

Environmental Education Commission
Meeting Minutes
August 11, 2015
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Louisiana Room, Baton Rouge Office
1 PM

I. Call to Order

Chairman Cole Ruckstuhl called the meeting to order at 1:14 pm.

II. Roll-Call/Sign In

Commission Members: Jessica Dixon, Ann Wilson, Alex Appeaning, Gary Balsamo, Angela Capello, Jonathan Dearbone, Brenda Walkenhorst; Deepak Bhatnagar, Kelly Templet, Dean Blackett, Cole Ruckstuhl, Heather Egger, Adell Brown, Jr.

LDWF/ LEEC Staff: Venise Ortego, Thomas Gresham

Guests: Mary Cooper, PACC/NC; Linda Hardy, LDEQ; Lauren Hull, LSU Graduate student; Dottie Hartman

III. Introduction of New Member

Recognition of New Member Adell Brown Jr. from Southern University

IV. Minutes from Last Meeting

Alex Appeaning made a motion to adopt the May and February 2015 minutes. Jonathan seconded. The minutes were accepted.

V. Financial Report

Venise Ortego – Summary of 2014-2015

Environmental Education Section – Discussion of Litter Abatement; EPA Environmental Education Grant. Funds are shared with Enforcement and Keep Louisiana Beautiful. Budget of 2014-2015 ends year in the black.

VI. Coordinator's Report

Venise reported that a contract has been signed with the Marriott for the 2016 Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium. A call for Short-Course presenters has been made and one for concurrent session presenters will be made soon.

The first round of the 2015 Grants Program did not exhaust all of the funds so we were able to release a green school RFP as well. Four Louisiana Green School programs were awarded. A Sustainability Initiative Program grant was also awarded to LSU with modifications for a volunteer planting at Bluebonnet Swamp.

Watershed Webs lessons are currently being developed by the contracts team. Material developed will be presented as a short course at 2016 symposium. The two 4-day workshops have already been scheduled for next summer. One will be held at Rockefeller Refuge and one will be held at LUMCON.

Comments and Questions:

Deepak – Question of credit cards being accepted as a form of payment for symposium

Venise – Auditors do not allow because of account set up – LEEA will receive registrations using Pay-Pal.

VII. Old Business

A. State Environmental Literacy Plan: Venise reported that the plan will be updated and brought before legislators.

B. Watershed Webs Update: Thomas provided a demo of the Watershed Experience Tracker (WET). We were able to view the new logo and the App populated with example data.

C. Environmental Awareness Art and Language Art Contest: Thomas reported that 80+ were in attendance at Governor’s Mansion. We received another round of funding for program. Our Alcoa representative said that there is a possibility that this will be the last year of funding because the plant is scaling back significantly and is in danger of closing.

D. Discovering Biodiversity Workshop: Venise said that there were 25 participants at this workshop held in Lake Charles. Teachers will receive additional materials upon proof of implementation.

E. Green Ribbon Schools: Venise reported that we awarded grants to 4 schools. They will be interviewing candidates to manage this program soon.

F. 2016 Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium

Sub-Committee Breakout Session

Members conferred with each other to list what has been done and plan additional tasks.

Comments:

Deepak – Bylaws need to be reviewed because there is a disconnect between the dates of the outgoing and incoming chairman position and symposium date.

For the proposed amendment of bylaws, the bylaws committee makes its recommendation and then this is voted on by commission members.

VIII. New Business

A. 2016 Art and Language Contest: This program is funded and is moving forward.

B. Nominating Committee: Adell Brown, Jr. and Gary Balsamo were voted onto the Nominating Committee. Brenda Nixon is chair of this committee. Chair Elect and Secretary will be voted on at the November meeting

IX. Announcements

X. Next Meeting Dates

November 17, 2015; February 19, 2016 (at Symposium); May 10, 2016; August 9, 2016

XI. Adjournment

Chairman Cole Ruckstuhl made a motion to adjourn at 2:50 PM; seconded by Alex Appeaning and Ann Wilson.