

Environmental Education Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 14 2019
Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries
Baton Rouge Office

In attendance: Denise Bennett, Matt Reonas, Dianne Lindstedt, Brenda Nixon, Dean Blackett, Kea Sherman, Jessica Dixon, Jennifer Roberts, Heather Niemic, Brian Salvatore, Kelia Bingham, Heather Egger, Joey Breaux, Cole Ruckstuhl, Breigh Rhodes, Christopher Chappell.

LEEC staff present: Thomas Gresham, Brian Gautreau, Venise Ortego

Call to order: 1:11 p.m.

Minutes from February 12, 2019: Didn't get circulated, but up for review. Heather motioned to accept the minutes, Kea seconded, all in favor—yes.

Financial Report:

- Travel: Included trip to LSTA
- Operating Services: Included strategic planning costs at LUMCON
- Supplies: Short course supplies, vehicle fuel
- Services: Planner
- Other: KLB, LSU contracts
- IAT: Interagency transfer for printing of calendars, brochures, and other printing costs.

Budget change: because of a \$30,000 grants budget change, we were able to move funds to purchase supplies for workshops for 2-3 years. It will cost 15,000. Also computer for Thomas. This change was approved so it will look differently. The additional funds will be used for field experiences.

Coordinators Report:

Regional short courses: (Venise) 9 happened out of 10. One was cancelled due to a family emergency for the facilitator in Lake Charles. 82 participants in 2019 (45 in 2018). We received a \$5,000 check for Shell to be utilized next year.

Green Schools: (Brian) Announcement date moved from May 29 to May 22nd. More states are participating but the number of schools has dropped. Aiming at identifying how to keep recognized Green Schools engaged in the program, providing opportunities for those already identified Green Schools to continue engaging. Ideas: Mentorship opportunities?

Grants Awarded: **GNOF \$60,000 grant** for fellowship workshops to begin summer of 2019. 23 qualified applicants. **NOAA BWET ~\$80,000 grant** to expand teacher workshops and provide MWEE's (Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences.)

New Business:

Arts and Language Arts Committee: 391 Arts entries, 31 schools, 2 homeschools. Language Arts 137 for 13 schools, 2 homeschools, 10 parishes. Judging happened on April 30th; thank you Matthew Reonas and Brenda N. for assisting with judging. Reception on June 11th at Governor's Mansion.

Submitted Themes:

Engaging Others in Outside Learning
Go Outside and Learn
Envisioning your Classroom Outdoors!
Knowing Nature
Environmental Education: it's a Natural
Last Teacher in the Woods
Becoming an Outdoor Teacher
Take it Outside: Nature is our Classroom!
Take it Outside: Nature's Classroom!
Take it Outside: The Natural Classroom
Take it Outside in Nature's Classroom!

Choice: *Take it Outside! Explore Nature's Classroom.* ((We love this and want to buy shirts with this logo!))

Bylaws Committee: update to page 24. Changed from 50% of meetings. Change reflects that commission members must attend 3 out of 4 meetings.

Discuss: Do we want to move from 50% absences allowed to 25% absence rate allowed before you are asked to step down.

How would we enforce?

Heather and Cole: Both recommend enforcement of original language. There are 25 of us total on the Commission, there are 26 seats. Quorum is 14 members. The issue is that there are things that we want to vote on. Can we avoid losing voting ability by voting remotely? No, AG Boards and Commission says no proxy voting. There is no room to call in.

Kea: 1) all seats filled 2) Chair enforces 50% rule.

Record of attendance is kept by Venise. She can alert the Chair and they will send a strongly worded letter. We decided to keep the status quo, keep the board full. Cole R. made a motion to table this change. Heather seconded, all ayes no nays.

Grants Committee: (Brenda N.) 16 grants awarded: educator (1), Green Schools (2), Professional Development (3), University Research (10)
Grants program: 16 of 19 grant applications for an approximate total to \$28,000+

Nominating Committee: (Matthew) One open seat (Industry) Ashley Cain is the nominee with Louisiana Midcontinent Oil and Gas Association (LAMOGA). Our boards and commissions reviewer has resigned so that our nominee may be delayed in being vetted through the state. Motion made to submit candidate Ashley as a candidate by Jennifer, Seconded by Denise. All were in favor. Motion passed. Cole is leaving the Commission in August 2019. He will recommend someone to LEEA.

Outreach Committee: Identifies ideas/opportunities for outreach that can be brought to the larger committee. Breigh Rhodes is nominated.

2020 Symposium: March 6-7 at Fontainebleau State Park in Mandeville. Park has been reserved for us. Deluxe cabins (12), group camp (sleeps 100 using top bunks), meeting room, pavilion (by beach), RV spots and improved camping spots. Nature Center doesn't have to be reserved, but Jessica is letting them know that we are coming. Lodging assistance is always available for teachers traveling and staff will work to block off hotel rooms. We are encouraging no PowerPoint. We want folks to teach outside, little room for technology. Do we know people who should present? Advertising for presenters will begin in early fall. Will have design and write up ready at the August meeting.

Strategic Planning Sub-Committees: Heather Niemic made a motion to establish subcommittees, Matt seconded, all present were in favor.

Financial Resources: Justin G. is the chair. Kea and Heather Niemic.

Education and Advocacy Resources Group: Brenda Walkenhorst is chair. Dinah, Brian S. Brenda W, Dianne Lindstedt, Angela Capello, Christy Flynn, Connie Conner, Pierre LaCaze, Breigh Rhodes, Brenda Nixon, Kelia Bingham.

Marketing and Brand Development: Chris Chappell is nominated as chair. Jennifer R., Justin Gremillion, Jessica Dixon, Dean Blackett, Matt Reonas.

Big Changes in the Commission: House Bill 501 will up for a vote tomorrow (5/15). LEEC would be moved to La Dept. of Education. It's passed House committee and is moving through the Senate floor. This would take KLB, Litter Abatement, License Plate fees over to LDOE. Venise and Thomas would be move over to LDOE. Brian? Decision to approach Stewart Bishop happened through LDWF. Was there a memorandum or anything? LDWF Conservation funds are dwindling so this was an attempt for LDWF is "lightening the load." **Goals from Strategic Plan**—do they need to change? Answer: No.

Heather Niemic resigns and has resigned from her role at the AgCenter.

Grant program details: 1) GNOF: 1 yr., April 2019-July 2020. 20 7-12th grade teacher training. Developing and implementing phenomena. Teacher stipends \$1500. Goal is to build up environmental literacy, advance the high quality educational resources available to teachers across the state. Outputs: 5 phenomena per teacher (100 total) will be created and uploaded to the LA Dept. of Ed. website. 4 workshops. 1) Center for River Studies led by Steve Babcock and Lydia Hill; 2) LDWF in Grand Isle by Brian, Venise and Thomas - Marine Debris; 3) Murt at LUMCON - water quality; 4) UNO CERF Dinah Maygarden and Claire Anderson of Ripple Effect - invasive species. Teachers must come from schools that serve a lot of students who receive free and reduced lunch, 14 GNOF parishes. Workshops are 2 days each. Morning to evening day 1, morning to mid-day Day 2.

Jen Roberts votes to accept Heather's resignation, Cole seconded the recommendation, all were in favor.

Announcement: (Brian S.) House Bill 615- all industry would be self-regulated. Made it through committee. Call your legislature.