

Environmental Education Commission

Meeting Minutes

May 9, 2017

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Louisiana Room, Baton Rouge Office

1 PM

I. Call to order

Brenda Nixon called the meeting to order at 1:13 p.m.

II. Roll Call/Sign-in

Commission Members Present: April Newman, Heather Niemic, Jessica Dixon, Denise Bennett, Deepak Bhatnagar, Jennifer Roberts (came in at 1:30), Dianne Lindstedt, Brenda Nixon, and Kea Sherman

Commission Staff Present: Venise Ortego, Thomas Gresham, Brian Gautreau with Guest Kelley Templet (LDNR).

III. New Member Welcome

April Newman joins us as the new Commission Member representing LDNR.

Kea Sherman, representing small business, is a lawyer practicing at Sherman Law Firm, LLC in New Orleans.

IV. Minutes from last meeting

There is no quorum and as such the minutes from February's meeting could not be accepted.

V. Financial Report

Venise Ortego provided a copy of the Revenue/Expenditure Report generated by LDWF.

VI. Coordinator's Report

Commission staff has been very busy this spring. Brian and Thomas participated in Envirothon, Earth Day, Palmetto Island State Park events, etc.

House Bill 111 was passed by the House and is moving to the Senate. This bill requires instruction in litter prevention and awareness for public school students in kindergarten through grade five. Provides that such instruction shall be integrated into the existing curriculum and may include instructional materials created and developed for students in La.

VII. Old Business

A. Symposium Committee Report

2017 Symposium

1. Shell verbally committed to \$5,000 and the check should arrive soon. Once this check is received, the remaining hotel bill will be paid.
2. There were a total of 240 participants this year (compared to 225 :2016 and 195: 2015)
Registrants: 127; Presenters: 28; Exhibitors: 65; Special guests: 6; LEEC Members: 19;
Volunteers: 2

2018 Symposium

1. The Baton Rouge Marriot submitted the lowest bid for the 2018 Symposium; however, the contract has yet to be signed.
2. The theme of the upcoming symposium is “Green STEM”
3. Some short course ideas have been coming in and additional course ideas are welcome.
4. Deepak asked if members could utilize a 501c (3), such as LEEA to solicit funds for the conference.

B. EE Grant Awards

Brenda Nixon described EE grants awarded and the process of getting more teachers on board. We will announce the grant opportunity in the LSTA monthly newsletter and we will begin announcing the opportunity earlier in the school year. RFP will release in August, applications will be due in October, and awards will be announced in November. Approximately \$45,000 is awarded per year.

Types of grants include:

- ❖ Educator: up to \$1,000/1 teacher or \$2000/team
- ❖ Green Schools grants: up to \$5,000
- ❖ Professional Development: up to \$2,500 (teacher training/PD workshops)
- ❖ University Research Grants: up to \$1,200 (research must be presented at symposium)
- ❖ Sustainability Initiative Program Grant (SIP): Concept Paper is submitted and independently considered (Envirothon was funded as a SIP)

C. Art/Language Art Contest

Thomas reported that the Arts and Language Arts Contest deadline was extended because the date fell during spring break and testing. Ultimately 500 entries were received. Judging of the entries will take place May 16th and additional judges are needed. April Newman and Kea Sherman both volunteered to judge entries.

In years past Alcoa funded this project at \$20,000. This funding covered calendars, billboards and student awards. With this funding no longer available they are searching/soliciting donations with a goal of raising \$10,000 to be utilized on calendars and cash awards for students only. Deepak suggested that we offer potential contributors three levels of funding, perhaps a \$10,000/\$5,000/\$20,000 giving levels.

- D. Watershed Web Grant** – There is an upcoming June Watershed Webs Workshop to be held June 5-8, 2017. This grant has between \$12,000 and \$14,000 left. This Grand Isle Workshop has 15 confirmed, 18+ tentative. Teachers from 5th-12th grade are participating and 2 of the teachers are coming in from Florida. LDWF is requesting an extension to enable us to provide this final workshop as well as follow up experiences and field excursions for teachers and their classes to be offered in fall.

- E. Green Schools Program** –In early May the state presented Green Ribbon Schools Awards. The three schools LEEC supported were all awarded and are now prepping for trips to Washington D.C. Brian is working with schools to facilitate recognition ceremonies. LEEC is currently working to identify potential Green Schools Applicants. This Green Ribbon Schools Award is open to K-12, post-secondary, and districts. LEEC can nominate 5 organizations and 1 district. Can target public and private as long as the majority of those nominated are public.
- F. Youth Summit** – The Youth Summit held on March 24, 2017 was a success and many thanks are due to Brenda Walkenhorst for her ability to provide the space at the Audubon Zoo free of charge for this event. This event had 5 concurrent, student-led sessions with a joint planning session. 85 students participated and USGBC sponsored the participation of the Music Notes, who performed 2 original songs and were a big hit. Planning for 2018 Summit has begun and one of the potential locations mentioned is the Audubon Nature Center.
- G. Outreach Committee** – Heather Niemic informed us that the Outreach Committee met to discuss the logo, who and how it may be utilized and the upcoming bylaws vote which may help to clarify these points. When there are new Outreach suggestions to be vetted by LEEC, this Committee will review and make recommendations to the larger Commission.

VIII. New Business

- A. EE Working Group Meeting**—Wednesday, August 2nd LEEC members who are involved in Curriculum design are invited to a Curriculum integration working group meeting in order to interface and integrate EE knowledge into new science standards.
- B. Bylaws Update** (Dianne Lindstedt) – The bylaws will need to be voted on, but require a 30-day review period. Therefore the bylaws and suggested edits will be shared mid-July and will be voted on during the August 8, 2017 Commission Meeting. The changes will define when the logo can be utilized and by whom.
- C. 2018 Symposium**—to be held at the Baton Rouge Marriot, though the contract has yet to be signed. The theme is Green STEM and committees will need to be formed during the August meeting. We will need to determine whether the cost of attendance can be increased by at least \$5. There is a need to identify additional Symposium sponsorship for at least \$3,000, and at the August meeting Commission members who would like to solicit sponsorship will be given packets for this purpose.
- D. Chair Elect**—Johnathan Dearborn has left the commission and his replacement will be a member from Shreveport. Johnathan was Chair-elect, and with his departure the Commission will need to vote for a new Chair-elect. The nominating committee will generate a new slate to be voted on during the August meeting.

IX. Next Meeting Dates

August 8, 2017; November 14, 2017, February 23, 2018 (tentative)

X. Adjournment

Brenda Nixon called for the meeting to be adjourned at 3:02 p.m. and was seconded by Jennifer.