

## Environmental Education Commission

### Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2019

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Louisiana Room, Baton Rouge Office

**In attendance:** Jessica Dixon, Breigh Rhodes, Denise Bennet, Justin Gremillion, Matt Reonas, Dianne Lindstedt, Ashley Cain, Dean Blackett, Dinah Maygarden, Jennifer Roberts, Cole Ruckstuhl, Connie Conner, Brenda Nixon, Heather Egger, Pierre LaCaze, Kelia Bingham, Christopher Chappell

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

Guests present: Morgan Crutcher with the Governor's Office  
Tomeka Prioleau with DEQ

**Call to order:** 1:05 p.m.

**New Member Welcome:** We welcomed Ashley Cain representing Industry to the Commission.

**Minutes from May 14, 2019:** Accepting of the minutes was tabled until a quorum was available. Once the quorum was met, the minutes were approved with a motion from Heather Egger and Matt Reonas providing the second.

#### **Financial Report:**

- 630,000 for KLB money, 150,000 STEM pathways, 30,000 for Environmental Literacy, 50,000 for LEEC grants program
- First time for new budget; start fiscal year on July 1

#### **Coordinators Report:**

Symposium site visit: Site visit was in June. On the positive side, there are many different aspects for sleeping arrangements as well as nearby hotels. On the downside, there is nowhere for all to get together as one large group. We will also need to secure tents (for cover for weather), tables, chairs. There will be another group going back to visit the site again to finalize decisions.

Art/Language Art Reception: Reception was held at the Mansion. Susan provided the keynote address with Heather serving as the emcee. There were over 100 in attendance.

GNOF: The GNOF fellowship is on course for Subsidence, Marine Debris, Invasive Species and Water Quality. They started with 20 participants and ended with 17. There was an overall score of 4.77/5.0 based on reviews of participants. Fellows uploading phenomena are approximately 80% finished. They have received their first stipend, a microscope, water quality kit and will later receive the 2<sup>nd</sup> portion of their stipend. Many have been asked to return as a mentor.

Green Ribbon Schools: Brookstown Middle (EBR) is confirmed to attend the awards ceremony in Washington, DC. Regarding next year's cycle, the application is produced, approved and posted for the 2020 season. There are 3 pillars, must show improvements. All information is online.

NOAA grant: In process of being approved by Dept. of Education. Is similar in scope to GNOF – same workshops and Venise administering. Looking to contract out for missing phenomenon. Phenomenon website handed off to Thomas, Breigh, and Lydia.

**New Business:**

**Arts and Language Arts Committee:** Decided we should keep the theme connected to the symposium. Wording is decided by committee and submitted. After different themes were suggested, it was decided to use *Take It Outside! Explore Nature's Classroom*.

**Bylaws Committee:** Attendance issues were fixed the last time at the August meeting. Still had the issue to move the date for next the next August meeting pending voting since it falls on August 11 per bylaws. Denise Bennet motioned for the change in date and Matt Reonas provided the second.

**Grants Committee:** Brenda Nixon stated that all paperwork has been completed.

**Nominating Committee:** They were “up-to-speed” at the time. Discussed needing to fill Heather’s seat.

**Outreach Committee:** No updates at this time. There will be many resources moving forward. The website will follow to DOE (designing a landing page, working on slides). They are working on a newsletter to go out. Question brought up as to whether there would be a link to redirect from Wildlife and Fisheries.

**2020 Symposium:** There were numerous points brought up:

- Newsletter to go to a larger group with info needed about 1-week prior
- March 6-7 at Fontainebleau State Park
- Need weather plans
- 50 min to 1.5 hr sessions for concurrent (include transitions, Q and A, breaks) with a push to phenomena/data-driven science, what does it look like in field?
- Accommodations may be needed – mics, speakers, interpreters, wheelchair access
- Call for proposals made – leave flexible whether Friday or Saturday, full day vs 1.5 hour; see what comes in to determine time/scheduling
- Webinars for presenters to understand phenomena
- National Geographic to maybe come onboard – Geo Educators/Explorers
- Sponsors, parish tourism, seafood board
- Needs: tables, chairs, tents, bags, food, stipends, etc.

**Vision Setting:** Breigh Rhodes stated we need to prioritize/focus on science – state specific content; use resources to further/continue. She also discussed the STEM-focused pathways, specifically the Environmental Protection Sustainability Pathway. We need to align with strategic planning to bring environmental resources/organizations into the classrooms. Need more discussions than just the four meetings per year.

**Program Spotlight:** Tomeka Prioleau spoke regarding Envirothon on Feb. 15, 2020 at Burton Center. She gave a brief background on Envirothon and stated the winners would represent the state in the North American competition.

**Announcements:** Dianne Maygarden announced that Ocean Commotion would be Thursday, October 24.

**Upcoming Meetings:** Dates were announced as November 12, February 11, and May 12 along with the new date of August 25 at the Claiborne building Rm 137.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn was made by Justin Gremillion and seconded by Ashley Cain at 3:06 p.m.