**Nebraska Chapter of The Wildlife Society**

**Quarterly Board Meeting**

**May 26, 2021**

**Notes**

NETWS Board

President-elect: Andrew Little

President: Will Inselman

Past-president: Shelly McPherron

Secretary: Jennifer Corman

Treasurer: Matthew Gruntorad

At-large board members: Sarah Nevison, Jenny Prenosil, Larkin Powell, Chelsea Forehead

Members present: Will Inselman, Chelsea Forehead, Jenny Prenosil, Eric Zach, Erin Considine, Matthew Gruntorad, Shaun Dunn, Shelly McPherron, Larkin Powell, Jen Corman, Andrew Little, Sarah Nevison, Carl Wolfe, Mel Nennemen.

Will Inselman called the meeting to order at 12:04pm

Secretary’s Report – Jen Corman

Summary of the February 2021 Quarterly Board Meeting. Jenny motioned to accept and Larkin seconded. No nays.

Treasurer’s Report – Mattew Gruntorad

2021 Budget Update as of May 19th. See Treasurer’s Report. Highlights since last update:

* $162 in donation income
* Joe Gabig Scholarship: closed old CD and put $152 back into new CD
* $387 income from lifetime memberships
* $1,057 income from regular memberships
* Over $1100 auction income
* $4,420 annual meeting registration, including 2019 NGPC registrations
* Expenses: Costs for photo contest, photo contest platform, and auction platform

Joe Gabig is now at $4,420 and matures in April. The CD has a low interest rate, but is safe. Matt is open to other options and has briefly considered some, but switching from the CD is not urgent or necessary yet.

Erin Considine and Jess Jurzenski assisted Matt with Audit. No major errors detected. Did not quite report enough on a tax form, but resubmitted with correction.

Will initiated a discussion on discretionary funds. Currently our expenses occur once a year for the annual meeting. With our accounts in good shape, we should consider spreading expenses out over the year and using funds for additional initiatives beyond annual meeting. Matt suggested applying funds to incentivize undergraduate and graduate students to attend annual meeting (travel awards, etc.) Shaun agreed and noted that we can allocate funds based on results of the student participation survey that we just sent out to TWS members.

Larkin and Sarah also expressed agreement.

Mel Nenneman suggested using discretionary funds to be more proactive about membership development. For example, getting people started on certification, especially assisting students to get their associate certification while still in school. Will added that we could use the funds to host certification workshops.

Everyone keep thinking about potential ideas and uses for discretionary funds.

Committee Reports

* Nominating – Shelly McPherron
* Nothing to report
* Sarah and Jenny’s At-Large positions and Matt’s Treasurer position will open for election next annual meeting
* Membership - Shaun Dunn
  + If we hold certification workshops we should make sure students are registered as state and national members of TWS
* Programs – Andrew Little
  + We will hold annual meeting in-person this year; Andy and Will talked to Holiday Inn at Kearney. The Kearney Chamber of Commerce is offering a deal: if we sign a 3 year contract for using the Holiday Inn at Kearney for our conference, then the Chamber of Commerce will give $150/year back to TWS. Kearney is a convenient central location with affordable and functional facilities, costing $600 to rent rooms for the two days. Do we want to sign a 3 year (long-term) contract?
  + We can host a virtual space as well for people who want that option. We will assess interest in a virtual option in an upcoming survey. We will need to be careful with logistics because if many people decide they prefer to attend virtually, we will be locked into a 3 year contract already for facilities we may not need.
* Conservation Review - Eric Zach
  + Tomorrow, 27 May, is the end of the State Legislature session. For the most part, the bills we were tracking either did not get out of committee or if they did make it out of committee never went to floor for discussion.
  + A lot of momentum for RAWA. Good opportunity for inclusion in a larger bill and become a reality. “If we don’t do it now, it won’t happen for 10 years.” May not be true, but we should still strive to take advantage of our groundswell of support.
  + 30x30 Initiative
* Push-back from the ag community. Gov. Rickets is making public statements against it. This is a sticky political subject. Tread lightly if we want to put out a statement on it; emphasize that it is based on voluntary, incentive-based conservation and not a “Land Grab.” Handle with care.
* Local news outlets are publishing opinion pieces against it. People fearful of federal land grabs.
* Will called for Discussion: should NETWS board try to respond?
  + Carl: Deserves a response, but hard to tell who to respond to. Perhaps a Lincoln Journal Letter to the Editor. Politicians seem to be commenting on it without reading it. We need to respond in a positive way that states a professional opinion.
  + Jenny: agree. A letter with a positive perspective would be valuable. Don’t accuse anyone of being wrong. Has been twisted and manipulated by people. 30x30 initiative could be a good thing for farmers because it could mean increased funding for programs like EQIP and CRP.
  + Chelsea: landowners in her Chadron work area are actively withdrawing from federal conservation programs due to (unfounded) fears about federal land grab in the 30x30 initiative.
  + Andy: also observed it has recently been hard to access properties for research projects; landowners don’t want federal government involved on their property, although they are otherwise open to data collection.
  + Jenny and Andy are both concerned about timing because the federal government is now sending out info on the usual conservation programs, and Andy’s research group is contacting landowners about access and data collection, but landowners are connecting that information with the 30x30 initiative rollout.
  + Eric will start putting together an official TWS statement on the 30x30 Initiative that the Board can review. A Letter to the Editor can be signed as NETWS, but a letter to the Legislature would be most impactful if there are professionals signing it by name. Carl Wolfe and Larkin Powell are willing to submit the statement under their names with their NETWS affiliation.
* Information and Education – Erin Considine
* Newsletter: may return to quarterly schedule. Working with Amanda Ciurej. Phone call in June to talk about next one.
* Website updates. Getting all of the pieces together to give to Mariah Beyers who is working on website. Looking for old newsletters, awards history, and updated info on student travel grants.
* Sarah really likes the improvements so far on the website.
* Awards – Andrew Little
  + No updates
* Certification – Carl Wolfe
  + - * + Carl had a professor at university who mildly pressured wildlife students to join TWS. This was effective.
        + Budget is more stable than it has ever been since he can remember. To assist students, we can set aside some funding to cover fees for students to apply for certification, with caveats to make sure NETWS is getting their money’s worth.
        + Shaun pointed out that only two people have taken advantage of our offer to reimburse 50% of certification costs. Jenny pointed out that no contact information is provided with the online information on the program. Primary contact should be the Treasurer, Matt. We should send out a reminder that the funding is available.
        + Will suggested in-person workshops at meetings would help get students started on certification. Attendance can inform budget allocations.
        + Sarah reminded us that TWS has additional resources to answers questions on application process.
        + Shaun suggested presenting the steps of certification every year or every other year during the annual meeting lunch, to take advantage of the captive audience.
        + Sarah encouraged everyone on board to get certified.
        + Will: we can set a budget and have a more in-depth conversation at next board meeting.

Ideas to Engage Student Chapters

Will was invited to talk to UNL students about TWS membership. Students are mainly asking “how is TWS useful to me?” and “what are the benefits?” Will discussed networking and other benefits. We need to be more personally engaged with student groups. Students want to spend more time one-on-one with professionals outside of annual meeting and need to see more tangible benefits from being part of TWS. Should we hold an annual student conclave?

Will would like to establish a Student Engagement and Outreach Taskforce within the Student Chapter Committee to target more consistent student engagement beyond the annual meeting.

Sarah, Jenny, Erin, and Andy want to be part of the committee. Chelsea is also interested in engaging with students at Chadron State College. Eric noted that we are likely going to lose the Wayne State student chapter (sponsor: Mark Hammer). There is interest from students but no wildlife degree at Wayne State.

Meeting adjourned at 1:06 pm