

ISTS Board Retreat

August 14-16, 2007

National Conservation and Training Center, Shepherdstown, WV, USA.

Treasurer's report

Ed Drane presented the auditor's report and indicated that all was well and reminded everyone that there are two accounts—the Operating account and the Symposium account. Our assets have increased for the second year in a row—the By-Laws state that we can accrue money to an amount that is equal to what it costs to host a Symposium. To facilitate handling of overseas finances when Symposia are outside the USA, Ed Drane suggested giving a grant to an entity/organization to help fund the Symposium with the auditor's agreement. However, the biggest challenge with Symposia overseas lies with giving out the travel grants.

Nominations

Transparency in the nominations procedure was reviewed. The online voting system was discussed. There will be no more nominations from the floor; all voting will be done online (a quorum is needed) and voting will begin a month before the Symposium and will continue up to the Plenary. Members only have to log in to vote—a reminder note will be included in the registration packages of those who have not voted. Write-in candidates will be allowed.

2008 Symposium

J. Nichols highlighted the 2008 Symposium logistics: the Seri Indians have designed the logo and will participate in a 4-day ceremony, this was going to be a “green” Symposium and the organizers are very conscious of the Symposium's impact on the town, there will be no simultaneous sessions or keynote speakers, and posters will be displayed throughout the Symposium. The 2008 Symposium budget was also presented for the Board to review.

Optimizing the Symposium & Membership/Development position

To ensure continuity in fund-raising and consistency with funders/donors, it was suggested that an assistant be hired to help the Board Chair and President with administrative tasks. Board members have an already-trained assistant work in this capacity, but would review the position at the next retreat. Additionally, seaturtle.org's role in the ISTS and monetary compensation were discussed. An independent assessment of how much seaturtle.org's services are worth was recommended; competitive quotes will be compiled for the Board to review.

Awards

An awards scheme was drafted, reviewed, modified, and approved by Board members. The implications and impacts of the awards as well as the different types of awards to be granted were discussed. An independent Awards Committee was recommended; the Terms of Reference for the Awards Committee will be developed. Modifications were made in the By-Laws and Constitution to include the Awards Committee to be presented

to the membership. Meanwhile, an Ad Hoc Awards Committee will be assembled by the President for the next Symposium.

Online voting

The online voting proposal was discussed as well as the duration of membership. It was agreed that “membership would be from the beginning of one vote to the beginning of the next vote.” Relevant amendments were made to the By-Laws and Constitution. The membership will be informed of the changes and the new proposal.

Resolutions

Last Symposium’s Resolution procedures were reviewed with the goal to streamline the process for efficiency at the Plenary. The new procedure actively discourages editing at the Plenary. Ideally at the Plenary, people would make a case for or against the Resolution under discussion. No Resolutions will be accepted at the Symposium.

Eligibility of travel grants recipients

In an effort to increase transparency of criteria and the awardees, travel criteria were drafted and travel grantees will be posted on the ISTS website.

Formalizing positions

The Program Coordinator plays an important role in providing continuity to the Program Committee each year. Therefore, the position was formalized and Terms of Reference for the Program Coordinator’s position were drafted.

Board Chair

The Board Chair plays an important role of maintaining corporate and institutional memory and allows the President to concentrate on the Symposium. Therefore, this position was reviewed and modifications were made to the Terms of Reference for the Board Chair. It was decided that the Chair’s position would be revisited again at the 2008 retreat at the end of the interim period. An annual report was added to the Terms of Reference of the Interim Board Chair.

Annual ISTS Report

The need for an ISTS brochure, ISTS annual report, an ISTS one-page document for major donors was highlighted.

Strategic long-term involvement of the ISTS

Increased ISTS representation at meetings such as the annual meeting of the Signatory States to the CMS was discussed to have strategic influence in issues concerning sea turtle conservation. The feasibility of this representation was discussed, but no decision was taken.

Proceedings/Book of Abstracts

Value of current Proceedings vs. Book of Abstracts was revisited. The option of uploading electronic submissions to a web site would be made available.

Funding the MTN and IOTN

The ISTS has been funding the MTN since 2003 and the IOTN since 2006. The same level of funding was provided for another year. However, future newsletter funding requests need to be accompanied by a proper proposal.

2009 Symposium

Colin Limpus acknowledged the incredible support he has to organize this Symposium and gave an overview of preparations for the Symposium.

Members in attendance: Thane Wibbels, Ana Barragan, Hedelvy Guada, Donna Shaver, Michael Coyne, Naoki Kamezaki, Brendan Godley, Lisa Campbell, Kartik Shanker, Ed Drane, Manjula Tiwari, J. Nichols, Nancy FitzSimmons, Colin Limpus, Jean Beasley, and Marydele Donnelly.

Observers: Shigetomo Hiramama