

2022 Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society Business Meeting

February 24, 2022

Action items/new products highlighted in yellow.

10:00am Call to Order

-Andrew called the MTTWS business meeting to order at **10:04am**.

1. **Roll Call** (Rebecca take note of all attendees)
Andrea Litt, Andrew Jakes, Brett Dorak, Kelvin Johnson, Emma Heydenberk, Heather Brower, Dan Bachen, Brandi Skone, Kerrell Dunsmore, Dayton, Garrett Schairer, Ken Plourde, Brad Petch, Emily Mitchell, Wyatt Nielsen, Jo Ann Dullum, Lori Roberts, Annika Bollesen, Morgan Monroe, Mike McGrath, Chad Bishop, Steve Gniadek, Noah Starling, Jenny Sika, Bryce Maxell, Rebecca Mowry (26).
2. **Secretary's report** (Rebecca Mowry)
 - a. Rebecca read previous business meeting minutes from 2021 conference or Sept 24, 2021 special meeting
 - b. Andrew added special meeting we had in September regarding bylaws change, to formalize new awards etc.

Andrea Litt moved to approve minutes, Dan Bachen seconded. All in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

3. **Treasurer's report** (Heather Brower)

Heather Brower shared her screen. Talked about income, sponsorships, registration costs, as well as other income. Paid out for awards, lobbyist, contracting service (website and conference platform), \$22,866.95 total income for this year. Total assets in bank at the moment \$170,064.64.

Andrea added that we still have outstanding expenses to pay for a few conference-related things, such as \$9K to Next Great Event.

Andrea asked about motion to set up new student travel account, did that occur? Heather said no, and **she will get that set up**.

Andrew asked if there was a possibility to move some funds into the new travel account, **Heather** said yes, asked how much we should put in there. Northwestern Energy money will be put in there. **Brett** said for any amount to be put in that account from our general account, we need to have a motion and discussion from people at business meeting. Kendeda did not contribute last year due to virtual conference. Andrew opened up the discussion to membership. **Jo Ann Dullum** asked to match the NW Energy account. **Brett** recommended anytime we get a donation toward student travel we should match it from our general fund, especially since we didn't get any contributions from raffle/silent auction for the last two years. **Brett** said one of the things we've tried to do better is get more students here, said we should match up to \$5K annually (Andrew added caveat that we could do this as long as account is in the black). **Brandi** asked how much we

normally contribute to student travel on an annual basis. **Andrew** said we should add \$2-3K this year.

Ken Plourde motioned to approve financial minutes. Kelvin Johnson seconded. All approved, none opposed, motion approved.

Andrew asked for anymore discussion on the travel account, heard none. **Kelvin made a motion that chapter add \$2K to student travel account for next year, and moving forward, as long as we are financially secure (in the black), that MTTWS will match travel contributions up to \$5K annually.** Jo Ann Dullum seconded. *All in favor, none opposed. Motion passes.*

4. Committee reports

- a. Nominations and Elections (Andrew Jakes) 2 new board members: Brett Dorak and Rebecca Mowry leaving; 2 nominees for secretary and 3 for president-elect. **Brandi Skone and Chad Bishop elected**, respectively. Andrea thanked outgoing officers. Next year we will have one open position (president-elect).
- b. Membership (Heather Brower). Currently we have 199 members. 132 regular, 6 retired, and 61 students. Might have missed folks who registered through National. **Andrea** pointed out that this number matches the number of people registered for conference (including 17 nonmembers). Should have about 364 members if adding in those registered through national (could be some issues with repeated names). Would be good to get a sense of the proportion of membership that renews through national or through the annual MTTWS conference process. **Andrea** added that there have been attempts to simplify and she'll talk more about it during programs.
- c. Programs (Andrea Litt). Board had retreat at Beartooth in July 2021 to discuss 2022 conference which initially was planned to be in person in Butte. In the fall we polled membership to see what kind of conference people were interested in; lots of interest in in-person and hybrid, but then COVID resurgence made us decide to do virtual again. Talked throughout the year for potential for a hybrid meeting. Used Next Great Event again for virtual conference platform. Had 199 registered participants this year, 39 presentations (32 oral and 7 poster with 1 withdrawn just before meeting); 16 were student presentations. We had 3 workshops (grazing=43, resume=42, game meat=57); not concurrent and people could do multiples. Some new things we did: new student award (Wynn Freeman restricted to MSU/UM students), need to talk about the name of this award and the nomination/review process but we'll do this later in meeting. Had a hard deadline for abstracts. Sold a t-shirt designed by John Kuntz, we will have leftovers to sell or give away next year. Tied membership to registration to ensure better renewal but that caused some problems with needing to pay for these separately. Also included election as part of registration process which helped get votes but unfortunately voting choices showed up on receipts, so we need to fix that if we do it again. Ideally will be in person in 2023 in Helena. No contract at this point. Then 2024 again in Butte or Billings. **Andrew** added that

we have great partnership now with Next Great Event and thanked them. Said the new board will need to get on the 2023 conference planning/contract with Helena hotel very soon.

Andrea noted that the institutional knowledge about in-person meetings is leaving so we'll need help. **Andrea, Rebecca,** and **Brett** mentioned recent and upcoming hybrid conferences and we can learn from them for next year (state AFS, Rangeland Management, Western TWS). **Dan** added they've done hybrid working group meetings for last two years with varying degrees of success, can be hard for people to engage. We will continue to discuss this for MTTWS. **Lori Roberts** mentioned that federal agencies may only be allowed to do virtual if a hybrid option is available.

- d. Financial Management (Heather Brower, Lorelle Berkeley, Sonja Anderson). We were not able to meet between last conference and this conference, mostly because we forgot! So **Heather will get in touch with Lorelle and Sonja** to get this taken care of.
- e. Education and Information (Brent Lonner (unavailable), Vanna Boccadori, Megan O'Reilly, Lori Roberts). Brent and Vanna not present **but see addendum (attached below) for Feb 23 meeting notes**. Lori is new to group. There was an e-mail exchange about Brent's letter but Lori doesn't yet have a good sense of the committee. Letter gave updates on Wynn Freeman Award account, reiterating it's for UM/MSU students. Info on NW Energy grant and Mackie Award. Brent spoke with Barb Mackie and confirmed this would be for MSU/UM students for travel to national.
 - i. IJS Status Report for 2022. Terry Lonner said 2021-2022 publication will be delayed and combined because we only had 1 manuscript + abstracts. So we need more manuscript submissions to keep IJS a viable option. If you have questions you can reach out to board and/or Brent and Terry Lonner. **We need to do a better job of getting this opportunity out to membership**. Could try plugging it in newsletters. **Brent** suggested adding info about it to abstract submission process for next conference.
- f. Resolution and Public Statements (Executive Board). Discussed item (i) below (upland game bird issue); recommended we wait to talk about this until we get to the item below. Otherwise, nothing to report.
- g. Scholarships (David Willey (MSU), Chad Bishop (UM)).
 - i. Chad had to miss the banquet last night. Focused Wynn Freeman award on undergraduate side. Chad said he's glad there will be other opportunities for other schools, not just UM and MSU.
 - ii. David vacant so Andrea gave info. MSU alternates between undergrad and grad; this year was grad award, Elise Loggers. Excited also about new student award. We will touch on new award during Unfinished Business part of meeting.

- h. Awards (Megan O'Reilly). Andrew discussed as Megan is absent. **Noted that we need to do better at getting nominations.** Virtual platform hasn't helped. Rebecca discussed some of the issues with newsletters being spam-blocked which limits people's knowledge of nomination openings/deadlines/process.
- i. Conservation Affairs Committee (Brett Dorak – Sonja Andersen and Lance McNew). Issue with proposed comments on Upland Gamebird regulations to MTFWP commission. **Andrew** gave summary. There were several proposed FWP changes, specifically one for upland game bird hunting season dates. A member (with support from national TWS) suggested we should comment, and submit to the FWP Commission. This came in relatively late and there are bylaws and gray areas regarding the need to discuss with membership, vote, etc. The board decided we should bring in the CAC (especially as Lance is a UGB expert). Lance did draft comments, and we met as a committee/board and decided we would not submit at this time and that maybe we shouldn't be doing that sort of thing (didn't have enough time, for one). Would be better to have position statements similar to how national TWS does; would be good to set up a regular meeting as part of MTTWS meetings to discuss FWP Commission season setting proposals, and see if we want to put forward statements as a chapter in future years. There was also a good indication that the proposal was DOA (which it was). But this could certainly come up again.

Andrew spoke with Ed Arnett later (CEO of national TWS) and he disagreed with our decision. If our chapter is interested in stances on issues like this, Ed would be happy to visit with us/members on what options/processes we have. Do we do advocacy? Are we more education-focused? We as a chapter do financially contribute to Audubon and Montana Wildlife Federation and they keep us abreast of things happening during legislative session.

Jo Ann commented that she likes having position statements, and that maybe retired members could represent MTTWS issues to reduce fear of reprisal to active employees. Said it's better to be more specific on some issues, but we're not advocacy: we're more education, should work to educating Commission.

Andrew added that Ed gave us advice on how to have issue statements more educational. **Andrea** quoted the part of our mission that is to provide science education to policymakers.

Brett asked if we should maybe expand the CAC to five members to be able to prep for Commission meetings. **Andrew** said it depends on if people want to step up. We may need to have a general position statement worked out so people can respond right away. Brett suggested maybe having experts in various fields on the CAC who can jump on bills/Commission changes. **Said let's maintain our payment for Audubon/MWF for legislative session and try to get a biennial meeting during FWP season setting years to discuss.** Can be educational for students as well as some professionals. **Set up a date for this at next year's**

business meeting in preparation for next FWP commission process. And definitely take advantage of Ed Arnett's offer to help with this discussion, maybe as a working group meeting for the next conference. Andrew will be on the CAC by then so can continue that conversation.

5. Ad Hoc Committee reports

- a. Small Grants (Claire Gower). Claire is absent. Andrea noted that both small grants were awarded this year but they've had a hard time getting many applications. Continuing conversation about how best to use those funds. Continue trying to solicit applications, or allocate a different way (maybe to student travel). They can be useful pots of money for students and other organizations but need sufficient applications. **Rebecca** and **Andrea** asked about showcasing previous recipients' uses of the funds, project outcomes, etc., either on the website or through the conference or through newsletters or social media or all. Maybe make that a requirement of the awards. Potential to use some of that funding to help pay for website functionality. Andrea added that she can help with Twitter.
- b. Species of Concern (Dan Bachen). Not a lot to report, haven't had annual meeting yet. Some behind-the-scenes database updating, rearranging species. More to come next year.
- c. Recreation (Bryce Maxell, Liz Bradley). Bryce present. Project has been on hold for this past year because of administrative changes and paperwork/hiring nightmares. There are \$19,200 available for the project parked at TWS and we need to put an agreement in place; talked to Liz about this, and we should get started on this at next fiscal year (July 1 2022) but think we can get it finished by the following spring.
- d. Endowment – VACANT. Nobody quite sure what this was; Dan Bachen said he thinks this was efforts to get an endowment for supporting TWS, something we've been discussing since first Butte meeting and keeps getting kicked down the road. Kris Boyd probably knows more than anyone and we should reach out to her. Possibly Mark Ruby as well. Rebecca will e-mail Kris and Mark and ask for a status update. Andrew suggested we drop this if nobody is willing to pick it up.

6. NW Section report

- a. NW Section Strategic Planning – VACANT. Brett: Looking for nominations for all positions. No other updates.

7. Student Chapter reports

- a. University of Montana – Wyatt Nielsen. Things going better this year. Attendance is way up, we've been collecting dues again and been able to go on trips and hold regular meetings. Just got back from Yellowstone trip to see wolves (saw Junction Butte pack) and have been keeping relationship with Teller Wildlife Refuge as part of their work plan is to work with UM-TWS, doing some work

there. Went to Swan Valley Connections in Condon to learn about snow tracking. In early stages of coordinating with FWP on citizen science project for bat boxes for homeowners. Were able to send 12 students to annual conference this year and be involved in resume workshop. Like that students can peruse talks at their leisure. Will get involved with WildFest again.

- b. Montana State University—Emma Heydenberk. This year better than last year. 30-40 active members, more than 75% have done volunteering or workshop or other involvement in conference. Did four volunteer events this year (fence-pulls, stream clean-up, camera trapping). 13 guest speakers this year. Also radio telemetry workshop and tracking workshop. Got shirts and stickers as a fundraiser. Next president is Morgan Monroe, who said we have nice events to close out semester (plant ID workshop with grad student), speakers, and volunteer opportunity with Lewis and Clark Caverns. 17 students attending conference, got top 3 spots in game leaderboard! Lots of engagement and students enjoying conference.

8. Unfinished (or Ongoing) Business

- a. Dick Mackie award. Given to chapter presidents for virtual. Need application process in place so students can apply for national – in person meeting Fall 2022. Spokane. Discussed at 9/24/21 Meeting. Brent gave update on letter for when we're back in person conferences. Andrew suggested **application deadline of July 31, awards committee has a month (August) to review, and then that person has funding to go to National that fall (awarded by September 1)**. Committee must consist of someone from UM, someone from MSU, and an at-large member. Must go to a UM or MSU student chapter member. Rebecca offered to be at-large member. Andrea happy to serve on committee as MSU person, will ask Chad to be UM person. We need to make sure to change "undergraduate OR graduate" into the bylaws; *Brandi made motion, Ken seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion carries.*
- b. Any other unfinished business
 - i. Need to name new award for students at smaller MT colleges. We wanted to give opportunity to all members to offer suggestions, this is our second try. Montana Meadowlark Student Award? *Kelvin motioned to name the award the **Western Meadowlark Award**. Dan seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion passes.*
 - ii. Logistics of award: Andrea said we originally proposed soliciting committee members from those schools to review applications (along with past president and awards chair), and that's what we did, but it got complicated because biases with nominators/nominees. So it transitioned to Awards Committee who made the final decision. So proposed **taking this process to just the Awards Committee with a standardized 1-page application/ nomination form along with nomination letter from now on**. So soliciting of nominations would be alongside those for regular professional awards, and awarded with other student awards. We need to put in

bylaws. *Brandi Skone made a motion, Ken Plourde seconded. All in favor, none opposed, motion passes.*

9. New Business

- a. Anything new to discuss – None

10. Adjournment at 12:33pm. Andrea moved to end the meeting, Brett seconded.

February 23, 2022

ADDENDUM: Education Committee Updates

(B. Lonner – chair, V. Boccadori, M. O’Reilly, L. Roberts)

The following is a synopsis regarding various tasks the education committee has been involved with most recently. Due to poor education committee board chair communication (lack of), this synopsis is limited in its collaborative input from the entire committee. Some content is verbatim from a summary reported to the MT TWS Board from July, 2021 but applicable to content from the 2021 Business meeting minutes.

Wynn Freeman Award/Account (verbatim summary from July, 2021)

After checking in with the UM Foundation, where this account resides, it confirmed that “the endowments at the UM Foundation need to be strictly for the benefit of UM or UM students (Missoula). Back when this fund was setup an exception was allowed to include MSU (Bozeman) in the criteria as well, which we will continue to honor. We cannot however expand the criteria to include additional schools.”

For the past several years we have raised more than the annual minimum target (\$1000 for each scholarship) that we need to put into the Wynn Freeman account. In reading out Chapter by-laws, we do not see anything that specifically says 100% of the Silent Auction/Raffle money must go towards the Wynn Freeman account. There is language in the context of the Wynn Freeman account speaking to "Monies will be raised from tax-free donations, raffles, and/or other fund-raising efforts..." Therefore, as long as annual money raised via the Silent Auction/Raffle is meeting this minimum financial target and maintaining the Wynn Freeman account in good standing, our recommendation is that anything above and beyond that target or some agreed upon minimum value would be placed into a separate (new?) non-UM/MSU account that would be specific to other institution scholarship(s)/travel grant(s). This does not answer the need or not for these other institutions to be a formal student TWS chapter member. As of now, no other institutions in MT (outside UM Missoula and MSU Bozeman) have student chapters so probably not a need to have this be a requirement as of now.

Northwestern Energy Grant (mostly verbatim summary from July, 2021)

Marco Restani with Northwestern Energy reaffirmed their commitment to support non-UM/MSU student travel to the annual conference. Marco is fully aware of the grant and has been making sure it is given the Chapter every year. He recommended that we do not formalize an agreement/letter related to this. They prefer to have some flexibility for this grant depending on circumstances (e.g., for the 2021 conference they gave less because COVID cut into their profits but also our costs were lower, so it worked out ok). They are committed to the grant, just need that flexibility. Not sure if they provided the Grant for 2022?

Mackie Award

Confirmed with Barb Mackie earlier this spring that the \$500 annual donation from her (in honor of her husband, Dick Mackie) is intended to be for either *MSU or UM student chapter member*. Her intention is to ideally have some sort of application process for any prospective student (graduate or

undergraduate) that are interested in the monetary award to specifically offset costs (registration, travel, lodging, etc.) to attend to the *National TWS* meeting. This grant is currently available as long as Barb is able/willing to contribute.

Given the 2021 National TWS meeting was virtual, assuming prospective scholarship winner(s?) would put money towards offsetting primarily registration costs. A letter was sent to Barb Mackie in September, 2021 requesting a contribution of \$400 to offset costs in an equitable fashion for each University. Assuming this check was received and allocated properly. In the future, likely need to develop some sort of application process/form for students and solicit a formal call for applications.

Kendeda Funds

V. Boccadori was or did (?) reached out to Kendeda to see if we can get another grant for tribal student travel for the 2022 conference. Given the virtual platform for this year's conference, this may not have taken place (other than offsetting registration costs)? Need to confirm with Vanna.

Summary of "Other" Awards and New Account

At the 2021 business meeting, it was decided to create a new account specific to housing these other funds to help with student travel and/or awards (NWEF, Mackie Award, Kendeda Funds). Just a reminder along these lines as much as anything to continue such discussion assuming the account hasn't been created already.

Intermountain Journal Of Sciences

See separate thorough document.

MFPE Conference – Great Falls (October, 2021)

Information was sent out last spring to all chapter members to solicit individuals who were interested in applying to present at the upcoming Great Falls conference October 21 & 22, 2021. To the best of my knowledge, B. Lonner (abstract below) was the only one submitted an abstract (and accepted) and presented this go around. Our presence at this conference is an effective and efficient means of providing important, accurate and up to date wildlife information to educators of Montana's youth. Perhaps something other MTTWS members can consider for next year's conference tentatively set for October 21 & 22, 2022 in Helena.

"Wetlands, Waterfowl and Freezout Lake WMA" – Brent Lonner

Abstract: Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is one of the premier migratory bird staging areas in the Northwestern U.S. (let alone in Montana). Places such as Freezout Lake WMA provide vital habitat for both seasonal movements and spring/summer nesting activity for a large diversity of birds, especially waterfowl. Perhaps of most interest during the migration periods is the big white bird migration (white geese and swans). Information will be presented to educators about history/management of Freezout Lake WMA, migratory bird ecology with an emphasis on white geese (snow and Ross' geese) and swans (trumpeter and tundra), general timing of the migration through the Freezout Lake WMA, and educational opportunities related to this spectacle.