

**AREA Executive Board Meeting**  
**Conference Call**  
**December 8, 2008**

**Board Members on Call:** Angela Capello, Kevin Cunningham, Shahab Farzanegan, Lea Gray, Randy Honebrink, Tom Lang, Steve Marshall, Nadine Meyer, Spring Reilly, Marc Sommer, Judy Tumosa, Karina Walsh

**Absent Board Members:** None

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 EST by Shahab.

Motion to approve the October 20, 2008 minutes was made by Judy and seconded by Tom. Motion passed.

**Financial report:**

- Lea has opened an account. During the call she received the AREA funds from Amanda bringing the current balance to \$9,696.90. She is still waiting on the check from TX which will be sent to her once all remaining conference bills have been paid.

**Record Transfer Update:**

- Karina has received electronic minutes and notes from Doug Darr and is still waiting for the box of papers from Marc. Marc said he would get the stuff to Karina ASAP.

**Regional Reps Comments and Concerns:**

- **Far West** – Shahab e-mailed and then called all of the state educators in his region. Keith Underwood of Washington mentioned he was up against a budget freeze and Ethan ? of California was not being supported by his administration. Ivy Santee of Nevada reported that she is very busy, facing budget cuts and will not be able to host the 2010 national conference. Brenda ? from Idaho and the people from Alaska have not returned his calls or e-mail.
- **Northeast** – Judy has contacted, through e-mail, the state educators. She has received very little feed back. She did touch base with Amy ? from Maine who was very interested and has sent in her application to become a member of AREA. Judy said that Amy was interested in whether Maine had been part of AREA in the past – Shahab said that yes they had and in fact used to be very active.
- **Southwest** – Kevin said that he has sent an e-mail out to his states but has gotten no response. He is going to call people individually and set up a conference call to touch base with everyone. Kevin has not had a chance to follow up with his federal aid coordinator and asked for clarification on why he should. Steve said that sometimes groups/organizations (universities for example) other than state agencies receive SFR grants and that your federal aid coordinator can let you know who they are and put you in touch with the right person.

- **Mid-Atlantic** – Spring has not had a chance to get in touch with anyone.
- **North-Central & Midwest**– Nadine has not contacted anyone yet.
- **Pacific** – Randy reported that 2 of the 4 states he represents do not have Aquatic Ed programs right now, Guam and Northern Mariana Islands. He will touch base with his federal aid coordinator to find out more details. He knows that Guam had folded the AE into their outreach program. Northern Marianas were shut down due to non performance.
- **Southeast** - Angela joined the call late but had nothing to report.
- **General**
  - Shahab strongly encouraged everyone to call their state coordinators if they don't hear from them through e-mail. He said he got through his calls in about 45 minutes and managed to talk to almost everyone.
  - Shahab also mentioned that people can go to the FAIMS website and view a list of all the Federal Aid grants. He sent the link below.  
[http://faims.fws.gov/portal/page?\\_pageid=33.1.33\\_4088&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://faims.fws.gov/portal/page?_pageid=33.1.33_4088&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)
  - Nadine wanted to know about the joining of the Midwest and North Central regions – was there 1 or 2 federal aid coordinators and if there were two who was the contact for the Midwest? There are 2 coordinators and Tom said that Fabian would be the coordinator for the Midwest.
  - Marc asked/suggested that we employ the feds as go betweens to let non AREA members know about the group and how to become involved.

### **Recruitment Letter**

- Steve has drafted up a recruitment letter that has been reviewed by Tom and Marc.
- The letter gives a generic background of AREA, touches on the value of the membership at \$25 for 2 years, benefits of membership. Openings have been left for reps to insert their name and contact info.
- The letter should help regional reps answer questions they may encounter on the how, what, etc. of AREA.
- Steve had been waiting for the website to be updated with the new membership form that has Lea's contact info.
- An electronic form of the letter will be sent out to the board sometime this week.

### **Board Title Change Update:**

- Steve suggested that Karina send the ballot out over the AREA listserve. Karina reviewed the policy on amendments (please see Article 10 of the AOI) and has agreed to send out an electronic ballot in mid January. (She will wait until mid January in the hopes that all memberships, new and old, will be updated by then.)
- All members of the board put in a positive verbal vote for the name changes.

### **2010 Conference**

- Tom will update the proposal application and will send it out to the four potential hosts as well as posting it on the listserve/website.
- 4 potential hosts – Oregon, Nebraska, National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), and Kentucky (Wolfe Creek National Fish Hatchery)

- Shahab said that Oregon is definitely interested in hosting however, would not be able to make any sort of decision before June – when their financial situation will be more apparent.
- Marc spoke with Amanda Kirkpatrick out of Kentucky and will pass along her info to Tom.
- Steve touched base with Amanda from Nebraska and they are still very interested in hosting – she will get back to him soon.
- NCTC has various challenges associated with hosting.
  - Who will be the actual host? – The feds? And will they provide the staff to run the event?
  - Dry campus
- There was a lot of discussion on whether we should consider putting the AREA conference off a year (2011) due to the current economic climate and restrictions many states are putting on out of state travel.
- Further discussion led to the conclusion that we should go on as scheduled for 2010 even if numbers are lower than normal. Various reasons thrown out where:
  - It will help in AREA’s mission to be viewed as a professional organization.
  - It will help maintain AREA’s financial status.
  - It will continue to serve as a valuable resource/experience for AREA members that can attend.
- Suggestions were made as to how AREA could support/encourage members attending the conference:
  - A stronger focus on scholarships
  - Attend on “own” time – if states wont support attendance
  - Have it in a geographically central location – so more people could drive.
  - Lower conference fees by having less/different activities
  - A few board members mentioned that the letter sent to their director prior to the 2008 conference helped their cause/justified travel.
- Tom mentioned one way to help share the burden of hosting is to strongly encourage states to team up and co-host.
- There were questions about who was responsible for making the final selection of the conference host.
  - NOTE: This is the first year there is more than one potential host site to choose from. Thus the selection procedure has never been formally documented.
  - Tom had assumed that he selected the host site, since all the paperwork goes through him and the conference organization etc. is one of his duties.
  - It was decided that there needs to be a clear procedure for the selection process identifying how it is done and who is responsible.
    - It was decided that the officers will review the applications first and then bring it before the entire board.
    - Karina moved to have this process added to the AOI and Kevin seconded it.
    - Randy suggested we wait to vote on the change until everyone was clear about what they were voting on.

- Karina withdrew her move. She will work with Tom to write up a formal procedure on the selection process and send it out to the board for review.

### **The Financial Meltdown**

- Randy wanted to have a discussion about the financial meltdown we are experiencing and how it is affecting our ability to travel and spend our SPWR dollars.
- As a result of the freezes in travel and expenditures states abilities to complete projects will be reduced.
- Steve said that historically there have been cuts, as he his experiencing now, and they he has not seen it as something he cannot live with. He did however recognize that things in Florida may not be as bad as in other states.
- Marc questioned whether it was the Feds putting restriction on how money is spent – Randy said that it was the state.
- Marc thinks that more emphasis needs to be put on the match of SPWR \$ by volunteer hours.
- Nadine brought up that the match is not the only issue. States are having to foot the bill up front and wait for reimbursement.
  - Marc said that state reimbursement does not take long.
- Randy mentioned that he has met with various “important” people (the feds); they understand our problems and have thought about lowering the match to 10%.

### **Duties of the Board/Bylaws/AOI**

There was some confusion and a lot of questions over the duties of the board, AOI, and Bylaws.

- Nadine expressed some confusion as to the labels given to the board.
  - To clarify: the Executive Board includes the officers, past chair and the regional reps. The officers are simply referred to as “the officers.” (See Article 2. b of the Bylaws.)
- Various people wanted to know the status of the committees listed in Article 7 of the Bylaws. (Conference/Membership/Administrative/Education)
  - Marc said that none are active as of now. Doug Darr and John Lyman have made up the Education committee and we will check with Doug to see if he wants to remain active as the Chair.
  - Karina suggested adding Ti Piper to the Education committee seeing as he is supposed to be responsible for scholarships. – committee agreed
  - There were questions as to whether we should keep the committees if they were not active and did not have any members.
    - Marc said that people dropped out of committees and no one volunteered to replace them.
    - It was decided the committees will remain in existence, currently inactive, that way they can be resurrected if/when they are needed.
- Lea wanted to know if there was an AREA invoice to use when members have submitted their dues, or if she should create one.
  - Steve said that Lea should make up an invoice to use for this.

- Karina wanted to clarify the duties of the Secretary and Treasurer. In the AOI (Article 9. c.) it says that that the Secretary will maintain the membership list – in recent years the Treasurer has done this. She wanted to know if we should keep it as the AOI indicate or how it has been done of late – and amend the AOI accordingly.
  - Marc said the reason things had been done this way was because of lost officer positions and because it creates an extra step in the process because the Treasurer gets the application and dues and then has to send the application on to the Secretary.
  - Steve said we will keep the duty assignments as listed in the AOI. Lea will collect the money from members and then pass along the membership information to Karina.

### **Website**

- Marc's request to the listserv for updates to the AREA contact list has gotten out of control. The contacts on the website should all be members of AREA and at this time there is no easy way to monitor this. In the next few months (after the membership renewal process is over) he will go through and make sure everyone listed is a member. Letter will be sent to individuals that do not have AREA memberships. Karina volunteered to help Marc with this.
  - Steve made it clear that those individuals/groups that do not renew their membership will be cut off.
- Kevin wanted to know why some states had so many contacts and questioned whether this was what we wanted?
  - Marc stated that historically there was one contact that was a member of AREA. That contact could direct questions to the appropriate person within their state.
  - The reality is, in many states there are multiple people coordinating aquatic ed programs so the contact lists have expanded to reflect this.
- There was a question about how someone becomes a sponsor and whether or not the list on the website was up to date.
  - Marc said that sponsors pay membership dues and that the list would need to be updated. (Currently, there are people/groups that are no longer participating in AREA listed.)
- A new page will be added to the website that people will be able to reference for the latest happenings.
  - Marc thought that this would be a good opportunity to use the time we have already purchased for professional work on the website development. Marc will get in contact with Amanda to find out who was paid for the programming and how to get in touch with the company.
- Marc will be working on a redesign of the website - he is not able to provide a date of completion. He will work on this in his spare time.
- Marc hopes to get the power point presentations that were given at the 2008 conference up on the website – he will need something to help describe each presentation for users – someone suggested using the abstracts.

- Unfortunately Tony Fedler has disappeared with the abstracts – Steve has volunteered to track Tony down and get these for Marc.
- Tom suggested adding a past chair/officers page on the website.
- Karina said that there are some links that you click on (exp. To get in touch with the secretary for directions on how to use the listserv) that need to be updated with new e-mail addresses.
  - Marc requested that we e-mail him directly with this and any other updates we may notice the website needs.

## **Other Business**

### *Texas Conference Survey*

- Kevin said that Sara is still working on the survey and that Ann has not had a chance to look it over yet. It should be completed soon and he will pass along the results to the board.
- Tom thought that the results of the survey would be a good thing to have at the AFWA meeting.

### *AFWA Meeting*

- Tom wanted to know if anyone on the board was going to attend the January 2009 AFWA meeting. – None
- Nadine suggested that AREA fund someone's travel to attend AFWA as an AREA representative. She questioned if there was anything in the bylaws that addressed this – there is (see Articles 6. and 5 in the AOI)
- The board discussed and decided that it would be a good idea to have representation at the AFWA meeting and Tom thought that he could get permission from his state to travel. He will request that the state reimburse his travel costs. However, if they can't/won't AREA will pay the costs.

### *Regional Meetings*

- Judy wanted to know what people's thoughts were on having regional meetings during the off years. Have regions been doing this?
- Marc said the last meeting his region had was 7 years ago.
- Steve said that it is up to the reps to decide whether or not their region will meet in the off years.

### *Strategic Plan*

A majority of the group thought that the strategic plan needs to be updated. In addition the AOI, and Bylaws need to be gone through to make sure that all 3 documents reflect the changes that have been proposed over the years and that they do not contradict each other and/or have the same language throughout.

- Objectives that have been completed or met should be removed
- Uncompleted objectives should be updated and reassessed.
- What AREA has accomplished should be added.
- AREA membership should be made aware of changes and what we have accomplished.

- Steve and Marc suggested a few people get together and review the documents and past meeting minutes and make sure that we are updating rather than rewriting.
  - Marc said that he would contact Doug Darr and start this process. Other committee members expressed interest in being part of the process.
  - Once Marc and Doug have had a chance to look things over they will pass it along to the Board for review.

#### *AREA History*

- Since much of the board is new, requests were made for historical references and the who, what, where, and when of AREA's beginnings.
- Karina has volunteered to tackle this project and will work on documenting AREA history.
- Various names were thrown as contacts for Karina to get started with.
  - George Babey, Randy (although Randy said he might not be much help since he was out of the loop from 1996-2006), Carl Richardson, Bob Jones, Sharon Rushton, Mark Reeve.

#### *Conference Calls*

- Nadine wanted to know how the conference call was set up – was it through AREA and if so was it available to Board members to use for regional meetings?
- At this time AREA does not have an account, Steve set up the call with FL funds.
- Steve said that he and Lea are going to look into setting up an account with a company that can provide conference call service to us. Once this is done the service would be available to all Board members. He will keep us up to date.

#### *Dues*

- Karina questioned whether or not we should raise the AREA membership dues.
- No one felt this necessary due to the amount of money AREA has in its account and its 501c3 status.

Steve moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:50 EST; the move was seconded by Tom.

**NEXT MEETING:** By conference call Thursday March 12, 2009, 2:00 pm EST.