

PENNSYLVANIA BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP
Board Minutes
31 January 2002
PA Fish and Boat Commission Headquarters, Harrisburg, PA

Board Attendees: Bill Adams, Steven Balzano (for DCNR), Jacqui Bonomo (for Larry Schweiger), Tom Buzby, Tom Ford (for PFBC), Randy Gray, Paulette Johnson, Cliff Jones, Douglas Kuntz, Blaine Puller, John Rawlins, Ann Rhoads, Dessie Severson (for Tom Pauley). **Others:** Jim Drager, Frank Felbaum, Sue Thompson. **Excused:** Michelle Cohen, Cindy Dunn, Laurie Goodrich, Tom Kerr, K.C. Kim, and Dick Whiteford.

Chairman Gray called the meeting to order. Douglas Kuntz and John Rawlins, new members attending for the first time, were introduced. Minutes of the 29 November 2001 meeting were approved as submitted. Sue Thompson presented a treasurer's report submitted by Tom Kerr showing a balance of \$258,695.80, which was approved. The PA Biodiversity Conference held on 30 November 2001 was completely self-supporting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Gray reported that Sue Thompson was hired as full time President and CEO effective 1 January 2002. Gray relayed a suggestion that the PBP Board meet more often than four times per year, however the sentiment was to call special meetings as needed rather than change the schedule of quarterly meetings. In addition, all board members will be invited to attend meetings of the planning team.

It was decided to change the date of the fall meeting from 24 October 2002 to 12 September 2002, and hold it in the vicinity of Warren, PA. A field trip to view sustainable forestry and gas/oil lease sites will be arranged in conjunction with the meeting. An additional trip to an elk viewing area, will be arranged for either the evening before or the morning after. The July meeting date was changed from 25 July 2002 to 18 July 2002.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Thompson reported that PBP underwrote two items in the Earth Day packets being sent out by DEP: a flyer promoting the Biodiversity 911 exhibits this summer at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and a special package price for teachers who wish to purchase the biodiversity video produced by WRCF.

A proposal has been submitted to DEP for \$20,000 for teacher training workshops on biodiversity. Another proposal was prepared for submission to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for \$304,692, but is on hold due to a lawsuit brought against the program by the state of Missouri. A proposal was submitted to the Heinz Endowments for \$49,857 for support for the publication of the state of the state report.

Application has been made to become a member of the Tides Center of Western Pennsylvania. Thompson is looking for suitable, affordable office space in Pittsburgh.

Thompson was interviewed by radio station WQED on biodiversity and water issues and has speaking engagements scheduled at the Coldwater Conference, Kings Gap's biodiversity conference and the Land Ethics Symposium sponsored by Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve. She met recently with the Biodiversity Group at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

Education: Johnson reported that 8,000 Earth Day packets have been mailed. Completion of the education report for the state of the state report was a major focus of the task force. The Pennsylvania Center for Environmental Education will assume responsibility for completing the writing of the Pennsylvania-specific supplement to the Windows on the Wild biodiversity curriculum. Delivery of a finished product is expected this year.

Public Relations: Felbaum presented a tentative schedule for production of the state of the state report with a 1 April 2002 delivery date. A distribution plan was outlined suggesting that at least 10,000 copies will be needed. It was suggested that the report, and the commissioned background reports, be placed on the PBP website to facilitate access.

Stewardship: Puller reported that of the five reports commissioned by the task force, two full reports and executive summaries of two others have been received and are being reviewed by task force members.

Funding: Ford reported that the task force is in need of a new chair as Sara Nicholas has taken a new position that does not allow her to continue in that role. Thompson and Ford will meet with the task force to try to resolve the problem of a chair.

Policy: Buzby reported that the task force held a lengthy meeting to review comments on the report prepared by ELI. The revised report was received yesterday, but has not been reviewed.

Bioinformatics: Severson reported that the task force held a conference call meeting to discuss the content of the report summary. It was suggested that she add a reference to the Bacastow et al. report on ecological databases prepared for the three state natural resource agencies in 1999.

STATE OF THE STATE REPORT

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved that the Partnership award the contract to produce the state of the state report to JG Communications following a recommendation by the planning group. Cost is not to exceed \$40,000. Funding will come from the pending Heinz grant.

The issue of external reviewers was also discussed by the planning group and the following names were recommended: Shane Mahoney, Arthur Davis or Nicholas DiPasquale, and James Quinn. If needed, other candidates will be sought from state biodiversity programs in Ohio or Massachusetts. The intent is to engage reviewers who will be available throughout the period during which the strategic plan for biodiversity conservation will be developed, to review both the process of plan development and the content of the plan. Puller will contact James Quinn and Thompson will contact DiPasquale or Davis to determine if they are willing to serve.

In addition to Mahoney as a external reviewer, he would also be engaged to assist in outreach for the biodiversity plan. The proposed contract stipulates three multi-day visits to Pennsylvania by Mahoney over a 12-month period for public lectures and other meetings. According to Thompson, Caren Glotfelty of the Heinz Endowments supports this proposal and will provide funding within the state of the state contract to underwrite Mahoney's costs. Several board members expressed concern at the cost. It was moved and seconded that we offer Mahoney a one-year contract with a 90-day rolling review and termination clause. The vote was in favor of the motion with Jones, Balzano, and Rhoads abstaining.

AGENCY REPORTS

Fish and Boat Commission: Ford reported that PFBC is asking the legislature to approve a license increase in order to address hatchery upgrade and dam repair needs. He urged support.

DCNR: Balzano reported that plans to upgrade PNDI are proceeding. The goal is a state-of-the-art data management system. Secretary Oliver has authorized him to proceed with definition of the Office of Biodiversity, the establishment of which was recommended in the internal DCNR Biodiversity Workgroup report.

MISCELLANEOUS

Jones suggested to all member organizations that this is the time to submit statements to the campaign committees of gubernatorial candidates for inclusion in their platforms. He also suggested letters to the governor supporting a proposal by Senators White and Musto to exempt Growing Greener Funding from the state spending freeze.

Johnson reported that the PCEE would hold "Listening Sessions" around the state as a follow-up on the environmental report card project. A schedule can be found on their web site.

Rhoads raised the issue of overlap between several technical committees of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey and the Education and Science Task Forces of the Partnership. This issue received further discussion during the strategic planning session that followed the meeting.

approved 25 April 2002