

**TWS – Western Section  
Executive Board Meeting Minutes  
Westminster Retreat, Alamo, CA  
August 4-5, 2012**

**In attendance:**

**Board members:** **Linda Leeman**, *President*; **John McNerney**, *Past President*; **Doug Bell**, *President-Elect*; **Don Yasuda**, *Section Representative, Membership Services*; **Janine Payne**, *Secretary*; **Rhys Evans**, *Professional Development Committee Chair*; **Jessica Martini-Lamb**, *San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Representative*; **Laura Patterson**, *Sac-Shasta Chapter Representative*; **Jeff Lincer**, *Southern California Chapter Representative*; **Craig Brown**, *Cal Poly Student Chapter Representative*.

Via phone: **Cynthia Perrine**, *Program Director*; **Linda Connolly**, *San Joaquin Chapter Representative*.

**President Leeman called the meeting to order at 11:02.**

**Roll Call and Introductions – Leeman**

President Leeman welcomed everyone and introduced Craig Brown, representative from the newly formed Cal Poly Student Chapter.

**Review of Meeting Minutes – Payne**

**Lincer motioned to approve the minutes from the conference call on April 27, 2012. Patterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Review of Action Items – Payne**

Officers included the status of their Action Items in their submitted reports. Items that required further discussion were considered.

Regarding the new chapter seed fund, Leeman felt that if lack of funds is an impediment to a chapter forming, the Section should provide financial assistance and asked if these funds can be approved as a discretionary action. Yasuda said we need to codify it in our Operations Manual and state that it's available; there is no need for a bylaw change. Brown said the Cal Poly Student Chapter used funds they had raised during their former status as a wildlife club, but added that the funding would have been appreciated. Perrine suggested we add new chapter support to Student Affairs outreach activities and pointed out that a line item on the budget for this purpose is problematic because it is not something that happens every year. Perrine is working on updating the Operations Manual. **Linda will contact Dave Wyatt and give him a briefing about developing a seed fund and doing outreach to new student chapters. (AI)**

Yasuda suggested we encourage newly forming chapters to create a 3-5 year action plan due to the high turnover of chapters forming and dissipating. He recommended that student chapters have a local chapter liaison to help with continuity and to link them with local professionals.

Highlights from the Chapter, Committee, and Officer Reports – Leeman:

**Western Section logo – McNerney**

McNerney updated the Board on the progress of our new logo search. The deadline for submissions is August 15<sup>th</sup> and the Board will vote via email. He gave a brief recap of the parameters. Leeman mentioned that the HI Chapter is revising their bylaws to extend to other Pacific Islands. If they approve this change we will need to consider that before logo is finalized. *\*Leeman will follow up with HI to check on their bylaw status. (AI)*

**TWS Conference, Portland – Evans**

Evans gave a brief sponsorship update and thanked the So Cal Chapter for their generous support. Both events the Section sponsored at \$2,500 have been approved. Barbara Peters will do her resume workshops and Hooper will do his “How NOT to Do a Scientific Presentation” workshop. Jeff Lincer will attend the Conservation Affairs workshop. Several board members suggested that the Section should pay for Leeman to attend. *\*Leeman will evaluate if she can go. (AI)*

**Conservation Affairs Committee Update – Leeman for Gonzales**

The CAC has an upcoming meeting. They are working on a boilerplate letter to decision makers, which is not project specific. They have a draft letter circulating which they are hoping to finalize soon and start looking at which priorities they’re going use the letter for.

Old Business:

**TWS Awards – Yasuda**

Yasuda asked the Board for assistance with nominations for Distinguished Service Awards. He went through the vetting process. The person we have selected is Marshall White for his participation in the Members Forum, serving as Trustee for our endowment, and his long history of participation. Each Section awardee will get a certificate, a short blurb that will go on TWS’ website, and have the recipient’s name read at the Annual Conference. However, TWS is not covering travel costs. Yasuda asked the Board if we would like to contribute or recognize the recipient at our conference. Leeman’s position was that we should contribute. McNerney asked if TWS would at least comp their registration. *\*Yasuda will find out if TWS will comp registrations. (AI)* Leeman requested board members share potential future nominees with Yasuda and Burg. Going forward it will be part of the normal TWS award cycle to recognize people who the sections believe deserve recognition from TWS. One of the criteria is 20 years of service. The Awards Committee will make recommendations, bring them to the Executive Committee and give to Yasuda for Council.

Other TWS Awards Yasuda asked the Board to consider were group achievement awards and TWS Fellows. Yasuda would like the Awards Committee to put together a master list of folks we would like to consider for national level awards.

### **Additional support needs for WS Awards Committee – Leeman**

The Board discussed invigorating the Awards Committee to help with the work load. McNerney volunteered to help. Payne volunteered to help Burg with coordination, such as greeting and photographing award recipients. It was agreed that a list of award recipients should be posted on the website. *\*Leeman will contact Burg and submit the list to Eric to post a list of award recipients on our website that goes further back in time. (AI)*

### **Western Section Awards Committee – Leeman for Burg**

The first item the Board discussed was the support of the CWA youth education programs requested by Mike Chapel. At our last meeting the Board requested additional info. Leeman said she not sure where Burg is regarding that request.

The next item discussed was two applications for grants received, one for research and one for travel. Leeman said that we are still working on establishing grant deadlines. *McNerney motioned that we approve the Brianne Winter travel grant application. Lincer seconded. \*Evans will clarify that her budget is listed correctly for registration fee. (AI) The motion passed unanimously.*

The Board reviewed research grant application submitted by Roy. *Based on the understanding that he will present at a conference, Evans motioned that we support Roy in the amount of \$500. Patterson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.*

Leeman asked for clarification regarding travel grants. They used to be under the domain of Student Affairs but moved to Awards and Grants. She thinks the research grants need to be clearly described in the Operations Manual and travel grants should have a three month lead time. Burg did submit revisions on the Awards and Grants section of the Operations manual and we should have this discussion with him. Yasuda felt that conceptually awarding research grants twice a year is fine, but maybe we need a separate section on the website for research and separate section for travel grants with different timelines. *\* Leeman and McNerney will edit Burg's draft to reflect two separate deadlines for research grants and student travel grants. (AI) \*Perrine will look at the travel grants advertisements which are posted in our newsletter and use that text as a starting point for the Ops Manual. She will post the newsletter text on Google docs for review. (AI)*

### **TWS Affinity Program – Yasuda**

Yasuda requested feedback from the Board regarding the Affinity Program currently being considered by Council. The idea initiated with a request from Taser, which got Council thinking about whether or not it's desirable to have our logo on a product, which implies endorsement. They have received strong feedback on both sides. Concerns were expressed that the program would put us on an ethical slippery slope and several people did not feel comfortable with the TWS name on a product. According to Yasuda, the tone of Council seems to be that the membership does not believe the practice is in our interest, but the benefit of the program is that it would give us funds to support our organization's growing activities.

The Executive Board discussed the issue at length and the general consensus was that the WS did not feel comfortable putting the TWS logo on products. Even if there was no impropriety, we would still have to

worry about appearances. Yasuda added that Council feels torn because TWS really needs the non-dues income, but they certainly do not want to lose members over this issue. No other professional societies have set a precedent in this area. Objectivity is essential to our publications, and our priority is to retain our professional integrity.

#### New Business:

##### **TWS-WS Transactions – Leeman/McNerney**

The search for a new Transactions Editor is underway since Dave Wright resigned a few months ago. He did a great job trying to reinvigorate Transactions but we are still not there. Bill Tietje has submitted a transcript and we have approached him about becoming editor. He is currently considering the possibility. The Board discussed Transactions viability. Leeman attempted to get presenters from the Annual Conference to submit manuscripts and none did. It appears that there is a lack of interest from the membership. *\*Perrine will address this in the member needs survey. (AI)*

The question was raised whether we want to wait to hear from the membership on this issue or have we already come to the conclusion that it is not viable? Perrine suggested that we decide as a board and use the member comments to craft the iteration of Transactions that we come up with. Yasuda suggested that agencies are currently trying to get more quality publications from their biologists for their own journals. Perhaps we could contribute by doing peer review for their journals. It was decided to delay the decision pending further discussion.

The publication schedule was then discussed. *\*McNerney will issue a statement on the website regarding the status of Transactions. (AI)* One idea presented was that involving faculty may be the way to go. If we do away with Transactions we would still need to preserve the history of previous articles. In a Strategic Planning effort in 1995, Transactions was identified as the number one valued item. Leeman suggested we carry this topic forward and perhaps hold a brainstorming session at the annual Conference. *\*McNerney will contact Barrett, Wyatt, Wright, Harris, Perrine, Eadie, and Van Vuren to invite them to participate in this meeting. (AI) \*Bell will see if anyone from NPS is interested in participating. (AI)*

##### **Newsletter Format – Leeman**

Leeman asked the Board if the current format of the Newsletter is serving us well. Some alternatives were discussed, such as a formatted email where people would click through to read the articles that interest them. The bonus of this format is that we can track which articles are being read. Leeman raised this possibility with Candace, but it would require an investment of additional training and effort on her part and therefore cost more initially. Another possibility is to link the Newsletter to a blog. This should be considered when evaluating the media aspect of our Strategic Plan. Next steps considered were creating a committee or consulting with TWS and reinstating the Information Committee. *\* Linda will talk to Candace about what the cost of different newsletter format would be. (AI)*

### **Support for State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program – Leeman for Perrine**

The US House of Representatives has proposed a 50% cut to this program for 2013 on top of the already substantial cuts made in 2012. The SWG program, which is designed to support each state's Wildlife Action Plan has supported the research of many of our members. Headquarters has asked sub-units to consider joining with them in endorsing a letter to request the highest level of funding possible. *McNerney moved that we sign in support of Teaming With Wildlife. Yasuda seconded. The motion passed unanimously. \*Leeman will let TWS know. (AI)*

### **Western Section reimbursement schedule of members' dues to Chapters – Connolly, Bailey, and Yasuda**

People have been paying Chapter dues on the TWS-WS website and there are concerns that the information is not getting back to chapters efficiently. Connolly reported that the SJV Chapter gets updates quarterly but has not yet received a dues payment for 2011. McNerney said all dues payments went out for 2011. Once a year, the Treasurer validates the chapter recipient and Mike Chapel cuts the check, then notifies the Treasurer if the check remains uncashed. Bailey is supposed to look into it. There is a possibility that it could be a Treasurer issue, since the SJV Chapter has had a personnel change. Yasuda emphasized the need to have this process written down in the Operations Manual. *\*Leeman will ask Chapel if he has a record for cutting a check to the SJV chapter and get back to them. \*Yasuda will ask Eric to create a password for people to be able to access their current member list on web. (AI)*

### **Technology Needs – Yasuda**

Current technology needs were discussed and it was determined that we can afford to replace one laptop per year. Payne has Candace's old laptop and is waiting for her husband to install a new operating system, which TWS would have to purchase. *\*Yasuda will assess whether Payne, Eric, or Candace need a new compute this year. (AI)*

### **Website – Leeman for E. Renger**

Leeman informed the Board of the impending transition to Drupal. She is not sure of timing, but estimates six months or so. She is also not sure what the chapters need to do to prepare for the change. *\*When Leeman finds out more about chapter requirements for the transition to Drupal she will report back. (AI)*

Leeman also broached the subject of security requirements for our online credit card transactions. The yearly process Eric goes through with PCI DSS [The PCI DSS is a multifaceted security standard that includes requirements for security management, policies, procedures, network architecture, software design and other critical protective measures. This comprehensive standard is intended to help organizations proactively protect customer account data.] in order for us to process credit cards for conference registrations appears to be subject to increased scrutiny. It is possible that we may be required to upgrade our online security. If the new requirements are too onerous we may be forced to look at other options such as using PayPal for conference registration or going through TWS' site. *\*Yasuda suggested Eric should check with Jeremiah regarding the possibility of running conference registration*

*through the TWS storefront. (AI)*

### **Need for Strategic or Operational Planning – Leeman**

Leeman voiced that one of her frustrations with taking on the role of presidency is feeling that we are on the cusp of major growth but sometimes wondering if we are asking too much of our volunteers. She asked board members if they felt that we were functioning as we should and asked if we should be considering additional contract staff. Of course, we need to be sensitive to financial lessons learned in the past, but do we need take some of the administrative burden off volunteers? Is what we're doing fulfilling our mission? Evans felt that an 80% renewal rate was good indication that we are and Yasuda voiced that all indicators are that we are meeting at least some important need.

The issue of hiring additional contract staff was considered. The “pros” would be that a long term staff person can provide continuity and offset volunteer burnout. Possible “cons” weighed were avoiding the negative financial impact of “creep” and the fact that more staff requires additional contract management and supervision. The Board discussed various staffing scenarios, including hiring Candace in an increased capacity.

McNerney suggested we create a strategic plan looking five years out and beyond. A strategic plan would really help us evaluate incremental growth. We need to evaluate which committees are working and which are not to help us achieve the next level. Leeman suggested we have a focused meeting on this subject at the Annual Meeting and suggested that it might be beneficial to have a professional facilitator. *Leeman will search for possible facilitators and get an estimate for the Board. (AI) Martini-Lamb offered to provide some name for consideration. (AI)*

*Meeting recessed at 17:00.*

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*Meeting reconvened at 09:00.*

### New Business (continued):

#### **2013 Annual Conference Update – Bell**

President Elect Bell Reviewed the program for the 2013 Annual Conference. The Board discussed the program and possible workshops as well as possibilities for the pre-conference symposium. The following Action Items arose from that discussion:

*\*Rhys will follow up in the next few weeks possible ESA biological assessment workshop. (AI)*

*\*Leeman will follow up on the possibility of a policy workshop on Tuesdays CAC conference call. (AI)*

*\*Linda will invite Michael Hutchins to the Annual Conference. (AI)*

Janae Scruggs has agreed to help out as the Volunteer Co-Coordinator at the Annual Conference and

would like to train someone new. If anyone has any suggestions for a good person for Janae to train, please let her know.

**2015 Annual Conference location/venue – Leeman**

The Board considered possible locations for the Annual Conference in 2015. Candace will send out RFPs. We are considering a location near the Oakland Museum. It is a very spacious facility in an urban setting. Rohnert Park is another possibility. Riverside is strongly advocating for our return business. Other locations considered were Ontario, Anaheim, and San Diego, which has great facilities but is expensive.

**Scheduling the next meeting at DoubleTree in Sacramento – Leeman/Bell**

The Board scheduled the next Executive Board meeting for **Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Sacramento Double Tree**. Chapter and Student Reps, please send a proxy if you are unable to attend!

Unfinished Business:

**Participation**

The Board discussed the ongoing issue of encouraging participation from our less active members. Perrine suggested that we do some outreach to some of our sub-units to encourage participation. ***Leeman will call the North Coast, Central Coast, and Hawaii Chapters. (AI)***

***Brown moved to adjourn. McNerney seconded. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Meeting adjourned at 10:59.***

***Respectfully submitted,***

***Janine Payne  
Secretary***