

# **Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting of the Herpetologists' League**

**08 August 2012**

**University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada**

## **Board of Trustees members in attendance:**

Marty Crump, David Cundall, Tiffany Doan, Linda Ford, Harold Heatwole, Meredith Mahoney, Jim McGuire, Brad Moon, Steve Mullin, Patrick Owen, Carol Spencer, James R. Spotila, Brian Sullivan, Stan Trauth

## **Committee members and other guests:**

Hinrich Kaiser, Kim Lovich, Lori Neumann-Lee, Roy McDiarmid, Joe Mitchell, Henry Mushinsky, Erin Muths, Mary Reilly (Allen Press), Al Savitzky, Mary White

## **Regrets:**

Michael Harvey, Fred Kraus

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President Trauth called the meeting to order at 1400.

The 2011 Board of Trustees Meeting and Business Meeting Minutes were approved unanimously.

All of the following reports were approved unanimously:

### **Meetings Management and Planning Committee Representative's Report (Mahoney)**

In 2015, SSAR has decided to meet separately from the JMIH, so the JMIH meeting is being planned as smaller meeting in the western U.S. The Reno Grand Sierra Resort was the most competitive and accessible of the bids submitted.

### **Past President's Report (Heatwole)**

Heatwole noted that there is continued movement toward greater cooperation between the JMIH societies. The issue of the publication lag time in *Herpetological Monographs* has been addressed.

### **President's Report (Trauth)**

Trauth thanked Heatwole for his service as President, and he welcomed Spotila as Vice President/President Elect.

### **Treasurer's Report (Mahoney)**

HL is ahead financially due to the timing of royalty payments. HL made some money on sales of calendars, and it continued to receive royalties from *Lizards of the American Southwest*. The current large costs are meeting costs, and last year's meeting was in the red. The WCH will be expensive due to how the cost shares for this meeting work.

### **Membership/Long Range Planning Committee Report (Mahoney/Trauth/Spotila)**

While membership is still declining, the treasury balance is increasing. AP projections indicate that future royalties should not decline. Spotila discussed future work of the Long Range Planning Committee which will need to project the society's situation for the next 5-10 years. HL may need to be reinvented as a society to keep it from fading away. While currently the society generates income, the continued loss in members is not sustainable. Questions to contemplate are:

- What are other possible functions of HL besides just publishing journals and holding meetings?
- Should HL do more in the areas of conservation and education?
- What are reasons for more students to join HL?
- What can HL do to raise the stature of the herpetological field?
- How can HL support more students with grants and activities?

Mahoney noted that there has been an increase in student membership over the past few years, largely due to more student participation in the Williams and Jones-Lovich Awards. She suggested that HL should still involve more students in the society outside of just participating in award competitions.

Heatwole discussed the current decline in senior members. A recent survey indicated that retiring members did not see the need to continue their memberships. Additionally, students did not see the need for membership given that they could get access to the journals through their libraries.

Neumann-Lee noted that more student members could be added to committees, the Facebook page could be more active, and a Wikipedia page and Twitter feed could be created. SSAR has started a mentoring program where grad students mentor undergrads, and HL could participate in this as well.

Spencer suggested that HL could open up more of its competitions and grants to undergraduates.

Spotila suggested that *Herpetological Conservation and Biology* could be linked in some fashion to HL. When its enthusiastic founders move on, the journal may disappear. HL could help maintain it. This would be advantageous to HL since it could move the society into online-only publishing. Spotila also suggested that HL could seek out foundations for financial support to maintain the income stream and increase its possible activities (such as more graduate and undergraduate student awards).

Mushinsky suggested that an increased emphasis on conservation is a way to engage more students since many students want to go to graduate school to protect herps. Retaining these students longer than a few years, however, is a big problem

Moon suggested that HL could get students more involved in society management, and more events could be added at the conferences to attract students. More of a focus on retaining older members is important, and HL could try to attract more international members. Very few international authors that submit to *Herpetologica* are members, and *Herpetologica* does not have any international associate editors. Heatwole suggested that HL could have honorary overseas members who could be appointed to the editorial board for fixed terms.

Trauth suggested that a certificate of membership could heighten prestige of being member of HL. It would have the HL logo, be signed by the officers, and it would be simple to implement. Anyone else with ideas for increasing membership is encouraged to direct his/her suggestions to Spotila, and Spotila will report back to the BoT next year with a plan.

### **Secretary's Report (Owen)**

Any comments or suggestions regarding the recent election and the document wiki should be directed to Owen. Owen will be leaving the position of Secretary at the end of his current term (2013), and anyone interested in running for the position should contact Trauth.

### **Publication Secretary's Report (Mullin)**

There is still no Spanish language mirror website. Mullin is looking for a volunteer to work on this given that almost a third of submissions to the journals come from Latin America. HerpForum and Facebook are currently underutilized, and things that are currently physically posted on bulletin boards at the WCH should be posted electronically as well.

### ***Herpetologica* Editor's report (Moon)**

*Herpetologica* is still on schedule. The time from acceptance to publication is good. Reference and citation formats have been standardized with SSAR, and Moon is currently working on creating an EndNote style. AP is still doing a terrific job. There is some turnover of associate

editors, and two positions need to be filled. Moon is going to try to find international associate editors and improve the balance between men and women in terms of editors. Moon has updated the editorial board, and he is now making more use of them for opinions on split reviews and needed reviews when reviewers drop out. The *Herpetologica* associate editors and editorial board members helped to bring Herpetological Monographs back on schedule. *Herpetologica* remains a strong journal in systematics, morphology, physiology, and behavior. It is strongly international. Submissions increased last year, and the journal is still pretty selective (rejection rate 41%). Moon has been very proactive in helping with English-language problems in submissions. Brazil is the second most common submitter in manuscripts next to the U.S., and Moon would like to get a Brazilian associate editor.

This year will be end of Moon's 2<sup>nd</sup> term. He would like to continue but may not be able to due to new administrative responsibilities. *Herpetologica* may suffer if this happens, so Moon recommended that HL decide whether or not Moon should be appointed to a new term or be replaced. Moon suggested Mullin as a replacement since he has past experience with the journal.

*Heatwole moved to reappoint Moon for a new two-year term.*

*Moon's reappointment was approved with all votes in favor.*

Trauth wondered why *Herpetologica* no longer has subject/topical index. Moon indicated that this was expensive and a large amount of work, and it ended when Jaeger was editor. An index is unnecessary now given the availability of electronic searches. With increased submission rates continuing into the future, extra pages that could be used for the index will probably be used for manuscripts.

### ***Herpetological Monographs* Editor's Report (Moon)**

Last fall there were a number of delays with submitted manuscripts. Reeder had increasing administrative responsibilities that were keeping him from working on the journal. Reeder was replaced with Michael Harvey who had been an associate editor. The delays in *Herpetological Monographs* have now been solved, and this year's issue should be published with the December issue of *Herpetologica*. Moon wondered whether *Herpetological Monographs* manuscripts should be delayed if the page limits are exceeded, or if some pages from *Herpetologica* should be donated to *Herpetological Monographs* to avoid extra charges (this could possibly delay some *Herpetologica* manuscripts in the process). Heatwole indicated that HL should make the investment even if over cost since many *Herpetological Monographs* papers were so overdue. Reilly will check on extra page charges and provide quotes. Moon noted that *Herpetological Monographs* currently has a high impact factor and is now back on schedule. Harvey has done great job in the past year.

### **Allen Press Publishing Report (Reilly)**

Impact factors have increased over a five year period. The journals are available in Brazil through BioOne. AP could put a Facebook link on its journal site and link to the HL Facebook site. Press releases have been very effective and have been picked up by major news sources.

### **Archives Committee Report (McDiarmid)**

The Smithsonian Institution archives is now sorting through and inventorying a number of boxes of HL materials. Future materials should be sent directly to the archives. Any questions should be directed to Ginger Yowell who is in charge of archives.

### **Symposium Committee Report (White)**

There was only one proposal for the Albuquerque meeting in 2013: "Detectability and studying rare species: when cryptic natural histories defy both conventional and progressive statistics," organized by Andrew M. Durso and Richard A. Seigel. The committee recommended funding for the proposal, and the BoT supported the funding.

### **Graduate Research Award Report (Mahoney)**

Last year HL gave out four of the five possible awards. Espinoza recommends making the award a more general student award so that undergraduates could compete. There are twice as many students participating this year compared to last year.

### **Williams Award Report (Muths)**

Paterson has done great job, and there has been an increase in the number of proposals. Opening this award to undergraduate applicants was discussed, possibly creating a separate category for undergraduates.

### **Jones-Lovich Award Report and HL Facebook page (Spencer)**

There were many more applicants this year. HL could use more judges for this award. Jones is stepping down from the award committee, and the committee is looking for another professional from Mexico. Jones and Lovich are not very interested in opening up the grant to undergraduate applicants.

The HL Facebook page has been averaging one post every other week, with not very many "likes" so far. There are people from 20 countries "liking" the page so far.

### **Conservation Committee Report (Lovich)**

Lovich summarized three current challenges for the operation of the committee:

1) The challenge of being notified about important issues that impact conservation which complicates the response time of committee. The committee is seeking out more contacts for quick notifications.

2) The challenge of communicating issues to the Board of Trustees

3) The challenge of communicating issues after the fact. The Conservation Committee could be more involved with the Education Committee.

### **BioONE/AIBS Report (Savitzky)**

AIBS is facing the same membership issues with individual membership sharply declining. BioONE is providing substantial publication royalties back to the societies. Mobile device usage is expected to exceed desktop usage in near future, and this will have implications for how the journals are accessed.

### **Education Committee Report (Mullin)**

The Meritorious Teaching Award decision this year was difficult, and the announcement will be made later in the meeting. The committee is working on a new program with joint society sponsorship to get K-12 students more involved. Gibbons is stepping down as chair of the committee, so a new chair is needed.

### **Graduate Studies Committee (Neumann-Lee)**

This is the third year for the calendar, and it had 31 photo entries this year. This year HL could not sell calendars at meeting due to border issues, but it will pre-sell calendars at the meeting. AP will ship the calendars to Mullin, and he will mail them out. Calendar sales are currently not offsetting the costs of the Williams Award. The committee's current goal is to fund one Williams Grant (to make at least \$1000 from calendar sales). The committee would like to offer complimentary calendars to photographers and award winners. The chair of the committee would like to be more included in BoT email correspondence. The committee can do more Facebook posts and put together a Wikipedia page. The committee will need another student to co-chair committee.

### **New Business:**

#### **JMIH Long Range Planning Committee (Mushinsky)**

Last year the JMIH societies supported the creation of an umbrella society for self-preservation and promoting herpetology. The ornithologists are considering creating a new Society for Ornithology. ASIH is very in favor of a similar herpetological/ichthyological society. The societies would not have to lose individual identities, and their journals would remain intact.

Heatwole noted that all of the society presidents and journal editors are in favor of this umbrella organization.

Doan invited HL to meet with SSAR in Kansas in 2015.

*Spotila moved that HL meet with the JMIH in Reno in 2015.*

*One vote was opposed, all other votes were in favor of meeting with the JMIH in Reno in 2015.*

**Point of view paper endorsement:**

Many recent taxonomic papers have come out (particularly by 2 individuals) which are not in keeping with accepted practices in peer reviewed taxonomy. Kaiser noted that the problem is that a huge number of descriptions have been done this way on some very conservation sensitive species. These names are available under ICZN rules, but they are not scientifically useable. ICZN does not require peer review of names. The point of view manuscript is currently in revision and will be published in Herpetological Review. This paper can be cited in the future as a justification for not using these names. There is no other mechanism for retracting these names. These names could be tabled for the time being until ICZN says otherwise. HL is asked to support the point of view, not the entire text of the paper. Once a final version of the paper is accepted, it will be made available to the BoT.

*Spotila moved to table the endorsement pending further discussion by the BoT.*

*All votes were in favor of this motion.*

**National Center for Science Education:**

NCSE requested that HL join to help defend the teaching of evolution and climate change.

*Spotila moved to support NCSE at the \$500 level for one year.*

*All votes were in favor of this motion.*

**IUCN membership:**

Spotila noted that IUCN membership enables HL to participate at the meeting and have voting rights.

*Sullivan moved to join IUCN for one year at \$700.*

*All votes were in favor of this motion.*

## **ESA petition submitted by Center for Biological Diversity**

The petition asks for support of putting 53 amphibian and reptile species under Endangered Species Act protection. Spotila indicated that HL needs a recommendation from the Conservation Committee.

Trauth adjourned the meeting at 17:55.