

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

**DATE:** 12 September 2016

**REPORT TO:** TWS Council

**FROM:** Maggi Sliwinski, Chair, Early Career Professional Working Group

**SUBJECT:** Semi-annual Report of the Early Career Professional Working Group

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL:

- 1) **We would like Council to consider adding a “donate” button to the membership renewal page that could be used to donate funds to a working group, but would not require the individual to become a member of the working group.**
  - a. *Reasoning:* There are members of TWS who want to support the goals of particular working groups, but do not want to become a member for various reasons. This would allow TWS members to donate money to a working group.
  - b. *Financial implications:* This would require staff time devoted to creating a payment button on the registration page, and a system for sending the funds to the respective working groups on timely basis.
  
- 2) **We would like Council to send official responses to any groups that submit recommendations to council.**
  - a. *Reasoning:* Some recommendations may be quickly resolved, whereas others might require some more time, planning, or research. It is easy for recommendations to be forgotten with the oft changing leadership within working groups and TWS Council. Timely follow-ups to recommendations will allow working groups to develop action plans, remind new board members to follow up on recommendations, and contribute any effort required to make the recommendation happen. Minutes from Council meetings used to be published on the TWS website, but since they are no longer available to TWS members to see what was discussed at the Council meetings, it is difficult to determine if recommendations were addressed.
  - b. *Financial implications:* This will require staff time to organize minutes and ensure that all the recommendations made to council are included in the minutes, or to see that specific discussions and resolutions regarding recommendations are recorded and forwarded to the group that made the recommendation.

## **REPORT**

In July, our working group moved to its new membership structure, with all New Professional members of TWS becoming automatic members of the working group; thus, we have over 900 members. Other TWS members may still join the working group for \$5 if they wish. We would like to thank Ed Thompson and Mariah Simmons for facilitating this new membership structure, as we think it will be a huge benefit to TWS and particularly to new professional members. Part of the agreement for this new structure was to provide “value propositions”. Our value propositions are as follows:

Being a member of the Early Career Professional Working Group has numerous benefits, including:

1. Receiving a special version of e-Wildlifer geared specifically to early career professionals. The e-Wildlifer might contain professional development tips, announcements of training courses (leadership, supervisory, conflict resolution, presentation skills, etc.), networking opportunities, member highlights, and more.
2. Networking with other ECPs to share ideas and act as a forum for early career issues within The Wildlife Society and the wildlife profession. Networking will take place through our Facebook group, Facebook page, and during the annual meeting at the annual Wildlife Society conference.
3. Providing input to the working group board, which may be reflected in reports to council, through which policy changes can be suggested to The Wildlife Society Council.
4. Planning and taking part in professional development activities specifically designed for Early Career Professionals. These activities may be in the form of workshops at the Annual Conference, webinars, or in-person workshops hosted by sections and chapters with the support of the working group.
5. Receiving a registration subsidy for workshops being held at the annual TWS annual conference or at events that may be held throughout the year, such as webinars. This subsidy will be available to the first ten ECP registrants of each workshop, and the amount of the subsidy will be announced with the workshop announcement.

### **2016 Conference Workshops**

Our group organized a workshop on Environmental Conflict Management at the annual meeting in Raleigh, NC. We are working with the Natural Resources Leadership Institute to provide this workshop to interested society members. We are providing a \$20 subsidy to the first 10 new professional members to register for the workshop. We also supported

a workshop being organized by Susan Rupp to discuss a mentoring forum, and a symposium on linking science and management being organized by Jerod Merkle.

## **Elections and Charter**

2016 is elections year for our working group. We are currently compiling biographies of the 15 members who expressed interest in leadership positions in the working group and hope to hold elections before the end of September. This is the largest show of interest in the working group's leadership since our founding in 2011, and we are very excited about the years to come with the new membership structure. We also updated our Charter to reflect the new membership structure. The updates were approved by the membership, tentatively by TWS, and will be submitted to TWS Council for final approval.

## **PAST RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL THAT REQUIRE AN OFFICIAL RESPONSE OR FURTHER UPDATES:**

- 1) **We would like Council to reduce or remove the registration requirements for speakers at workshops on the Saturday of the Annual Meeting.**
  - a. *Reasoning:* At the Annual Meeting in Winnipeg, we made the recommendation that Council and staff review registration requirements for workshop speakers/facilitators. Workshops related to early career professional development are often not directly related to advanced wildlife research and management topics. Therefore, the workshop speakers may not be interested in attending other conference events. These speakers' required registration costs consequently become part of the overall workshop expense, which increases participant registration rates. This is a disincentive for student and early career professional workshop registration. We hope that Council will develop a policy that either removes or reduces the one-day registration requirement for workshop speakers/facilitators.
  - b. *Financial implications:* Since many (possibly most) workshop speakers and facilitators are also attending the conference, we do not foresee this new policy having substantial financial implications. It will, however, broaden the pool from which working groups can draw to recruit speakers.
  
- 2) *This request was made in our Fall 2015 report to council; our latest update was from Mariah Simmons on March 23, 2016: "We are looking into doing this, but I need to check with our IT administrator first and gauge how much work this will entail. It's dependent on our database and what kind of work needs to be done "behind the scenes". Once I have an update from him I'll let you know."* **We would like Council to reduce or remove one-day registration requirements for New Professional Members attending workshops only.**
  - a. *Reasoning:* Attending workshops that take place before the annual conference is a fantastic tool for early career continuing education and

professional development. Yet for many early career professionals, full registration for the annual conference is unpractical due to costs and job obligations, as many are temporary employees who do not earn vacation or who may not be working in the wildlife field during the time of the conference. The additional \$150 cost of one-day registration makes an affordable \$30 workshop fee pointless for early career professionals who cannot justify this 500% cost increase for attendance. Instead they, and our profession, pay the price of eliminating this valuable continuing education as a viable early career option. For this reason, we recommend that TWS consider a separate workshop-only fee for new professionals.

Alternatively, we recommend a new tier of reduced registration fees for new professionals (such as was recommended in our Spring 2015 Report to Council, and is again presented below).

- b. *Financial implications:* We understand that the venue must be rented at quite a significant cost. It is likely that many workshop participants will also be attending the conference and paying the full registration fees, so this policy change is unlikely to create a financial burden. However, removing the requirement for a one-day registration for workshop-only attendees may open workshops up to many more local professionals that live near the conference city. It could also build the reputation of TWS with early career professionals and show them that TWS is a worthwhile organization that supports their needs through this type of policy. We hope that you will take this recommendation into consideration.

- 3) *This request was made in the Spring 2015 report to council. Our latest update on this was from Mariah Simmons on March 23, 2016: "We're also looking into this. If we determine that it's possible, it's unlikely that we'll be able to executive it in time for the Annual Conference in Raleigh. However, we will continue to look into it for future conferences and hopefully have a definite answer before the Annual Conference in Albuquerque."* **We would like Council to make the recommendation that new professional TWS members be able to attend certain conference events at reduced registration cost.**

- a. *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 an additional tier of registration 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.

- b. *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 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.
- c. 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!