NETWS Annual Business Meeting

Holthus Convention Center, York, NE

21 Feb 2019, 1:00 pm

Agenda:

Standing in for President Matt Steffl, President-elect Shaun Dunn called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm with the introduction of the NETWS Board.

Dunn introduced President Matt Steffl, Past-president Jenny Prenosil, board members John Denton, Caroline Jezierski, Mike Gutzmer, and Erin Considine. Secretary Mel Nenneman and Treasurer Jessica Jurzenski introduced themselves, as did incoming President-elect Shelly McPherron. Incoming board members are Mercy Dinwiddie and Andrew Little. Outgoing board members are Jenny Prenosil, Caroline Jezierski and John Denton. Board members that were not able to be at the meeting were Matt Steffl, Jenny Prenosil, Mike Gutzmer, Erin Considine, and Caroline Jezierski.

After the introductions, Dunn encouraged NETWS members to engage with NETWS, becoming more involved with our chapter and bringing topics of wildlife interest to the board.

Secretary’s Report: Nenneman provided a summary of the 2018 Annual Business Meeting with the notes projected for members to read. At the end of this summary, Nenneman asked if there were any additions or discussion of the minutes as presented. Seeing none, Eric Zach moved to accept the 2018 Annual Meeting minutes as presented, Dunn seconded and the motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Jurzenski reviewed the 2018 budget, explaining the actual income and expenditures and income as compared to the approved 2018 budget. The NETWS chapter ended 2018 in very good financial shape, with $25,515.32 in checking, $5,529 in savings, and $4,744.87 in the Joe Gabig CD. There was no additional discussion on the 2018 budget.

Jurzenski then presented the proposed 2019 budget to membership. This budget included projected income and expenditures based on projections from recent years and some actual costs that the chapter has already incurred for the year. Jurzenski noted that the board had approved expenditures in the budget to provide 50% reimbursement of the application fee for members seeking to become certified by TWS as an Associate or Certified Wildlife Biologist, to support sending a board member to the annual TWS meeting, and to provide funding to TWS for the Annual Meeting. Rich Nelson asked for clarification of how the reimbursement to members applying to become AWB and CWB would work, and Jurzenski explained that NETWS would provide a one time, 50% reimbursement of the application fee per individual. Mark Lindvall asked how the Gabig scholarship money is paid out since the money is housed in a CD. Jurzenski explained that the money technically comes from the CD, but NETWS has provided the money to the recipient with income from an auction item designated for the Gabig scholarship. Laurel Badura asked about the CMPS membership dues expense line as it included expenditures for both 2018 and 2019. Apparently there was some technical difficulty last year in transferring money from NETWS memberships to CMPS. Scott Wessel suggested that the estimated auction income in the budget may be a bit optimistic.

Rich Nelson moved to approve the 2019 budget, Dunn seconded and the motion passed by voice vote.

Committee Reports:

* + Nominating - (chair Jenny Prenosil) Dunn said that Prenosil noted that Survey Monkey had again worked well for voting, and that candidates had been found for all of the open board positions, and that new board members had been elected.
  + Membership - (chair Shaun Dunn) Dunn reported that current NETWS membership stands at 112 members. He reminded everyone to renew their memberships as the membership cost was not included in the registration fee for the annual meeting. Zach mentioned that he had not gotten a CMPS newsletter or update recently, and asked that this information be sent to the members of the state chapter. Lanka said that the CMPS newsletter and other information should be being sent to the NETWS president for disbursement to the membership. This makes it easier for the CMPS as it cannot maintain a current email list for all 7 state chapters that comprise the CMPS. Cassidy Wessel moved to share the NETWS Google Group email with CMPS since NETWS maintains the members of the list. Zach mentioned that this would make communication more of a two way street if NETWS members want to communicate with the CMPS board. Lanka or Badura will talk to CMPS President Adam Ahlers to see what he thinks about the idea of adding the NETWS Google Group to the CMPS email list. C. Wessel’s motion to do this was tabled for the time being.
  + Programs – (chair Shaun Dunn) Dunn thanked everybody on the programs committee for helping pull the meeting together.
  + Conservation Review (co-chairs Eric Zach and Bill Vodehnal) Zach started by saying that this is an area where NETWS is really important in giving wildlife professionals a voice on big issues in NE. He reported that the Recovering Americas Wildlife Act, a bill that would provide funding to states to provide wildlife habitat to keep common wildlife common, is still in the works in congress. The Wetlands Recovery Act passed. NETWS sent a letter in opposition to a proposal that would have transferred water from the Platte R. basin to the Republican R. basin. This proposal is still awaiting a final decision. NE LB 126 and 127 – a bill that would have revised the NE deer hunting season by allowing landowners to rifle hunt in the 7 days prior to the existing NE rifle deer season, and would have liberalized landowner permits. NETWS opposed this bill as it is not based on good biology or sound wildlife management. Zach indicated that only part of this bill is moving forward, and is broadening the definition of family members.

Zach said the Farm Bill had passed in the US Congress, and its contents were largely positive for habitat and wildlife.

Issues to watch- Recovering Americas Wildlife Act, attempts to modify the Endangered Species Act, and potential roll back of Clean Water Act rules implemented under the Obama administration.

* + Information and Education – (chair Mark Lindvall) Lindvall reported that they had sent out 3 newsletters in 2018. These were sent to 290 (!) email addresses and had a 22% open rate. He would like to see the email address list cleaned up and improve the open rate in the coming year. He has been getting help with the newsletter from Jason Clark (contacting student chapters) and David Baasch (helping gather stories for the newsletter). Lindvall encouraged members to submit items to him for inclusion in the NETWS newsletter. The NETWS website is now being hosted on the TWS web platform, and items to be posted on the website are sent to Marriah Simmons, who is incredibly efficient at getting updates posted. Jess Jurzenski is the NETWS Facebook page administrator. Lindvall said that there were 97 facebook posts for the year, and invited members to use the Facebook page to share information (job openings, meeting notices, etc.). Our student chapters and most of the Universities also have Facebook pages, and these can be a good way for members to reach student members with items like job announcements. Jessica Barrett administers the Google Group, and Lindvall reminded that any member can use this email to communicate with NETWS members.
  + Awards – (chair Andrew Little) Andrew Little is just stepping in as chair of this committee, and there was no new information to report.
  + Certification – (chair Carl Wolfe) Wolfe urged students in attendance to consider becoming certified as certification provides a big boost for career and provided credibility if asked to testify in court. He encouraged everyone to read recent op-eds in the newsletter that explain how certification is important.
  + Student chapter reports

UNL – Ally Beard gave a summary 2018 activities, which included 4 main headings- Community service, Meetings, Fun experiences, and Annual Banquet. Community service included hosting Nature Nights, working at the State Park Expo, and stream clean-up on campus. Meeting activities included a blow dart competition, chili cook off, deer jaw aging and working deer check stations, and alligator in the classroom. Fun experiences the chapter had were the welcome back bbq, capture the flag, Niobrara River canoe trip in the fall, and a game feed. Their annual banquet is going to be on April 6th from 5-8 pm at the East Campus Union.

UNK – Dustin Ranglack, UNK professor and student advisor spoke for the UNK chapter as none of their students could attend. He said that they had participated in events similar to UNL, had done deer check stations. He also said that UNK had a nice, central location and asked members to contact UNK with projects that students could help with.

Wayne State – Diana Denalski and Jewel Knifel represented the student chapter, and provided a list of activities including building and placing bird houses in the university prairie, assisting in pallid sturgeon projects, working on watershed protection project, helping with a live animal exhibit, holding a prescribed burn workshop, and building bat boxes.

Chadron State College- No one from CSC was present at the meeting, and no report was available

TWS Report – Bob Lanka (section Representative to Council) Lanka said that the TWS FY 18 budget goal was to achieve a $94k surplus, and the result was a $265k surplus from membership dues, donations and other sources. TWS sent $15k to Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLFT) for student chapters could send members to the leadership conference. Remaining funds were placed into the Permanent Reserve Fund (Rainy day fund). The goal of the Rainy day fund is to have enough money to cover 6 months of operating expenses. TWS has an independent audit of its budget every year, and the FY 2018 audit had the highest rating for a clean audit.

2019 Annual Conference is going to be held in Reno, NV. Dates are Sept 29-Oct 3, 2019, and the conference this year is a joint meeting with the American Fisheries Society. This will be a big meeting, with 4000-5000 expected participants and will be a great networking opportunity. All information about the Annual Conference is available on the TWS website, including information on how to apply for financial assistance to attend the conference. CMPS also offers travel assistance. The plenary topic is How to deliver a conservation message to today’s audience.

The 2020 Annual Conference location is in Louisville, KY.

The CMPS Annual Meeting will be held Aug 23-24 in Bismark, ND.

Deadline for applications to attend the TWS Leadership Institute is March 24, 2019. The Leadership Institute is funded by the Dallas Safari Club, and provides leadership training for 10-15 early career professionals who are 2-3 years out of school. Acceptance into the Leadership Institute includes a trip to the TWS Annual Conference. Lanka encouraged NETWS members to consider applying to attend the Leadership Institute.

Lanka reminded members that when they renew their TWS membership, they can nominate other wildlife professionals to receive a free 6 month trial membership to TWS.

TWS privacy policy was updated to meet the new, very stringent standards passed by the European Union.

TWS created a new award for 2019 – the Best Wildlife Restoration Award. This award will recognize outstanding projects supported by Wildlife Restoration funds (also known as Pittman-Robertson funds) and associated non-federal matching funds.

Lastly, Lanka told members that TWS President Miller asked him to tell NETWS members that he appreciates all that we do for wildlife, and that we should feel free to contact him with any questions or concerns, and provided his email address (also on TWS website).

Old Business

* Dunn reminded members about using the Google Group protocol – tell everybody who you are, and then your message to the group
* Formation of an ad hoc committee to develop a structure for NETWS to distribute funds for research and outreach projects

New Business

* NETWS providing funds for TWS certification reimbursement and funds to assist member (s) to attend the TWS Annual Conference
* In 2020, NETWS will be reviewing and updating the chapters strategic plan, and board will be seeking input from membership
* Update Annual Plan of Operation
* Seeking ideas for the location and topic of the 2020 annual meeting. One proposed theme/topic is “On the ground management; Lessons on the land”. Members are encouraged to provide other ideas for topics and potential meeting locations.

Dunn asked if there was any other business, and seeing none asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jurzenski moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Badura, and the motion carried. Meeting declared adjourned at 2:42 pm.

2019 NETWS Board Members

President-elect: Shelly McPherron

President: Shaun Dunn

Past President: Matt Steffl

Treasurer: Jessica Jurzenski (2018-2019)

Secretary: Melvin Nenneman (2019-2020)

At-Large members: Mike Gutzmer, Erin Considine (2018-2019)

Andrew Little, Mercy Dinwiddie (2019-2020)