

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2016

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Baton Rouge Office, Louisiana Room

1 PM

I. Call to order

Brenda Walkenhorst called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Commission Members Present: Jada Lewis, Nancy Rabalais, Jill Cowart, Tomeka Prioleau for Denise Bennett, Gary Balsamo, Kelley Templet, Angela Capello, Jonathan Dearbone, Brenda Walkenhorst, Dean Blackett, Dinah Maygarden, Jennifer Roberts, Connie Conner, Melanie Dupre, Heather Egger, Heather Niemic, Brenda Nixon.

Commission Staff Present: Thomas Gresham, Brian Gautreau.

III. Introduction of new member

Jada Lewis, representing BESE Board

IV. Minutes from last meeting

Brenda moved to accept the minutes from the last meeting. Connie seconded. Minutes were accepted.

V. Financial Report

Thomas reported in Venise's absence: No new information to add to the report provided.

VI. Coordinator's Report

Thomas reported in Venise's absence:

Care packages for teachers affected by the flood have been distributed. Extra materials were also delivered.

Art and Language Arts Contest: the contest is now open; brochures were distributed at LSTA (Thomas).

Green Schools Program: Applications have been distributed and applications have been received by 4 applicants. (Brian) Two webinars were conducted in August and September with 2-4 attendants each.

Brian is exploring a partnership between USGBC Louisiana and Green Schools Program.

The plans for the Youth Summit at Audubon Zoo are progressing.

2017 EE Symposium: The Marriot was unable to provide services this year so Embassy Suites have been secured for the same dates. Currently waiting for the contract. Embassy Suites has a good layout for the symposium. Currently registration is ahead of schedule.

Shell has donated \$5,000.

An AP/ college track is being included in an effort to include more high school/ college participation. There are >4 sessions to fill.

The LEEC coordinators office participated in:

- LSTA/ LATM conference
- KLB conference

- Ocean Commotion at LSU
- Green Schools in Hammond

Watershed Webs: One student field experience with Covington H.S. has been conducted (Thomas and Dinah) and Thomas visited St. Thomas More School in Lafayette.

Nancy Rabalais asked if there are guidelines for the H.S./ College prep track. Nancy is the Board of Regents representative so she can help. Need to coordinate with teachers of college level A.P. Environmental Science and biology.

VII. Old Business

- A. State Environmental Literacy Plan:** Nancy Rabalais reported that the Governor's office is moving forward with obtaining signatures.
- B. Watershed Webs grant:** Dinah reported that one field experience with Covington High School took place at Fontainebleau State Park on October 18. Students collected beach debris data and water quality data.
- C. Environmental Awareness Art & Language Arts Contest:** Thomas reported that the contest is now open; brochures were distributed at LSTA. The budget has been scaled back due to lack of grant funds. There is \$3,000 available for prizes. If funding becomes available, the program can be expanded.
- D. Green Ribbon Schools program:** GS Youth Summit, Brian reported that the plans for the Youth Summit are going well with the site confirmed and a page on the web site devoted to the Summit. There are links for conference registration, presentations and exhibitors. The costs are being kept low due to Audubon Nature Institute donating the space.

Brian introduced Shannon Stage from U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) who explained USGBC's role in Green School Challenge (Green Schools and Green Tools mission). They will help with continuing education, Student Ambassador Program. This partnership opportunity is a step to Green Ribbon School status.

Brian requested to propose that USGBC be a co-host for the Youth Summit. Nancy made a motion to this effect, and Jonathan seconded. The proposal was accepted by the Commission.

- E. 2017 Symposium Committee Reports, 5 minutes each**
 - 1. Promotion: Jennifer Roberts will chair this committee.
 - 2. Audio Visual: Heather Niemic reported that equipment would be available as before.
 - 3. Door Prize/Hospitality: Connie Conner reported that there are a lot of unclaimed prizes left from last year. She will have a letter ready to go out.
 - 4. Evaluation: Cole was not present.
 - 5. Exhibitor: Angela Capello reported that more exhibitors are needed.
 - 6. Finance: Deepak was not present. The finance report was provided in the packet.
 - 7. Keynote: Kelley reported that she is looking into possible keynote speakers including Monica Sykes of U.S. FWS. Two speakers have been contacted and waiting for response. She tried to get John Folse, but he was not available.
 - 8. Program: Brenda reported that registration and program is going well.
 - 9. Registration: Jill Cowart will assume the chair this committee.
 - 10. Short Course: Dinah mentioned that short courses have been announced. Also mentioned issue of the short course presenters being able to make the LEEC meeting is a challenge. The time for beginning of the social will be moved back to allow for a later meeting time.

Discussion on how to best identify the teachers that teach AP E.s. and Biology II. Several possible contacts were mentioned (Sue Ellen Lyons, Janell Simpson, Steven Babcock at U. High, the Ag Center, School for Coast and the Environment.

VIII. New Business

LEEC Vote of Officers:

Chair Elect: Jonathan Dearbone and Jessica Dixon

Secretary: Dinah Maygarden and Jennifer Roberts (Dinah nominated Jennifer)

A vote took place via paper and pencil. Thomas collected the votes.

Result:

Jonathan was elected Chair- Elect

Jennifer was elected Secretary.

IX. Announcements

New LEEC webpage

Brian announced that LDWF is redesigning their web site. No date is set for the launch, although the re-design is complete. The same content will be kept, but slightly reorganized.

The Green Schools Brochure is in the packet.

Calendars are available.

Jill Cowart Provided an update of science standards.

Jada Lewis commented that she is excited about the new standards. The Committee of Science Education workgroups put in many hours integrating math, science, engineering and technology. BESE will consider the standards in March.

The new draft standards are posted on the LA Dept. Education website for public comment Dec 1 – Jan 6. Comments should be directed to Jill Cowart jill.cowart@la.gov.

Brenda Nixon commented that there is a testing issue. There has been a decision made to give less rigor to science and social studies in favor of math and ELA.

It is up for discussion that science will be tested in 4th and 8th grades.

The new standards will hopefully encourage teachers to teach science.

Kelley asked about calendar distribution. Production has been reduced to save money.

Brenda suggested having an online version.

Jennifer said to let her know of any sponsorship needs for the symposium.

X. Next Meeting Dates

February 3, 2017 (at Symposium in Baton Rouge); May 9, 2017; August 8, 2017; November 14, 2017

XI. Adjournment

Angela made a motion to adjourn. Jennifer seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.