

PENNSYLVANIA BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP
Interim Executive Board Meeting
26 September 2000
Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, PA

Board Members Present: Joe Barnard, Joan Clippinger, Cal DuBrock, Cindy Dunn, Tom Ford, Bob Hill, Paulette Johnson, Tom Kerr, K.C. Kim, Tom Pauley, Blaine Puller, Ann Rhoads (minutes), Joe Sullivan (for Michelle Cohen), Sue Thompson, Wilbur Wolf. **Other Partnership Members Present:** Jim Brett. **Guests:** Lloyd Casey, President, Pennsylvania Forestry Association. **Board Members Excused:** Tom Buzby, Laurie Goodrich, Ron Ramsey, Larry Schweiger, Dick Whiteford.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Sue Thompson, Interim Executive Director, reported that a proposal has been submitted to the Heinz Endowments through the Wildlands Conservancy (our Treasurer Tom Kerr's organization) because we do not yet have 501(c)3 status, for \$125,000 to fund Phase 1 of a 4-phase effort to prepare a strategic plan for biodiversity conservation in Pennsylvania. We should hear by December if we will receive the grant. We have also applied to DCNR for funding from the Wild Resources Conservation Fund. Sue has had some discussions with Jim McElfish of the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) regarding preparation of a strategic plan. ELI could work on our plan; they have prepared plans for several other states including Delaware and Ohio.

As announced at the July meeting, Sue has set up the office in Pittsburgh and has been working on developing a library of relevant newsletters and other publications.

Draft bylaws are currently being reviewed by DCNR counsel and policy office and will be submitted to PGC and PFBC for review by their legal staffs and policy offices also.

Sue and Bob Hill met with John Oliver, Dick Sprenkle, and Rick Carlson (all DCNR) before the meeting to brief Secretary Oliver on the progress of the Partnership. The Secretary did not object to the use of the term biodiversity in our name. Collaboration between DCNR and the Partnership regarding strategic planning for biodiversity was discussed. Sue will request to be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Natural Diversity Work Group so all three natural resource agency heads can be briefed.

TASK FORCE REPORTS

Education – Joan Clippinger reported that a team of six persons attended the National Biodiversity Education Leadership Institute at the Disney Institute in August. Pennsylvania was the only state-level delegation; other teams represented zoos and cities. The goal of the week-long conference was to develop a strategy for biodiversity education. The PA team decided to concentrate on middle school students; Joan presented a report with details. The activities listed incorporate several projects already underway by PCEE and the PABS Education Technical Committee. It was suggested that under Activity #2, the task force explore what would be the best vehicle to maximize exposure and that the indicators of success be revised to reflect the outcome of the ultimate activity rather than the search for funding.

One of the needs identified at the conference was to develop a standard definition of biodiversity for use with the general public. The Department of Education has agreed to incorporate the definition in its curriculum standards. The definition in the Natural Diversity Work Group statement which has been adopted by DCNR, PGC, and PFBC was suggested and approved by unanimous vote after discussion: "Biodiversity is the variety of species, their genetic makeup, and the natural communities in which they occur."

Funding – Tom Ford presented an update on the status of CARA which is stalled in the Senate where the leadership has balked on bringing the bill to the floor for a vote despite a letter urging them to do so signed by 63 senators. Senator Specter signed the letter. Senator Santorum, who is worried about the use of eminent domain in land acquisition, did not. Tom urged all to contact both PA senators and ask them to push for immediate action on the bill.

Information Management – Tom Pauley reported that the task force has not met, but a meeting is scheduled for October 20.

Policy – The task force has not met since the last Executive Board meeting.

Public Relations – The task force has not met.

Science – The task force has not met since the last Executive Board meeting.

Stewardship – The task force has not met since the last Executive Board meeting. Greg Eckert, chair of the task force, has taken a new job in Colorado. Blaine Puller reported that he was trying to contact someone in the TNC office whom Greg turned the responsibility over to and that he hoped there would be a meeting in October.

REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIP NAME COMMITTEE

The *ad hoc* Partnership Name Committee was charged with determining public reaction to our present name; investigating use and acceptance of the terms biodiversity and natural diversity by both the general public and the conservation community; and making a recommendation regarding an appropriate name for the Partnership. The committee presented a report of its findings and its consensus that the name be changed to Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership. The recommendation was approved by a unanimous vote.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Sue suggested that there is a need to define what constitutes a "partner." What commitment do we expect from organizations, agencies, or individuals? Should there be different levels of membership and dues? Certainly we will need to look to participants for some financial contribution, however the point was made that we don't want to create financial barriers to participation. It was suggested that the natural resource agencies could be sponsors and providers of significant financial support. However it was also suggested that basic support needed to be internal to the organization.

A committee consisting of Cal DuBrock, Tom Kerr, K.C. Kim, Blaine Puller, and Sue Thompson was established to develop recommendations on this topic.

Next Meeting

The next Interim Executive Board meeting is scheduled for November 30, 2-5 pm in Room 105, Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, PA.

Reminder: February 24, 2001 is the expiration date for the Interim Executive Board. We need to have completed our work on structuring the partnership by that time.