

Nebraska Master Naturalist Executive Board meeting 4/4/19

Present: Dennis Ferraro, Austen Hill, Chris Robie, Andrea Faas, Matt Jones, Doug Wells, Karen Klein, Dorie Stone, Tisha Johnson and Ali Mayes, Bryce Krohn on phone.

Absent: Carolyn Smith, Jason Hall, Mike Schraad absent Previous minutes, revision request: to insert 'winter social at Heron Haven RCMN', and page numbers. Dennis motioned to accept the minutes and Dorie Stone seconded

Reviewed 2019-2024 Strategic Plan Summary, Goals, Objectives and Actions. The following ideas were updated and re-named Immediate Actions.

Create new volunteer hours portal by November so that the change could be communicated to Master Naturalists at the Winter Celebration.

Add another volunteer subject category 'to collect and distribute volunteer activities from program partners.

Board members liked the idea that for each Partner's volunteer request that a follow up phone call be done. This can also be a way to capture information useful in grant writing.

Also a check-in phone call with Partners who have not made volunteer requests. Let them know we care. The communication improves relationship for when we have to ask for money. Questions such as how did your event go? How many Master Naturalists showed up? How many times did you send your request, how far in advance?

Conduct Partner visits, Matt suggested he could revisit partner benefits page and develop a print material that could be given to Partners.

A Potential Partners packet was requested and Matt agreed that he could create that. The Nebraska Natural Legacy Project document/book, includes the Potential Partner targeting list.

Bryce Krohn communicated that switching from In Kind donations to Cash donations would be a better way to go because of the upcoming Foundation transition. Andrea Faas suggested one way to do that would be to market sponsorships to Partners, for example a sponsor would make a cash donation in order to have allotted time to speak about their organization at the Conference. Ali Mayes has information on various sponsorships. Andrea Faas to speak with Mike Schraad about his thoughts on sponsorships.

Bryce Krohn reported that the Sustainability Committee was working on updating the verbiage in the MOU and that this would be finished in April, then Matt would email it. Budget is based off the MOU which is being developed and will be in place 7/2021. Bryce mentioned that there is a need to look at the revised Tax Code, and consider the ramifications of asking people for Cash donations today versus years past. Another consideration for 2019 is that there would be donations going to assist flood victims, a good thing, but less money for NGOs. As he considers the program's financial sustainability in the immediate future, "we might have to look at grants or from our foundation linking into other foundations". Budget is based off MOU which is being developed and will be in place by 7/2021.

Chapters will be asked to cover 10% of Nebraska Master Naturalist operating costs during the next fiscal year so that the organization can become a sustainable entity, supported by its Member Owners and Foundation Donors. Chapters can decide whether they would like to collect funds from a fundraiser or collect a fee for programs or collect chapter dues. The point is that all Master Naturalists are Member Owners and with the transition to the Foundation, the donors and the membership will be paying the grant match portions. Grantwriters nearly always offer a matching grant in their grant proposals.

Significant time was allotted to reviewing the Strategic Plan, and line by line the Actions were assessed. Andrea Faas has collated notes from the Board's discussion surrounding the Strategic Plan, including the updated timing for each Action. Additionally, an email will be sent to the membership sharing information updating Master Naturalists regarding our organization's finances. The NET grant to Foundation transition the main emphasis.

Matt Jones reported Nebraska Master Naturalists quarterly data, 1300 volunteer hours, down 100 hours from last year. This decrease is attributed to the fact that this year there was no Gala. Another possibility discussed was that the colder weather was a factor. This year 263 Master Naturalists have documented their hours. Active Master Naturalists have also decreased from 455 to 365. Recommendations to address this were not discussed.

Dennis Ferraro reported on the Budget, Partner in Kinds and proposed spending. The Partner in Kind numbers require that \$7000 be donated, so there was a discussion about which partners this financial support has already come from and which Partners will likely donate their In Kind portions before the 6/15/19 grant deadline.

The Revolving Account's balance is approximately \$8900 and must be completely spent by 12/30/19 or the University will tax the Master Naturalist program.

Regarding the balance of \$30,000 in the grant account, it must be spent by 6/30/19. Dennis Ferraro mentioned that \$7000 will pay Matt's salary, and an undisclosed amount will be paid for the rest of Doug's salary, whose position will be dissolving 6/30/19. \$5000 can be spent on display and promotional items. Perhaps keychains, display tablecloths, citizen science field notebooks, magnifiers. Dennis Ferraro suggested a stand alone sign that can be written on to direct visitors to Master Naturalist events. Chris Robie mentioned she would be against the use of funds for plastic promotional items that would likely be discarded. Citizen science field data notebooks were suggested and Tisha Johnson, Dennis Ferraro, Andrea Faas were in favor of the data collection notebooks. \$2,500 was suggested by Dennis Ferraro to go towards nature trunks and carts. The remaining dollars will be spent on wildlife acoustic recorders designed for recording birds, frogs and bats. The Cornell software was suggested by Dennis Ferraro. \$6000 will be spent on 6 trail cams with state of the art texting capability, scheduled to be ordered in April. That would leave approximately \$1000 to be used for, as of now, a yet to be determined Nebraska Master Naturalist project.

Annual Trainings:

There are 4 Core Trainings, one at the end of May at Glacier Creek and Heron Haven in Omaha has 14 people already signed up. The training in June at Niobrara now has a waiting list and was capped at 18 people. In July, there will be a Core Training at Cedar Point and there are 4 registered. There will be another training in October in Eastern Nebraska but at this time there are no registrants. Nebraskaland employee will be present at an April meeting to promote Nebraska Master Naturalist training.

Additional Upcoming events:

outreach - Fort Kearney Expo

Board meeting - Niobrara Friday morning 8/9/19. During the Niobrara Core training, there will be speakers who will share on edibles and bat research. Last I heard Bat guano is not edible. Conservation Conference still needs a date set. Matt Jones is coordinating with Dorie Stone. Winter Celebration is set for a Saturday in February.

Matt Jones evaluation will be changed somewhat as the transition for his salary coming from the grant to the Foundation. Andrea volunteered to be involved in the staff evaluation process.