

PENNSYLVANIA BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP
Executive Board Meeting
28 June 2001
Rachel Carson Building, Harrisburg, PA

Board Members or Alternates Present: Bill Adams, Jacqui Bonomo (for Larry Schweiger), Don Brown (for Bob Barkanic), Joan Clippinger (for John Oliver), Calvin DuBrock (for Vern Ross), Cindy Dunn, Randy Gray, Cliff Jones, K. C. Kim, Jen Novak (for Andrew McElwaine), Tom Pauley, Peter Pinchot, Blaine Puller, Ann Rhoads, Bill Robie (for Tom Buzby), Dick Whiteford, **Also Present:** Frank Felbaum, John Grehan, Sara Nicholas, Ron Ramsey, Sue Thompson, Larry Williamson (part). **Excused:** Jim Brett, Tom Ford, Tom Kerr, Paulette Johnson.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Randy Gray, who introduced several new participants: Don Brown representing DEP, Bill Robie of the Hardwood Lumber Manufacturers Association, alternate for Tom Buzby, and Larry Williamson of DCNR.

The minutes of the previous meeting of 29 March 2001 were approved as presented. The Treasurer's report, submitted by Tom Kerr, was approved as presented. Randy Gray noted that we are exploring working with the Tides Center, which has opened an office in Pennsylvania and works with other similar organizations, for administrative support.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Interim Executive Director Sue Thompson reported that she had hired an office assistant through a temporary agency. Legal assistance needed to review the by-laws and complete our 501(c)(3) application has been obtained through the Executive Service Corps for a fee of \$200.

Our application to the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account (WCRA) was funded in the amount of \$157,000, the full amount that we asked for.

Thompson and Dessie Severson met with the Pennsylvania Spatial Data project (PASDA) at Penn State University to discuss PBP and coordinate development of a database of biodiversity databases.

BYLAWS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The revised bylaws, sent to members in advance of the meeting, were reviewed and approved. Bill Robie raised a concern about the deletion from the bylaws of language reflecting the organization's mission statement. Thompson and Gray explained that the deletion was recommended by legal counsel.

Michelle Cohen was elected to the Board of Directors to replace Joseph Sullivan, who has moved to California.

Gray proposed that we move to hire a full-time President/CEO, as defined in the bylaws, stating that sufficient funds were available from grants already received to budget for salary, benefits, and adequate working space. Motion moved, seconded and passed to initiate the search for a President/CEO. While some speakers thought the office could be located anywhere in Pennsylvania, others expressed that the office should be located in Harrisburg or State College. There was general agreement that the person hired must be willing to travel and at least spend time in Harrisburg. A committee will be formed to write a job description with the hope that we can have someone on board as soon as possible and at least by the end of the year. Gray requested that persons interested in serving on this committee contact him.

Gray also asked for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee as it will soon be time to fill the initial one-year board positions.

The potential amount of lobbying by PBP was discussed. Given our current level of activity, there was agreement that we should use the standard election in our application for 501(c)(3) status, which limits us to 20% of exempt purpose expenditures. At our current level of expenses that would be about \$2,500 per quarter. It was pointed out that we have the option for the future of setting up a 501(c)(4) lobbying arm should we wish to increase our activity in that area.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

Bioinformatics – Tom Pauley reported that Severson had prepared a template for the inventory of biodiversity databases after consulting with PASDA. The questionnaire will be circulated electronically. Development of a literature database is under discussion.

Education – Joan Clippinger reported on the Education Task Force meeting that morning, which included a discussion of educational materials to be produced with some of the funding received from WRCA. This includes materials going into the biodiversity packets for Earth Day 2002.

K.C. Kim circulated proof sheets of his new publication *Biodiversity, Our Living World, Your Life Depends on It*. Twenty-thousand copies will be printed and distributed through the Wild Resources Conservation Fund and the Agricultural Extension Service.

Funding – Sara Nicholas reported that several options for long-term funding were discussed by the Funding Task Force. A two-tiered membership fee for organizations and individuals was suggested. A fee would raise funds and also demonstrate commitment by members. Another suggestion was that we try for a line-item appropriation through each of the agencies involved in PBP. A single signature fund-raising event such as a BioBlitz with sponsors similar to bird-a-thons was also mentioned. The task force was requested to develop a proposal on membership fees for the Board to review. Bill Robie suggested that a budget be developed that would lay out the financial needs on an annual basis.

Policy – Ron Ramsey reported that the task force received two proposals in response to the RFP for a review of laws, regulations and policies affecting biodiversity. The task force agreed that the ELI proposal exceeded the scope of the RFP, but recommended that it be accepted with the stipulation that ELI revise the proposal to reflect the task force's concerns. The Board agreed to communicate that to ELI by specifying in the letter of engagement its expectations with regard to deliverables. It also was agreed that the Policy Task Force will work closely with ELI to establish the parameters of the research project. The recommendation to accept ELI's proposal was approved. Thompson will draft the letter to ELI and submit it to the task force for review.

No progress has been made on the policy on policies; the task force will prepare a second draft for the next meeting.

Public Relations – Frank Felbaum presented a proposal to hold our First Annual Meeting on 29-30 November 2001 at the Penn Stater Conference Center in State College. The Board of Directors meeting will be on 29 November as previously scheduled, followed by an evening reception. The formal part of the Annual Meeting will take place on Friday, 30 November. The goals are to involve members, attract new members, and get buy-in for the State of the State Report (SoS) and Biodiversity Conservation Plan (BCP).

A mock-up of a brochure about PBP was circulated for comment. A draft logo was exhibited, but all agreed it needed more work.

Science – John Grehan reported that he felt stymied by his lack of understanding of the role of the task forces in the PBP structure. He expressed a need to be involved at the board level in order to function effectively as task force chair. Regarding a work plan for the task force, it was stated that for now the task force should focus on the SoS report.

Stewardship – Blaine Puller reported that the task force's RFP to prepare a compilation of Best Management Practices relevant to biodiversity preservation elicited two proposals. The task force recommended approval of the McKinstry – PSU proposal with reservations regarding the scope of work. Their recommendation was moved, seconded and approved. A letter of engagement specifying the deliverables will be drafted by Thompson and reviewed by the task force.

The task force has prepared four additional RFPs to fulfill the requirements of Chapter 2 of the SoS report. The RFPs were approved with the alteration that the survey component will be eliminated from all four.

REPORT OF THE BIODIVERSITY PLAN COMMITTEE

Gray reported that the SoS report is underway and that simultaneously the Joint Interagency Natural Resources Group is preparing a report on the status of habitats in Pennsylvania. The habitat report is being coordinated by Rick Carlson; Ron Freed and Thompson are on the committee. Concern was expressed that the habitat report and our SoS report be coordinated and complementary, not contradictory or a duplication of effort.

The committee recommended issuance of an RFP to conduct a survey of PBP members and others with two goals in mind: 1) determine attitudes and expectations of PBP members with regard to the Partnership; 2) determine current uses and adequacy of biodiversity information in PA. We will ask for a presentation of the results at the November Board meeting. Anticipated cost is \$25,000-30,000 based on a survey of approximately 60 respondents. This project would be modeled after a similar needs assessment that was conducted by ELI in New York as well as standard assessments used for strategic planning. Circulation of the RFP was moved, seconded, and approved.

OTHER REPORTS

DCNR – Clippinger reported that the search for a Biodiversity Director for DCNR is now focused on three top candidates selected from a field of 40 applicants. It is anticipated that the person will be on the job by September or October.

Pennsylvania Consortium of Interdisciplinary Environmental Policy, DEP – Don Brown gave a brief report on the Consortium which has been formed to increase the interaction between scientists and policy makers. Forty-three colleges and universities have signed memoranda-of-understanding to participate in the Consortium. The program emphasizes environmental protection and sustainable development. Currently the focus is on (1) encouraging colleges and universities to make a commitment to sustainable energy; (2) developing reliable indicators of sustainable development in environmental, economic, and social terms; and (3) conducting a greenhouse gas inventory and mitigation plan. Other program areas yet to be developed include biodiversity and toxics. Overall goals of the Consortium are to:

- help decision makers find sources of scientific information.
- help scientists learn the needs of public policy and decision makers.
- fill policy gaps.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann F. Rhoads, Secretary