

**Early Career Professional Working Group  
Annual Members' Meeting  
Virtual TWS Conference  
29 September 2020  
12:30 – 2:00PM Eastern Standard Time**

1. **Welcome, introductions.** Sign in (46 in attendance); Emily Williams (Past Chair), Jonathan Trudeau (Chair), Yasmine Hentati (Co-Chair), Jennifer Merems (Secretary), Alix Godar (At-large board member), Dustin Brewer (At-large board member), other members in attendance listed at the end of meeting minutes. Start time: 12:30 EST End time: 2:00 EST
  - a. **Welcome new executive board!**
  - b. Other new executive members not in attendance: Treasure: Carson Coriell; Communications coordinator: Tess Gingery; At-large board members: Phillip Lyons, Micah Bingaman, Laura Young, Nicole Alonso-Leach, Zachary Wardle
  - c. Don Yasuda, incoming VP for TWS and Chair of Ethnic and Gender Diversity Working Group spoke with the group about the importance of ECPs and being involved to aid in changes that could benefit ECP.
2. **Contact information**
  - a. Email: [ecpworkinggroup@gmail.com](mailto:ecpworkinggroup@gmail.com)
  - b. Website: <https://wildlife.org/ecpwg/>
  - c. Twitter: @TWSearlycareer
  - d. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/earlycareertws>
3. **What is the ECPWG?**
  - a. ECPWG is a people-centric group, not policy based, centered on increased professional development and ECP support.
  - b. The board is working on creating a new definition for ECPWG.
    - i. Currently, the broad definition includes someone out of school up to five years post degree (undergraduate, masters, doctorate)
    - ii. Would like to change it to be more inclusive, can be a current student, can remain a member until you've had 5 years of consecutive fulltime work.
    - iii. When new definition is created, it will be sent to the working group for a vote before being sent to council.
  - c. Members are automatically registered in the ECPWG if their TWS membership is "new professional".
    - i. The board would like to change the "new professional" designation online to "early career professional" to reduce confusion when registering.
    - ii. If you are not a "new professional" but would like to be a part of ECPWG, you can join for \$5
  - d. ECPWG is a six-year old group
  - e. ECPWG purpose: increase engagement of members, provide professional development opportunities
    - i. Professional development \$500 grant
      1. Money can be used professional development (i.e, conferences, workshops, classes, certifications, field gear, etc.)

- ii. TWS certification \$500 grant
  - 1. Money toward required classes to obtain the TWS AWB or CWB certification
- iii. Trail Blazer \$500 grant
  - 1. In conjunction with the Student Development Working Group
  - 2. Similar to our professional development grant

**4. Accomplishments in the last year:**

- a. ~\$5000 in account (note: \$1500/year budget from council)
  - i. Typically award 2-3 grants per year and could possibly increase that number for 2020/2021 due to saving money from the virtual conference
  - ii. We are in a great position financially if you'd like to apply for a grant!
- b. Surveyed ECP for general information to understand our membership
  - i. 270 respondents
  - ii. Most respondents weren't aware they were automatically registered in the ECPWG
    - 1. The board will work on increasing awareness
  - iii. Respondents were between 22 – 33 years old, mostly US citizens, most white, most did not have the TWS AWB or CWB certification, 40% worked federally or at the state level, 20% worked in NGOs, 20% worked in academia, and 20% worked in consulting.
    - 1. The board will work on reaching out to the rest of our members to increase inclusion and diversity within ECPWG
  - iv. Suggestions from respondents on what ECPWG can improve upon
    - 1. Offer webinars, different courses, mentoring programs, increasing amount of resources provided to ECP
      - a. Mentorship program within TWS hopefully launching in 2021
      - b. The ECPWG board has created a google spreadsheet for ECP resources. This spreadsheet is not yet live, but you're your eyes open. Information includes but is not limited to,
        - i. Different job boards and opportunities
        - ii. Grants, fellowships, and other funding sources
        - iii. Podcasts
        - iv. Text (i.e., books)

**5. What do we want to see in the coming year?**

- a. Creating an TWS ECP award
  - i. It is important to recognize the great work ECP are providing for the profession and society.
- b. Increasing the diversity, equality, and inclusion within ECPWG and outside of ECPWG
  - i. We are not a diverse group, but we can be a great source for allies.
  - ii. One way to help is to make a stance on stopping unpaid work which is a huge barrier for gaining experience in this field.
    - 1. The board will draft a statement which condemns unpaid work, circulate it and gain support for other working groups, and send it to council

2. The goal is to have TWS as an organization support this statement
3. If you have any suggestions or thoughts about this initiative, please email the board or join our next board meeting!
4. Ideas provided by group members:
  - a. Create a certification for employers who treat ECPs well so ECPs can choose jobs in a more informed way (*Dustin Brewer*)
  - b. TWS/Universities/NGOs could help supplement income for ECPs who are working an underpaid job (*Ed Davis*)
  - c. Raise awareness of these issues to employers so those who cannot afford to gain experiences through volunteer/unpaid labor aren't overlooked (*John Vanek, Tyler Turner*)
  - d. Grants should explicitly mention how employees will be compensated (*Katie Gundermann*)
  - e. Push for positions to include healthcare (*Katie Gundermann*)
  - f. Have jobs implicitly state what personal supplies the position requires (your own vehicle, computer, unlimited cell phone data, etc.) and push for employers to provide these instead (*Gabby Barnas, Katie Gundermann, Ed Davis*)
  - g. Create an information packet for ECPs who are interviewing for positions so they know what questions to ask so they are fully aware of what personal items are required of them/how much money they will spend for this job. (*Alixandra Godar, Tyler Turner*)
  - h. Reach out to popular job boards and suggest that unpaid work goes into the volunteer sections. (*John Vanek, Katie Gundermann*)
- iii. If you have anymore ideas about how we can make our working group, the organization, and the field more inclusive, please share your ideas.
- c. Understanding the effects of COVID-19 on ECPs
  - i. There have been a loss of seasonal jobs and new fulltime jobs.
  - ii. The board wants to gauge the impacts of COVID-19 and try to understand the legacy affects that will occur.
  - iii. Questions the board is after:
    1. How hard will it be to find future jobs to do the lack of experienced gained during COVID-19 times?
    2. How has COVID-19 impacted you and your colleagues?
    3. What do you see as being barriers moving forward and what kind of hope do you see in the future?
    4. What kind of resources do you need and how can ECPWG help?
    5. Main suggestions discussed:
      - a. ECPWG or TWS offer trainings/workshops during this time so those without jobs can still gain experience (*Sara Kramer, Katie Gundermann*)

- b. Types of trainings/workshops: Policy classes (*Alixandra Godar*), elevator-talk trainings, CV/resume reviews (*Elizabeth Meisman*), interviews (*Annie Loggins*), ATV/UTV trainings (*Ed Davis*)
- c. Create a database which links to online information already created during the virtual transition of COVID-19 (i.e., Youtube videos, etc.) (*John Vanek*)
- iv. Please email us, we would love to hear your thoughts/opinions on these questions!
- v. If you have ideas for workshops/trainings and would like to create one and lead it, let us know! It would be great for your resume too!

**6. Action Items:**

- a. Create a subcommittee of interested individuals to move forward with ideas suggested for increasing diversity, equality, and inclusion within ECPWG
  - b. Continue collecting more ideas about ways to increase diversity, equality, and inclusion within ECPWG and how to help ECP impacted by COVID
7. **Attendees:** Tyler Turner, Kaitlin McGee, Nalonso, Don Yasuda, Laura Duffie, Krysten Zummo, Dan Taylor, Jessalyn Bowman, Lisa Zoromoski, Kaitlyn Wilson, Andrew Letter, Cailey Powell, Erin Poor, Julia Geschke, Elizabeth Meisman, Alexis Hand, Morgan, Kristin, Taylor, Annie Loggins, John Vanek, Lauren Head, Ash Cable, Devin Welch, Amy K, Ed Davis, Katie Gundermann, Jailene Hidalgo, Elizabeth Meisman, Sara Kramer, Gabby Barnas, Jennifer Rodgers, Andrew Letter, others may have been missed.