

Executive Board Meeting
August 18, 2004, 5:00 pm – 7:25pm
MDC Resource Science Center, Columbia

Attending: Larry Mechlin, Vicki Jackson, Dan Zekor, Margie Mitchell, Rosemary Heinen, and Steve Sheriff

President Larry Mechlin opened the meeting at 5:15 pm.

Minutes

Steve Sheriff reviewed the approved minutes from the March 11, 2004, meeting of the executive board.

Treasurer's Report

Margie Mitchell reported that our chapter has over \$7,863 in our account at the Conservation Employee's Credit Union, not counting the 3 CD's for the Chambers Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Farmer/Wildlife Award

Larry Mechlin presented an idea that Bob Shroepfel and he had put together for the Farmer/Wildlife Award. After much discussion concerning the award and the timing for receiving nominations, Dan Zekor moved that the Missouri Chapter of The Wildlife Society proceed with adopting the proposal of Larry and Bob for a new Farmer Conservationist Award to replace the Farmer/Wildlife Award with changes suggested by Vicki Jackson. Motion was seconded by Rosemary Heinen. The motion carried approving the attached item. Rosemary will lead the effort to recruit nominees through a revised nomination form.

Fundraising for the TWS Endowment Fund

Larry Mechlin reported that the fundraising committee for our contribution of the TWS Endowment Fund is starting to work on their ideas. They are looking for opportunities during next spring.

Fall Meeting

Discussion concerning the fall meeting focused on the scope and breadth of this gathering. Discussion progressed to the point that dates for weekends around September 25, 2004, at wetland areas, such as Grand Pass CA or Fountain Grove CA, were suggested. The focus of the activities would be on wetland management training that would be appropriate for students and professionals.

Quiz Bowl

Rosemary Heinen reported that she will be contacting universities and colleges in Missouri to determine their interest in establishing a quiz bowl for teams of wildlife students. If she finds that several of these schools will make the commitment, then she will plan for this event at the Missouri Natural Resources Conference.

Missouri Waterfowl Association Scholarship

Dan Zekor reported that it looks like the scholarship is not proceeding, because he has not received any further communication from the Missouri Waterfowl Association. Dan will call his contacts with the Missouri Waterfowl Association and see if interest is still alive for this scholarship.

MU Curriculum

Larry Mechlin reported that Aaron Jefferies is contacting the wildlife programs at the Missouri institutions of higher education concerning their requirements for plant identification courses and the availability of such classes. Aaron will provide a report at the annual meeting.

At 7:17pm, Margie Mitchell moved that the meeting be adjourned. Dan Zekor seconded the motion. Without discussion, it passed.

FARMER CONSERVATIONIST AWARD

The Missouri Chapter of The Wildlife Society established the Farmer/Wildlife Award in 1976 to recognize farmers who have made outstanding contributions to wildlife management. However, due to problems in locating qualified farm operators to receive this award, the Executive Board of the Missouri Chapter of The Wildlife Society at its August 18, 2004, meeting established a replacement award with more liberal definitions of who would qualify. The new Farm Conservationist Award is meant to recognize and promote sound wildlife management programs on farms, because the vast majority of wildlife habitat is located within Missouri's rural landscape.

The Chapter expects qualified farm operators to be nominated each year so the award can be presented at the annual banquet. However, only when qualified farmers are nominated will the award be presented.

A Farmer Conservation Award Committee will be appointed annually by the President. This committee will screen candidates who will be nominated by conservation agents, biologists, or other interested agricultural and conservation workers. The Committee will submit a list of two or three names in order of preference for final selection by the Executive Board. If it is the opinion of the Committee or the Executive Board that none of the nominees is qualified, the award will not be presented that year. All nominees submitted and deemed appropriate by the Committee and Executive Board shall receive a letter from the Executive Board acknowledging their contribution and nomination.

Several definitions are necessary to limit recognition to individuals that are at substantial risk from their farming operation and commit to the management for wildlife as an integral part of their farm plan and at scale sufficient to provide at least local benefit to wildlife populations.

Farm Operators: Individuals who actively manage their "working farms" and derive a substantial amount or portion of their income from the farm operation.

Working Farm: A farm where a substantial portion is manipulated by farm practices annually (not one mostly in long-term set aside).

Farm Operation: An agricultural business of sufficient size that it is clearly recognized in the community as a farming operation.

Scale: Farms must be at least 100 acres, because few farms could be operated on a smaller tract and still have substantial resources available for wildlife management.

Wildlife Management: Any manipulation or improvement of resources which clearly illustrates planning and having a long-term desirable effect toward habitat improvement and wildlife numbers. This would include preservation of unique areas providing habitat for uncommon wildlife or wildlife communities.

The Farmer Conservationist Award Committee will consider the level of reliance on farm income/commitment to a farming operation and the level of wildlife/natural resources management on the farm equally.