

WVMNSAC Meeting  
October 8, 2020

In attendance: Scott Warner, DNR; Kieran O'Malley, DNR; Gregory Phillips, DNR; Andy Dalton, Canaan Valley; Carol Nix, Monongalia; Tony Maciorowski, Potomac Valley; Steve Swank, New River; John Bocan, Monongalia and Manual Maintenance, Sue Flowers, Mid-Ohio Valley; Denise Gwinn, Monongalia and Webmaster, Tommy Zeitz, Tygart Valley; Becky Linger, Kanawha Valley

Meeting called to order at 10:07 am

Minutes from April 2020 approved without changes.

Treasurer's Report: \$4,627 in our account.

WVMN Chapter Questionnaire, Scott Warner: was sent out to the WVMNSAC. Pulled together the results of the survey; would have been interesting to have a pre-COVID evaluation. Most chapters are at pause without face-to-face meetings. Total of 35 meetings held this year over the state. It looks like everyone needs marketing and recruitment help. A website should be updated, and a social media presence would be appropriate. Biggest needs are getting new topics and finding new instructors. DNR will help out by looking for new instructors and suggesting new topics. Great interest in serving the DNR and getting involved with Citizen Science. Partnering with our State Parks and doing habitat restoration is also still very strong. Finally, the conferences: it looks like Oglebay may be a good place to host our next conference. Greg is to be commended on his work on the survey. Any questions on the survey or to the DNR, contact Greg.

2021 Conference Update, Andy Dalton: Still not sure if we will be able to hold the conference. Have reservations at Canaan. Scott and Andy will meet in January to assess the situation. Hope to have the same conference as was planned for 2020. May have to make some changes, depending on the situation. Also, we need to consider moving the conference to a different time of year; state parks are quite busy with wedding season in June.

Scott Warner: DNR will be meeting with the State Parks to strategize how the Parks will be hosting large events and how we might have to modify our conference to properly follow CDC guidelines and how the Parks want to handle large gatherings.

Conference Planning Guide: A draft of the guide was delivered to the president but was not evaluated. Clark had given his comments very late and these comments have not been vetted. This item is tabled until the next meeting. Andy will work with Clark to finalize the draft.

Establishing a Chapter Guidelines: Would like to approve these guidelines so that they can be sent to the folks in Wheeling and Pendleton who are interested in setting up a chapter. Need a motion to approve. Carol Nix: comment: part about setting up a non-profit organization was extraneous and could possibly scare folks from setting up a chapter. Suggests eliminating the section on non-profit. Becky makes a motion to approve this section of the Bylaws with the section on setting up a non-profit deleted. Second by Sue Flowers. Approved unanimously.

Nominating Committee: Asked Tommy Zeitz and Steve Swank to serve on the nominating committee. Made a comment that we have limited folks who have not served as President or who are not too busy to serve. If we are unable to find officers from the WVMNSAC membership, would like to entertain nominations outside of the committee membership. Everyone agreed to make this an agenda item for the next meeting.

Certification: need to add a year to the time for certification. Carol Nix makes the motion, Tony Maciorowski seconded. Motion carries.

Chapter charters: Scott and Becky were charged with setting up a charter protocol with the DNR to ensure that the chapters are truly a part of the DNR. They will continue to work on this item and have it ready for the Spring meeting.

Youth Program at Oak Hill High School: Keith Richardson was spearheading this outreach and a newspaper article covered the work before COVID shut it down. Have not done much since March on Youth Program establishment. Keith is working on an outdoor classroom thingy at Oak Hill HS.

Showcasing WVMN: Question, do we want to print more brochures as is, or do we want to go after another platform. It appears that Facebook might be the best option. Rachel Davidson can do the graphic design for a fee. We need to discuss where we see this program heading beyond this group. We need to showcase the work that the WVMN is doing. News coverage goes a long way in highlighting the program. Scott Warner can get press releases out. Request: Send notices of what your chapter is doing to Scott so that he can create press releases on these activities.

Website: We need a webmaster; we really don't have the funds to pay for a redesigned website. John Bocan is willing to manage the website but would not be interested in writing articles for it, nor redesigning the website.

Carol: would like to see a list of our instructors and whether they need to get paid. Andy has a list of instructors and will send it out this week.

Zoom Classes for Credit, Denise: Has been taking Zoom classes through other groups in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. Would these classes be approved for credit in the WVMN? Andy: this is typically at the chapter level, chapter coordinators approve. If you hear of good Zoom classes, let John Bocan know the contact information and he can put it on the webpage.

New Chapters at Oglebay and West Liberty: Talked to Molly ???and Vickie Markey who has a great deal of material from the Wheeling chapter. Andy will work with them to set up that chapter. Scott: West Liberty is interested in starting a student chapter that would be affiliated with the university. WL is not allowing groups or clubs to gather. Will be waiting until the Spring semester to allow clubs to be formed. We're trying to use this program as an opportunity for folks who are going into the wildlife and conservation fields to build their resumes. It's possible that we might be able to set up student chapters at the other colleges and universities in the state. We see that West Liberty may be the successful student chapter set-up that we need to show the value of having chapters at the schools. Denise: what would the students get out of it? Scott: College students would be able to use the volunteer hours as resume items. Would make them stand out from other job candidates. The volunteer work would be like job shadowing in a sense. Denise: could we extend that to scouts? Scott: there's liability concerns and whether you can use certain equipment as well as transporting the youth. Looking at the efforts of start a Junior Master Naturalist program, this may be the way we want to go. The question would be; how you certify individuals at such a young age?

Gregory Phillips was promoted and while he will still be working with us for a little while longer, he will be leaving us. We do have someone in mind to replace him. Gregory: Have had folks requesting new manuals and these have been going out. He can still do a lot of services on his end, can still send out manuals and certifications. Have had new members joining the program and badges have been made.

Kieran: Should have Gregory's replacement in about a month. Continue to work with Gregory for all WVMN items.

Wildlife Diversity Unit Citizen Science Projects, Kieran O'Malley: Box Turtle and Firefly reporting tools were very popular. Box Turtle website received over 7,000 reports. Was supposed to be a two year project but received enough information to complete the goal. The webpage may not continue but do continue to report box turtle sightings. The Firefly project received over 2,000 reports. During the season, we were able to identify two populations of the synchronous fireflies: one in the national forest and one in Watoga State Park. Worth the trip to see these synchronous populations. Website will continue next year. Make your membership aware of the firefly portal.

Pollinator Program, Kieran O'Malley: Sue Olcott is working on Pollinator Best Practices events. Working with the Dept. of Agriculture to create events that would benefit all types of pollinators. She's customizing publications for farmers, landowners and homeowners. Dept. of Ag will be publishing these within the next year. There will be eight; forest management, land management, farmers, commercial sites, lawn management, etc.

Reptile and Amphibian Regulations Revision, Kieran O'Malley. In August, our natural resources commission has approved several of our policies and we've protected our priority one species through these changes. Will take effect January 1, 2021. Example: Timber Rattler, can't touch, can't kill, can't collect. DNR will be sending out news releases to advertise these changes. Other literature will be revised. Kevin ??? is working on a revision on the salamander booklet. While many of the booklets have been revised, the salamander booklet is the last one to be finished.

Wild Yards Program, Kieran O'Malley: DNR needs help with the wild yards program. Promotes homeowners to customize the landscape to benefit wildlife. Has wild yards manual, available for download from DNR website. Jim Fregonara is spearheading the applications. Looking to renewing and revising the yard signs. The wild yards manual is about 30 years old and could be revised to include new material. Wildlife Diversity section of DNR website. If any members are interested in helping to revise these materials, let Kieran and Jim know. Would sync well with a Master Gardeners' project. <http://www.wvdnr.gov/Wildlife/Wildyards.shtm> Have about 270 certified wild yards. Only about seven counties that have no wild yards.

Pollinator Habitat Development: workshops are being held at commercial sites. A workshop will be held in May at the Toyota Plant in Buffalo. May be an opportunity for a landowner who might be interested in having MN members do a site review. Protocols on how to do this could be developed out of this program. Doing a site review at a private land in Preston County. Have extended the agreement in RCS to have a Pollinator South position; would be hiring a bird biologist to cover golden wings and cerulean habitats.

Clements State Tree Nursery, Steve Swank: The tree farm is on the Ohio River halfway between Parkersburg and Point Pleasant. Was purchased from the Clements family, Mark Twain's grandparents. Steve was finally able to reach Jason Huffman at the Clements State Tree Nursery about possible volunteer projects. He informed Steve (almost choking back tears) that the nursery will probably be shut down by the first of the year. Covid has created a lack of funds and a complete loss of workers from the local prison. Steve things we need to do anything we can to help keep the nursery open. Needs volunteers to help prune the American Chestnut plots. There was great interest from the attendees to help in this effort. Steve will contact the nursery and see if the Master Naturalists can help out.

Oriental bittersweet removal at Cacapon State Park by the Potomac Valley chapter was highlighted in the Wonderful West Virginia magazine. Karen DeSalvo.

Becky Linger's New Book, Scott Warner: Becky Linger has written a book that's available on Amazon: "A Guide to the Toxicology of Select Medicinal Plants and Herbs of Eastern North America."  
[https://www.amazon.com/dp/0578766302/ref=cm\\_sw\\_em\\_r\\_mt\\_dp\\_D4YFFb5BN3F1J](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0578766302/ref=cm_sw_em_r_mt_dp_D4YFFb5BN3F1J)

Identifying areas of exceptional habitat management, Kieran O'Malley. Establishment of recognition of unique areas of our state to protect them from destruction. By the spring, should have a natural area program that will identify these areas that need to be protected. Master Naturalist membership may see this as an opportunity to identify unique natural areas and interpreting them; developing educational materials. One of these areas is in Canaan Valley state park. Natural Area Program, a project in development, working with state parks and wildlife management areas.

Action Items:

- Scott hopes to have a marketing plan for the program within the next year.
- Scott and Becky will finalize the draft of the Chapter Charter protocol.
- Andy and Clark will finalize the draft of the Conference Planning guide.
- John Bocan will take over as webmaster for current WVMN website.
- Scott, KO, Andy will work on the 2021 Conference

Meeting adjourned at 11:31 am.