

**PENNSYLVANIA BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**  
**Interim Executive Board Meeting**  
**30 November 2000**  
**Rachel Carson State Office Building, Harrisburg, PA**

**Members Present:** Jim Brett, Tom Buzby, Joan Clippinger, Michelle Cohen, Cal DuBrock, Tom Ford, Laurie Goodrich, Bob Hill, Paulette Johnson, Tom Kerr, K.C. Kim, Ron Ramsey, Ann Rhoads, Richard Sprenkle (joined the meeting in progress), Sue Thompson, Dick Whiteford, Wilbur Wolf, Jr. **Members excused:** Jacqui Bonomo, Cindy Dunn, Tom Pauley, Blaine Puller.

Minutes of the September 26, 2000 meeting were accepted as presented.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

On behalf of PBP, Interim Executive Director Sue Thompson thanked Bob Hill for his many contributions and wished him well in his new position at the University of Georgia. Joan Clippinger will take over as the representative of DCNR on the Partnership Board.

PBP has received a grant of \$125,000 from the Heinz Foundations for Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity Conservation. The grant was awarded to the Wildlands Conservancy on behalf of the Partnership. An additional \$25,000 was recommended by the Wild Resource Conservation Board at their November 21 meeting. A proposal was submitted to DCNR's Community Conservation Grants program for \$75,000. Even if all of these grants are received we will need an estimated \$75,000 more to complete funding for Phase 1 of the Strategic Plan.

The Environmental Law Institute is holding a National Biodiversity Symposium in Washington, DC Jan 16-18, 2001. Topics to be discussed are state biodiversity assessments and how to get the resulting information into the hands of decision makers. Fifteen states will be represented; Sue Thompson and potentially Rick Carlson of DCNR will represent Pennsylvania at the meeting.

Articles of Incorporation have been prepared by Susan Wood, lawyer for DCNR, and will be filed.

**TASK FORCE REPORTS**

**Education** – Joan Clippinger reported that the task force had met that morning. Plans are to prioritize needs identified at the Florida workshop in order to make recommendations to the board.

**Funding** – The task force has not met since the last board meeting, but Tom Ford reported on the outcome of the efforts to get the Conservation and Reinvestment Act (CARA) through Congress. Despite broad bipartisan support, the bill never got to the Senate floor. Instead scaled-down parts of it were incorporated into several appropriations bills, including a \$50 million competitive grants program and another \$50 million to be channeled through the Pitman-Robinson program. At this time it is unclear how these funds will be administered. The Natural Resource Working Group has discussed some options; there may be \$1.8 million for Pennsylvania.

**Bioinformatics** – Tom Pauley submitted a written report that was presented by Sue Thompson. The task force asked for and received approval of a plan to establish a moderated listserve for the Partnership hosted at the University of Pittsburgh contingent on appropriate arrangements for any costs involved. The task force also recommended a statewide survey of databases be carried out. It was suggested that the task force look into a survey of 80 natural resource related databases completed by Todd Backastow (Penn State, ERRI) for DCNR in 1998, that along with GAP Project databases is now managed by PASDA (Pennsylvania Spatial Database Access) associated with the Pennsylvania GIS Center at Penn State. Another relevant project now underway is the E-commerce initiative of PNDI. The issue of database (and data collection) standards was raised. All agreed that it is an important, but difficult, issue.

Bob Hill reported that DCNR has been without a database manager for the PNDI database for a year. However, PennDoT recently offered to fund a position in conjunction with the E-commerce initiative. PennDoT already funds similar positions at the USFWS, PFBC and PHMC to do project reviews. Concern was expressed that the salary range under discussion might be too low to attract and keep a competent person.

**Policy** – Ron Ramsey reported that the Policy Task Force has not met; they are awaiting guidance on the role of the task force in the strategic plan preparation.

**Public Relations** – Dick Whiteford reported that the PR task force has not met, however he has received some comments on a draft brochure that is under development and is preparing for a press "roll-out" in January. Dick requested to be replaced as task force chair due to other commitments.

**Science** – Michelle Cohen reported that the task force has not met since the last board meeting. They are waiting for guidance on strategic plan involvement and are planning to meet in December or January.

**Stewardship** – Wilbur Wolf reported for Blaine Puller who has accepted the chairmanship temporarily. The task force met in November at Hawk Mountain. They requested approval of a plan to seek a grant to fund a graduate student to conduct a survey and create a database of Best Management Practices that have bearing on biodiversity conservation. They also discussed plans to broaden membership on the task force to include utility right-of-way managers, PennDoT, and the Pennsylvania Association of County Conservation Districts among others.

## **BYLAWS**

Draft bylaws that had been reviewed by Susan Wood, DCNR lawyer, were discussed and the following changes were made:

- The President will not be a member of the Board of Directors.
- The vice-chairman will not automatically advance to the chairmanship.
- Elections will be held at a board meeting scheduled during the fourth quarter of the calendar year (rather than at the annual meeting) and new board members and board officers will take office the following January 1.
- Article 7.5.4 was deleted, article 7.5.3 was amended to read ..."approval by a majority of the board."

The revised bylaws will be reviewed for appropriate immunity language and in general by a lawyer familiar with not-for-profit organizations before final action is taken to adopt. We will operate under the general intent for now.

## **STAFFING**

(Sue Thompson left the room for the following discussion regarding hiring staff which was chaired by Tom Kerr.) The Heinz grant includes \$25,000 for staff, however it is primarily for the purpose of coordinating the work on the strategic plan, not for general organizational support. The board decided that it was important to separate the President/CEO position from the grant administrator position and to only fill the latter at this time. The permanent board will need to initiate further discussions and fundraising before the President position can be filled. Several members expressed the feeling that a full-time President will be necessary to generate needed momentum.

There was unanimous agreement that Sue Thompson should be offered a contract for \$25,000 to administer/coordinate work on Phase I of the Strategic Plan. She was asked to send copies of the Heinz proposal and other pending proposals to all board members as soon as possible. In addition a smaller committee of the board needs to be established to guide the work on the strategic plan. (Sue Thompson rejoined the meeting at this time.)

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Sue distributed an outline of the strategic planning process and, due to the lateness of the hour, requested comments by email. She noted that a final report on Heinz Grant is due December 31, 2001.

Sue asked several members to explore the availability of video conferencing facilities in various parts of the state to enable some meetings to be held in that format.

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

A committee consisting of Tom Kerr (chair), Joan Clippinger, Michelle Cohen, Wilbur Wolf (subject to confirmation), and K.C. Kim was established and charged with the task of presenting a recommended slate of board members and officers at the January 23, 2001 meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectively submitted,  
Ann Rhoads