

REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE: 13 February 2015

REPORT TO: TWS Council

FROM: Maggi Sliwinski, Chair
Early Career Professional Working Group

SUBJECT: Mid-year Report of the Early Career Professional Working Group

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

- 1) **We would like Council to provide a brief written summary of its reasoning for supporting or choosing not to support the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act**, as presented in 2013 by Mark Davis, Vice-President of the National Federation of Federal Employees, and Kristina Boyd, working group Past Chair.

Financial implications: None. Although we recognize that this policy would support federal employees outside the wildlife profession as well as wildlife professionals, there are potential positive financial implications for TWS.

Reasoning: In its current form, this act gives temporary federal employees the opportunity to compete for agency positions on an equal footing with other federal employees if they have worked at least 24 months of service time and their performance was satisfactory. Advocating for this act is a step outside of pure wildlife policy and offers an opportunity for TWS to advocate for its current constituents and possibly garner attention from perspective members.

- 2) **We would like Council to make the recommendation that new professional TWS members be able to attend certain conference events at reduced registration cost.**

Financial implications: It is likely that only new professional members local to the conference city would take advantage of this opportunity, which would keep the opportunity cost for TWS low. In fact, TWS may see a small increase in revenue because new professional members who may not have attended the conference at all would at least register for these networking opportunities. We suggest offering this additional registration type on a trial basis for three years to determine its popularity and solicit feedback.

Reasoning: The annual conference has a wealth of networking opportunities that are sometimes unavailable to new professional members because of the cost of registering for the conference and a lack of funding to cover registration fees and/or travel (e.g., many grants are available to students, but few are available to new professional members). We would like to see the development of an

additional tier of registration type available to new professional members that provides access only to networking opportunities at the conference (see below for a list of suggestions). This limited access may help these individuals see the value in attending future TWS conferences, while also showing that TWS values their membership. We would expect that such a registration type would be used mostly by members living in or around the conference city. Because many of these opportunities are in the early morning, over lunch hour, or in the evening, new professionals would not necessarily have to be absent from work to attend these events.

Suggested activities to include in a reduced cost registration: Student reception, new member/new attendee reception, Leadership Institute Alumni and Friends Reception, all working group meetings, all TWS member and council meetings, certification application counseling, plenary sessions, resume critique, trade show, poster sessions, associated receptions, and TWS IGNITE!

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We currently have 97 members. All of our executive positions are filled, and we have a substantial number of active members and ongoing projects.

Project: Gather and distribute information on programs available to ECPs

Because ECPs are generally not able to participate in national conference activities, one of our goals is to gather information on programs for ECPs at section and chapter level as well as the national level. The survey requesting information from chapters and sections is being developed and will be sent shortly.

Project: Develop scholarship proposal for AWB/CWB Certification

Many ECPs are interested in being AWB/CWB certified, but lack a single course to be able to secure the prerequisites. We are developing a proposal for a scholarship to be offered to early career professionals to provide funding for completing the last course to be able to qualify for certification by TWS.

Project: Submitted proposal for workshop at annual conference

We submitted a proposal entitled “Critical Skills for the Early Career Professional” for the annual conference in Winnipeg, MB. The workshop will cover relationship building and communication skills, project and risk management, securing funding for projects, and meeting facilitation. We are hopeful that this workshop will be accepted.

Project: Survey of early career professionals

We are developing a survey to ascertain the primary challenges faced by early career professionals in the wildlife field in the areas of professional development, career

advancement, peer interaction and networking, and home/work balance. The survey will be used to guide the ECP working group in program development such as chapter and national level in-person and online workshops, networking tools, and TWS membership advancement. We are currently seeking partnerships with other TWS working groups to develop and implement the survey.

Completed activities in the past year include:

- 1) Associated Meeting - ECP WG at Annual meeting
- 2) Associated Meeting - National Working Group Executive Board Meeting – ECP Past Chair as meeting coordinator and current chair in attendance.
- 3) Submitted workshop proposal for 2015 annual conference

Our working group Facebook page is our primary mode of communication with membership. We use it to distribute activity information, promote discussion topics of interest, recruit committee members, and solicit feedback on projects. We also email updates directly to our membership periodically.