

Board Meeting Minutes (Fall 2022)

Submitted by Courtney Larson (Secretary)

The WY-TWS board gathered in person for a productive and wide-ranging board retreat in Lander on Aug 18 and 19, and met online on Oct 11. Below are some of the topics discussed and decisions made at board meetings and via online communications.

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness action planning

The board spent considerable time at our retreat discussing different options for how we could work to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the wildlife field in Wyoming. Our discussion resulted in a list of nine actions, which we sent out to membership on Sept 1. We have now started to work to accomplish some of these items, including working on hiring a trainer for bystander intervention training, forming a new IDEA committee, and working on language to incorporate principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion into the language for WY-TWS awards.

New website

Taylor LaSharr has been hard at work on a new WY-TWS website to replace the current system in which we have a page on the national TWS website and a separate conference website. A draft version is up and running and looks great. Stay tuned!

Chapter priorities, committees, bylaws, and strategic plan

A major topic of the board retreat was discussing what the priorities for the board should be in the next year and beyond. The two primary ones that emerged were the IDEA initiatives (described above) and the management/science interface. We discussed whether there is a need for WY-TWS to help ensure that the best available science is used to make wildlife-related decisions. There were many ideas proposed for different forms of summaries or syntheses of scientific papers and evidence, which the board will continue to discuss.

At our October meeting, the board heard updates from the chairs of various committees:

- Awards and Nominations Committee (Riley Bernard): Riley is managing the current board election (remember to vote by Nov 1!) and will soon send out a call for award nominations
- Conservation Affairs Network (Rhiannon Jakopak): We discussed the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and decided to send a letter to our congressional delegation in support of the bill as well as encourage members to send their own letters and emails. CAN is compiling a list of policy priorities that we will need to contribute to by Nov 28.
- Legislative Affairs (Rhiannon Jakopak): The legislative session starts Jan 10. Rhiannon discussed a strategy of relying on nonprofit partners who have policy/lobbying staff, such as Wyoming Outdoor Council, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and Wyoming Wildlife Federation. WY-TWS could work to feed scientific information to these organizations.

- UW student chapter (Renee Lile): Renee is helping the student chapter with a budget. We also discussed ideas to provide more opportunities for professionals to interact with students, and to involve students more fully in the annual conference.

The board also reviewed our current bylaws and the strategic plan for 2015-2020. We identified a number of things in the bylaws that need to be updated; Aly is coordinating edits. We will also work on a new strategic plan.

Finances and 2023 budget

At our board retreat, our treasurer Megan Smith provided an overview of the chapter finances. We have approximately \$50,000 in the bank. Megan will set up the accounts with 15,000 in chapter checking, 25,000 in conference checking, and 10,000 in reserves. We are starting to put together the 2023 budget, which we will discuss and approve at the November meeting.

2023 conference

The 2023 conference will be held March 28-30 in Laramie at the UW conference center. The board is working on ideas for a keynote speaker and other program highlights.