

February Executive Board Meeting
2/15/2017
10:00am – 11:50am
MassWildlife Field Headquarters and call-ins

In attendance:

David Paulson
Susan McCarthy
Ken MacKenzie
Dave Cowell
John McDonald (call in)
Tracy Rittenhouse (call in)
Chase Bernier (call in)

Agenda

- Treasurer's Report: 2016 Income/Expenses
- Fall Workshop Recap
- Spring Workshop planning
- TWS Field Course Scholarship
- Donations to Envirothon
- I&E Updates
- State Updates
- Northeast Section/National Updates
- Other Business

Treasurer's Report 2016– The Chapter's income from January 1, 2016 through December 2016 totaled \$1,840.00 and consisted of apparel purchases and membership dues paid at the spring and fall workshops and online. Expenses for the year totaled \$1,541.70 and included donations to the MA and NH Envirothon, purchase of a professional recognition plaque for John McDonald, purchase of refreshments for the spring and fall workshops, two scholarships for TWS Field Course participants, and a parting gift for Chapter Vice President Laura Conlee. Petty cash available for use totals \$137.00 and the TD Bank account balance was \$12,092.54 as of January 19, 2017.

2016 Fall Workshop Recap - Dave Cowell gave a brief recap of the 2016 fall workshop that was held at the USFW region headquarters in Hadley on November 17th. We had a great lineup of speakers who presented on the impacts of climate change on wildlife and their habitats. The workshop was a great success with just under 50 people in attendance many of whom were USFWS personnel who have been working on some of the regional planning groups discussed during the presentations.

2017 Spring Workshop Planning - Most of the executive board meeting was spent discussing plans for the upcoming 2017 spring workshop. During the August e-board meeting, there was a brief discussion of potentially holding the spring workshop at the University of Connecticut where the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources will be held this year on March 13th. We had previously discussed trying to design a workshop to be held at the conference on GIS modeling. Such a workshop would require much thought and significant input from specialists in order to create a truly beneficial learning experience for attendees. After further discussion of logistical challenges, particularly with less than a month left to plan, we determined that attempting such a workshop would not be in our best interest.

It was also noted that it will be necessary to have our annual business meeting at the spring workshop and we need to ensure that officer elections take place. Currently, there are two officer vacancies in the Chapter including the Vice President and the New Hampshire state representative positions.

After some brainstorming, we felt that it would be most beneficial to take the conference as an opportunity to recruit new members, as the event is well attended by many natural resource professionals and students (~350 people expected) and is being held in a location (southernmost New England) where we typically do not hold workshops. Tracy updated everyone with information on the conference planning, who typically attends, the \$50 registration fee which includes breakfast, lunch, and coffee breaks, booth fees (\$250 with two free registrations), and the availability of space to hold presentations or workshops. Tracy will be able to reserve a room at the conference for the Chapter to use the entire day at no cost. She also provided us with a link to the website for last year's conference (<http://ccnr2016.weebly.com/oral-presentation-grid.html>) allowing us to look at the schedule which will essentially be the same this year.

We decided to create a discussion panel where officers will speak to attendees about The Wildlife Society national and regional chapters, the Society's mission, advantages of joining a Chapter, as well as the certification process and its benefits. Speakers will then segue into a discussion of career path options that students and young professionals have to consider. Students and young professionals are often unaware of or overwhelmed by the variety of career choices available to them and could benefit greatly from a discussion that may clarify points of confusion or questions. The panel of professionals should include representatives from academia, a state agency such as CT DEEP or MassWildlife, a federal agency such as USFWS or USDA-APHIS, a NGO such as Audubon or The Nature Conservancy, and private consultants. We suggested that the Chapter cover the \$50 registration for each of these speakers.

It was determined that we will plan to hold the business meeting from about 10:30am to 11:00 am while the conference poster session is taking place. This business meeting will be followed by the panel discussion and a Q&A session until lunch time. In the late afternoon from about 3pm to 4pm, we will have a less formal gathering where students and young professionals can speak one-on-one with professionals and can discuss career options as well as resume, cover letter, and interview tips and suggestions. Prior to the workshop, we will be able to advertise this event using social media to all of the colleges in our area with student chapter of TWS in order to promote attendance.

Dave Cowell will draft a schedule for the workshop and a "save the date" will be designed and emailed/posted as soon as possible.

TWS Field Course Scholarship – John McDonald noted that there are five students from New England Chapter colleges who are enrolled in the field course. These individuals are all potential candidates for the two scholarships the Chapter is able to provide this year. John will provide us with information on these students and we will be sent any cover letters and/or resumes to review from those students interested.

Donations to Envirothon – Dave Paulson noted that the Chapter recently made a \$100 donation to the Rhode Island Envirothon and that we are waiting to hear from other New England Envirothon groups who may request a similar donation. The Chapter typically offers two Envirothon donations each year and alternates amongst the New England states.

I&E Updates – Ken updated the group on information and education efforts. There are currently 600 members on the Facebook page and the TWS website has recently undergone some updating. Ken now gets information directly from the parent chapter webpage organizers and he updates our chapter page accordingly. Ken made a request for presentations from past workshops so that he can post them to the website. He needs presentations from the fall 2015, spring 2016, and fall 2016 workshops.

State Updates – Chase gave an update for Rhode Island in which he mentioned that the New England cottontail restoration project is on its 4th or 5th year and going well and that all hunting seasons went well this year. Tracy gave an update for Connecticut mentioning that the state is dealing with budget issues.

While she doesn't know exactly what those issues are, it will likely have some effect on the wildlife division. She mentioned that New England cottontail monitoring is consuming much staff time this winter, as there are many sites to sample. Tracy also noted that they are in the beginning stages of a new deer study in which they are collaring animals to assess population estimates at the management unit level. Tracy was unable to provide any updates for the non-game sector in Connecticut at this time. Todd Olanyk, the Chapter's Massachusetts representative was not in attendance, so David Paulson and Sue McCarthy gave noteworthy updates. Dave talked about the potential listing of the rusty patched bumble bee, the one confirmed record of the species from Harwich, and the many regulatory challenges (affecting all northeast states and federal agencies) that would come should the species be listed given that it is considered a habitat generalist. Dave also noted that NHESP staff are currently conducting bat hibernaculum surveys and noted that there are several grants available for wood, Blanding's and spotted turtles as well as grant money for rare mussel restoration projects utilizing now unoccupied federal salmon hatcheries. Sue McCarthy spoke briefly about updates in the Wildlife Section. This fall there were record harvests for deer, bear, and turkey. Similar to CT, staff has been quite busy with NEC pellet monitoring and has several sites to sample. The annual hunter survey has recently been deployed and over 4,000 responses have been received thus far.

Northeast/National Updates - John McDonald provided the Northeast and National Chapter updates. He noted that the national chapter is currently looking for a new executive director and that there are five candidates who will be interviewed in conjunction with the upcoming Council meeting the first weekend in March. John reminded us of our free access to TWS publications with our membership and hopes that we are all taking advantage of that. John noted that when members renew their membership they can offer one free, 6 month sponsored membership (at the national level) to people who may be interested or whose membership has lapsed. He said that at least 75% of those offered the membership thus far (about 350 people) have accepted it. After their free 6 months are up, the candidate is encouraged to continue on as a paying member.

Dave Paulson mentioned his concern regarding the recent non-compliance notice the Chapter received from the President of TWS. Dave explained that the letter attached in the email was very short, vague, and unhelpful in determining what the non-compliance issue was. He also expressed concern over the unnecessarily threatening tone of the email. John said that the National Chapter has received a number of complaints regarding this mass mailing of non-compliance letters to several chapters and that the approach will be discussed at their next council meeting. John requested that we forward him the original email with the attached letter so that he can read the language himself.

John talked briefly about the TWS Field Course saying that it is currently filled at 20 students. He said that there is a good range of graduate (9) and undergraduate (11) students from all over the country and that many of them come from more general biology backgrounds or degrees. John noted that five of the students are from New England Chapter colleges and may be candidates for the two scholarships the Chapter will offer this year. The course fee is still \$950, but Castleton University has raised their tuition price by about \$25 per student.