
Minutes of the ESA Governing Board 19–20 May 2005 Washington, D.C.

Members present:

Jerry Melillo (President), Bill Schlesinger (Past-President, 19 May 2005 only), Nancy Grimm (President-elect), Alan Covich (incoming President-elect), Gus Shaver (Vice President for Science), Norm Christensen (Vice President for Finance), Bill Parton (incoming VP for Finance), Carol Brewer (Vice President for Education and Human Resources), Rich Pouyat (incoming VP for Public Affairs), Shahid Naeem (Member-at-Large), Dennis Ojima (incoming Member-at-Large, 19 May 2005 only). Unable to attend: Boersma, Palmer, Powers.

Staff Present:

Katherine McCarter (Executive Director), Cliff Duke (Director of Science), Nadine Lymn (Director of Public Affairs), David Baldwin (Managing Editor), Elizabeth Biggs (Director of Finance), Sue Silver (Editor).

Guests:

Jeff Herrick, 19 May 2005
Bruce Hayden, 20 May 2005

Thursday, 19 May 2005

I. ROLL CALL AND AGENDA

A) The GB unanimously adopted the proposed agenda.

II. RATIFICATION OF VOTES TAKEN SINCE THE OCTOBER 2004 MEETING

A) The minutes of the October 2004 meeting were approved.

B) Brief discussion and approval of the 2006 Annual Meeting theme, "Icons and Upstarts in Ecology."

C) Reappointment of David Schimel, EIC for Ecological Applications, to a 3-year term, beginning January 2005 and ending 31 December 2007, was approved.

III. REPORTS

A) Report of President Melillo. A reminder of the schedule of program reviews and midterm reviews:

Program	Review	Midterm Review
Science	Fall 2004	Spring 2006
Finance/ fundraising	Spring 2005	Fall 2006
Publications	Summer 2005	Fall 2006 or Spring 2007
Public Policy	Fall 2005	Spring 2007
Education	Fall 2006	Spring 2008

Gus Shaver requested that a document be created summarizing the timetable of events such as creation of the ESA office in Washington, D.C., the SBI program, etc. Katherine and staff will work on this after the Annual Meeting.

Gene Likens has agreed to give a retrospective of the ESA on its 90th birthday. Jerry has been contacting past-presidents to encourage them to attend. Nancy suggested that we consider commissioning a history of the ESA for its 100th anniversary. The ESA archives at the University of Georgia library could be a resource for this.

B) Report of the Executive Director and staff

- See the May 2005 written report. One highlight is the positive reception that several federal agencies gave to Katherine

and Sue Silver about possible financial support for *Frontiers*.

- The Montreal meeting may have 4000 people (registration to open next week); this meeting may be even larger than Portland. Presidents of other ecological societies from around the world are being invited to a breakfast meeting with ESA president Jerry Melillo and BES president Alastair Fitter.
- Cliff Duke reported on the data sharing initiative, and planning and fund-raising for the Mexico meeting.
- Sue Silver reported on discussions with Charlesworth China to introduce *Frontiers* to many libraries in China, and efforts by the Chinese *Frontiers* Board member to solicit articles from Chinese authors for a possible special issue next year. The Mexico meeting may also generate a special issue (there is a proposal in to NSF for funding this).
- David Baldwin reported that submissions are up, and turnaround time at *Ecology* is now at a record low. The success of *Ecological Archives* is responsible for some of this (e.g., there are now >100 submissions associated with papers in *Ecology*, and almost every paper in the August issue has material in EA). The publications office is ready to start making links to a data registry as soon as it is created.
- Liz Biggs reported that Charlesworth China is also exploring marketing of other ESA publications besides *Frontiers*.

ESA has had a good year in terms of finances (memberships, meetings). The membership database is now working with on-line access by members. The e-store is also working now for purchase of back issues.

- Nadine Lymn reported that the rapid response teams are mostly mobilized, and Board members will be invited to a lunch meeting with the team members at the Annual Meeting. Congressional Visits Day went well. Plans are proceeding to take a bus-load of congressional staffers on a tour of USGS activities in the Chesapeake Bay area.
- Jerry Melillo reported on a dinner meeting with Lou Pitelka, who is now working part-time at USDA, and discussion of possible collaboration with a few other societies to run a workshop about agricultural ecosystems.

C) Financial updates: Norm Christensen and Katherine McCarter

The fiscal year begins on 1 July, and Katherine reported results through the third quarter (March). The budget is in good shape, in large part because of the success of last year's Annual Meeting (two-thirds of the surplus) and subscriptions and dues (one-third); currently we have a \$325,432 surplus. We are trying a different mechanism this year to discourage those who submit abstracts for the meeting and then don't show up (taking credit card numbers but not charging an abstract submission fee to nonattendees until after the meeting occurs).

D) Written reports from President-Elect Grimm and Program Chair Paul Ringold

- Grimm reported on plans for the International Conference on Circular Economy and Sustainable Development, to be held in Hangzhou, China, 1–4 November 2005, sponsored by the provincial government of Zhejiang. Melillo and Grimm will attend.
- Plans for the 2005 meeting in Montreal are proceeding well.

IV. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

A. Financial review

Liz Biggs led a quick discussion of 10 graphs sent to Board members that show membership and financial data for the past 6 years; the trend has been positive in both areas.

- Reserve funds. An analysis was done of the ESA's requirements for operating reserves. Total risk, should there be significant problems with subscription revenue, cancellation of the Annual Meeting, etc., is about \$2.3 million. One suggestion is that we have a reserve of 6 months of operating expenses, which is also about \$2 million. The VP for Finance and staff recommend that we use this as a target, with the goal of budgeting \$50,000/yr, as well as adding any additional surplus. This could become a quasi-endowment, managed like an endowment, but without the restrictions of endowment spending. We currently have about \$600,000 in unrestricted reserves.
- **A motion was moved and seconded: The Ecological Society of America should develop a financial reserve of approximately six months of operating expenses, currently \$2 million, through an annually budgeted payment (\$50,000) and any surplus from the annual budget. Approved unanimously.**
- Investment of restricted funds. These follow a typical (conservative) pattern for endowment funds. Significant growth will have to come from donations, not from investment income.
- Discussion of a fundraising position, following on previous Board suggestions that we should have one. Katherine presented ideas about how this can be accomplished (using both core funding and Millennium Fund). We have researched a target amount for annual salary for a nonprofit development officer (with up to 50% of this in additional funding for travel, entertainment, publications, etc.).
- Millennium Fund. The Fund is available to the Governing Board for specific projects. Fund balance is about \$84,000; Christiansen suggests we shouldn't let it get this large. The proposed budget would fully utilize the account for this year, and let us start over next year.
- *Frontiers* budget. Katherine reported on efforts to raise \$500,000 to cover the gap that developed when Packard Foundation was unable to meet its original commitment. About \$165,000 is now in hand from a few different federal agencies, and we are waiting to hear from a few more. Advertising revenue is above the goal for this time, and a lot of effort is going into securing additional library subscriptions. We have funding in hand for about three more years (at about \$400,000/yr).

- Other publication issues. The plan is to give electronic access to ESA journals to all subscribers, for the previous cost (+ 9%) of print subscriptions. This will result in a savings of about \$700/yr to libraries; Schlesinger suggests we use this as an opportunity to push adding a *Frontiers* subscription.
- Membership dues. Have been flat for many years, and we should consider whether to raise them. There is no specific proposal yet.
- Board ethics and management. Sarbanes-Oxley legislation provided guidelines to commercial companies, and while nonprofits are not covered by this, many organizations are beginning to look at a checklist of requirements of Sarbanes-Oxley that may eventually apply to nonprofits. ESA has been doing most of these for some time, but there are two that we should adopt: an audit committee of the Board, and clear conflict of interest policies (e.g., an annual form to be signed by Board members). The plan is for the staff to start work with the incoming VP for Finance, Bill Parton, to work on these changes.

B. The Mexico Meeting

Guest (meeting co-organizer) Jeff Herrick made a presentation about the meeting. Plans are progressing well, and there has been a lot of interest. A call for workshop titles will be issued soon (many have been suggested already). Fundraising is progressing and looks promising, but the Board decided to assume responsibility for the cost of the meeting (running the meeting and subsidizing registration and travel for international participants) in the meantime so participants can make commitments to attend.

A motion was moved and seconded: The ESA will commit to up to \$250,000 in expenses for the Mexico meeting. Approved unanimously.

C. Proposed 2005–2006 budget

Katherine and Liz presented the budget, which the Board discussed. A major new initiative in the proposed budget will be the addition of a development/fundraising position (see discussion above). Printing of WAMIE II report, analysis of undergraduate education survey data, translation of additional Issues in Ecology before the Mexico meeting, and a WAMIE workshop were suggested as additional activities for Board approval. No decision was made about these additions.

D. Public Information Campaign

Vice President for Public Affairs Sunny Powers joined the discussion via speakerphone. Should the ESA undertake such a campaign? Nadine reviewed the chronology of this idea. Sunny summarized discussions of the Public Affairs Committee, and presented a recommendation. Lengthy discussion led to a consensus that a regional focus, perhaps taking advantage of ESA chapters, would be an appropriate way to proceed. This is less daunting than the idea of a national campaign, whose scale (and expense) began to appear formidable. Staff will begin development of a concept paper for review in August.

E. Publications issues

- Journal mission statements. David Baldwin reviewed the origins of these statements. A few suggestions were made that David will convey to Jim Reichman.
- EIC review recommendations. Issues raised in the report of the review

committee for the Editor-in-Chief of *Ecological Applications* were discussed, and some recommendations were made that will be passed on to David Schimel.

F. Data registry proposal / data access

Nancy Grimm presented a possible timeline/process to move from a data registry toward a data repository, and then on to ways to facilitate use of stored data. The Board has already approved a statement for ESA journals encouraging authors to identify a data registry for their data. A prototype for an official ESA data registry at NCEAS can be seen at <<http://knb.ecoinformatics.org/knb/style/skins/esa/index.html>>. **A motion was made: The ESA has approved the data registry at NCEAS and strongly encourages all authors of papers accepted in ESA journals to use this or another ESA-approved registry for data in their papers. Data registration will become a requirement for papers submitted for ESA journals beginning in 2006. Motion is tabled.** The Publications Committee is asked to clarify the steps involved in creating a data archive and implications of requiring that it be used, and to come up with a list of ESA-approved data registries that might be used in addition to the ESA registry. The motion will be reconsidered at the August meeting.

Dinner: The Governing Board invited NEON postdocs to join the Board for dinner. Those in attendance were Kit Batten, David Kirschtel, Rank Knight, Meeko Oishi, and Brian Wee.

Friday, 20 May 2005

EXECUTIVE SESSION

G. British Ecological Society proposal

The British Ecological Society intends to invest approximately \$1,000,000 in support of

ecology in developing countries, and has asked ESA to join in this effort, at least in terms of moral support (and potentially in terms of fund raising in the future). **A motion was made and seconded: The ESA Board supports the idea of collaboration with the British Ecological Society. Approved unanimously.** The details of this collaboration remain to be decided, but because there is some urgency for the BES to proceed, we would like to convey our interest and support at this time.

H. NEON Co-Director Bruce Hayden

Co-Director Hayden gave the Board an update on the status of NEON, and the role of the postdocs that joined us last night for dinner. They are working toward an integrated plan for development that is due in October. He also addressed the issue of funding for big science projects (e.g., what influence might they have on smaller-scale science funding), the relationship between NEON and other science agencies (e.g., NASA), the ratio of funding for infrastructure vs. research, and what the ESA might be able to do to support NEON.

I. Norm Christensen report

Norm Christensen reported on discussions regarding the National Parks Fellowship program. He is very enthusiastic about the impact of this program for science in and for the parks, and the potential to strengthen the relationship between NPS and ESA. Previously funding has come through a collaboration of the National Parks Foundation and the Mellon Foundation, while ESA has served as a subcontractor to organize the selection process. Advisory Committee Chair Kay Gross and Committee member Norm would like the Board to consider having ESA lead both the program in general and fundraising efforts for it. The Advisory Committee will come back with a proposal.

J. Science Committee suggestion for a change in the Bylaws

A proposed Bylaws revision to combine the Research and SBI Committees into a new Science Committee and to clarify the mission of the Office of Science Programs was proposed. This change grew out of the discussions in May about Science Programs. **A motion was made and seconded: The ESA Board supports the proposed change in the Bylaws. Approved unanimously.**

K. Awards nominations

Vice President Brewer presented the slate of proposed award winners from the Awards Committee. **A motion was moved and seconded: The ESA Board supports the slate of proposed award winners. Approved unanimously.**

L. Proposal from VP Powers and the Public Affairs Committee

The Committee proposed pursuing development of a position paper on ecosystem services. There is general support for this idea (including from incoming VP for Public Affairs Pouyat). The Committee is asked to proceed with identifying appropriate people to help develop a position paper.

M. Proposal to adopt a statement on economic growth

A proposal was made by an ESA member (Richard Christian) that the ESA adopt a statement on economic growth as it relates to the long-term health and functioning of ecosystems. Concerns raised by Board members included potential alienation of some ESA members (many of whom come from industry), potential to damage the Society's reputation as an impartial source of advice to government, and the fact that

some of the statements of fact in the proposed policy statement may not have a strong scientific basis at this time. There was consensus that this is a subject worthy of further discussion and study, but that it is premature for the ESA to make a policy statement.

N. Presentation of the WAMIE II report

The WAMIE II report was presented by VP Brewer. Extended discussion of the report and its (33) recommendations followed. There is a big gap between what seem to be female-majority graduate students in ecology (although many are not ESA members) and the numbers of females in postdoctoral and faculty positions. How can we identify the barriers and work as a Society to overcome them? Although there seems to be some progress with regard to sex ratios, there has not been much in recruiting from minority ethnic groups. Sentiment was expressed for using the existing committee structure (e.g., the Standing Committee on Education and Human Resources) rather than forming a new one to push for progress on the issues raised by the report. Can we mine previous government studies for data rather than duplicating efforts? Perhaps we should contact other societies such as the Society for Conservation Biology and the Society for Ecological Restoration about their memberships to see whether they are proving to be more attractive to female graduate students. **A motion was moved and seconded: The ESA Board gratefully accepts the WAMIE II report. Approved unanimously.** The EHR Committee was asked to try and find answers to several questions:

1) Why don't more of the female ecology graduate students become members of ESA and consider it their primary professional organization?

2) What can ESA do to address the general issue of retention in the field?

O. ESA links to NEON

Given that NEON is likely to be funded in the near future, after a build-up phase of 5-10 years, and that this may bring about a cultural change in what ecologists do or are perceived as doing, what can the Society do to bring its membership behind this effort? Suggestions included an editorial in *Frontiers*, having Jerry make some comments at the NEON symposium in Montreal, and letting Bruce Hayden know that the Society would like to know what it can do to strengthen the case for NEON funding.

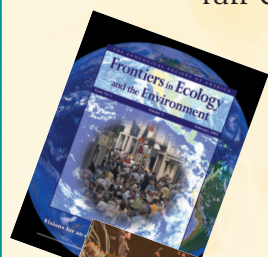
P. New business— none.

President Melillo reminded the Board about its meetings in Montreal. Board members are reminded about the requirement for a passport or other acceptable documentation for travel to Canada and back.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,
David Inouye, Secretary

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT
Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment...
full-color scientific journal of the Ecological Society of America
Here's what they are saying...



"Frontiers is the only journal that I read cover to cover. I'm impressed and your team of editors should be congratulated."
– Robert B. Srygley, University of Oxford

"...One of the few that I skim, cover to cover, every issue. Keep up the wonderful work!"
– Jonathan Foley, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment receives glowing praise – one of the most unanimous reactions that I have ever heard from our membership in the past 30 years."
– William Schlesinger, 2004 ESA President, 2004 Annual Report

"I am very much enjoying reading Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment. It is very well prepared and contains excellent articles of current ecological issues. It serves my current needs of trying to keep up-to-date with ecological issues in the complexity of current life."
– Roger Hnatiuk, Emeritus Member of ESA

Join ESA – Receive *Frontiers* (Institutional subscriptions also available)

To Join ESA or Order your College, University, Department, or Library Copy

Visit our website, www.esajournals.org, and click on "Subscriptions" or call 202-833-8773.

Contents: editorials • breaking international news • readers' letters • high-impact research communications of broad interdisciplinary interest • readable synthetic reviews on ecology and environmental science • multi-author debates on current issues and controversies • essays on legal issues affecting the environment • reviews of the latest websites • resident columnist

Not Just a Must-Read but a Want-to-Read

esa