

TWS COUNCIL REPORT

Bob Lanka, Central Mountains and Plains Section Representative

TWS Council met March 25-26 in Norfolk, Virginia in association with the 83rd North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

TWS Budget and Finances

Our FY17 (7/1/16-6/30/17) audit report came back very strong with total assets of about \$2.9 million and total liabilities of about \$1.4 million. Most of the liability, ~90%, was for deferred revenue which basically means money owed to TWS but not yet paid. Think of your membership dues here. You pay your dues all at once but obtain services over a 12-month period. So TWS only counts 1/12 of your dues each month as income, deferring the rest to when services are provided. This deferred income shows up as a “liability” until it is taken. Clear as mud, right? Glad I am a biologist and not an accountant!!! Bottom line, our audit report was very good.

For FY18, our budget goal is to finish \$94,000 to the good. Looks like we will achieve that goal and maybe a bit more. Any budget surplus will be directed to the Permanent Reserve Fund in order to move TWS closer to having at least 6 months operating expenses in our “Rainy Day” Fund. Given the FY18 budget, the goal for this fund is just shy of \$1,346,000. As of mid February 2018 we were about 89% of the way there. The target for this fund changes as budgets change and performance of this fund is dependent on what goes on in the stock market, but we are making good progress toward our “Rainy Day” fund goal. By the way, this goal was not chosen at random. It is generally accepted business practice to have a 6-month reserve.

As I have mentioned before, the big three for Society income listed in order are: 1) publication royalties, 2) annual conference and 3) membership dues. These three make up about 90% of our annual income. I have been asked questions about why does TWS try to make money at the annual conference and with publication royalties when there are already member dues. If you will let me use an analogy I will try to explain. Think of TWS as a college athletic department. Most of those departments make their money on football and basketball ticket sales and the booster donations related to those programs. These universities fund the rest of their athletic activities using money from these funding sources. If football only paid for football it is very likely that many of the other sports would have to be cut. TWS is the same way; we have to make money on some of our initiatives in order to fund other initiatives that do not generate income. TWS policy activities, publishing and distributing The Wildlife Professional, making all TWS journals available to members for the basic membership rate and boosting our “rainy day” fund to its goal, are four prime example of services provided using funding from initiatives that generate revenue. So I know it is hard sometimes to wrap your

head around paying member dues, paying conference registration and paying page charges to publish in one of our journals but those costs are what allow our Society to engage in the important work of conservation at a higher level that we would otherwise be able to do.

TWS Strategic Plan Revision

The following link (<http://wildlife.org/operations-and-finance/>) will take you to the section of the TWS website where you will find information on the TWS Code (ethics, conflict of interest, whistleblower, open door communication) and the 2015-2019 TWS Strategic Plan. Our current strategic plan focuses on five key strategic themes. Those themes are:

- The Wildlife Society achieves a positive impact on the sustainability of wildlife populations.
- The Wildlife Society is a recognized and trusted organization for expertise on science-based wildlife management and conservation.
- The Wildlife Society supports, encourages, and enables its members to conserve and manage wildlife through the application of science.
- The Wildlife Society supports and encourages networking among student chapters, state/provincial chapters, sections, working groups, Council, and headquarters to leverage synergies and communications that advance science-based wildlife conservation.
- The Wildlife Society is professionally managed and financially robust.

Given that our strategic plan will expire next year Council is considering whether it needs modifications or not. I ask that you take a moment to review the plan and provide me any thoughts you might have for changes or modifications by June 30.

TWS Membership

At the end of January paid membership was at 9,700 with 900 more in the Give Back program. We hope to be over 10,000 paid members by the end of FY18. Member demographics have been very consistent over the past four years with 94% of our membership being white and 69% male and 31% female. As of December 2017 there were 1,155 TWS members from CMPS, up 18.7% from the 2014-2016 average of 973. **Nice job everyone!** Hopefully we can keep our Section's membership momentum going. With that in mind, I once again challenge each state to increase the number of TWS members from your state by 10%. I realize +10% is a big number for some states but no point in having a challenge that isn't challenging! Given the importance of increasing membership to our future and the reach of our professional society, won't you help achieve this goal by asking a friend or coworker to join? See the TWS website at: <http://wildlife.org/tws-membership-benefits/> for more information about the benefits of membership. Table 1 shows the membership breakdown by the states within our section and the 10% challenge. I look forward to being able to present results this time next year.

Table 1. December membership figures CMPS states and 10% membership challenge.

STATE	2014-2016 3-YR Avg	Dec 2017	% Change vs. 3-Yr Avg	CMPS + 10%	% of all TWS Membership
CO	349	423	21.2	465	4.11
KS	87	108	24.1	119	1.05
NE	91	119	30.8	131	1.16
ND	108	115	6.5	126	1.12
SD	77	69	(10.3)	76	0.67
UT	99	130	31.3	143	1.26
WY	162	191	17.9	210	1.86
TOTALS	973	1155	18.7	1270	11.23

Upcoming Meetings

I hope to see you all in Cleveland, OH at the 25th Anniversary TWS Annual Conference October 7-11 (<http://wildlife.org/2018-conference/>). The 2019 Annual Conference will be a joint meeting with AFS held September 29-October 3 in Reno, NV. Did you know there are travel grants available to attend the annual conference? Click here to learn more.

<http://wildlife.org/network/conferences-network/>

Closing Thoughts

My last day with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will be May 16. It is hard to wrap my head around the fact that in about 30 working days I will retire from a 35+ year career. My how time flies. Seems like our son Aaron should be about 9 or 10 now, not 28 like he turned last month. Doesn't seem possible Sheila and I have been married almost 34 years either, but we will hit that milestone together in June. Aaron is studying to get a degree in Fire Science and eventually a job as a fire fighter. He volunteers at least one 24 hour shift a week at the local fire department in between going to school and working half time. Last year he was recognized for being part of 2 lifesaving events, events where if those working for the fire department hadn't shown up, two people would not be alive today. I can't tell you how special it is to have him talk to us about what it means to serve others, to be part of something bigger than yourself.

After 35 years working for wildlife and people I know what he means. Our profession and the bedrock principles it was built upon, the Public Trust Doctrine, Access to Wildlife is Allocated by Law, Wildlife Policy is Based in Science and all the others calls each of us to serve a cause bigger than self and narrow special interest. It calls on us to speak for that which has no human voice and to do all we can to ensure that future generations have at least something of what we have today, wildlife and wild lands. Upon application for membership in The Wildlife Society, each member is basically asked to pay member dues and uphold the TWS Code of Ethics. There is a

link to that document earlier in this column. In a nutshell the TWS Code of Ethics calls on each member to: “Subscribe to the highest standards of integrity and conduct and will proactively promote and address ethical behavior.” Who would expect anything less from a public servant entrusted with understanding and managing a public resource as economically and spiritually valuable as wildlife? Not me and I bet not you either. Thanks for all you do.