



Waterbird Conservation for the Americas

Executive Committee of the Waterbird Conservation Council Conference Call August 15, 2006

Participants

Executive Committee: Eric Mellink, Paul Kluckner, Ghisselle Alvarado, Ian Davidson, Paul Baicich, Don Paul. Also Jennifer Wheeler, Garry Donaldson, coordinators.

Unable to attend: Kathy Parsons, Paul Schmidt, Lisa Sorenson.

Next Call: October 24, 3 p.m. Eastern Time

Discussion and Decisions

Responsibilities of the Executive Committee:

Annual Meeting. Ian Davidson had circulated ideas for topics and schedule via email, reviewed these on the call, and requested feedback. A variety of comments, general and specific were offered:

- Week of January 15 still acceptable.
- Schedule should allow time for small groups to meet (committees, working groups, etc.)
- The discussion on steps after the NMBCA (2 hours) should be given more time, especially since a greater emphasis on Latin America – Caribbean topics was requested at last year's meeting.
- The time dedicated to Andean wetlands discussion (1/2 day) might be shortened?
- Jointly meeting with WHRSN is important though it offers logistical challenges.

Decisions. Ian will work with a small group (Eric, Garry, Jennifer) to continue to refine the agenda. Interim drafts will be circulated to the full Executive for feedback as appropriate. The timeline for meeting development is:

End of Aug – general agenda and dates finalized; info on accommodations compiled

End of Oct – agenda fully developed

End of Nov – agenda finalized, background and preparatory material compiled

Funding-raising. Jennifer explained that funds were needed to assist Members to attend the annual meeting (estimating 10-12 members will require travel assistance). As in previous years, the institutions of some members may be able to support the travel costs of another member.

Decision. Jennifer will begin to approach Members regarding travel needs and assistance. Executive members will be attempting to secure assistance from their own institutions.

The Council and Advocacy Positions/Decision-Making. Jennifer reported that a small group has been discussing the Council's approach to advocacy, which evolved into a



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discussion about decision-making. The unresolved issue is primarily whether a majority of Council members can “outvote” opposition from a minority of Council members, if decisions cannot be reached through consensus. This small group should be able to complete discussions and make recommendations to the Executive soon.

Committee Reports/Issues:

Membership – Jennifer reported on the recommendations resulting from Membership committee deliberations over the last few months (see attached notes). In short, these recommendations involved:

- principles/procedures relating to member recruitment.
- letters of appreciation and detachment to the four members in the Class of 2006.
- Include in our invitation packages a letter to an invitee’s supervisor, to assist in garnering institutional support for that invitee.
- Deferring any new member nominations until after the Annual meeting (that is, skipping the September 2006 round of recruitment).

Decision. Each of these recommendations was endorsed by the Executive. Associated language will be inserted into the Terms of Reference or Principles of Membership documents, as appropriate.

Letters will be drafted and sent to departing members.

There was concern that skipping a round of recruitment for Class of 2009 would cause imbalance in the roster (an overly small class). Membership committee will look into the ramifications of this (which are likely slight, since existing members were also assigned to the Class of 2009).

Executive Members were also reminded that they have 2-year terms. These have yet to be assigned to the current Executive (geographic representatives and committee chairs). However, it is recommended that these rotations occur, or are at least confirmed, at the Annual Meeting.

Policy and Critical Issues – Paul Kluckner reported on the conference call convened to discuss the Council’s involvement in policy actions (see attached notes). In short, the recommendation was not to form a committee, but to continue discussions, prepare to lay out some options at the Quito Annual Meeting, and decide upon actions there.

Jennifer described how she was working with Garry, Jennifer Arnold (ABC’s new Seabird Officer) and others to have a group of graduate students write a white paper that would lay out some options for involvement in seabird conservation by the Council.

Decision. Paul will facilitate discussions regarding policy involvement at the annual meeting in Quito.

Regional – Don and Ian described discussions they had been having with regard to facilitating regional-scale planning and implementation of projects. They emphasized the need for good communication across the regions of the Americas as a way of ascertaining



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region's needs and formulating solutions. They were undecided as to what, if any, new committee was necessary given that the Executive is already structured to have representation of the super-regions on it (Canada, US, Mexico, Caribbean, Central America reps now; South America to come). They did recommend that the website be made into a more interactive tool for regional-scale partners.

Don and Ian will continue deliberations in order to recommend a means of addressing regional concerns and engaging interested Council members.

Communications – Paul B. reported on the activities of the Communications committee (see Attached notes).

end

ATTACHMENTS

Decisions of the Membership Committee

August 15, 2006

Recommended to the Executive Committee on August 16, 2006.

1. The following principles/procedures for addressing expiring 3-year terms were accepted by the committee:

- Membership Committee takes an active role in managing the Council roster.
- Membership Committee will consider to whom reappointment offers should be made (individuals that have brought value to the organization and potential value in the future). Ideally, but not necessarily, committee members will have close enough relationships with all members to have a sense of expiring members' interests and situation prior to this discussion.
- Membership Committee members will converse individually with those in expiring year classes, offering reappointment if recommended -- to reach a cordial understanding and agreement about outcome.
- Recommendations for reappointment for interested individuals will be provided to the Executive Committee, and if approved, provided to the full Council for approval (just as new appointments are currently).
- This process should take place in or around June/July of the given year.

2. There were no calls for re-appointment for the members whose terms are now expiring: Betty Anne Schreiber, Mauricio Cervantes, Pat Patterson, Craig Harrison. These individuals will be sent a certificate of appreciation and a letter of thanks, encouraging them to participate in committee work via committees.

Note: There is the precedent of sending a larger token of appreciation (framed print) to retiring members whose participation was significant. Such a token is due Eric Carey, Bahamas National Trust.



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3. Fund-raising for attendance at the annual meeting is the responsibility of the Executive Committee, but the Membership Committee supports approaching appropriate Council members about additional travel support from their institutions.

Note: Ian will prepare rough budget estimates within a few weeks. It is likely that costs for accommodations will be comparable to the San Jose meeting.

4. Personal vs. institutional membership. There is an important distinction between an individual being invited based on their affiliations versus invited as an official representative for a specific organizational "seat" on Council. **It was agreed that Council invitations are directed towards specific individuals; there are NOT member organizations of the Council.** However, invitations are very much based on an individual's positions and connections to specific organizations, as we hope that they will bring institutional backing and act as liaisons to their organizations in their capacity within those organizations.

To alleviate any future confusion about institutional vs. personal membership, it was recommended that nominees be contacted personally to discuss the matter.

Note: Although invitations are directed to individuals based only in part on their affiliation, there are advantages to routing an individual's invitation through their institution's leadership (that is, letters be addressed to an individual's supervisor/board/director). This would increase the individual's leverage with their organization, and more likely increase institutional support. The risk of an institution "offering" someone other than the individual identified is felt to be small, though real, so careful consideration and communication should occur in advance with the invited individual.

Note 2: It was felt that an institutional invitation should now be sent for Francisco Rilla, as well offered to Rosa Montanez.

5. With regard to developing another slate of nominations for 2006, members of the committee identified some outstanding priority areas for recruitment. These include:

- seabird conservation expertise
- the provincial representative for Canada
- the geographic region of Brasil/Brazil
- connections to Wetlands International

However, it was felt that in light of the new members and the issues yet to be discussed at the annual meeting, that rather than invitations to join Council, targeted individuals be invited as guests to the annual meeting. This would give us a chance to refine membership priorities in light of discussions at the annual meeting and get to know those individuals better.

*** end ***



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Notes from Conference Call to Discuss Viability of a Conservation Action/Policy Committee/function.

June 27, 2006

Purpose of the call:

to consider priorities, tasks and positioning of a re-vitalized committee
assess whether there was enough interest to re-activate it.

not to work out the details

Attendees:

Paul Kluckner – Facilitator/Notes

Paul Baicich

Jennifer Arnold

Myra Finkelstein

George Finney

Deb Hahn

Discussion:

- general view that this was important. Views included that it was absolutely essential, that it be action-oriented, that it could discuss and prioritize issues, that other bodies (eg. NABCI, the Trilateral Committee) didn't engage on marine issues to any extent (although subsequently the Trilateral decided to do just that in 2007), that we needed an action committee of members who could look at different threats, that it could be a forum for dialogue
- general interest by participants in being involved in such a committee or forum
- didn't hear anyone (including your scribe) volunteering to Chair.

Action Items:

- advise Executive Committee (and general membership)
- create mailing list and cc's from this call
- develop some "lite" Terms of Reference, focusing on priorities, key issues and maybe policy. (Editorial comment: my view of the call is that there is enthusiasm to address actions and issues, but I don't yet detect a critical mass of Council members positioned to take actions directly. Even if there were, I'm not convinced that this would not create an overlap of committees and actions, which is the last thing a largely volunteer group like the Council needs. One option would be to have this policy "forum" or committee advise the existing committee structure and Council-at-large regarding high profile issues, actions and policies. So, my proposal is to craft Terms of Reference to try to use existing committees for actions.)
- Paul Kluckner will remain as "convenor" for the time being, with support from Garry Donaldson (who didn't know I was going to do this to him!)
- discuss on a Fall Executive Committee call



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- discuss as a specific agenda item entitled something like "Coordination of Policies and Actions on Priority Issues" at the January annual meeting in Quito

Notes, comments or objections by August 11th would be appreciated. If you wish to discuss by phone, my number is 604-664-4065. Thanks for participating.

*** end ***

Notes from Communications Committee Conference Call

June 29, 2006

Notes by Paul Baicich, Chair.

Our conference-call on Thursday went well. There were only three of us on the line - Heidi, Lisa, and myself - but it was productive.

Here's a VERY QUICK review.

We noted that the 'model waterbird brochure' was finished and waiting posting (more on that below), that our two waterbird listservs were functioning with some increased level of participation, that we needed more non-US member for our Communications Committee (again, more on that below), and that the Policy/Critical Issues Committee may exhibit revival, something which would serve as a complement to our Communications Committee.

On the 'model waterbird brochure,' Eric has now finished the Spanish translation. It is ATTACHED to this e-mail. Unless someone on the committee has some changes to suggest, both the English and Spanish version are now ready for posting. (Jennifer has indicated that multiple website tasks may be addressed in July...)

As for Communications Committee membership, it currently consists of these seven folks:

Alexandra Aparicio, Paul Baicich, Megan Hill, Heidi Luquer, Mark Rauzon, Lisa Sorenson, Xico Vega Picos

We've lost a few folks, some recently:

Chris Elphick - now engaged in the new Rice-and-Birds Working Group
Barbara Robinson - left the Canadian Wildlife Service and stayed on our committee for a few more months
Bill Howard - died earlier this year

On the conference call, we decided to write some of our Canadian and South American colleagues to ask them for ideas about increased membership, and I did so on Thursday evening.

Our next conference call will be on 12 September, Tuesday, 3pm Eastern time.



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In the meantime: please check out the Spanish-language brochure, encourage the use of our Listservs, try to find some non-US folks for our committee, and stay tuned!

*** end ***