

**PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MID-YEAR CONFERENCE CALL**

Tuesday October 2, 2012

1004 – 1335 AKST

Chair: Kim Rivera

ATTENDANCE

***Officers:* Kim Rivera, Pat Jodice (departed at 1325), Doug Forsell, Lindsay Young (departed at 1244), Heather Major**

***Regional Representatives:* Adrian Gall (departed at 1331), Ken Morgan, Don Lyons, Hannah Nevins, Steffen Opper, Sarah Thomsen**

***Ex Officio:* Vivian Mendenhall, Verena Gill**

***In attendance:* Holly Freifeld (on line at 1238), Pat Baird (on line at 1016), Dave Huber, Scott Schaffer (on line at 1100)**

***Proxy:* Ken Morgan for Iain Stenhouse, Pat Baird for Craig Harrison, and Don Lyons for Jennifer Boyce, Pat Jodice (after 1325), and Adrian Gall (after 1331).**

Kim Rivera, Chair, abstains from all votes.

Confirmed we have quorum

Kim Rivera called the meeting to order at 1004 AKST

1) Approval of Meeting Agenda

One request to move all of Lindsay Young's items to first of meeting.

Meeting agenda approved.

EXCO NEW BUSINESS

2) Treasurer's Report (Lindsay Young)

All PSGs books are in order and everything looks good. Our fiscal year ended on Sunday (September 30th) and we are prepared to submit our taxes on time. Our investments increased by \$13,000 in the last year and our net assets are about \$2,000 less than the end of our last fiscal year. There are a couple outstanding questions concerning our assets so this number could change slightly. We currently have \$8,500 in the Conservation Fund, which will decrease once grants are paid out. We generated about \$800 in income for this fund from registration at the Hawaii meeting and we've received another couple hundred dollars in donations since then. Our Endowment Fund has increased by \$17,000.

There are ways we could streamline our membership process that may end up generating money for PSG and make things easier for incoming Treasurers.

The Amazon.com service we were using before to generate funds for the conservation fund will again be up and running in the next couple weeks.

3) Financial committee update (Lindsay Young)

a) Financial Audit

Our books are almost completely in order. All our budget projections are now done in Quickbooks, which are linked to the downloaded statements each month and reports are very easily generated. We are trying not to pay any PSG expenses in cash so that all our expenses are documented. There are some details that still need to be worked out to pay travel awards by cheque as some foreigners may have difficulties cashing a US dollar cheque.

In terms of our audit, the accountant says there are two different options.

A review: here the accountant does not form an opinion on our books but will highlight things that might look suspicious. This will cost between \$3,000 – 5,000. This is not an audit but would give us an idea on whether a full audit might be necessary.

A Yellow-book Audit: Will cost between \$15,000 – 20,000. Here the accountant does form an opinion on whether or not fraud has occurred. Everyone on the board would be interviewed and the Treasurer's records would be inspected in person. As a Yellow-book Audit could be submitted to a court the accountants are liable for their 'opinion' on the books.

If the Federal Government requests an audit, they would request an A130 functional audit, but the chances of us getting one of these is very small because the amount of federal money given to PSG is small (under \$300,000). If we did a review and then decided to do a full audit the money spent on our review would be credited towards the Yellow-book Audit.

b) Extend time for Financial Committee

During the closed February 27, 2012 meeting we formed the Financial Committee for six months, that time period is up. Do we need to extend that committee to complete this audit work?

The Financial Committee needs about six more months, until the Portland meeting in February, to complete the audit work.

Pat Baird moved Vivian Mendenhall seconded that the Financial Committee timeframe is extended until the February meeting or until the work of the committee is completed.

Motion carried (one abstention).

4) Bylaws – proposal to revise

a) Proposal to revise membership renewal period to match fiscal year (Lindsay Young)

Right now our membership goes on the calendar year and doesn't match our fiscal year, memberships do not go from when it is renewed to one year later. If you renew your membership in October it is only good until the end of December and most people renew in the October – December time period, meaning most members are not current most of the year. This has been an ongoing problem. This proposal is to have membership run the same as our fiscal year. We should also consider raising our membership and this could be automated with our registration system (this is not included in the current proposed by-law amendment, but has been added to our agenda for the meeting in Portland in February).

Discussion:

Pacific Seabirds runs on a calendar year, members expect that when they pay they will get a year's worth of Pacific Seabirds. Changing the membership renewal period doesn't have to change the journal. These types of issues can be worked out.

Notification is a big thing. To streamline memberships would make things much easier. The automation of memberships is a separate thing from this by-law amendment, but the automated membership service would allow people to track their own memberships.

This change in membership renewal period wouldn't take effect until after the 2013 election (because changes to the by-laws must be voted on by the PSG membership).

Hannah Nevins moved Don Lyons seconded that we revise the membership period to be in alignment with our fiscal year (Oct 1- Sept 30th) and we would make an effort to notify members a month in advance so that they can renew on-time.

Motion carried (one abstention).

Action Item: Lindsay Young to work with Pat Baird to get the bylaw proposal on the upcoming ballot.

b) Automation of membership renewals (Lindsay Young)

Discussion:

We could move forward with the automation so that if we do go onto a fiscal year automation the change wouldn't be such a headache. The automation of memberships would cost about \$700 - \$750 per year.

Don Lyons moved and Hannah Nevins seconded that Lindsay Young identify and implement an automated membership renewal and data storage system and spend up to but not exceeding \$1500 per year.

Motion carried (one abstention).

5) Annual meeting update

a) LOCO chair report: Meeting Budget (Holly Freifeld)

Things are coming together, we are on target to open registration October 15th or 20th, we are adding an option to renew memberships with registration. Early registration would then end on December 1st, but that is a Saturday. The deadline to get abstracts submitted is December 3rd, a Monday. There aren't any deadline commitments with the venue but the sooner people register the better.

A lot of people don't take the decision to attend a meeting lightly, and need to know they are presenting before they register. Early registration should close after people know whether they are presenting or not.

It would be nice to have early registration close as late as possible, maybe two months in advance.

There will be three days of three concurrent sessions and a certain number of posters. In Hawaii we had almost 150 talks with three concurrent sessions.

We have all the figures for travel awards and awardee costs from last year, which were quite high. It would be helpful to refine those amounts at least for the travel awards. In principle the proceeds from the silent auction go towards student travel awards in the following year. It would be nice to have a little clarity on the total amount to allocate for travel awards.

The printing of awards is an expense that needs to be added to the current budget.

Part of the goal of our annual meetings is to improve communication but also to make a profit. In order to ensure that we have to start with a conservative budget. There is no reason to reduce registration charges at this point. PSG currently have some of the lowest conference and membership rates of any ornithological organization.

In the budget there is \$300 allocated for drink tickets and more for conference bags. We really don't need these and we might get rid of the bags and go with folders instead.

How should we compensate volunteers? Is giving them half off the registration too much?

In Hawaii we had a sign-up sheet and for each shift the volunteer was given a choice of a \$25 hotel certificate or \$25 off of a banquet ticket. This worked quite well and the cost is about what is currently in the budget.

We would like to add a 5% overhead to the field trips, this would end up being a very modest amount going to PSG.

The only lunch that is paid for out of the conference budget is the EXCO meeting on the first day.

Doug Forsell moved and Ken Morgan seconded that we pass the budget and any additional expenses have to be approved by the chair.

Motion carried (one abstention).

b) Scientific Program Report (Doug Forsell)

We have four Special Paper Sessions, one on Marbled Murrelets will include a plenary by Zack Perry who is revising Marbled Murrelet Birds of North America account. We think we'll have all of the Special Paper Sessions full.

Dan Roby will also be giving a Plenary.

c) Board Retreat (Pat Jodice and Pat Baird)

See report.

Before the training session John Glaza will send around a questionnaire, which will help cater his presentation. Basically his training will focus on board responsibilities and roles. His charge is \$1,500 plus a follow-up, airfare, and hotel. There is no charge for the meeting room.

There are two possible dates, February 19th or the 24th. Once a date is chosen based upon maximizing EXCO attendance a message will be put out on the list-serve inviting members (encouraging those that have an interest in serving on EXCO). John Glaza will be informed that not all of the board are US based, some of the focus should include information applicable outside of the US. Additionally, we need to ensure the transfer of this knowledge to future boards. This could be done by the outgoing board member taking the incoming member under their wing and showing them the ropes, or by making some background reading about boards mandatory reading.

Doug Forsell moved and Pat Jodice seconded that we fund board training for up to \$2,000 and have Pat Baird complete a poll to decide upon a time before or after the Portland meeting and maximize EXCO attendance.

Motion carried (one abstention).

d) Selection of 2014 Meeting Location (Scott Schaffer)

There are concerns that PSG has outgrown the venue at Asilomar. The main concern for both venues (Asilomar and the Monterey Convention Centre) is that the first week of February is a complete no go, as long as we avoid that timeframe we will be alright. The Monterey Convention Centre is owned by the City of Monterey and they facilitate the organization of events, generally working with local hotels for bookings.

Discussion: A proposal was forwarded a year ago about having our 2014 meeting in Juneau, Alaska. This proposal was well researched. PSG has a tradition of having its meetings in a close place (e.g., Portland 2013) and then an out of the way place. Could Monterey occur in 2015 as a close place with Juneau 2014 as an out of the way place?

General consensus that the Monterey option might be best for 2015. There is concern that a meeting in Juneau might not be well attended. Anchorage has been identified as a second option, and a small meeting does not mean a less successful meeting. Flight delays in and out of Juneau are not really an issue anymore.

Doug Forsell moved and Don Lyons seconded that the PSG 2014 meeting will be in Alaska and an Alaska LOCO will identify a venue in Juneau or some other location.

Motion carried (two abstentions).

Action Item: Scott Shaffer to bring a detailed proposal to the Portland EXCO meeting detailing a 2015 Monterey meeting.

e) PSG Awards: Lifetime Achievement Award nomination (Pat Jodice)

The Awards Committee (Chair, Past-chair, and Chair-elect) got together and suggested we offer a Lifetime Achievement Award to Malcolm Coulter at our Portland 2013 meeting. There will not be a Special Achievement Award.

Pat Jodice moved and Vivian Mendenhall seconded that we approve Malcolm Coulter for a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2013 annual meeting.

Motion carried (one nay, one abstention)

6) WSU Funding Proposal (Pat Jodice)

During the February EXCO meetings there was a motion that PSG would entertain a detailed proposal up to \$17,000 from the WSU for database expenses (global seabird colony register, and population trend and productivity indices). A detailed proposal was submitted by WSU and EXCO's task is to look at funding this or not.

This proposal from the WSU for \$17,000 comes in three parts, the largest to link seabird databases. The cost for each part are broken out and the outcomes described.

Discussion:

One thing that is missing is a timeline, this cannot be open-ended. Adding a timeframe to each action, as they are currently presented, would not be difficult.

If we had a schedule in this proposal right now that would be preferable, but this work cannot happen without the money and we will have to front the money. Given we have no way of holding them to a timeframe, requiring them to submit a timeframe and then waiting until the Portland meeting before making a decision doesn't seem logical.

There should be financial controls.

At this point we could do one of two things:

1. Ask for a timeframe and take this matter up again in February, or
2. Bring a motion forward now that includes a timeframe.

Approve the proposal with a stipulation that the projects will be delivered in two years, or by 2014. If they say they can't meet the completion terms they don't get the money.

Ken Morgan moved and Doug Forsell seconded that EXCO approve the proposal submitted by the WSU and award the allocated funds contingent upon the proposers accepting a completion date of December 31, 2014.

Motion carried (one abstention).

EXCO OLD BUSINESS

7) Approval of minutes from May 15 2012 EXCO Meeting.

Vivian Mendenhall moved and Ken Morgan seconded to approve the minutes from the May 2012 EXCO meeting.

Motion carried (two abstentions)

All other items will be moved to the 2013 meeting.

Kim Rivera adjourned the meeting at 1335 AKST

Vivian Mendenhall moved and Doug Forsell seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Motion passed unanimously.