

Master Naturalist/DNR Advisor Board Meeting

April 14, 2018, North Bend State Park

Minutes

Attending: Kieran O'Malley, Scott Warner, Jim Fregonara, Ellen Hrabovsky, Andrea Dalton, Bernie Howe, Tommy Zeitz, Clark Dixon, Ann Wakeford, Emily Grafton, John Bocan, Carol Nix, Rebecca Linger

Scott Warner: Welcoming remarks. Thanks to Ellen for her fine leadership.

At this meeting we will want to focus on updates from the DNR, chapter updates and action items. Also need to focus on the upcoming conference.

Previous minutes from October 19, 2018 approved.

Chapter Updates:

Emily Grafton, Mid-Ohio Valley Chapter. Advertising through brochures. Finding diversity of instructors has been challenging, but have good outings planned. Would like to have some suggestions for speakers. She's been approaching faculty at Marietta College for classes. Wildlife refuge offered interpretive training and the chapter members have attended and plan to help with interpretive walks.

Tommy Zeitz, Tygart Valley Chapter. Had a community meeting on Wednesday. 50 attendees. Talked about corvids (ravens and crows). Local newspaper reported the meeting on the front page. Have about 8 or 9 folks from the meeting that may want to join the chapter. Has three or four members finishing up. Runs the classes one Saturday per month from March to November. Tries to get all the core classes during that time. Tygart Valley has been around for five or six years. Has 15-20 graduates in his chapter. Feels that the pool of potential members is shrinking.

Andi Dalton, Canaan Valley Chapter. Amended schedule is up. There are two schedules posted. "Master Naturalist Weekends" and elective classes that would count as electives, such as Wildflower Pilgrimage, Mushrooms Foray. Core classes May – July. Had been down to 8 or 9 students per class in the past two years. Decided to charge dues to current students and it seems to be working: \$15/year. Does allow her to offer electives. Had previously tried charging \$10 per class, and while people were paying this fee, she would rather subsidize the class for new students. Concentrating on doing more programs at Canaan State Park (working with Dave Vance). Went through Doug Arbogast with Interpretive training through the National Association of Interpreters. Plans on doing classes for the state park. Invasive Plant survey at Blackwater. Will walk the park three times, in June, July and August. Can be pulling invasives and applying herbicide strategically. Zack Fowler will be teaching mosses and ferns.

Becky Linger, Kanawha Valley Chapter. Registered 31 students for the next cohort. Strong volunteer activities through collaboration with the Kanawha State Forest Foundation, leading walks. Also volunteering with the Girl Scouts to hold "outdoor classroom days" for local elementary schools.

Ellen Hrabovsky, Monongahela Chapter. 20 folks interested, about 15 signed up. Has classes schedule through October. Have folks who work at the Avian Education Center. The manager of the Arboretum has a program training citizen scientists, Zack Fowler. The diversity of her members are vast. Has an archeologist who will be teaching. Other members of the chapter will be developing electives in their areas of expertise. One of the most popular activities is the Winter Book Club. Charge the certified folks \$10 to recertify. Meet at the Agriculture School's plant pathology building. Working to get a room for the Master Naturalists at that location. Botanical Gardens are the field. Sends ad to Dominion Post; they publish it three or four times, but mostly advertise by word of mouth. Denise Gwinn is great about sending folks to the right coordinator. With WVU right there, getting instructors are not difficult at all.

Keith Richardson, New River Chapter Report, Ellen Hrabovsky: New River Chapter has a small but dedicated core group of members. Keith was unable to attend due to family commitments.

Clark Dixon, Potomac Valley: Has two open houses, one in November and one in January. Opened the 12th class in March. Enrolled 20 students. Meet once a month. Open the season with two classes on Saturday, two on Sunday. Then one class on Saturday, one of Sunday. Tries to hold the class at 20 enrollees. Now under new leadership. Clark has stepped down as Chair, but has agreed to be the vice president on the MNSAC. Looking for someone to represent Potomac Valley on this Board. The new Chair did not come from the committee, and has a learning curve. The new chair is Kelly Wolf, who was the Potomac Valley Audubon Society Chair. Chapter Planning Committee has been focusing on the upcoming conference (hopes to have 100 attendees at the conference). Charges \$300/person. Does offer scholarships. Has Master Naturalist from 2007 finding volunteers to help Cacapon State Park. They have just filled their naturalist position, Valerie Chaney. She will be working with the MN volunteers. There are naturalists in the area who may want to join the program to expand their knowledge.

Action Items from October's Meeting

Approval of new bylaws (EH): subcommittee worked to revise the bylaws so they met the needs of the program. With these bylaws, we were able to get the articles of incorporation and our tax-exempt status. The bylaws were cleaned up but not significantly changed. Bylaws are not on the mnofwv.org. Ellen will send these to Denise for posting.

Curriculum revisions (EH): subcommittee discussed the curriculum and the course credit hours. Made the decision to make all core classes are 3 credit hours except Names and Classifications (1 credit hour). Added "Fishes" and "Geology" to the core curriculum. A discussion of classes that would count as an elective ensued. Historical content may count, depending on the topics; the test is whether the topic relates to an impact or use of the natural environment.

Nomination Report of MNSAC Officers (EH): Andrea Dalton, Chair, Clark Dixon, Vice Chair, Rebecca Linger, Secretary, Carol Nix, Treasurer, Sue Flowers, member-at-large. (Sam Muncy has one year left as second member-at-large.)

Master Naturalist Display, Jim Fregonara: Have purchased two tablecloths with logo. Available from the Elkins office and can be shipped to the chapters as requested. Wants to create a retractable display, but

needs someone to create the display. 33" x 72". Another way to promote the program, Jim made some bumperstickers with the logo! Every registrant for the annual conference will receive a bumper sticker.

Master Naturalist Brochure Update, Scott Warner: Ellen has a member who was planning to use the brochure design as part of his curriculum. May be able to outsource this to WVU extension to print the brochure.

Monarch Summit Update, Kieran O'Malley: (http://mnofwv.org/monarch_summit) The Monarch butterfly has been petitioned to be listed as an endangered species. The Wildlife service is reviewing the request. To address the issues of the Monarch butterfly, the DNR has sought to create a conservation strategy to help the monarch and other pollinators. Need to get all stakeholders in the state involved, those who might be affected by the regulations but also those who can affect change. West Virginia is the spearhead for the Northeastern United States.

The Summit was held on March 5-6 with 80 attendees. Had the city representatives, oil & gas industry reps, rep from the Xerces society, the Monarch Alliance, Monarch Joint Venture, Forest Products Industry rep. All talked about how they can help with the conservation of the monarch in their business. Kent Leonhart, commissioner of agriculture. Breakout sessions: land use groups discussed what was happening on the landscape. Oil and Gas environmental consultants discussed how they could reseed with pollinator friendly seed mixes instead of fescue. Division of Highways also represented.

Sue Olcott has gathered all the information from the break-out sessions and plans to return that to the stakeholders to develop a strategy by June or July. This would allow the Fish and Wildlife division to consider the implementation. Sue is working on building a website of all the information and will be working with a Master Naturalist member of Monongahela Chapter to design this. This is a high priority of the DNR. Would be asking Sue to attend the October meeting to help us define what we need to do to promote this; is our role education, or helping the parks? That needs to be addressed.

Emily Grafton recognizes that the Master Naturalists are often "preaching to the choir" and suggests that we create a brochure that we could give to neighbors (and seed packets) to promote planting for pollinators. Also, consider Rail-Trails as a reseeded project. May want to survey the rail-trails.

Sarah Owens is spearheading the project at the DNR.

News article: <https://www.westondemocrat.com/article/dnr-holds-monarch-summit>

Chapter Assistance from the DNR(SW): Any events sponsored by the Master Naturalists can be advertised with News releases and press releases can be sent out by DNR to the Associated Press. Need four weeks' notice for publication. Send to Jim Fregonara. Also can promote through Facebook.

R3 Programs - Recruit, Retain, Reactivate (KO): Decrease in hunting licenses and wildlife tags. DNR is promoting hunting and fishing in the state and will be creating programs to support these efforts. Master Naturalists is one of the R3 programs.

Volunteer Opportunities (KO): Especially in Morgantown, Frank Jernejcic (ger NAY sic) is doing a rattlesnake study on Cooper's Rock. Would like to take some Master naturalists out when he is collecting data. <http://www.wvdnr.gov/rattlesnakereport/>

Firefly Survey (KO): A program is coming to describe how to identify fireflies.

Conference Update, Clark Dixon: Met with Cacapon SP and have everything they need to run the conference. Have a final list of presenters and their honoraria. Will accept volunteers at the conference if anyone wants to volunteer; ask Clark to send your name into the member in charge of volunteers. Will be meeting with his conference committee in early May to make sure that everything is covered.

Volunteers needed: 1) registration table, 2) room monitors who can ensure that the equipment is functioning, collect the sign-in sheets and introduce the speakers and 3) Sales table volunteers.

Kathy Shreve will be sending the registration checks to Ellen Hrabovsky who will deposit into the West Virginia Master Naturalist Program, Inc. state account.

Jim Fregonara described the items for sale: several sizes of polo shirts, tee-shirts, a few tote bags from last year, hats, a notebook with the MN logo, coffee cups, etc. A request to include the thumb drive manual was warmly received.

The group complimented Clark for his leadership and his team's dedication to scheduling the conference.

Articles of Incorporation (SW): Ellen worked with SW to get tax-exempt status for the WVMN. In the past, the folks at Davis and Elkins College had a general ledger item for us. In order to set up a bank account for the program, Ellen learned that the group needed an EIN and a tax-exempt form. She led the effort to get articles of incorporation from the state and a state business registration form. We are now a non-profit, tax exempt 501(c)3 organization.

Treasurers Report, Carol Nix: An account was established at United Bank for the "West Virginia Master Naturalist Program, Inc." on February 6, 2018. The initial deposit of \$156.16 came from the Monongahela Chapter account, which had been administering funds collected from all state MN branches. Davis and Elkins transferred \$7,853.25 on February 9th. Ellen Hrabovsky was reimbursed \$275 for expenses incurred for the 501c-3 incorporation. The 2018 website fee was \$131.28. A wire transfer fee of \$14 and a check fee of \$34.45 were the only other expenditures, leaving a balance of: \$7,554.68.

Recent Vacancies at state level (KO): Kathy Shreve was reassigned to environmental coordination. Other office assistant was moved to another program. Kathy and her supervisor are willing to support the Master Naturalists until the position is filled. Kathy is accepting the conference registration and checks and is forwarding these onto Ellen for deposit. For manuals and name tags, there is Kayla, a temporary person, who will be fulfilling manual and name tag requests. For the time being, send request to Kieran, who will forward to Kayla for completion. Send all requests through email only. Don't leave voicemail. DNR has asked to fill the two positions and hope to have Kathy replaced by the conference (hopefully, mid-May). Still need to address fulfillment of certificates.

Next Meeting: Stonewall Jackson Lake Dam Visitor's Center, 1012 Skin Creek Road, Weston, WV 26452.

Items for next meeting (SW): Need to revise the system of registration and fees, which must be kept together. Received federal funds through State Wildlife Grants fund. Need to manage the budget more carefully. We need to fill out the Annual Report of chapter activities to keep track of what the program is doing. Need to report all the volunteer activities and why we are spending funds to advertise the program. By reporting all of this, we elevate the program.

AD: We need to recognize our certified members at the conference.

Action Items

- State list of instructors of both core classes and electives, both established instructors or chapter members who are willing to travel: Emily & Ellen
- Invasive Plants Survey with State Parks. Need a formalized program. Scott will work with State Parks to flesh this out.
- Put Bylaws on mnofwv.org.
- Need a graphic artist/social media person to work with Jim Fregonara to develop
- Ellen will work with her contact at School create a new brochure for the October meeting
- Anything needing to promote, send the dates and name to Jim Fregonara to be put into the WVDNR calendar.
- Monarch Survey: Information will be disseminated to the chapters. Will ask Sue Olcott to attend the October meeting to tell us about their efforts
- Have another biologist at October Meeting to tell about fireflies or other programs through the DNR. And also to let us know things to be aware of in the environment.
- Discuss registration and collection of monies for next conference.
- SW creating a report form for the chapter activities.
- Need to recognize the certified members for their number of years. Recognition gifts? 5, 10, 15 years?

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.