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 Mallory’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
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**