



SOCIETY ACTIONS

Minutes of the ESA Governing Board 25–26 October 2004 Washington, D.C.

Members present:

Jerry Melillo (President), Bill Schlesinger (Past-President), Nancy Grimm (President-elect), Gus Shaver (Vice President for Science), Norm Christensen (Vice President for Finance), Alison Power (Vice President for Public Affairs), Carol Brewer (Vice President for Education and Human Resources), Shahid Naeem and Margaret Palmer (Members-at-Large).

Staff present:

Katherine McCarter (Executive Director), Cliff Duke (Director of Science), Nadine Lynn (Director of Public Affairs), David Baldwin (Managing Editor), Elizabeth Biggs (Director of Finance), Jason Taylor (Director of Education), Sue Silver (Editor)

I. ROLL CALL

A) The GB unanimously adopted the proposed agenda.

B) There were no votes to ratify.

- Brief discussion of what the last fiscal year's profit (approximately \$9000) represents,

where it should be invested (Christensen suggested the rainy day fund, which currently has about \$200,000), and how to respond to questions from ESA members about it.

- Margaret Palmer reminded the Board that strenuous efforts were made in 2004 by the nominating committee, chaired by Ann Bartuska, to find women to run, but they were unsuccessful. Bill Schlesinger, chair of the 2005 nominating committee, reported that the nomination process is well along and the slate is likely to include women.

C) The minutes from 31 July, 1 August, and 6 August 2004 were unanimously adopted.

II. REPORTS

A) Report of President Melillo

- Melillo has focused on two tasks since the August meeting—establishing rapid assessment teams in cooperation with Nadine Lynn, and developing a review of the Science Office in cooperation with Gus Shaver and Cliff Duke
- Rapid Assessment teams—41 of 58 people invited to join the rapid response teams have now responded, so there are three people on all but one of them now. Eighteen have been Leopold Fellows.
- Review of Science Office—focus will be on future activities of the Science Office and how they relate to ESA's strategic plan; history and current activities will also be covered.

B) Report of Executive Director McCarter and the Office Staff

- David Baldwin reported that all publications are on track for publication timetables, and that starting in 2005 all authors will be getting proofs as PDF files. All ESA publications back to 1997 (the first year when publications were produced with SGML tagging) will soon have DOI tags and be in the CrossRef database. You will soon be able to do forward linking too (looking for papers that cited a particular paper). A new set of tools will soon be instituted for copy editors, which will speed up their work (and reduce its cost). Google will now start sending their web crawlers through ESA journals about every 6 weeks, which should generate a large number of hits from searches of our journals in the future.
- Sue Silver reported that, since *Frontiers'* inception, authors have received PDF files of their proofs. *Frontiers* will have a booth at two scientific conferences in November, and the Special Libraries Association Conference (4–7 June, Toronto). The Visions articles will likely appear in the March issue.
- Jason Taylor reported that there is a November deadline for the third volume of TIEE. SEEDS will have a field trip to Louisiana soon, and will send a representative to three conferences this winter (American Indian Association of Science and Engineering (AISES), in Anchorage; Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), in Austin, Texas; North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE), in Biloxi, Mississippi). A new employee will join the educational program in January.
- Liz Biggs: ESA had 8718 members at the end of the fiscal year (a big jump up—about

900 in 2 years). Participation in Chapters and Sections has also increased in most cases. The e-version of the iMIS database is being rolled out this week, for real-time updating by members of their membership information. The biggest issue relates to the future of journal subscriptions, especially institutional subscriptions. Member subscriptions have been declining over the past several years. (ESA's budget anticipates a 4%/yr decline in personal subscriptions.)

- Nadine Lymn reported that the position of policy analyst has now been filled. A new initiative is to build a database of universities and other institutions with researchers who publish regularly in ESA journals, to create a news service for Public Information Officers that alerts them when someone from their institution publishes in a Society journal.
- Cliff Duke reported that there were about 50 applications for three positions in the National Parks Ecological Research fellowship program. Norm Christensen reported that the Mellon Foundation is likely to withdraw support for this program in about 2 years unless other major partners are found as donors. The fundraising is NPS' responsibility and they have not yet begun to seek the needed resources.

C) Report of Vice President for Finance Christensen

1) First Quarter Financials look healthy, according to Katherine. The Annual Meeting did very well (might be the top meeting for income to date). This is due in part to a trial policy whereby the abstract submission fee was not refunded or credited toward the cost of registration (generating about \$90,000). Next year, credit card numbers will be taken, but no charge will be made unless the submitter withdraws.

2) Norm Christensen reports that the Society investments are mostly flat.

3) The staff and VP for Finance recommend pursuing the idea of hiring a development professional to work with ESA. This idea will be pursued with the goal of making a presentation to the Board at the spring meeting. There is general support for the idea of a professional fund-raiser.

III. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A) *Publications issues*

1) Data sharing

a) Data sharing statement (Baldwin/Duke)

The meeting of 12 scientific societies hosted by ESA went very well and included representatives from Chile and England. Bill Michener and David Baldwin were ESA representatives. Clarification of terms was an important achievement (e.g., What is a data set? Are herbarium sheets and soil samples data? What is a data registry?—like a phone book. What is a data center?—a place where metadata and data are stored). A near-term strategy will be to establish an editorial policy for scientific journals. The meeting attendees proposed a statement to be considered by each group's governing body: "It is the expectation of the editors and publisher of this journal that authors will make the data underlying published articles available. Any impediments to data sharing should be brought to the attention of the editors at the time of submission." The ESA Governing Board developed a revision of this statement that will be reviewed by the Publications Committee before being placed in ESA journals. "The editors and publisher of this journal expect authors to make the data underlying published articles available."

NSF may be the driving force behind this, at least for grantees, but editors could also carry a big stick by eventually enforcing a data-sharing policy for authors.

National Biological Information Infrastructure (NBII; a broad, collaborative program to provide increased access to data and information on the nation's biological resources) might be interested in helping with development of a registry and repository. Perhaps ESA could help to effect a cultural change in ideas about the importance and value of data archiving by publishing a paper with examples of how historical data have facilitated newer studies, or how the lack of such data has removed opportunities for potentially valuable follow-up studies.

b) Data registry proposal

Jim Reichman asked the Board to begin discussion about creating a data registry for ESA members and for contributors to ESA journals, using technology currently being developed. The Board, after extensive discussion of Reichman's proposal, concluded that they were not yet ready to endorse a specific proposal for a data registry. Several groups are pursuing related initiatives and ESA sees the need to bring these groups together to discuss strategy and ensure that any ESA effort is inclusive. Nancy Grimm, David Inouye, and Margaret Palmer, working with David Baldwin and Cliff Duke, will form an ad hoc committee to coordinate ESA activities related to the data sharing. Jim Reichman will be invited to join that group.

2) Publications task force

Jim Reichman has contacted the Board already about issues related to online publications and the impact of open access, and recommends that a group be named to provide background material for the Board. He has asked the Board for some funding to facilitate this, and the Board approves unanimously the idea of using the contingency funding from the budget for this purpose. President Melillo will work with Jim to appoint the task force.

3) *Frontiers* program review

- Katherine reported on the history (dating

from 1998) of the Publications Visions Committee (which presented a report to the Board in January 1999). That “Brown Report” was discussed at each Board meeting for the next few years, evolving into something more compatible with the Board’s goals of increasing membership and reaching out to audiences that might not be attracted by current publications.

- Sue Silver reported on current status and management of *Frontiers*. It has met the original criteria of being international, interdisciplinary, and accessible. It has almost certainly played a role in the significant increase in membership over the past two years. (*Frontiers* comes free of charge to ESA members.) *Frontiers* faces two major challenges in the near term: (1) attracting new readers from government and business; and (2) becoming self-supporting.
- Liz Biggs reported on finances. After 2 years of publication, and 3 years of funding, we are in good shape. The Publications Fund balance was ahead of budget by about \$117,000 and will be close to \$1,200,000 at the end of December, with a new Mellon Foundation grant of \$750,000 just received. The business plan for *Frontiers* requires that an additional \$750,000 be raised for the fund in support of *Frontiers* to cover costs until the journal becomes self-supporting through a mix of library subscriptions and advertising. Currently we have a \$250,000 grant request before the Packard Foundation and we are beginning the planning to raise an additional \$500,000). Based on our current business plan for *Frontiers*, the projection is that *Frontiers* will be self-supporting in 2011, or 10 years into its life. Norm Christensen reported that Packard might be willing to make a long-term low-interest loan if we have difficulty in raising the \$500,000. The marketing goals seem to be on track for advertising and classified ads. Library

subscriptions (70 so far) continue to be the biggest challenge. ESA is currently putting \$50,000/yr into the Publications Fund that supports the project.

4) Journal mission statements

The Editors-in-Chief were asked by the Board to provide mission statements that might be a first step toward the upcoming review of publications. The Publications Committee has reviewed them and suggests that a uniform format would be useful. The Board agrees, and will ask (via a memo to be drafted by Jerry Melillo) that the EICs revise their statements for the next Board meeting. One alternative is that there be an overall umbrella statement about the Society’s suite of journals, followed by more detailed information about individual publications.

5) Pease letter response

Jerry has drafted a response to the letter sent to Board members by Dr. Craig Pease concerning editorial practices and policies of *Frontiers*. Sue will contact Mr. Rohrman asking him to remain as a columnist, but to resign as a member of the advisory board in order to remove any perception of a conflict of interest.

B) Visions priorities

1) Public information campaign

The ESA staff had a meeting on this topic. Nadine Lymn reported on some specific actions the Society might take, how to assess those efforts, and suggestions for people the Society might ask to become involved. The goal (#2) that seems to best match the Board’s intentions is (slightly modified): “Increase within 5 years public understanding of the essential role of ecological systems to the well-being of all people.” The Board will seek advice from some organizations that have run public information campaigns related to the environment; candidate organizations

include Environmental Defense, WWF, SeaWeb, NASA, British Petroleum, Toyota, Weyerhaeuser, and UCS. Staff and a subset of Board members will organize a half-day meeting in late February with about five of these organizations to learn from their experiences. Questions to ask these organizations might include the following:

How to identify a target audience? What is the best topic area to begin with? What are the elements of a campaign? What are creative ideas for addressing the audience? Are there examples of successful campaigns such as this? What advertising firms would you use? What would it cost and how might we raise the resources needed for the campaign? How do you measure success?

2) Rapid response teams

Nadine Lynn reported on the roster of ESA members who have been invited (most of whom have accepted). Roll-out will be early in the spring, with two Congressional luncheon meetings.

3) International actions

Our next annual meeting in Montreal will be international in perspective, as will our special meeting in Merida, Mexico in January of 2006. The theme of the Mexico meeting is "Ecology in an Era of Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities for Environmental Scientists in the Americas," and the planning committee is being led by Dr. Jose Sarukhan and Dr. Jeff Herrick. Cliff and Ellen will go to Merida this winter to look at hotels and venues for the meeting. Possible funding sources for meeting support are being contacted. Some SEEDS students would be a logical addition to that meeting. Osvaldo is working with Katherine to pursue support for ESA of a Federation of the Americas group of ecological societies. The Federation should play an important role in the Mexico meeting. Katherine met in August with the Vice President of the

Ecological Society of Australia to explore possible cooperation in the future.

C. Education issues

1) Leveraging SEEDS

There are 4 more years of Mellon funding remaining, and efforts are needed to start planning for how to replace it (currently \$500,000/yr). Ideas were discussed for how to find additional opportunities for SEEDS students and for the program. This seems like a logical program for work by an ESA development officer. SEEDS may play a (no-cost) role in a future IGERT program with the University of Maryland, which would fund three workshops for SEEDS students.

2) Women and Minorities in Ecology (WAMIE) update

Carol Brewer reports that the final report is on schedule for November. A survey will occur next year to generate a new Profiles of Society members (following up on the 1992 publication).

D. Issues for future annual meetings; 2006 Annual Meeting theme

The proposal, "Icons and Upstarts: Maintaining an Ecological Balance," is innovative. The Board suggests dropping or replacing the part of the title after the colon. The Program Chair and Meetings Committee will be asked to consider these comments and bring back a final recommendation.

E. NEON update

Carol Brewer reported on progress, which includes AIBS having received funding from NSF to serve in an organizational role.

F. Science Program review (Shaver/Duke)

1) Vice-President for Science Gus Shaver presented an outline of his vision for the Science Office during his tenure, and questions for the Governing Board to consider in its review.

- Science Office mission and niche within ESA
 - Are they well-defined?
 - Are they appropriate?
- How well do activities reflect the mission and niche, as well as the environment in which it must work?
- Interactions with Policy and Education
- Committees: Merge Research and SBI ?
- 3-year goals for Science Office:
 - Support Visions initiatives
 - Maintain responsiveness to the ecological science community
 - Develop a new sustainability science agenda.

2) Cliff Duke presented information on the history of the office (initiated in 1992 in the form of the SBI Project Office, then became the Science Programs Office in 1997). The existing structure and goals are outlined in the Bylaws; in short, the Office promotes the integration of ecological science into management and decision-making by government agencies and the private sector at all levels. Although the Science Office produces educational publications (e.g., *Issues in Ecology*, the regional climate change reports) it does not engage with students and educators in the way Education does. Nor does it engage with legislators and Congressional staff in the way that Public Affairs does. Current projects include:

- i) providing support for ESA activities (e.g., Annual Meetings, the Ecological Information Network, publications);
- ii) planning and organizing scientific conferences (e.g., the invasive plants conference, the Mexico meeting);
- iii) providing support to science, policy, and management (e.g., peer reviews, the conference on data sharing, JSTOR, Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable, National Parks Ecological Research Fellowship program);
- iv) generating publications (e.g., *Issues in Ecology*, the regional climate change reports with UCS).

Projects in development include:

- i) an Agricultural Air Quality workshop;
- ii) a cooperative agreement with NBII;
- iii) workshops for the Army Corps of Engineers;
- iv) potential collaboration with UNEP and UNESCO;
- v) developing communication training programs for federal scientists;
- vi) a follow-up proposal to NSF for a joint working group on Data Sharing and Archiving.

As noted previously, the proposed new agenda for the Science Office has three components:

- 1) Support Visions initiatives
- 2) Maintain responsiveness to the ecological science community
- 3) Develop a new Sustainability Science Agenda

A high-priority item for action on this agenda is combining and reforming the SBI and Research committees into a single Science Committee to advise and support Science Office projects. Others include leading international outreach activities, and developing activities to examine and articulate the intellectual

foundations for a new sustainability science.

Based on the discussions, Gus and Cliff will complete the following tasks before the next Board meeting:

1) Draft a new Bylaw statement about the Science Office, and prepare a proposal to delete the existing SBI office Bylaw, to be voted on at the Council meeting next summer.

2) Write a Bylaw about the new Science committee that reflects the merging of the Research and SBI committees, also for presentation at the Council meeting in Montreal, and discussion at the May Governing Board meeting.

3) Go through the list of people on the two current committees (Research and SBI), write to the individuals to see who is willing to stay on, and identify a few

new members who will be useful in implementing the new SO agenda.

4) Prepare a Supplementary Session proposal on sustainability science for the Montreal meeting by 1 Dec.

5) Prepare proposals to NBII and NSF, as described previously, and move forward on planning and implementation of support for Visions initiatives and international outreach efforts.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1) Nominations for ESA awards are due soon and suggestions should be sent to the Awards Committee.

2) Bill Schlesinger provided an update on nominations for Board members, officers, and committees for fall 2005.
