

REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE: 19 February 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 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, but I have not yet had a report back on Council's decision or progress in researching the idea: 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. I am adding it here to request an update on progress in considering this request. **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!

REPORT

We currently have 126 members, six more than our Fall 2015 report; half of these are new professional members, and one third are student members. 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.

Project: 2016 annual conference activities

Our group submitted a workshop proposal for 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 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.

Ongoing Project: Gather and distribute information on programs available to ECPs

Because ECPs are often 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 has been sent to section and chapter leaders across North America. Responses indicate that programming geared specifically towards early career professionals is limited. We hope to change that by distributing information on programs and opportunities offered by different TWS groups.

Ongoing Project: Develop scholarship proposal for AWB/CWB Certification

Many ECPs are interested in being AWB/CWB certified, but lack a single prerequisite course. We are continuing to work with the Certification Review Board on 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.

Ongoing 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.