

Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society – 2023 Business Meeting

February 17, 2023, 7:30-9 am

7:30am Call to Order

Andrea called the meeting to order at 7:32am

1. **Roll Call** (Brandi notes all attendees)

Andrea Litt, Chad Bishop, Andrew Jakes, Heather Brower, Ed Arnett, Brandi Skone, Dave Willey, Nicole Calvin, Elise Loggers, Raye Myers, Morgan Monroe, Daniel Quinby, Daniel Bachen, Patrick Cross, Bryce Maxell, Rebecca Mowry, Logan Bratsch, Brandon Quamme, Noah Starling, Andy Oestreich, Matt Comer, John Kuntz, Liz Bradley, Lance McNew, Jon M. Roberts, Ken Plourde, Sonja Andersen, Katie Benzel, Brent Lonner, Tim Hiller, John Waller, Terry Lonner, Brent Mitchell, Carlisle Segal, Jamie McFadden, Ericka Kuser, Carolyn A. Linden

2. **Secretary's report – Brandi Skone**

- a. Brandi read minutes from 2022 business meeting

Motion was made to approve minutes and passed.

3. **Treasurer's report – Heather Brower**

- a. Total assets in the bank currently \$181,135.46.

- Checking has ~\$65K
- Savings has \$25K
- Recreation project has ~\$49K. Talked with Liz Bradley about getting the recreation project figured out.

- b. Has not factored in cash from the conference yet

Motion was made to approve budget and passed.

4. **Committee reports**

- a. Nominations and Elections – **Andrea Litt**

- 1 new board member; Andrew leaving. We had 2 nominees for Pres-Elect, with **Katie Benzel** elected.

- b. Membership – **Heather Brower**

- Currently have 295 members with 27 new professionals, 38 students, and 36 retired. Probably another 20-30 people that updated membership at the conference.

- c. Programs – **Chad Bishop**

- Plenary theme was initially focused on RAWA, with the uncertainty in legislation, switched the focus to plants and pollinators. We had 4 workshops this year. We could have done more. We had 40 oral presentations, 15 posters. Attendance was right around 271 based on registration.

- d. Financial Management – **Heather Brower**

e. Education and Information – **Brent Lonner**

- Brent Lonner asked in regards to the 40 presentations that were part of this year's conference, if we had to turn any presentations away. Chad replied the 40 was all we had received and was the reason we merged the sessions on Friday. Sonja A. asked about the small grant recipients and having them present to get more interest.
- Wynn Freeman – Brent asked if it was sustaining itself. Chad said the corpus is about 48K. If we hit the average return on the investment should generate 2k back. Brent asked about the silent auction and how that money is used. Heather said it's for the student travel.
- Committee hasn't been as active in the last year. NorthWestern Energy grant, hasn't spoke with Marco Restani to get an update.
- The Dick Mackie award – glad it was recognized last night. Barb (Dick's wife) said she's still willing to contribute (\$500). In her words it's dedicated to the UM and MSU students to attend the National meeting. She asked if there was an application process. Andrea commented that we asked for letters from students who were interested in attending and how it would support their education and student chapters. This past year there were 5 on the board that attended the meeting. The committee that evaluated was Rebecca, Andrea and Chad. Chad said if it's across the country, it will be more difficult to send more students. This past year was doable with it being in Spokane. Brent is happy to continue to work with Barb and is also happy to serve on the committee to evaluate the applications. Ed asked if that's our one of our funding sources for the students. Ed would like to write to Barb personally because people like Dick is why he got into this profession. Laurie Mackie (daughter of Barb and Dick) said she will be willing to continue this and help support IJS.
- MFE Conference typically gets a member or 2 to attend, they can represent their agency but also TWS. This past year was in Helena. It was Marco Restani and Mike Thompson. Does not know what Marco presented on, needs to follow up. Mike couldn't attend due to health issues. Next year the conference will be in Billings in October 19-20. This is great way to connect and share our messages. Would like to encourage folks to consider presenting this year. Could possibly help with the costs of travel.

f. IJS Status Report – **Terry Lonner**

- IJS took it in the pants like we all did during covid. The journal started in 1995. The proceedings from TWS conference are contributed to the journal. The primary purpose of the journal was to get work being done in print as soon as possible. Has published 221 magazines so far in this journal. TWS is the only one that has been consistently contributing their proceedings to the journal. Fisheries stopped contributing in 2011.

- Volume 27 is going to become an e-journal. Started that in 2016. Each sponsor contributed \$500 to get it started and \$250/year to maintain. The webmaster is going to waive that fee, but will continue to host the journal. Will have one pdf of all the abstracts from each of the sponsors. Up until 2016, was only in print format. Have about 16 life subscriptions.
- MT AFS has decided this past year that they will no longer contribute any money to the journal. Terry asked if they would continue to sponsor if they will not contribute anything to the journal. Has the abstracts from the last 3 years.
- Hopes TWS will continue to support and sponsor the IJS. Terry asked TWS membership if they want to continue. Andrew asked how much the journal costs our membership. Terry responded page charges. Will have a lot less pages going forward with everything online. Might be about \$20/page. Most of the work done on this journal is all volunteer. Lance asked how much we pay to sponsor. Terry replied the only thing is page charges. Clarified that it's page charges just for the abstracts. Andrew said it would cost us about \$600 annually based on our current program.

g. Scholarships – **David Willey (MSU), Chad Bishop (UM)**

- Dave Willey (MSU) gave one award for Wynn Freeman. In the past Bob Garrot would have Andrea, Dave and other fish & wildlife colleagues (i.e. Wyatt Cross and Jay Rotella) consider candidates and provide feedback on nominations. Alternates every year between undergraduate and graduate student. Currently it's a discussion between Andrea and Dave to determine award recipient.
- Chad Bishop (UM) this is the only scholarship that they award where there is no application process.
- Terry Lonner recognized and supported that we expanded the award opportunities to other schools.

h. Awards – Megan O'Reilly (absent but provided report below to share)

- Acknowledged the rest of the committee (Ray Vinkey, Jenny Sika, and Allison Begley) and their help with this year. Lewis Young also typically serves on the board but was unable to participate this year due to health issues.
- Any sole award nominee submitted was determined by the committee to be deserving candidates and they received the award (Bob Watts, Meadowlark)
- This year we had the following numbers for nominations:
 - Distinguished Service -4
 - Biologist of the Year – 2
 - Bob Watts Communication Award- 1
 - Conservation Award - 0 (but several folks nominating for other awards were willing to shift their nominee into this category if the need arose, resulting in a recipient)
 - Rising Professional-1 (could have been two, but I didn't see an inquiry in my inbox early enough to answer some questions). I

expect and hope a nomination will be submitted next round for that individual.

- Wynn Freeman - Standard operation of MSU and U of M making the selection on their own and submitting the award recipient's names.
- Meadowlark - 1 submission
- This is certainly better than some years and we did not extend the deadline. So that is reassuring. Ideally, we would have all categories receive multiple nominations.
- Concerns with the language in the by-laws regarding the awards committee:
 - Bylaws state the committee chair should only serve for 1 year
 - a. Chad said it's nice to have continuity on the board if they could serve. John Waller said that we shouldn't have to change the by-laws, could reappoint that person each year.
 - Bylaws state that folks serving on the committee cannot nominate people for the distinguished service award but can for biologist of the year award. Would like to have the option to make/receive any of the awards while serving on the committee.
 - a. *Motion was made by Dan Bachen and passed to draft language to allow the awards committee members to recuse themselves when serving on the committee if they are nominated or nominating someone.*
 - Additional concerns listed in Megan's report but not discussed at the business meeting due to time constraints – need to be addressed at the Board retreat and possibly next business meeting:
 - a. Language in the by-laws: The Committee will **tabulate a total numerical rating for each nominee.** The Committee will decide the award recipient on the basis of these numerical ratings and other appropriate considerations. **The decision of the Committee will be forwarded to the President not less than thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting.** In the event of a tie between nominees, the president shall be empowered to use discretion in breaking the tie.
 - i. Neither of these things are currently how the Awards Committee operates. Would like to see the language updated or know if the procedure needs to change.
- Western Meadowlark Award – updated procedure for evaluation
- i. Dick Mackie Award – **Andrea Litt**
 - Award established by Barb in honor of Dick Mackie to support students attending the national TWS conference (\$500)
 - During the pandemic, provided registration fees for the virtual conference to several students

- Last year, the funds were awarded to the Leadership Team from the MSU student chapter of TWS
- Will seek applications later this year, to attend the TWS conference in Louisville in the fall

j. Conservation Affairs Committee – **Andrew Jakes**

- Discussion of expanding Conservation Affairs Committee to 5 individuals. Moving to incorporate more policy. Would like to see us move forward into being more active in Chapter. Andrew is willing to continue to serve on this committee.

5. **Ad Hoc Committee reports**

a. Small Grants – report from Claire Gower (absent but provided report below to share)

- Last year we awarded two grants (one education and one research), part of the obligation of this award is for the recipients to provide an update on their work in the newsletter, and as a formal TWS presentation or written report. Both 2022 recipients fulfilled this obligation.
- For the 2023 Small grants award, we received 2 proposals. Both were in the research category (nothing for outreach and education). The Board is comprised of Bob Garrott, Paul Lukacs, and myself. We decided not to extend the application period and award both small grants to research this year. Please see our selection for the small grants award
 - Research \$1000 – Jacob Melhuish (MSU) - Day Roost Characteristics of Northern Long-Eared Bats (*Myotis septentrionalis*) and Little Brown Bats (*Myotis lucifugus*) in Northeastern Montana
 - Research \$1000 – Colleen Piper (UM) Investigating how dynamic water availability impacts survival, colony structure, and dam persistence of prairie beaver
- Finally, we have very little interest again this year - 2 for research and 0 for education. Are there better use for these funds? Bob and Paul, and I are all happy to do this, but student interest is declining each year.

b. Species of Concern – **Dan Bachen**

- Typically handled between MNHP and FWP, but would encourage others that interested in getting involved to participate. In the last year the following changes were made:
 - Removed peregrine falcon from SOC, now S4
 - Upgraded hispid pocket mouse to S3 SOC
 - Upgraded gray flycatcher to S3S4 PSOC
 - Upgraded meadow jumping mouse to S3S4 PSOC
 - Removed white-footed mouse from list, now S4

- Also reviewed 25 globally rare species ranked SNR in Montana

c. Recreation – **Bryce Maxell/Liz Bradley**

- brief update is that the State Library building flooded in the summer of 2022 and staff had to wade through 37 years of hard copy materials and get them digitally archived, secured, and/or recycled in the process of moving to a new building just south of the Capitol (1201 11th Avenue).
- So, we are looking forward to finally working on bibliographic update for the Recreation Effects on Rocky Mountain Wildlife in state fiscal 2024 starting in July of 2023.

6. **TWS report – Ed Arnett, CEO**

- a. This is our 61st annual meeting, pointed out how cheap and great events that happened back in 1962.
- b. Update from HQ – go to the website for all the information, just updated. Have a new e-wildlifer also get a communication on Monday. Wildlife Society Bulletin went full open access. Part of their funding model might affect membership a little.
- c. Would like everyone to fill out a membership survey even if you're not a member. They want input on guidance for future and want to know if you're not a member, why.
- d. Had 2,034 members (3rd largest ever) at the last annual meeting in Spokane. Next one will be in Louisville this year, Baltimore in 2024.
- e. They have a new director of finance. His messaging going forward is unity, unity, unity. Need to work together moving forward to be effective in fighting the challenges.

7. **NW Section report**

- a. NW Section Strategic Planning – **Andrew Jakes**
 - There is potential for Northwest Section to come to our meeting. Proposed we integrated NW section a little more in the future.

8. **Student Chapter reports**

- a. University of Montana – **Addie Wichman (absent)**
 - Had a lot of guest speakers like copper bullets, volunteer at Teller Wildlife, also partner with BHA – lot students out there with mentor and mentees. Have 11 undergraduates at this conference. Have 26 active members.
- b. Montana State University – **Morgan Monroe**
 - 25 members, sent 4 folks to National.

9. **Unfinished (or Ongoing) Business**

- a. Updates to bylaws – **Andrew Jakes**
 - Bylaws added 3 components – rising professional, Dick Mackie, and Western Meadowlark
- b. Still need to incorporate our Chapter with National by 2025 to reduce liability risk. If someone gets hurt during our annual meeting, the board could be liable. Incorporating

would protect us. Heather said we need to figure out what address we want associated with the organization to incorporate. Dan Bachen asked how much is minimal cost? Ed Arnett responded varies from \$95-300 annually.

- c. Student support for MT TWS annual conference – **Andrea Litt**
 - Registration waivers to support attendance – allocated waivers for all schools in MT

10. **New Business**

- a. Planning and locations for future MT TWS conferences – **Chad Bishop/Andrea Litt**
 - Prior to pandemic, in a rotation of Butte and Helena. Next year we'll have to be in Butte due to down payment placed before pandemic. The idea of Billings has come up. Asked the Chapter if people would be willing to attend a meeting in Billings. Dan recognized that in past board meetings, discussions resulted in agreement to keep the annual meeting in more of a central location (like Helena and Butte) to promote inclusion of more students and members. Chad asked that others share their feedback going forward, running out of time, so need to wrap up.

11. **Passing of the Gavel** (thanks to Terry Lonner)

- a. Andrea passed the gavel to Chad!

12. **Meeting adjourned at 9:01 – *motion made and passed unanimously.***