

Early Career Professional Working Group Annual Meeting Draft Agenda

Tuesday, September 29th, 2020

1. Call to Order
2. Working Group Description
3. Introduction of the New Board
4. Grants Update
 - a. Professional Development Grant
 - i. Help defray costs associate with professional development opportunities pursued by ECP members, including things like travel to TWS conferences, regional meetings, workshop, and many more.
 - ii. Awarded one grant this year to provide support to attend a Wilderness First aid training
 - b. Certification Scholarship
 - i. Help cover costs for university coursework that EC members may be lacking to satisfy the requirement of AWB/CWB certification.
 - c. Trail Blazer Grant
 - i. This is a new grant that we are in the process of working with the Student Development Working Group to develop. This grant is similar in scope to our professional development grant in that it is aimed at helping ECP gain access to the things they need to be successful in this field. This grant will provide members the opportunity to apply for funds to assist in the purchase of equipment - like boots, packs, head lamps – that are needed for their work. We are still in the process of developing this grant so members can not apply for it yet, but we will let you all know once we have more information.
5. Communications
 - a. Newsletters – sent out twice a year. In our most recent edition, we featured interviews withj Dr. Auriel Fournier, who is the director of Forbes Biological Station, and Priya Nanjappa who is the Director of Operations at Conservation Science Partners. Both are amazing professionals in our field and they provided us with some great insight on job hunts and salient issues in the field for ECPs.
 - b. Social Media
 - a. We have Facebook and Twitter! Our past communications chair, Yasmine Hentati, has done an incredible job at upping our social media presence. We post pretty regularly and are always looking to highlight the things our members are going so please feel free to share with us.
6. ECPWG logo plans
7. ECP Definition
 - a. In our charter, it says *12 years post- baccalaureate degree*. Should it be 12-years post terminal degree?
 - b. **“within 60 consecutive months (5yrs) of full time employment”**

8. ECP Survey Results

- a. The goal of this survey was to get a better understanding of the diversity within our group, identify how people prefer to communicate and receive information, and get a general idea of how our members are doing.
 - i. 270 respondents
 - ii. We have the largest membership of all the WG, but that is because we have an interesting structure. If you are register as an Early Career Professional, you are automatically enrolled in the working group, free of charge. We do have due's paying members, though. About 36% of our members are dues paying, meaning they are not registered as ECP but still want to be part of the working group, which is great!
 - iii. Despite being a large working group, about 32% of our members didn't even know about the working group and 58% didn't even realize they were members. This is likely an artifact of our working group structure.
 - iv. The majority of our working group is between 24-33 years old (73%)
 1. And are U.S. Citizens (93%)
 2. With the bulk of them being within 5 years of completing their most recent degree.
 3. Most do not have an AWB or CWB (78%)
 4. 41% work for federal/state/county government, 17% NGO, 21% Academic, and 10% are in consulting.
 - a. With just over half (54%) of these being full time positions.
 - v. Over half of the working group is females (62.1%), which is encouraging.
 - vi. 95.6% of the group is Caucasian
 - vii. We have members from 8 different regional networks, with the North Central Section being the largest contributor.
 - viii. Most people wanted to receive information via email
 - ix. And very few, only 17%, of our members have ever visited our websites
 1. This is where you can find valuable information about grant opportunities, ECP resources, and contact information for our board members.
 - x. Most respondents wanted to see communication from the WG increase, which is what we have been working toward with our social media efforts and we plan to continue putting our annual newsletters.
 - xi. When asked what additional type of support our members would likely take advantage of if offered, online resources and webinars were the most popular responses.
 - xii. Additionally, mentoring was among the top responses which happens to relate to our next topic. One of our board members, Paul Di Salvo, has been working diligently over the last few years to develop a mentorship program and it has finally come to fruition.

9. Mentorship Program

- a. Mentorship for Life (MFL) subcommittee was formed, with Paul chairing it. This program will provide experiential learning opportunities capable of broadening skills and knowledge. Mentoring is not just to benefit the mentee, but the mentor as well with the most successful mentorship opportunities being reciprocal in nature.
- b. The vision statement for the program is: *To be the foremost natural resource mentorship program by continually fostering the development of a community of highly-skilled, knowledgeable wildlife professionals through collaborative mentorship within The Wildlife Society and beyond.*
- c. And the mission statement is: *To further the overall mission of The Wildlife Society by providing an interactive mentorship program that synergizes new and existing professional development and networking opportunities to promote continual learning and building reciprocal relationships between all wildlife professionals.*
- d. Essentially, the program is designed to create a more formalized method for mentoring that promotes leadership, member service, integration, diversity, and sustainability. This will provide members of TWS of all levels to take part in mentorship and support our fellow members. Once out of school, it can sometimes be difficult to find mentors and this program will assist with that.

10. Unpaid work

- a. I got this.
- b. Really want to get TWS to take a stand on this.

11. ECPWG Resources list

- a. <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XUHWzbNKZMgVTHVAj6uvt6xnE1ZpurKxGc934KMCCI/edit#gid=0>
- b. Jobs board
- c. Links to professional development opportunities
- d. Links to good resources – books, podcasts, etc.

12. TWS Emerging Leader Award

- a. Every year, there are a couple awards, like the Aldo Leopold award, that are given out at the annual conference acknowledging the great work and the impact that some of our most veteran members have had on the field. There is also a student award. This is great and these awards are well deserved, but there is no equivalent award for early career professionals who are doing an exemplary job and making an impact. With this in mind, we are in the process of drafting the proposal for an award that would highlight the accomplishments that ECP members are making to the field, not just students and those at the tail end of their careers. Our hope is this is an award that drives ECPs to make even larger impacts and feel that what they are doing is being acknowledge by the larger community. Our hope is to have this proposal to council in the spring.
- b. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gbBrZnyj9LtHUQ0Xc7NQDookYAQf-WEEDb8nzN1a2Sc/edit?pli=1>

13. Goals for the coming year

- a. Finalize ECP definition
- b. Finalize ECPWG Resource list
- c. Finalize ECPWG Logo
- d. Covid-19 impact and relief
- e. Diversity and Inequality
 - i. This is a topic that has really come to the forefront over the last 6 months with everything that is going on in the world. Our working group has always pushed to support all our members, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation but this is something that needs even greater attention. We as a working group are not overly diverse but we can be allies for those in our group that need it. Over the next year, we hope to work with other working groups, such as the Equity and Diversity working group, to change the culture in our field and make it more welcoming for all. I welcome every member to take part in this endeavor. If we can all support one another, we can make our field a more diverse and welcoming place.
- f. Unpaid Employment Statement
- g. 2021 Conference
 - i. Workshops
 - 1. Based on our survey from last fall, we found that 45% of respondents were interested in workshops specific to obtaining a particular type of wildlife-related job so something like how to get in with USDA or the EPA. About 36% were interested in communication and conflict resolution workshops.
 - ii. Symposia/panel discussions

14. Open discussion

15. Adjourn