

Minutes
Annual Business Meeting of the Ethnic & Gender Diversity Working Group
October 27, 2014
David Lawrence Convention Center Room 326
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania

Attending:

Faith Walker, Rich Wadleigh, Dana Sanchez, Brandon Frederick, Angela Larsen, Harriet Allen, Carol Chambers, Serra Hoagland, Michel Kohl, Erin Saunders, Clarissa Starbuck, Annika Keeley, Sara Schweitzer, Jennifer Martin, Misty Sumner, Susan Bernatas, Heberto Chaparro, and Dean Stauffer, and Jessica Homyack (via phone)

The meeting was called to order at 12:30 pm by incoming Chair Misty Sumner for Jeanne Jones not in attendance. All participants introduced themselves.

Sumner handed out 2013 minutes. Dana Sanchez moved that the minutes from the Milwaukee meeting be approved (2nd by Serra Hoagland?). Approval was unanimous.

OLD BUSINESS:

Sara Schweitzer and Jessica Homyack discussed the progress on child care provision at the annual meetings. There was a general feeling of support to provide child care to allow young professionals with families to be able to attend and participate in the annual meeting. Carol Chambers pointed out that Council tried to develop some options for the Portland meeting. While there is a need, the extent of the demand for child care is not clear and is important to understand as we move forward. Dana pointed out that we need to be sensitive and inclusive of family diversity. It was also noted that liability would be of concern and needs to be addressed. It was decided that this would be put forward to Council as an action item.

TWS Ad hoc Diversity Committee – Wini Kessler has recommended that this become a standing committee. It was noted that the working group should have representation on this committee. Chambers did point out that the efforts of our working group were valued by council.

2013 Women of Wildlife Symposium – Abstracts from the meeting will be available and Jessica & Tabitha's The Wildlife Professional article will be put up on the working group website.

Annual Diversity Award – This was received by Jeramie Strickland this year. He is with USFWS and works with urban & underrepresented youth. Chambers suggested that we could make a short video of the diversity award winner each year; this year we could ask USFWS to help with the editing.

Recognized Sara Schweitzer as 2014 TWS Fellow.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Dean Stauffer reported that we had income of \$148 and no expenditures for the year, with a balance on October 27 of \$1058.85. Chambers suggested that we raise dues. Most other working groups charge \$10 for dues. Sara? (Schweitzer or Hoagland?) suggested \$5 for students and \$10 for others. We currently do not have a plan for use of our funds. It was suggested that we could use some of the funds to support travel for the Diversity Award winner each year to attend the national meeting.

Other suggestions for funds were to put a banner on the website where we could auction items to raise money. The idea of a Foundation also came up. Chambers pointed out that we could approach the National organization with a proposal for what we would do with funds to promote diversity and seek additional funds. Rick Wadleigh pointed out that most agencies have diversity groups, and they could also be approached. Should we determine to move in that direction, Chambers pointed out it would be good to coordinate with Ken Williams

NEW BUSINESS:

We should be considering who the high quality applicants might be for the Diversity Award for 2015 and be looking for individuals to nominate.

Networking and Communications:

Sara Schweitzer pointed out that the working group has accomplished a fair bit over the last year, yet the word hasn't gotten out. We need to do a better case of showcasing what we're doing. It was suggested that we put the results of the WOW symposium on websites, and include a link on the WOW page to the working group. Carol Chambers pointed out that if we will provide the content, our activities could be on the TWS page and in the eNewsletter that includes working group activities.

Jennifer Martin volunteered to serve as a communications officer. Angie Larsen volunteered to set up a working group Facebook page (mentioned by Homyack?).

We don't have any materials in the form of pamphlets, logo, etc. to promote the working group. The Board members will work on developing something, and Jeanne Jones, in her absence, was volunteered to assist with this.

Symposium on Human Diversity and Changing Professional Identities in Wildlife

This symposium represents a collaborative effort between Native People Wildlife Management Working Group and Ethnic and Gender Diversity Working Group. Organizers: Michel Kohl, Serra Hoagland, Dana Sanchez, and Jeanne Jones. NOTE: It was held the day after the WG meeting. Kohl stressed the logic of our two working groups collaborating on items, such as this symposium.

Michel Kohl discussed some items regarding how to address diversity issues in TWS.

- The current certification requirements make it difficult for many to receive certification, in particular because of the stringent coursework requirements. To fully meet the academic requirements typically requires a BS along with some graduate work. This precludes many who may earn a 2-year technical degree, take some additional training and then go to work in the field. While they may be fully qualified wildlife professionals in every sense, because they lack some requisite coursework they may not be able to receive certification. It would be worth a discussion with the certification committee (and likely Council) to see if there might be a way to establish alternate pathways to certification.
- We need to clarify the current status of certification. What is it? And, how do we improve it?
- Consider for Certified Wildlife Biologist whether diversity training could be applied. Basically, we need to have some way to accommodate those individuals who have not had access to the traditional 4-year college path.

Collaboration with others – Schweitzer discussed the idea of collaborating with diversity units in other professional societies. The idea is to first identify other professional natural resource (perhaps loosely defined) organizations with diversity units, and then seek to collaborate. The collaboration might occur as a Diversity Summit or workshop to discuss the issues and potential solutions to recognizing and increasing diversity in our professions.

Other items:

Chambers suggested the possibility of providing a webinar to get information out on our efforts. Perhaps one time a year would be appropriate.

Sanchez noted that there was a reception open to all to support the LGBTQI community. She also suggested that TWS offer a “chill space” at future meetings where anyone could go to in order relax as necessary. She also noted that at the SAC NCS meeting there are often times displays of group activities. TWS might consider doing that at their meeting in DC in 2015.

Election results for 2015-2016 officers:

Chair elect – Jessica Homyack

Secretary Treasurer – Dean Stauffer

Board members: Columbus Brown
Kerry Nicholson
Sara Schweitzer

Sumner thanked Jeanne Jones in her absence of the fine job of Chairing the past two years and providing EGDWG support on symposium planning committees, Sara Schweitzer for her willingness to stay on the board as a Board Member at Large after coming off as Immediate Past Chair, Columbus Brown for his willingness to continue as Board Member at Large, Carol Haas for her service as Board Member at Large, and Dean Stauffer for his continued willingness and diligence as Secretary and Treasurer. Everyone in the room expressed concerns for Sarah Yarwood’s health and well wishes for her recovery.

Meeting was adjourned by Sumner at 2:30 pm