

# ***Environmental Education Commission***

## **Meeting Minutes**

May 8, 2018

Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

Louisiana Room, Baton Rouge Office

1:00 PM

### **I. Call to order**

Jessica Dixon called the meeting to order 1:09 p.m.

### **II. Roll Call/Sign-in**

**Commission Members Present:** Craig McClain, Jessica Dixon, Matt Reonas, Brenda Walkenhorst, Dianne Lindstedt, Dean Blackett, Brenda Nixon, Heather Niemic; Jill Cowart on the phone

**Commission Staff Present:** Venise Ortego, Thomas Gresham, Brian Gautreau

**Others in Attendance:** Tomeka Prioleau on behalf of Denise Bennett

### **III. Minutes from last meeting**

There is no quorum and as such the minutes from February's meeting could not be accepted.

### **IV. Financial Report**

Venise Ortego provided a copy of the Revenue/Expenditure Report generated by LDWF.

### **V. Coordinator's Report**

Commission staff has been very busy this spring. Brian and Thomas participated in Envirothon, Earth Day, Palmetto Island State Park events, etc.

### **VI. Old Business**

#### **A. 2018 Symposium Report**

Venise reported that Shell provided \$5,000 for the event last year and all exhibitor fees have been paid. Funds are sent to LEEA through their PayPal account and pays to LEEC.

#### **B. EE Grant Awards Update**

Brenda Nixon provided a short update on the EE and announced that we will resume the spring award schedule.

#### **C. Art/Language Contest**

Thomas reported that the Arts and Language Arts Contest had 400 entries all over the state this year. The art work was very good as usual and the judging took place on April 30<sup>th</sup>. He reported that we have announced winners and that everyone is invited to the Governor's mansion to honor our winners.

#### **D. Watershed Web Grant**

Thomas and Brian reported on a Watershed Webs Field experience for 120 St. Aloysius students and their teachers along Dawson Creek. They collected 100 pounds of trash in the area. Brian and Venise conducted a field experience with seven students from Washington-Marion in Lake Charles at Rutherford Beach.

#### **E. Green Schools Program**

Brian reported that he has been working with US-DOE, who is interested in Louisiana hosting its Green Strides Tour in 2019. Tulane and Edible School Yards NOLA is interested in participating in the program. Aramark has contacted Brian with two schools that are also interested in applying. A Montessori School in Shreveport is interested and St. Thomas Moore in Lafayette is applying. He reported that this year looks really strong. John Dupuis is participating "Bayou to Bug".

The Louisiana Environment Phenomenon Education website is in development and will be showcased at the Teacher Leader Summit.

**<http://sites.google.com/site/louisianaphenomena/>** This is a free site for educators. Jill from the Department of Education has announced for teachers and educators to submit phenomenon. Teachers and people at large can submit. Everything will be checked and monitored by LEEC and LDOE.

## **VII. New Business**

### **A. 2019 Symposium**

There was discussion was about other ways to implement the symposium with some new ideas. Some suggested having it at a state park and do more outdoor programming. This could include a variety of activities and more outdoor interaction at the Symposium. The Symposium has traditionally been held at a hotel in February. Some suggested changing the focus and do more outdoors. The problem may be that February may be a poor month for an outside symposium for PD. Perhaps we should change the time of year. Matt suggested that we poll past attendees. Craig questioned what is missing at the Symposium, the options for lodging and how to change it up. State Parks may work, there are various venues in these two places. The whole group liked the idea of more outdoor activities. Some suggested a theme of “being an Outdoor Teacher” at the outdoor Symposium. There could be a variety of hands on activities for various topics. Perhaps we can get more wildlife educators to participate and share ideas. There was a mention of get some data about changing the Symposium and get some feedback. Dean Suggested areas for kids in the Northeastern part of the state with more focus on Nature.

Another question was “would our symposium be more for teachers or for kids? Some suggestions about outdoor symposium were ATV trip, farmland, stock a pond, age groups for fishing. Someone said it sounded like LDWF Hunting Fishing Day. There was also a discussion of having an outdoor day activity across the state in several areas all on the same day. Thomas mentioned that a plan needs to be developed for a statewide celebration.

### **B. Strategic Plan**

Venise discussed that we need to develop a strategic plan for the organization and asked if anyone was interested in working on this task. Teachers should be a part of creating the strategic plan and are welcome to participate. Part of the process is to make sure that we are focusing on what is mandated.

**Action:** The Commission members need to develop a strategic plan for the organization Venise will survey members for a strategic plan retreat date. Members and teachers will be asked to participate in developing the strategic plan. She also will call for volunteers to chair the effort.

## **VIII. Announcements**

Brian announced that he is now at the Gordon Cain Center. He is a full time LSU employee and will transition his LDWF programing to LSU.

Brenda mentioned the problem of single use plastics.

Venise will send a link to the movies related to plastics and the Albatross

## **IX. Next Meeting Dates: August 14, 2018, November 13, 2018, February 12, 2019 (tentative)**

### **X. Adjourn**

Matt motioned to adjourn. Brenda seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.