1/22/2021

Nebraska Master Naturalist Executive Board Minutes

All Board members present

Andrea Faas

Dennis Ferraro

Mike Schrad

Vicki Von Loh

Brice Krohn

Heidi Swanson

Denise Pecha

Dawn Bryant

Jocelyn Harrison

Austen Hill

Karen Klein

Tim Olin

Matt Jones

Olivia

NET Grant: looking very good for receiving the Jr. Master Naturalist grant, ranking currently 29 out of 50.

Got some equipment from the Program, and thinking that that equipment can be used for a research project in exchange for presenting his/her work at the Natural Legacy Conference and furnish a report for Dennis explaining his/her research.

Matt Jones reported that some of the videos that were captured last year need audio voiceover in order for the videos to be used at the Spring Training. Videos that have been completed are up on the Program’s google drive page.

Dennis Ferraro proposes that the Program have the participants learn via Zoom, and that they be tested before they can attend the outside training. There are two benefits to this process, 1) there will be no lectures held inside any place, no need to secure a location and 2) to satisfy the Core Plus curriculum, the outdoor learning portion can then be compressed to 2-3 days in length.

Dennis described the University’s Covid policy.

A training for Central Nebraskans will be the 2nd or 3rd weekend of May and will be held at The Crane Trust. Then another two trainings, scheduled so that the cost is split between two separate grant periods, one in June and one in July. Again this year there will be a location in Western NE at Cedar Point. Matt Jones reported that there was a backlog of applicants and that he has several interviews that we’re starting to do. The official training dates will be decided in two weeks.

Engagement Ideas

Bioblitz scheduled in North Platte by Game and Parks scheduled for May.

Rowe and Crane Trust rehashing plans for Crane season ecotourism, specifically the activity of viewing Sandhill Cranes from blinds. Considering smaller groups, and the impact from the vaccines

There is currently an Aspergan grant request for $10,000. Vicki Von Loh and Mike Schrad, Foundation Board members are meeting monthly with Liz, their grant writing consultant.

Foundation 990 filed, applying for the nonprofit largely because of the discount for postage which was approximately $2000 last quarter. 400 thank you letters to donors and 40 thank you letters to partners were mailed, as well as 200 calendars.

Sitting at $30,000 a $25,000 increase from last year.

Austen Hill led a discussion informing the Board that the Job posting specifics have been determined by the Education Committee and asked Board members for their thoughts as to which platforms to use when posting the job for the part time on-call coordinator of the Junior Master Naturalist program. NACEE, Indeed, Facebook and the University were considered, and the education committee is looking to hire by March 1st, with a two weeks application period. Mike Schrad said that the Foundation will need a report from this coordinator regarding what he/she is working on, and written updates on the Jr. Program’s progress. Jr. Master Naturalist committee will meet biweekly with the coordinator.Dennis Ferraro clarified that this person will be paid by the NET grant and not the University. $7500 to fund the position comes from the Foundation. The University will bill after the fact.

 Matt Jones reported he’s been analyzing what to do for Master Naturalists given the usefulness of Zoom and is considering once a month, on the 2nd Wednesday to offer a video learning segment from contributor Adam Jones. Also the Program has a you tube channel.

Central Valley Master Naturalists’ meeting nearly a year ago had good attendance and had decided to meet every other month, but since Covid…… Of Core Plus training applicants, 10% were from outside of Lincoln/Omaha.

The first Master Naturalist newsletter will be finished around 1/28 and Tim’s contribution of Master Naturalist history will be very useful in this newsletter and those to come.

An Email was sent to the membership asking for pictures or write ups on Naturalists’ experiences with the program.

Volunteer hours have changed since Covid, yet there wasn’t as bad of a drop as one might think. 405 active Master Naturalists, total volunteering time was 7891 hours. In a normal year, volunteer hours typically range between 8000 and 9000 hours.

Matt Jones wrote \_\_\_\_\_\_article. And is in the process of compiling an annual member report with each Master Naturalists volunteer hours. Jocelyn Harrison suggested and other Board members agreed that with that letter that we send out an engagement survey. An Perhaps a simple, “How do yo feel like you could be more involved?” The letter should have a line mentioning the Board’s appreciation for their volunteering. Once final dates for this year’s trainings are determined, Matt will provide a press release on the website and updated fliers to our Partners.

A motion by Mike Schrad to waive the 20 hour requirement for volunteer hours due to the pandemic for 2020, the motion was seconded and approved.

Tisha Johnson, Brice Krohn and Mike Schrad to comprise a committee who evaluates whether the Program is on target, given its Strategic Plan.

Congrats on the NET grant request’s ranking thus far. Brice Krohn stated that he was pleased with the good communication with the Foundation Boards, and to keep the creativity going.

Meeting was adjourned.