

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2018

LSU Center for River Studies, Baton Rouge

1:00 PM

I. Call to order

Call to Order by Jessica Dixon at 1:13 p.m.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Commission members present: Jessica Dixon, Matthew Reonas, Angela Capello, Dean Blackett, Dinah Maygarden, Jennifer Roberts, Cole Ruckstuhl, Brenda Nixon, Heather Niemic, Kea Sherman, Brenda Walkenhorst, Jill Cowart, Brenda Nixon, Dean Blackett

LEEC staff present: Brian Gautreau, Thomas Gresham

Guests: Breigh Rhodes, LDE, Celine Flores, ULM

III. Minutes from last meeting

The minutes from the last two meetings cannot be approved due to a lack of quorum.

IV. Financial Report

Same budget will probably be approved for this year as last. Revenue from driver's license fees has increased this year. Staff is well within budget and it is well within the income. Discussed budget and the portion of the budget from license fees coming to LEEC.

V. Coordinator's Report

Grants Program: Several of our awardees have returned portions or all of their funds this year.

Outreach: Watershed education has been at the forefront; see old business.

Envirothon: Venise and Thomas are on the Envirothon working group committee to revive the program. They are going to present on Envirothon at LSTA conference. They will walk folks through the wildlife identification lesson. Participants test, present and then move on to the next phase of competition.

Discussion: Brenda W- There are deeper issues with the competition. Kids that win may not be able to move on if there are not prizes that help them to move to the next competition. Angela- LEEC did have more involvement at one time. Thomas- Cannon was a previous sponsor, but they are no longer sponsoring. Heather- I agree with Brenda. Maybe we should ask Tomeka to let us know how we can help. Is this something that our Green Schools applicants can be encouraged to be a part of? Brian- They are. There is a working group that is meeting monthly to discuss Envirothon. If someone from LEEC could attend the meeting on your behalf that would be helpful. Thomas- We did give Envirothon \$5,000 to promote and operate a few years back. Can we plan to do something to support this? It's in the spring. The next meeting is 1st Wednesday in Sept (9/5) at 10 am; maybe LEEC participation in those monthly meetings could help determine how we support the program.

LSU Contract: Brian is no longer at LDWF, but is now in a contractual position at LSU. He administers Green Ribbon School programs, litter education, maintains the phenomenon website, and supports teachers' use of the phenomenon website. Although the Litter Abatement and Education account has rollover to pay for the position, LDWF did not want to ask for a budget increase, resulting in a budget shortfall for Brian's position. LEEC staff have been in discussion with Keep Louisiana Beautiful, who is considering writing a \$50k contract to support Brian. This would change Brian's role a bit, leaning heavily on litter side of his duties. \$180k in grants have been written to ConocoPhillips and Honda Foundation. We will wait to see what can happens next. Who would need to approve a change in use of funds? Secretary?

VI. Old Business

A. Art & Language Arts Contest

Thomas reported that the Arts and Language contest is on track. Reception was well attended. Two students were out of the country but most were in attendance. It was intended to be at the Governor's Mansion, but it was undergoing renovations so the event was moved to the Old State Capitol. This alternate facility served our purposes well. The calendar should be printed in the beginning of October. We are working on the theme for the upcoming contest. Historically we have used the same theme for the conference as the contest.

Suggestions: coastal restoration, reducing single use plastics, what's great about your part of the state, what is enviro great in your part of the state, what are you doing in your part of the state to make it great. It needs to have "environmental" in the title to fit. Questions: Can you send out online polls? Can it be sync'd with Envirothon? Ideas: Envirothon could link to the arts/language contest. We could identify potential synergies. Contest entries have been turned in after Envirothon. Is there room for a groundswell to change due dates and link the arts contest with Envirothon?

B. Watershed Webs

Dinah stated that the grant was officially completed. On 7/19 Dinah and Thomas presented a field experience for the Big Buddies program on Dawson Creek. This summer program is for underserved students. The field experience included debris removal, quantification, discussion, and how we can reduce/prevent the debris that is found in the creek. Brian and Thomas held two field experiences in the spring. One was held in Baton Rouge at St. Aloysius and another at Episcopal School. NOAA allowed \$1,800 to be re-budgeted to pay salary. This was a NOAA B-WET grant. This year's NOAA application was not awarded. We had hoped to reach the majority of coastal parishes, providing them with virtual field experiences, but the B-WET folks didn't see the fit.

C. Green Ribbon Program

Brian said that apps for 2019 cohort have been updated and are up on the website. US Dept. of Ed wants to come visit our Green Schools. First Line Schools and Brookstown middle school in Baton Rouge wants to be involved. St. Thomas Moore (Lafayette) will apply and has spent a few years working with us. Montessori school in Shreveport, Glasgow School, SE Lab School (Hammond), Lycee Francais (NOLA) is interested.

D. Phenomena Website

Brian and Lydia Hill have been working on the website and are continuing to develop phenomena. One of their big goals is to move the website out of Google onto its own server. They have LDWF approval to take it out of Google. The hosting should cost ~\$300 per year. Jill: please submit phenomena to Brian. Please visit the website to check out "Pelican/Nutria stories." Brian can help with standards alignment. We want to start with Louisiana specific standards.

E. Litter Education

Brian is aligning Keep Louisiana Beautiful's Roxy's Toolkit with LSSS. The module will be part of a story line. It will remain cross curricular.

F. 2019 Symposium

Jessica stated that the Outreach Committee decided to offer short courses across the state in lieu of a 2019 conference. Commission members are going to participate. A \$20 fee will cover lunch/transportation for participating teachers. We need to decide between Feb 9, Feb 16, or March 16. Group consensus is February 16, 2019. We plan to host regional short courses near: Shreveport, Monroe, Alexandria, Baton Rouge, the North Shore, New Orleans, Lake Charles, and Lafayette. We plan to offer 1 day, 7-hour short courses or combined 3- and 4-hour courses with a partner. We will try to reach all age groups. In 2020 we will have another full symposium. We need to send out a request for proposals ASAP. Thomas will send a Doodle poll for theme ideas.

G. Strategic Plan

In our last symposium we discussed how we needed to identify our strategies moving forward. It is time to undergo a strategic plan for the LEEC. Can we consider dates, overnight dates? SSA consultants charge \$7,500 or \$5,000, depending on their level of involvement. They will conduct a series of interviews and surveys, as well as lead the planning session. It would involve a 1 night stay in Grand Isle. September 11 may still be viable. Proposed: November 12-13th or November 13-14 in Grand Isle. We will find out what is available from the consultant group and will send out a Doodle poll.

VII. New Business

A. New Legislation

In the past, some of the litter abatement responsibilities were with LDEQ in a non-existent department. Act 509 of 2018 moved these responsibilities to LDWF/LEEC: Litter reduction and abatement are part of the LDWF section mandates. We contract with KLB to handle the mandates but we do have a role. The Treasury

is to collect \$25 of littering fines and credit them to the Litter Abatement and Education Account. (See page 14 line 5.) The original LDEQ law was changed a bit when responsibilities flowed from LDEQ to LDWF. The LDWF section changed to the Environmental Education and Litter Reduction section, LEEC did not change. Can we initiate a conversation with the Secretary to educate those who collect the fees that we need to take in the funds? Operation Game Thief can be called: 1-800-442-2511. Also can call state police or the local sheriff. The hotline that was litter bug is now combined with Game Thief.

B. Audit results

The internal state audit is complete. They focused on the grants programs and there were a few weaknesses found. 4 recommendations: 1) change funding to be reimbursement model – do not give schools money upfront; 2) do not want LEEC board organizations to apply for grants - no grants to LSTA, DEQ, etc.; 3) specify number of grants and amount that will be given; 4) promulgate rules for grants.

This is currently under consideration. We have tentatively decided to: 1) change to a reimbursement model; 2) we are not in agreement with this but are working on guidelines to better address this 3) we are not in agreement with designating a specific number of grants. The amount that we award depends on funding availability and we would prefer to continue doing this; 4) we have agreed to promulgate rules. We are waiting to find out if they can be promulgated through the LEEC or if it needs to be done through LDWF.

C. Attendance Issues

(Jessica) We haven't had a quorum since the February meeting. We need to attend 50% of the meetings. If you miss 3 in a row you get a letter. We need better attendance. On a related note: the vacancies count against us. There are 26 seats so we need 14 individuals to make a quorum. Governor appoints seat, we can vote to nominate folks. Southern University, Industry, LDH, LSTA, local government, are all vacant. We will get a list of members and local seats.

D. Presentation

CPRA presentation given by Morgan Crutcher, the Outreach and Engagement Manager for CPRA. Center for River Studies (LSU/CPRA). Teacher recruitment strategy—not able to get the word out about the availability of the river model for tours. They are aiming to get their materials out to all 64 parishes. How can they get the word out better? Rivermodel@la.gov Min 20, max 55. Content was designed for: 8-10th grade, 6th grade is the youngest.

VIII. Next Meeting Dates

November 13, 2018, February 13, 2019 (tentative), May 14, 2019, August 13, 2019

IX. Adjournment

Tour of facility followed and official adjournment time was not noted.