

**Early Career Professional Working Group
Annual Members' Meeting
TWS/AFS Conference, Reno, NV
2 October 2019
12:00 – 1:30PM Pacific Daylight Time**

1. **Welcome, introductions.** Sign in (27 in attendance); Emily Williams (Chair), Kristi Confortin (Co-Chair), Krysten Zummo-Strong (Past Chair), Julia Nawrocki (At-large board member), Anna Butler (At-large board member), **Other members in attendance listed in ECP dropbox folder**
 - a. Claire Crow came to thank us for our contribution to the Out in the Field initiative
2. **What is the ECPWG?**
 - a. An ECP is 1-12 years out of your terminal degree
 - b. The ECPWG is a people-centric group, not policy based
 - c. Members are automatically registered in the ECPWG if their TWS membership is in “new professional” or “student” track
 - d. ECPWG is a five-year old group
 - e. ECPWG purposes: increase engagement of members, provide professional development opportunities including:
 - i. Professional development \$500 grant
 - ii. TWS certification grant \$500
 - iii. Mentorship program within TWS
3. **Accomplishments in the last year:**
 - a. ~\$4000 in account (note: \$1500/year budget from council) - some of this will be used for tomorrow’s workshop
 - b. Sent report to Council
 - i. Reduce registration fees
 - ii. Reduce journal fees to submit articles to the TWS journals
 - iii. Accept unofficial transcripts for TWS certification process
 - c. Awarded first professional development grant last year
 - d. Released newsletter in March
 - e. Communications Coordinator position started – that individual manages social media, newsletter
 - f. Survey of membership (in progress)
 - g. Workshop at this conference (Communicating Your Science: Active Communication Skills for the Future of Wildlife Conservation) – science communication with folks associated with Sharing Science American Geophysical Union (AGU)
 - h. Last year’s symposium – who are ECPs, work/life balance
4. **What do we want to see in the coming year?**

- a. Networking beyond the Student-Professional Mixer - an ECP specific networking event
- b. Put together an ECP specific symposium (suggested by Jen Malpass, which potential topics suggested by a variety of members)
 - i. How to navigate obtaining a federal job – What are GS equivalents? How do you use USA jobs? How do you navigate that process?
 - ii. Not everyone knows what is done in consulting – so a look at structure would be helpful to understand the difference between different sectors of employment (consulting, government, etc)
 - iii. Landing that permanent job/sustainable situation is a major goal of ECPs – how do you find those? How do you search for consulting jobs?
 - iv. Tribal government is also an employment opportunity, and you do not have to be a tribe member, comes with perks if they're a federally recognized tribe
 - v. Land trust is also an employment opportunity
 - vi. Also military lands
 - vii. Also self-employed/start your own business
 - viii. Building your support network as an ECP – what are the working groups that can support you in your career, what successes have they had, what opportunities for engagement are there?
 - 1. WISDOM – Women in Science Dialogue = an example of a support network
 - ix. More information about transition from academia to another sector
 - x. Think about how to expand audience for ECP symposia – address managers
 - 1. Ethnic and Gender Diversity WG is good at getting an audience – ask them
- c. A job board for ECPs? access to tools, resources that will help folks find those permanent jobs – there's esp a gap in the private sector
 - i. Add a page to our ECP website that offers opportunities/professional development opportunities, links to those resources and tools that we're seeking
- d. Online networking 1:1 would be helpful to get an idea of those different sectors of jobs again to answer questions about what it's like to work at a certain job
- e. TWS parent level – I am interested in being a mentor/mentee
 - i. TWS does have a directory for you to reach out mentors, it's kind of a passive system, but you can find these people if you look through TWS
- f. These people could also be a resource for us if we're putting together webinars
- g. Mentorship program is looking to make this system more formal and less passive with pushes from TWS for accountability

- i. Mentorship involvement as a mentor is incentivized within the CWB system
- h. Suggestion: 2-5 minute interviews with professionals as a resource
- i. Schedule webinars including an opportunity for live chat, questions
- j. Do chapters and sections offer ECP rates? What other benefits do they offer?
Might be beneficial to survey these sections/chapters to connect ECPs with more resources
- k. Long-term goal – working with TWS to make an official statement against wildlife-related jobs that don't pay any money
 - i. Best to jointly propose a position statement or an issue statement to address low-paying stuff (with Ethnic and Gender Diversity, etc)
 - ii. Interim goal to the low-income job proposal, would be to remove any low-income/unpaid jobs posted to job boards, definitely TWS's job board
 - iii. Note: definitions of internships versus other types of work (there are legal definitions of internships)
 - iv. for March make a case to Council to take unpaid jobs off job board – back it up with info and it will be considered
 - v. Conservation Affairs Network – 6 years ago there was a movement to support public land temporary workers with actual legislation/policy engaged in that conversation with the Union and Council
- l. Would be nice to have a workshop on empowering young professionals to advocate for themselves in employment situations
 - i. Grad students at Mallyory's university gave information on legal rights for what they can and cannot be expected to do
- m. TWS membership fee suggestions:
 - i. Lower membership fees across all chapters/sections could be a by-law edit for TWS
 - ii. Reduced rates for international members from poorer countries (we have this?)
 - iii. Income-based conference fees – AFS has this
 - iv. ECPWG could draft a revised by-law to make it consistent across the society
 - v. Might be more effective to develop a letter about lower ECP fees for chapters and sections and then reach out directly to chapter and sections, Council moves slowly
 - vi. NYS Chapter has discussed ECP rate, but might start the conversation with TWS (Western section has this already and could help)
- n. On communicating with Council
 - i. Earliest we can make recommendations to Council would be spring
 - ii.

- o. The Wildlife Professional is a good way to communicate across the continent – write a compelling article about the ECP fee struggle may effect change (Out in the Field as a good example of how this affected change)
- p. Information for new TWS members at large
 - i. Student Development WG is working on this, but it's continuous education; they do have highlights on social media
 - ii. Add a first-timers orientation – what you should attend, what resources are there, etc. Could also do this online
- q. 10 years ago WG receptions were common, could bring it back, it was on the very first night
 - i. We have a WG table, so its diminished, but something's still there
- r. 6-month free memberships
 - i. we need a system to connect people that want a 6-month membership with those that have it
 - 1. might have to be informal b/c of confidentiality issues
- s. General struggles noted
 - i. Professional development only offered to permanent employees
 - ii. Gambles to advance – take a civil service position that isn't wildlife as pathway to a wildlife biologist job (via a paycut and competition with PhD folks)
- t. How are individual members supposed to come forward with concerns? What is that pathway?
 - i. You can do that through a WG, chapter, section, or section representative
 - ii. You have submit something through that report to Council
 - iii. Bring the problem with some paths forward that are worth considering
 - iv. You can also address Council in open session at the annual meeting – though if there's no quorum it's not official, go when there's a quorum
 - v. Recommendation to Council in biannual report is most effective
- u. Strategic conference planning
 - i. Pay attention to other WGs so we don't conflict with our most relevant ones

5. Action Item!

- a. ****When you register for membership it defines an ECP as 3 years or less out, this does not match our definition so we've got to fix it****