

DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

Minutes of the Society for Conservation Biology

General Members Meeting

Held online via GoTo Meeting and in person at SCB Headquarters, Washington

December 12, 2018 5:00-6:00PM EST

Call to order: A General Members Meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) was held in person and on-line on December 12, 2018 with 48 people in attendance. A quorum being established, consisting of SCB Board of Governors (BoG) members and meeting participants from the general membership of SCB, the meeting convened at 5:00pm EST, SCB President Mike Mascia presiding and Marit Wilkerson as Secretary.

Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

After a warm welcome to all in person and online attendees, Mike went through an overview of basic structure of SCB leadership, particularly highlighting the global Board

Approval of Minutes from 2017 Members Meeting

After double-checking that there was a quorum (i.e. at least 30 members of SCB members), Marit briefly detailed the Minutes from 2017 which were posted to the online Conservation forum prior to the meeting.

Motion: Moved by Marit Wilkerson, and seconded, to approve the 2017 Members Meeting Minutes. In favor: Unanimous. **Motion carried.**

Message from the President

Mike reviewed the strategic plan through 2020 with its five strategic priorities to support SCB's mission. Under priority 1, Mike highlighted the journals from the existing ones, the new *Conservation Science and Practice* and the formal affiliation with *Pacific Conservation Biology*. SCB has also supported five new Smith Fellows, streamed and uploaded conference presentations from the regional conferences, and developed process to facilitate information exchanges between all of the SCB groups. Under Priority 2, highlights included policy vision in a *Conservation Biology* editorial, issued policy statements, developed key partnerships and underlying all of it is the establishment of online forums to facilitate conversations and connection to key topics in practice. With respect to Priority 3, there are new working groups, specific online communities to increase communications have been launched, chapter registration processes were reconstructed, created specific donate buttons for specific groups, and launched an annual call for service. Under Priority 4, the SCB membership directory and expertise database was

launched, SCB Memberships were restructured to enhance inclusivity, new categories of memberships added, the Anti-Harassments and Sexual Violence Task Force established, and membership recruitment and retention campaigns launched. Under Priority 5, we have updated key policies of SCB Meetings and Event Code of Conduct, established Socially and Sustainably Responsible Investments standards, reviewed the Board Designated Reserve and staff 401k to be in compliance, developed Executive Office workplans, hired professional conference and development personnel and implemented an Executive Office internship program.

Mike wrapped up by expressing his deep excitement and pleasure at seeing the progress that the Executive Office and Board have led over the past year.

Financial Report / Audit Report

Heather called out Warren Sander (SCB's CFO) and Steve Humphrey (member of Finance Committee and trustee of SCB's Board Designated Reserve [BDR]). She detailed how Dr. Debi Luke came on board as ED mid-year last year and is quickly implementing a plan to get SCB back to the black, given that SCB has often gone into the red (i.e. negative budgets). She plans to do this in three years from 2018-2020. With that context in mind, she reviewed the 2017 finances. The revenue lines detail the main programs of meetings, publications, investment income and net assets which are largely due to Smith Fellows. In expenses, publications, projects (largely ICCB 2017), and supporting SCB groups constitute the most sizable expenditures.

The Audit Committee is pleased to report a clean audit. SCB hires a firm to do this internal audit. Overhead is about 6.6% of expenses which is quite low for an organization of SCB's size. In net gains from BDR, we had an operating deficit in 2017 which we were expecting so in 2018 we did draw from the BDR to cover operating shortfall but even with that, there was \$90,000 gain in investments.

We did approve a Socially Sustainable and Responsible Investment policy this past year. A couple of key points is that 90% of our holdings conform to Dow-Jones Sustainability Index. The other piece is that we do exclude certain sectors such as tobacco, firearms, extraction industry, etc. Our BDR at the time we did this assessment was largely in compliance.

Finally, when taking a closer look at our BDR, we can see it has grown. At the end of 2017, the BDR was at its peak. All in all, still strong at \$1.9M.

At present, we see we are on track with the Board-approved budget for 2018. That's good news and we will update you all further at the 2018 Members Meeting.

Message from the Executive Director

Debi recognized the work of all the groups and volunteer leadership of SCB this past year. She then detailed membership trends which typically peak mid-year around conferences and also showed the breakdown of membership within Sections with North America having the highest by far and the other Sections grouped largely together. SCB has 37 Chapters currently registered and recognized, 6 official Working Groups and five provisional Working Groups, and eleven Board- and Society-level Committees. She reminded the attendees that the call for service just went out.

She then reviewed the new benefits launched this year: (1) Conservation Connections online forum that are both widely accessible and also partitioned along SCB group lines, (2) Membership Directory, and (3) Expertise Database. She highlighted the SCB journals, distinguishing their respective niches and drawing attention to the discounts that SCB members get. She then went over the 2018 Section Congresses which every Section, except Africa this year, held and flagged the upcoming ICCB 2019 in Kuala Lumpur.

SCB Washington, DC Chapter Presentation

Tanja Crk, the President of SCB-in-DC Chapter, then had the opportunity to review the activities, accomplishments and structure of the Chapter. She detailed how their Chapter were mostly NGO and federal government representatives. The Chapter has an annual Strategic Plan that mirrors SCB's overall strategic plan where they focus on creating partnerships and relationships, organize professional development and networking events, and maintain working relations with SCB Executive Office and North America Section. She then went over their yearly timeline, their involvement in observing the special year of 2018 as the "Year of the Anacostia" in the DC region, and their key partners and members.

Open Discussion

Members were then invited to ask questions and surface topics.

How does SCB supports local chapters? Response from Mike and Debi: SCB's deficit budget situation disbars it from supporting any groups as much as it did or would wish to. However, there are new fundraising ideas (e.g., GoFundMe) that groups could use that the EO, Board, Committees, etc. could help support.

Our biggest hurdle as a Working Group is the lack of communication from Executive Office staff and perhaps that small overhead is a bad thing if it sacrifices customer service. Hope that the overhead could be expanded so that groups can be supported. Response from Mike and Debi: Conversation to be had offline to support responsiveness and clarify roles and responsibilities. The Board has decided not to increase staff over the next couple of years and so there is a fine balance for how funds are spent or not.

Is the online forum screened? Response from Mike: It is moderated.

Has anyone ever done a study on rejected papers? Response from Mike: The editors of the journals closely monitor acceptance rates to ensure there are equitable processes and moved to a double-blind review. Happy to note that to the Publications Committee but there is a firewall between Board and SCB staff and the staff and editors of the journals.

What about Working Group funding in 2019 and beyond? Response from Mike and Debi: Our ability to support groups with our very limited restricted funds is hard at this time but there are targeted funds available if those who donate click on specific group donate buttons. Also, the whole Board and professional and volunteer leadership is looking for opportunities around targeted fundraising for groups and larger unrestricted fundraising. Also there will be an end of the year survey to all groups and those responses will help considerably in guiding the Board, staff and other leaders in supporting groups in general.

What are the targets and priorities for SCB? Response from Mike: There are qualitative and quantitative targets and the reporting on that would be in 2016-2017 report and in the forthcoming 2018 report. This is an evolving process as we increasingly professionalize the Executive Office.

New Business

There was no new business raised on the phone or in the room.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:03PM EST.