

REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE: 20 January 2019

REPORT TO: TWS Council

FROM: Emily Williams, Chair, Early Career Professional Working Group

SUBJECT: Spring Report of the Early Career Professional Working Group

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

(See details below)

- 1) To facilitate consistent progress and success with professional development programs offered to early career members, the Early Career Professional Working Group asks that the Council work with the ECPWG along with the LI subcommittee of Council to rejuvenate and enhance the Leadership Institute program.

REPORT

Membership

The Early Career Professional Working Group has a membership structure that is different from most other working groups. All New Professional members of TWS become automatic members of the working group as opposed to having annual dues; thus, as of the February we have 1416 members. Other TWS members may still join the working group for \$5 if they wish. We would like to reiterate our thanks 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.

2018 Conference Professional Development Opportunities

This past fall, the ECPWG presented two professional development opportunities at the annual conference of The Wildlife Society in Cleveland, OH; the WG hosted an all-day alternative careers symposium and afternoon panel discussion, and selected its first recipient of a professional development award.

The symposium, "One Size Fits None: Alternative Career Paths Can Benefit You and the Wildlife Profession," was co-organized by ECPWG Chair, Emily Williams, and two ECPWG members, Kris Boyd and Lindsay Vansomeren. This symposium addressed how to prepare for the possibility of a career shift and frame experiences to make the most out of them. The symposium was divided into a morning and afternoon session of invited talks, followed by a 40-minute

presentation by a career coach, and concluded by a panel discussion by all invited speakers. Attendees included 15 professionals and 20 students and was well received overall.

During our annual members' meeting, we presented the first professional development grant to ECPWG member, Jackie Gehrt, in the amount of \$500. This award was used to help defray travel costs of attendance to the 2018 meeting in Cleveland.

2019 Conference Professional Development Opportunities

The ECPWG is in the process of planning two professional development opportunities for the 2019 joint AFS-TWS meeting in Reno, NV. Board members are planning to submit for consideration a proposal for a science communication workshop, focused on hands-on learning where participants can actively practice and hone their communication skills. The WG also plans to organize an informal mixer to facilitate connections and networking opportunities for early career professionals.

Grant Development

The ECPWG has finalized and launched two new grant opportunities for our members.

The first grant is focused on members who have applied to their Associate Wildlife Biologist certification but did not meet requirements due to course inadequacies. Applicants can apply for up to \$500 to complete course requirements for their certification. A maximum of two grants will be awarded each year.

The second grant is focused on professional development opportunities. Members can apply for up to \$500 to participate in a professional development opportunity (training, travel to conference, etc.). A maximum of two grants will be awarded each year.

Depending on applicant pools for the respective grants, a maximum of two grants will be awarded each year. Should one grant receive no applicants, then two may be awarded in the other applicant pool.

The number of awards given each year will be subject to the ECPWG's current budget.

Elections and Charter

Elections for the ECPWG are held every other year; 2018 was an elections year for our working group. Elections were held from August 8 – 30, 2018. We

received much interest in the working group's leadership and had several good candidates to vote on. We also formally introduced a new position to the Executive Board, the Communications Coordinator. The election results were as follows:

- Chair: Emily Williams (previously Secretary)
- Co-Chair: Kristi Confortin
- Secretary: Jonathan Trudeau
- Treasurer: Sarah Clark
- Communications Coordinator: Yasmine Hentati
- At-Large Board Members: Paul Di Salvo (returning); John Vanek, Julia Nawrocki, Rob Lewis, Jason Matthews, Anna Butler, and Ben Olsen.

The ECPWG will be holding elections for the 2020-2022 board during the summer of 2020. We will remind TWS members of elections and encourage nominations as it gets closer to July 2020.

Communications

This year the ECPWG has focused on improving open communication with our members. Our board has been working hard on increasing our social media presence. Over the past year, our outreach on Facebook has increased from occasional posts to daily offerings on jobs, tips, grants and scholarships, training opportunities, member highlights, and more. We also launched a twitter account, @TWSEarlyCareer, that cross-posts similar content as our facebook account. We have also created a newly elected position that focuses on our social media and communications – the Communications Coordinator. We formally introduced this position into our bylaws and it was voted on and approved by all board members.

The ECPWG is also working towards developing our very first newsletter. Once the format is finalized, we plan to provide a newsletter at least biannually, but more often depending upon board time constraints.

BACKGROUND FOR REQUESTS TO COUNCIL

1) Request for Council Action – renewed efforts to improve the Leadership Institute program

To provide continued progress and success with professional development opportunities such as the Leadership Institute for early career members, we suggest several action items to achieve this goal:

1. Modernization and rejuvenation of the entire LI curriculum to meet the current needs of ECPs.
2. Make better use of the LI in-person meetings during the conference, with different discussion activities from the pre-conference assignments, hands-on activities, focus on the world beyond TWS, and greater focus on putting leadership skills into practice.
3. Revitalize the LI Subcommittee of Council to work quickly to restructure the LI program and engage with members of the ECPWG and LI alums for advice and feedback.
4. Identify members of Council (past or present) and TWS Staff to actively work with/on the LI Subcommittee of Council to ensure ample communication between interested parties (including the ECPWG) and to ensure progress towards the goal.
5. Ensure that a consistent amount of funds are reserved each year to provide an LI alumna/current participant networking event with refreshments provided to attendees. Ensure that this is a staple event at annual meetings and a required activity on the LI agenda of events during the conference.