
Minutes of the ESA Governing Board

8–9 May 2006
Washington, D.C.

Members present:

Nancy Grimm (President), Jerry Melillo (Past-President), Norm Christensen (incoming President-Elect); Alan Covich (President-Elect), Gus Shaver (Vice President for Science), Carol Brewer (Vice President for Education and Human Resources), David Inouye (Secretary), Shahid Naeem (Member-at-Large), Richard Pouyat (VP for Public Affairs), Bill Parton (VP for Finance), Dennis Ojima (Member-at-Large), Meg Lowman (incoming Vice President for Education and Human Resources)

Staff present:

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

I. ROLL CALL (9:00 am)

A) The Governing Board unanimously adopted the proposed agenda.

B) A motion to ratify votes taken by e-mail since the October 2005 meeting was approved. These include:

- The San Jose 2007 Annual Meeting theme, “Ecological restoration in a

changing world; Tracking a moving target”;

- The Position Paper Biological Invasions: Recommendations for U.S. Policy and Management;
- A statement on the Endangered Species Act;
- The minutes of the October 2005 Board meeting ;
- Appointment of Margaret Palmer as the Awards Committee Chair; and
- The audit for the fiscal year ending 30 June 2006.

II. REPORTS

A) Report of the President

Grimm thanked the staff for its efficiency, and noted the good news that the Society is on track to reach 10,000 members soon. Areas for attention in the future include:

- 1) Publications. The Publications Committee report from Jim Reichman will be considered during the meeting.
- 2) Web site. A report from the consultant is

on the agenda for the meeting.

3) International activities. The Mexico meeting was exceptional. Some work is ongoing on the Federation of the Ecological Societies of the Americas (we are hosting the web page); ESA also has endorsed SF2010, an ad-hoc, international advisory committee on prevention of biodiversity loss, and is a co-sponsor of the third Eco Summit (organized and paid for by Elsevier, to be held in Beijing in May 2007); Mexican and Canadian ecological societies are now active.

4) Interactions with federal agencies. Tomorrow a group from the Board will meet with the USDA competitive grants program. Ideas for other agencies we should meet with are solicited, and for major ecological messages that we can convey to them. Melillo suggests three major areas: energy, competitiveness, and security, and the potential to work with other societies on such issues. Discussion centered on how these major themes relate to ESA's sustainability agenda and the activities of the Science Office.

5) Dinner this evening will be with seven AAAS fellows who are ESA members, and they will be invited to the Rapid Response Team lunch meeting in Memphis this summer.

6) The Regional Initiative will be discussed later.

7) Education and outreach. SEEDS is going well. We co-sponsored a session at the AAAS meeting about evolution and education, and issued press releases about the Pennsylvania and Kansas court rulings concerning Intelligent Design.

8) Financial issues. Board members are reminded about the Millennium Fund and the importance of having a high rate of Board participation to bolster other fund-raising efforts.

B) Report of the Executive Director and staff

1) Executive Director

Fran Day is the new Director of Development. Two new staff members, Michelle Horton and Devon Rothschild, are working hard on the Memphis meeting and coordinating well with the Program Chair and local host. Staff members gave 3-minute synopses of their main activities.

2) Science programs

Agricultural air quality conference is coming up next month (about 300 participants); 5 Latin American graduate students from the Mexico meeting will be funded to attend the Memphis meeting with funding left from the Mexico meeting.

3) *Frontiers*

The China special issue of *Frontiers* is completed except for one paper, the Mexico issue has all articles in, and the ESA Asian Section has become a wonderful resource for *Frontiers* (found a calligrapher to help with design of the special issue, are helping with translations, and facilitating access of ESA journals to China).

4) Public Affairs Office

Appropriations season in an election year is a busy time, but focus on economic

competitiveness in NSF and DOE is making it harder for some other areas in which ecology is funded. Some Senators need to be reminded about the need for NSF funding for ecology. Publicity for Memphis is beginning.

5) Finance and administration

Registration has opened for Memphis (about 3 weeks earlier than usual; planning is going well). ESA has 8700 members now (600 more than this time last year). The new web site is coming along well (to be demonstrated this afternoon). ESA met its financial goal to break even on the Merida meeting.

6) Education and diversity Programs

SEEDS students had a field trip at the Sevilleta LTER site, attended the Merida meeting, and will go to Konza Prairie in June. There's a monthly electronic newsletter that seems to be popular with the students. Institute for Learning Innovation is helping with developing an assessment process. A new CD for TIEE is in the works, as is a collaboration with other societies for a national science digital library. There's a suggestion for a mentoring program for young minority faculty.

7) Development Program

ESA is the most intelligently managed nonprofit Fran Day has worked with. The Staff has been very willing to take on the additional workload that a long-term commitment to development demands. College of the Atlantic (where Fran Day has an appointment) will give their graduating seniors (about 60) a one-year membership in ESA. Preliminary discussions are

underway with a couple of major corporations (Subaru and Alcoa). Three proposals have gone out to foundations and another major one is in preparation, as are some for SEEDS.

8) Publications

Discussion later on the Publications Committee report. Allan Press ran a meeting last week on emerging trends in publication that David Baldwin and Sue Silver attended. Submissions continue to increase. All graphics work is now being done in-house (at a great savings), and publications are back on schedule after a slowdown due to the new composition system. Frequency of *Ecological Applications* publication will increase to eight issues per year in 2007. The *ESA Bulletin* is also doing well in its new electronic format.

9) Financial updates

Current estimate is that ESA will end the fiscal year with about \$180,000 above expenses, which will be added to the operating reserve fund. The Mexico meeting broke even, and the Montreal meeting generated about \$160,000, but the Memphis meeting will be less profitable. As of June 2005 our reserves reached \$1,000,000, half of our target goal. The investment portfolio (60% stocks, 40% bonds) is just under \$1,000,000; one-year return was 11%, three-year return 15%. The issue of increasing the target for the reserve was discussed; in some societies an amount equivalent to half of the annual budget is held in reserve.

III. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A) Proposed 2006–2007 budget

The proposed 2006–2007 budget was presented and discussed. There was some discussion of raising membership dues. Suggestions were solicited for use of Board initiative funds; ideas include Profiles of Ecologists dissemination, a publication related to the sustainability science initiative, an ESA intern to write the undergraduate survey report, a meeting of the Publications Committee, a retreat for congressional interns or staffers, working toward the documentation of the ESA history, a travel budget for preparation of future policy papers, a meeting of education organizations from CSSP to discuss SEEDS, and the idea of funding an ecologist's sabbatical on Capitol Hill. Decisions about the use of these funds will be made in August.

B) Science “midterm” update

High-priority activities include:

- Advancing the Visions initiatives, through development of workshops (e.g., Agricultural Air Quality workshop next month), international outreach (e.g., Merida meeting, October 2007 Fourth International Nitrogen Conference), and follow-on activities for the Society Summit (2004 meeting with a dozen other societies to talk about data sharing activities); there are proposals in to NSF for three additional workshops.
- Responsiveness to the ecological community, including the air quality workshop, NBII cooperative agreement to develop a web site on pollination, and the upcoming peer review of the Sage Grouse

comprehensive strategy.

- Development of a sustainability science agenda, working with the Science Committee, developing proposals for workshops on sustainability science in a nonequilibrium world, organizing a symposium for the San Jose meeting, and publishing symposium papers as *Issues in Ecology* to translate the information for nonscientists.
- Gus has met with representatives of SCOPE about collaborating on a meeting in Paris in 2007, a workshop leading to a symposium in San Jose, and possible an *Issues* edition.

NEON UPDATE

A lunch meeting update on NEON was presented by guests Liz Blood (program director for research resources at NSF's Division of Biological Infrastructure, in charge of NEON), Bruce Hayden (Co-Director for Science and Education of the NEON Project Office and NEON PI) and Jim MacMahon (NEON Senior Management Team and National Network Design Committee, Chair of the Board of Directors for NEON, Inc.). The Public Affairs Committee is asked to suggest what should be an appropriate Society position on NEON.

C) Publications issues

The report from the Publications Committee was discussed. The Society's cost per article is about \$3000, and about one-third of

authors request grants to cover publication costs. The issue of open access publishing is still under active consideration and discussion by many societies and libraries, and it is premature for ESA to make any moves toward or away from such a policy for its journals. The Publications Committee may be asked to take on further consideration of the issues it has raised, with a charge to be prepared for the August Board meeting.

The current Publications Committee chair, Jim Reichman, would like to be replaced as of August. Two ESA members have agreed to serve if asked and other current Committee members may also be appropriate and interested; Vice President Shaver will make an appointment soon.

D) ESA Award nominations

The proposed slate of awardees from the ESA Awards Committee, chaired by Judith Bronstein, was presented and approved unanimously.

E) LTER initiatives

President Grimm reported on the LTER planning process, an effort to integrate research from LTER sites (continental-scale science). One component of this is a proposal to the NSF for multi-site research. A second component is an initiative called Integrative Science for Society and Environment (ISSE), which is being prepared for submission to the NSF and perhaps other agencies. The ISSE focuses on integration of ecological with social science through the lens of ecosystem services. Grimm informed the Board about these efforts and urged that the ESA

support them.

F) Web site

David Gammel (consultant from High Context Consulting) described the process behind design of the new ESA web site, and demonstrated both the structure and appearance of the new design. Full implementation will involve a lot of staff time and will probably not be completed until the fall.

G) Development program

Vice President for Finance Bill Parton and Director of Development Fran Day presented a report about Development activities. A major step was the hiring of Fran Day as Development Director in February. Recent activities include trying to get the grant proposal pipeline going, contacting individuals who are potential major (>\$50,000) donors, foundations, and corporations. The idea of endowment funds was briefly discussed. The Board is in agreement with the several projects receiving most attention at present. Norm Christensen is charged with working with staff to develop criteria that will be used to evaluate possible corporate and commercial sponsors, and to bring a proposal back in August.

Board members are asked to look over the list of potential corporate donors for any that they think should not be solicited. Fran presented a list of four corporations she would like to approach for funding: Interface, Subaru, Alcoa, Toyota. It is moved and seconded that we approve approaching these four corporations now, and consider the remainder on the list at the August meeting. Passed with two abstentions.

The proposed conflict of interest policy for Board members was considered and will be brought back for discussion in August.

H) Education issues

Vice President for Education and Human Resources, Carol Brewer provided updates on two projects.

1) The Profiles of Ecologists report is in (possibly final) draft form, and provides much food for thought. The Board is enthusiastic about finding ways to distribute the information, and about the idea of publishing the data as a data paper (as well as the results of the survey described next).

2) The survey of Ecology in the Undergraduate Curriculum was conducted and analysis performed (by a student). A recommendation is made that an intern working with Jason take on the task of writing a report; funding would cost about \$2,000.

I) Nominations Committee

Jerry Melillo, Chair of the Nominations Committee, presented the report of the committee. They recommend the following slate of candidates:

- President: Jim Ehleringer and Alison “Sunny” Power
- VP for Science: Rob Jackson and David Schimel
- Secretary: David Inouye and Deb Peters

- Member-at-Large: Ann Kinzig and Kate Lajtha
- Board of Professional Certification: David Breshears, Carmen Cid, Steve Handel, Wayne Polley, Ed Reichel, Diane Wickland

It was moved and seconded that the list of nominees be accepted. Approved unanimously.

Break for dinner with AAAS Fellows who are ESA members.

Tuesday 9 May 2006; same participants minus Christensen.

IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

V. DISCUSSION / ACTION continued

J) Regional Initiative

Past President Jerry Melillo, Director of Public Affairs Nadine Lymn, and Director of Education and Diversity Programs, Jason Taylor reported on efforts to date.

A meeting was held this spring to work on this initiative. Goal of the “Knowledge Partnership” initiative is to share the basic principles of ecology with decision makers and clarify how these principles can help solve some of society’s most difficult environmental problems. Hurricane Katrina provided some incentive to pick the southeast as an initial focus. We might pick about 5 regions overall, consider them sequentially over 3-5 years. Rocky

Mountains/Great Plains area might be another possibility (a prospectus was prepared by Jill Baron), as well as East, Far West, etc. Steps toward establishing a partnership could be:

- 1) Appoint a high-profile regional leader and a 3-person advisory committee;
- 2) Define three priority topics based on a regional workshop;
- 3) Appoint three, five-member Regional Response Teams (R3Ts), one per topic;
- 4) Hire a regional network officer (perhaps housed at an academic institution) to
 - a) facilitate development of a regional network of ecologists;
 - b) track major environmental legislation in the region and coordinate with DC office on national links;
 - c) support interactions between R3Ts and key decision makers in the region;
 - d) write for, edit, and publish an electronic regional newsletter;
 - e) attend three ESA meetings, two in D.C., one at Annual Meeting;
- 5) Nurture the regional “knowledge partnership.”

Robert Twilley (Louisiana State University) was identified as a possible leader for the southeast region, focusing on post-Katrina activities as well as other regional issues. Melillo has talked with some regional funding possibilities, and with Louisiana State University Board of Regents.

The sum of about \$250,000/yr might be required for each regional office. Could be a way to invigorate chapters. Need to be politically savvy as well as nimble. Maybe have a training program for participants such as the Leopold program. Do we wish to go forward with this as a pilot project? Should we have a business plan before proceeding? Melillo will continue to work on this, with a possible joint meeting of the Science, Education and Policy committees before the 16–17 November fall Board meeting to develop a proposal for the overall project. Fran is given some direction about what fund-raising ideas would be appropriate. Two workshops will be pursued to identify the regional issues; first, the group of scientists, and second, a broader group of stakeholders. Finally, ESA must define how it wishes to proceed and develop a funding plan.

K) Position Paper process (Pouyat)

Dennis Ojima is monitor for the Ecological Foundations for Fire Management Position Paper review process, with both peer reviews and an open review process. The first draft of the paper is done and some reviews are now back.

The Public Affairs Committee met in March and proposes changes in the protocol for Position Papers. One change would be a category of proactive Policy Papers, with clarified process and goals (to target decision makers). The end result would not be a scientific publication, as has been the case for Position Papers, although publication in *Frontiers* is envisioned. The VP of Public Affairs would monitor the process, which would include a 2-day meeting and 1-year timeline for the finished product. Board

discussion noted that there may still be a role for Position Papers, whose goal would be more to find consensus about a potentially controversial issue in ecology, and not necessarily creation of a policy. We also have Position Statements, which are reactive one-pagers produced quickly on specific issues, and *Issues in Ecology*, which reflect scientific consensus but only pass an editorial review process, and do not require Board approval or represent an ESA position. Position Papers of the Society add a layer of approval but have often taken very long (years) to complete. *It is moved and seconded that we accept the idea of Policy Papers and the process for creating them, as described in the PAC Proposal (without its first sentence). Passed unanimously.* The new policy process would not eliminate the previous process for developing Position Papers. The Science Committee and editorial board of *Issues in Ecology* is charged with considering whether *Issues* could become an official publication of the Society and an outlet for ESA-approved positions.

L) Annual Meeting issues

1) Carbon-neutral meetings. The Meetings Committee has collected a lot of useful information, and the Board is supportive of having information placed on the Meetings web site and made easily available to registrants. *It is moved and seconded that we support the effort to promote carbon-neutral travel to the Annual Meeting. Passed unanimously.*

2) Abstract submission fee. Previous attempts have caused confusion on the part of meeting participants and created headaches for volunteers and staff. *It is moved and seconded that the Annual Meeting registration fee be increased \$10 to cover the cost of the abstract software fee. Passed 6 to 4.*

No new business. Meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

David Inouye
Secretary