:**

**Email copy of WAEE board election nominations to all students on list.**

Elections Committee –

There is only one nomination for elections for a non student position currently. Carrie asks the board for approval for the management committee to extend the deadline. A conference summary and elections reminder will go out at the end of this week. The official deadline is now November 30<sup>th</sup>, and ballots will be electronic. We are not worried about security at this point because there is only one nomination and it feels more like a recruitment versus an election. Ballots should be sent out electronically by Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Action Item:**

**Send out request for board members. Accept nominations by November 30<sup>th</sup>. E-mail ballot will be sent out December 1<sup>st</sup> to members without email address. Paper ballots to be sent out the following day.**

Karla makes a motion to accept nominations until November 30<sup>th</sup> with ballots going out December 1<sup>st</sup>. Rebecca seconded. Passed unanimously.

There is a board declared protocol for notifying nominees.

Liaisons –

WEEB

WEEB liaison Pat Marinac encourages board members to review and provide feedback for the EE2010. Dave was our WAEE representative for the WEEB 2010 meeting. Dave said it was a good experience and again encouraged board members to provide feedback on the WEEB plan.

PLT

Tanya mentioned that they are coming out with a new book. They hold two educator workshops in Wisconsin every year. One is at Treehaven and one is held at Weir Nature Center.

#### WAAE Business-Unfinished Business

Carrie reported that there was a lot of good feedback about the voting on the WAAE bylaws. The bylaw vote will be done by paper ballot because many of the people initiating this don't check emails.

#### December Board Meeting-

The time is set for Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup>. Suggestion is for Manitowoc. The Fall Conference Committee could be invited to report on progress, ask for specific help. The meeting will start at 10:00am. Location in Manitowoc will be as close as possible to the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, the site of the Fall 2006 conference.

#### Nominating the next 2006 Chair-Elect (2007 Chair)

Eligibility as it stands right now for chair elect includes Tanya, Rebecca, Dave, & Heidi. Amy and Betsy could potentially be chair elects if they get re-nominated and voted in for the 2006-2009 terms.

Mary suggests that we look at who will take over the Conference Oversight Committee Chair.

#### New Business

##### WAAE Board at the 2005 Fall Conference-

Carrie heard lots of good feedback from lots of members and conference participants. The members felt there was a very strong presence of board members this conference.

##### NAAEE 2006-

Because we will be a member of NAAEE, we need to find an official liaison to go to meetings and be the mouth of WAAE in NAAEE. Carrie reported that Jeremy made the suggestion that Carol will be the official person between NAAEE and WAAE.

Dave is making one additional recommendation to the board: Dave is strongly recommending not to elect two employees from smaller Nature Centers because it leaves their Nature Center somewhat unattended during Conferences, etc.

Betsy suggests taking an active role in EE Week in April. It is the same week as Earth Day.

Dave motions to close the meeting. Amy seconds. Motion Passes.