

TWS - Wildlife and Habitat Restoration Working Group Annual Meeting
Monday, October 8, 2018, TWS Annual Conference, Cleveland, Ohio

Minutes distributed for review on November 16, 2018

Approved as submitted on November 29, 2018

Attendees:	Email Addresses:
Ray Dueser	ray.dueser@usu.edu
Ashley McGinnis	armac118@comcast.net
Dustin Edens	S300692636@students.rio.edu
Brick Fevold	brick.fevold@gmail.com
Cody Rhodes	cody.rhodes@ky.gov
Eric Darracq	ericdarracq@yahoo.com
McKenna Hammons	mhamm833@unsp.edu

Call to Order

The 2018 annual Wildlife Habitat Restoration Working Group meeting was facilitated by Chair-elect **Ray Dueser**. **Ashley McGinnis** (Northeast Section Representative) recorded the meeting minutes.

Meeting began at 8:15 am

Welcome, sign-in and distribution of agenda

There being fewer than 25 members of the working group in attendance, no quorum was available for conducting official business.

Report of Secretary-Treasurer Michelle Ford

Secretary's Report: The WHRWG had 229 members as of September 1, 2018. Membership has been relatively flat since 2014. We have representatives from 39 states, 5 Canadian provinces, and 3 other countries (Finland, Romania and South Africa). We have 33 student members, 34 new professionals and only 11 retired. ^{SEP}*The working group is large, widespread and young!*

Treasurer's Report: Account activity through July 2018

01/05/2018	Direct deposit	\$ 300.00	\$ 1,663.29
01/10/2018	Check deposit	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 3,663.29
	(Donation per P. Santavy for 2017 Bison symposium)		
04/27/2018	Dues	\$ 144.00	\$ 3,807.29
07/27/2018	Direct deposit (TWS)	\$ 300.00	\$ 4,107.29
07/24/2018	Dues	\$ 172.00	\$ 4,279.29

The working group receives funding primarily from dues payments and contributions. Funds are used to provide travel grants and honoraria for symposium/workshop participation. *The working group is well-funded and financially capable of doing important things!*

Old Business:

2017 Bison Symposium (Paul Santavy) – well done and successful. Very well attended. *We do things well when we set our minds to it!*

Report to Council – Chair **Marcia Wolfe** submitted our Annual Report to Council on September 7, 2018 (see attached).

Action Plan (2009-2013) – The WHRWG 2008 Five-Year Action Plan is in serious need of updating. Marcia Wolfe has appointed a committee of 3 WG members to review and propose revisions. **Chris Aikos, Casey Hendricks** and **Doug Turk** are working on this big task, but no completion date has been set. *We're working to update our goals and objectives!*

Board Conference Call (May 16, 2018) – Decisions included (1) proceed with WHR logo design competition that was proposed by **Bryan Kluever** (Past Chair) in 2017, (2) move forward in discussions of webinar program with Society for Ecological Restoration if a team of volunteers can be identified to spearhead the effort, and (3) engage other working groups/societies (e.g., Society for Ecological Restoration and American Society of Mining and Reclamation) in programs of mutual interest, and (4) recommend a WHRWG member for service on *The Wildlife Professional* editorial board. **Brian Zinke** (Central Mountains and Plains Section Representative) subsequently accepted an appointment to the Editorial Board of *The Wildlife Professional*. *We're finding ways to expand our activities and increase our influence!*

Travel grants – We last awarded travel grants 2 years ago. The Executive Board decides whether travel grants should be awarded in a given year. The Chair-Elect then advertises the availability of grants to the WG members. A committee of 3 Board members evaluates all requests and recommends those to be funded. The award typically is \$500.

New Business: *We need to decide where to invest our efforts in the near-term future.*

Logo design contest – **ACTION ITEM:** **Jody Bremner** (Canadian Section Representative) has volunteered to take this contest live in the December/January 2019 time frame. Jody already has identified some that might provide a useful logo design platform. There is a modest fee for the use of most of these sites, and the prize value for the winning logo usually is in the \$80 - \$300 USD. Based on her investigation, Jody has posed several questions for the group:

1. Are we willing to have logos submitted by designers outside the WHRWG or TWS? Advantages are we could get professional designs and more entries.
2. What will the prize value be?
3. Is there funding for a logo contest web-tool fee?
4. If anyone knows of a free online tool, ideas are most welcome. Jody will keep investigating as time permits.

26th TWS Annual Conference – This meeting will be held September 29 – October 3, 2019, in Reno, NV. It will be held jointly with the annual meeting of the American Fisheries Society.

ACTION ITEM: It was agreed that we should begin requesting proposals for symposia, workshops and special sessions from the WHRWG members sooner rather than later. No date was set, but it was agreed that we should put out a request at least 3 months before the official call for proposals, to stimulate interest. It was further agreed that we should reintroduce travel grant support for the 2019 annual conference, with a focus on student members of the WHRWG and symposium speakers.

Ray Dueser proposed a 2019 workshop and symposium on the reintroduction of the American beaver (*Castor canadensis*) as a means of restoring trout streams in the West. Representatives from Nevada, Idaho, Oregon and Utah already have expressed interest in participation. No outside source of funding has been identified.

Sarah Hewitt (North Central Section Representative) reported that urban restoration has become an increasingly

prominent aspect for localized conservation efforts in the Midwest. She proposed that the topic of successful urban restoration would be an intriguing and useful workshop or symposium as it ties in not only the science of restoration, but also the social/cultural view of nature, and partnerships between municipalities and conservation groups. [SEP]

Brick Fevold proposed inclusion of the Great Lakes Region in any call for workshop or symposium proposals.

Webinars – The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) has a very active website supported by input from 2,900 members. **Bryan Kluever** has been engaged in discussion with the SER about the possibility of collaborating in the production of and distribution of WHR webinars of special interest to the wildlife profession. It was universally agreed that webinars also hold great potential for enhancing communication and engagement, particularly the sharing of real-world experience. Members expressed an interest in using the WHR website link for the distribution of webinars of particular interest to our members.

Ashley McGinnis proposed starting a WHR webinar series with a session aimed at students and young professionals on “How to be involved in habitat restoration” or “Steps to getting started,” with expansion and diversification from there. A session on “Finding the information I need” from among the enormous amount of restoration information available would be useful. There was agreement that this would be a good starting point, but no one stepped forward to take the lead in the production.

Jody Bremner and **Ray Dueser** have volunteered to continue working on this initiative, and have some ideas for possible webinar subjects and presenters.

Ray Dueser proposed a webinar on landscape and habitat change on the “high speed” landscape of the Virginia barrier islands. Under the combined forces of wind and waves, coastal landscapes routinely change at a rate many times faster than typical inland landscapes; furthermore, these rates of change are themselves responsive to climate change. These landscapes thus, provide a benchmark for rates of succession, response to disturbance, and capacity to support viable wildlife populations. The wilderness barrier islands and lagoons of the Virginia Coast Reserve LTER site on the Eastern Shore of Virginia have been under intense study for the past 30 years, and the rates and trajectories of change are well described. A webinar on the dynamic behavior of this landscape would provide a compelling case study of landscape recovery, restoration and resilience in a natural system.

Brian Zinke and **Sandra Patrick** (Southeastern Section Representative) proposed that the webinar series might begin with three case studies that highlight wildlife and habitat restoration projects *and* the cooperative relationships that are necessary to make them successful. Ideally, these case studies represent not only different areas of the country, but also different professional entities (e.g., state agency, consulting and private industry, academia). They proposed a common thread of something like “Public, Private, Regulatory Partnerships; Wildlife and Habitat Can’t Survive Without Them - 3 Successful Case Studies.”

Several other individuals indicated they have presentations that could readily be turned into meaningful webinars.

ACTION ITEM: The Executive Board will (1) discuss ways and means to take the discussion of webinars to the next level (e.g., staging a webinar for the WHRWG membership on the idea of doing webinars – why, how, for what purpose?), (2) discuss whether there may be a better platform for holding this discussion, and (3) follow up on the McGinnis proposal that we try to identify ways to attract student interest in the webinar idea.

Restoration guidelines - The SER recently published their “International Standards: Raising the Bar for Restoration Efforts Around the Globe” (Gann 2017. <http://ser.org/page/SERNews3112>). [SEP] It was agreed that this document would be well worth reading by anyone interested in wildlife and habitat restoration. It was suggested that the WHRWG Executive Board consider appointing a panel of volunteers might be appointed to read and review this document with an eye to determining whether a similar effort should be undertaken more specifically for wildlife communities and habitats.

Other collaboration - **Marcia Wolfe** proposed that we develop a joint technical session with the American Society of Mining and Reclamation during their annual meeting in Montana in 2019. She subsequently sent to the WHRWG membership an announcement and call for papers for the meeting.

Floor Was Opened For Discussion and Suggestions

The goals of the WHRWG are to:

- 1) Facilitate communication and the exchange of information among members of the Society interested in restoring wildlife populations and degraded habitats.
- 2) Enhance knowledge and technical capabilities of wildlife professionals in the area of restoration.
- 3) Increase public awareness and appreciation of the technical capabilities of restoring wildlife populations and degraded habitats.
- 4) Develop implementable ecosystem management principles enabling community-wide recovery.
- 5) Identify effective monitoring and evaluation programs to determine successes and failures of restoration techniques.

Given these goals, what do members of the WHRWG want the working group to actually *do*? The most active TWS working groups appear to be those which have direct effects on the lives of their members through things such as cooperative agency training and employment programs, focused education programs, focus on emerging issues, or enhanced technical skills. What can the WHR working do to increase its relevance and significance for the skills, capabilities and careers of its members?

Six realities emerged from the discussion:

- 1) **Eric Darracq** and **Brick Fevold** observed that limitations on travel support, particularly for agency personnel and students, makes on-line communication vital to the effectiveness of the working group. Activities and events that require physical presence will, by definition, limit participation by most members of the working group. The ability to participate virtually is a critical need.
- 2) Using social media such as Facebook, on-line forums and Mendeley Desktop offers promise for enhancing communication and engagement among the various sectors of the working group. The opinion was expressed that Mendeley might be a valuable tool for sharing and collaborating. Perhaps we could use this to advance initiatives #1 and #4, and market it through symposium/technical session/poster in #3 and webinars (noted above). We already have 469 members on our Facebook page, almost twice as many as we have in the working group. **Rachel Williams** (Western Section Representative) and **Ashley McGinnis** are cooperating on reinvigorating the WHRWG Facebook page, but it will require a serious collective effort to turn the page into a meaningful forum for the exchange of ideas, experiences and opportunities. Items specifically identified for exchange included case studies of documented restoration successes and failures, educational and employment opportunities, and current events. Ashley suggested sharing information from Mendeley could help bridge the gap to getting more people to use the site.
- 3) The working group should renew its commitment to sponsor a symposium, workshop or technical session at each TWS Annual Conference. **Brick Fevold** proposed that we organize a "Restoration Topics" poster session each year. It might be useful for each working group to sponsor/organize a working group poster session. This would be an inexpensive way to call attention to the working group and to foster discussion among working group members.
- 4) **Eric Darracq** made the important point that we should seek to reduce confusion and over-complexity about wildlife and habitat restoration, to help land managers become more unified as a team and appropriately improve more acres, more quickly. How do we make the vast amounts of existing information available to land managers in an organized manner and thereby improve communication? Specifically, Eric proposed that a

WHR position statement would be much more visible and likely to provide actual guidance than a document being buried in our working group files or stored somewhere obscure on the web. He pointed out TWS has a few position statements (PS) that address parts of the foundational aspects of wildlife and habitats, including three that fit the puzzle fairly tightly but do not connect with enough simplicity or direction (TWS PS Oct 2018-Oct 2023: *Incorporating Wildlife Needs in Land Management Plans*, TWS standing PS: *Environmental Quality through Resource Management*, and TWS standing PS: *Conserving Biological Diversity*). Eric proposed specifically that it would be very helpful and conservation-constructive for all TWS members if we drafted a PS that (1) provides a definition of wildlife, habitats and habitat restoration, (2) identifies for wildlife, habitat and habitat restoration a list of credible citations/sources that clearly delineate who their best-fit target audience(s) may be, from K -12 students to full-time experienced land managers, and (3) serves as a point-source tool for improving land area conditions and landscape connectivity. (Note: The NRCS has dozens of conservation practice standards transparent for the public on their website. TNC obviously has great resources for this. EPA's delineation of level 3 and 4 ecoregions are excellent. SER's international standards could be helpful, especially for organizations with the infrastructure to handle the additive facets. Standards of the Forest Stewardship Program, Sustainable Forestry Initiative, and Forest Stewardship Council have similar broad guidelines. We can all think of many others to include.)

- 5) **Ray Dueser** observed that many of the other really effective TWS working groups have active partners such as state and federal agencies, Native American groups, or international organizations that support and/or aid their activities. The WHR Executive Board should explore the possibility of such options.

- 6) **Ray Dueser** raised the question of working group organization. The current organization includes 4 elective officers (past chair, chair, chair-elect, and secretary-treasurer) and 8 board members representing the TWS sections (Canadian, Northeast, Southeastern, North Central, Central Mountains and Plains, Southwest, Northwest, and Western). It was concluded that a 12-member Executive Board, with few actual defined roles, is too large to be effective. We should identify the necessary roles to be played and the proper structure to help us achieve them (e.g., program chair, communications chair, student chair). This may involve revising the WHRWG charter in order to better align roles, goals and accountability. This will be a topic for the next meeting of the Executive Board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.