Minutes of the Summer Meeting of the

Southeastern Chapter of the Ecological Society of America

4 August 2010

Cambria West, Westin, Pittsburgh, PA

Meeting Called to order at 11:45 am

Dave Vandermast from Elon College called the meeting to order and introduced himself as the new Chair of SE-ESA for 2010-2012. Introductions were made around.

**Attending:** Dean Cocking, Alan Covich, Howard Neufeld, Brenda Rashleigh, Jim Fralish, Janet MacFell, Kay Kirkman, Paul Schmalzer, David Vandermast, Jackie White, Jeffrey Herrick

**Old business**

During the spring 2010 Chapter meeting it was agreed that the website has not been sufficiently maintained. Dave Vandermast reported that Joel Gramling, the former SE-ESA Chair, has arranged for a student at Duke University to manage the content on the website. The Chapter had suggested a payment of $500 for the service. ESA hosts the Chapter website on their server and provides limited technical support.

The role of the Vice-Chair has also been a point of discussion at several previous meetings. The by-laws state that the role of the Vice-Chair is to arrange the scientific program, including field trips, for all meetings. Some felt that the field trips were no longer desirable by members of the Chapter. Additional duties were suggested for the Vice-Chair including successor to the Chair and website content coordinator. A committee should be formed to propose changes to the by-laws, which must be submitted to members 60 days prior to the annual meeting.

There was little objection to the brown-bag format of the meeting.

**New business**

Howie Neufeld suggested a symposium at the 2011 Association of Southeastern Biologist (ASB) meeting to address the long and short-term effects of the Gulf oil spill. Howie suggested Gary Machlis as a plenary speaker. Janet MacFell thought this would be an appropriate proposal for a session or symposium at the Ecological Society of America (ESA) meeting in 2011. The deadlines for proposals for both ASB and ESA are in September. For ASB, the scope of the symposium should be broader than the ecological impacts. Topics and questions for the symposium suggested by attendees included:

How did it happen?

What was the initial response?

Who is assessing the environmental impacts?

Who should be assessing the impacts?

Silencing scientists - corporate funded research vs. independent commission

Environmental impacts: off-shore effects, on-shore effects, water quality, wetlands, wildlife, both realized and potential.

Economic and social implications: fisheries, socio-ecological feedbacks

A BP spokesperson should be invited

Environmental regulation/policy

Ecological restoration

Speaker suggestions: Researchers from Florida Marine Research Institute, Center for Wetlands Jeb Byers (UGA), Mandy Joy (UGA), Robert Twilley (LSU) (Alan Covich will contact for availability), US-FWS, BP, Gary Machlis (UIdaho)

An email would be distributed to Chapter members to call for additional speaker suggestions. Once 6 speakers, or tentative speakers, have been found a prospectus would be drafted for submission to the ASB planning committee.

For ESA, an Organized Oral Session (OOS) could be proposed. This session would focus more on the ecological impacts of the oil spill. Jane Lubchenco from NOAA was suggested as a speaker. Other sections such as Aquatics and Applied could be solicited to co-sponsor the session or symposium.

We can request funds from the ESA Executive Committee to pay for speaker travel. Alan Covich mentioned that the request for funding to support both the ASB and ESA symposium would complement the Knowledge Partnership Program, a pilot initiative by ESA to revitalize Chapters and promote rapid regional response to emerging environmental issues.

Committees need to be formed to direct these efforts. An email calling for volunteers should be sent immediately in order to meet the proposal deadlines.

Other new business discussed included the importance of communication for increasing membership. Our outlets include the quarterly newsletter published in the ESA *Bulletin* and the website. It was suggested that funding from ESA could be requested to pay for the web designer. The Chapter could also start a Facebook site to increase visibility.

Alan Covich noted that 2012 is ASB’s 75th anniversary. A committee is being formed to plan the activities, and the Chapter should be ready to participate. The University of Georgia’s Odum School will be actively involved. On the agenda thus far are field trips and a historical retrospective. Additional suggests from members are requested.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.

I have attached the minutes from the ESA brown bag lunch. If you need  
minutes from previous meetings (Asheville) I can send these as well. I have  
not requested the financial report for this year but maybe Dave did when we  
were trying to plan the symposium.  The contact for the financial report  
and membership stats is:  
  
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