

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**NCF Envirothon Operating Committee**  
**August 19, 2020 11:00 AM EDT**

**Zoom Meeting:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86098468781>

NCF Envirothon Operating Committee (OC) Members present: Kerin Hume (DE) (only for part of the call), Shonny Nordlund (MT), Becky Geneau (NB), Millie Langley (NC), Jeanne Dryburgh (NE), Wendee Dodds (OH), Lorelle Steach (PA), Debbie Waycott (NS)

NCF Members present: Jennifer Brooks (NACD/NCFE Program Manager), Stephanie Tolar (NACD/NCFE Education Specialist)

1. Call to Order – *Millie called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m. Millie received Jeff's letter of resignation.*
2. Roll Call – *Millie did roll call.*
3. Approval of May 12, 2020, Meeting Minutes – *Millie – Jeanne moved to accept the minutes with Wendee's second; motion passed.*
4. Operating Committee Officer nominations – *Millie*
  - a. Secretary - *Lorelle moved to appoint Andrea McKeown to serve as the NCFEOC Secretary with Shonny's second; motion passed.*
  - b. Education subcommittee chair – *Debbie will serve as chair of this committee. She is seeking members to serve on the committee.*
5. NCF Update – *Jennifer reported that NCF could not hold its annual in-person summer meeting due to COVID-19, but instead held a virtual meeting. Millie set in on the meeting call. The NCF has been very active in implementing their Strategic Plan, with several items directly relating to the Envirothon. Envirothon programming and fundraising continue to be incorporated into the NCF Strategic Plan. NCF is hoping to hold a fall fundraising campaign. To date, the annual meeting is a go and will be held in New Orleans; they have until November to make that determination. Best case scenario we will meet in person.*
6. NCF-Envirothon Update – *Jennifer*
  - a. Regional Envirothon Rep virtual meetings update – *Re-cap: everyone on today's call participated in one or more meetings; 100 total participants took part in the one or more of the 5 meetings; some states/provinces had several representatives; some states/provinces had no representation; notes were shared with everyone after the meetings; good feedback was received; Jennifer is anticipating repeating this format for fall reps meetings. Millie shared that we had more representation than we would have had at an in-person meeting.*
  - b. 2020 Statistics update – *Out of 55 total possible responses, Jennifer has received 51 surveys. She is going to contact the final 4 which include: Illinois, New Jersey, Newfoundland, and Washington. China is currently holding its event and will share statistics with Jennifer at the conclusion. Several states would like to receive the statistical information once it is compiled.*
  - c. Barriers to Participation survey update – *Big push during Envirothon week; a total of 254 responses were received; more than anticipated; responses were received mostly from current and past advisors and students; a handful of responses were received from teachers who have heard of the Envirothon but not participated. Responses from students who have never participated in the Envirothon were lacking. Jennifer is compiling the survey*

*information and will share a report very soon.*

- d. Website update – *Jennifer has made updates to the current and future competition pages. She will add the Amazon Smiles banner to the website.*
- e. Social Media - Envirothon week posts – *On social media there was a push of 3 – 4 posts during each day of Envirothon week on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.*
- f. China MOU - Envirothon China started on Monday and will wrap up on Thursday. *China is back to school and in the classroom. They are holding an in-person event with 21 teams who are competing in a preliminary round and final teams will compete in their National competition. Stephanie produced a video for them to show possibly during their awards ceremony. They are in their 5<sup>th</sup> year and are working to grow their program. NCF is working on an MOU to have in place by the end of this calendar year.*
- g. Membership Dues – *Jennifer gave an update on the membership dues. A subcommittee met to discuss membership dues and determine should our international partners pay the same rate as states and provinces? China currently pays \$550 per team and has sent 2 teams to the annual competition for the past few years. China would like to see their rate be the same as states and provinces. The Program Policies committee felt that all teams should pay the same membership dues and registration rate. The base rate is currently \$350 and has not been changed since 2012. It is time to update it and raise the membership dues to \$450 for everyone across the board. This would be for the 2022 competition year. All representatives should pay the same rate. Representatives will be made aware of this increase well in advance. Lorelle made the recommendation that states, provinces, and international partners pay a \$450 membership fee beginning with the 2022 competition with Shonny's second to be sent to NCF for approval; motion passed.*

## **7. Educational Updates – Stephanie**

- a. 2020 virtual Envirothon events report – *17 states and provinces hosted some form of Envirothon event, including official competitions, informal challenges, social media engagements, and other activities. A survey was sent to this group asking what platforms were used – most used Google Forms, Zoom, and/or other low-cost options – as well as an outline of what they did. Stephanie has received 15 responses and will seek information from the remaining 2. She will compile a more detailed report and share it with everyone.*
- b. 2021 virtual Envirothon contingency plan – *As we look at the 2021 season, we need to look at what is going on and watch how things develop with schools opening. We need to develop a contingency plan that includes travel restrictions, large group gatherings in-person, etc. We need to develop a plan that includes all contingencies and options. Stephanie shared the Questions for Consideration for a Virtual NCF-Envirothon Competition that she sent to everyone. These questions will help us develop a plan to have in place for 2021 and possibly future events.*

*Jeanne said they are learning a lot through planning a large conference in September. More investigation needs to be done before answers can be developed for coming up with such a plan.*

*There are multiple aspects – logistics, etc. These questions are going to be very dependent on health department guidelines, reoccurrence of COVID-19 cases, etc. Hosts should consider how things should be handled with regards to tests, resources, etc.*

*Debbie noted the border restrictions; schools are not permitted to participate in extracurricular activities or travel outside of their province. Debbie noted that many variables need to be explored.*

*Millie shared that we need to see how things progress with schools. In-person is the most optimal method for competition, but virtual may be the reality.*

*Debbie mentioned that partners (Nebraska or NC State since it is closer to Jennifer and Stephanie) for test writing and grading need to be explored. Need to keep sponsors updated.*

*Stephanie put out these questions for consideration, both specifically for the Nebraska event, but also in the more general sense, should another need arise to hold a virtual Envirothon event in the future. She is looking for direction.*

*Jeanne said that Nebraska would like to stay as involved as much as possible. Millie noted it makes sense for Nebraska to continue to be the host of the competition and to work with partners.*

*Becky talked about what New Brunswick is doing with schools reopening. Becky's group is developing learning videos, how-to videos, etc. These videos provide an opportunity to show their partners and sponsors what they are doing. They are planning A, B, or C options for holding Envirothon competitions. She feels that Canadians will not be able to cross the border. For this unique year, would you open it up to more teams? If we do online, would that be the responsibility of the Host or the NCF? Who gets IT support and creates partnership ideas.*

*Stephanie is looking for guidance to establish a protocol for this year as well as in the future.*

*Jennifer suggested that the Host and Staff begin to have conversations about the 2021 event.*

*Jeanne suggested that the calls start up again after October 1.*

*Stephanie asked the Operating Committee please share comments.*

*Lorelle shared that this is a great discussion and we need to continue to work together and share our plans and ideas, which will be helpful to all Envirothon programs.*

*Becky asked about developing an operational plan and event insurance that includes coverage of the pandemic. Is there an increase in the cost of insurance? Is this something the Host needs to consider?*

*Jeanne said that cost increases are dependent on what the insurance covers.*

*Debbie mentioned that some schools require students to sign off on a document stating they will not hold the school liable if they contract the virus.*

*Other things Hosts need to consider are university guidelines when it comes to housing and rooms (i.e. 1 person per room).*

- c. Alumni Network update – An online network was developed on LinkedIn to engage Envirothon alumni. Currently, there are 52 members and it continues to grow. Please continue to share this link with contacts. Questions should be directed to Stephanie.

## 8. Upcoming Competitions

- a. 2021 – Nebraska update – Jeanne – They will be starting committee meetings again in October. The University of Nebraska Lincoln has started on-campus classes.
- b. 2022 – Ohio update – Wendee – They are behind on their timeline; they had another university approach them to host. They visited 2 sites, the University of Ohio and Miami University and will visit The Ohio State University at end of this month. It will be a matter of cost and contingency plans. They have a committee meeting tomorrow to develop schedules. They are looking at ways to cut costs. The topic will be chosen once they select a site. By the middle of September, they will choose a university and topic. They are moving

*forward as if they are holding an in-person event. Their event may be bare-bones depending on funding. Wendee has questions and will tap into all members. Ohio dates will be July 24 – 30, 2022.*

- c. *2023 – New Brunswick update – Becky - Dates will be July 23 – 29, 2023; Mount Allison University; they didn't lose any committee members; videos are being developed for training; a committee meeting will be held the end of September; funding will be a challenge, but the extra time will be helpful; funding received from Environmental Trust Fund for current issue topic.*
  - d. *2024 – New York – Jennifer – NY updated their preliminary bid packet; the committee is very eager to work on the resources and topic. They are working on fundraising; developing their current issue topic; and want to designate their site location. Jennifer was planning to visit the locations this past spring to provide feedback. The NCF Executive Committee would like to have the OC and Staff more involved with choosing the site. Jennifer expressed this to the NY committee. NY is okay with the staff and OC members doing a site visit this fall if travel is possible. This is the approach that NCF will use when choosing sites in 2024 and beyond. The NY committee is very engaged in planning the 2024 event. They are currently looking at two sites.*
9. Updates from Standing Committees *(be sure to include Jennifer &/or Stephanie on committee discussions, etc.)*
- a. Education Committee – Debbie - *(staff Stephanie)*
    - i. *Learning Objectives update – Stephanie reported on the Learning Objective documents that she revised. As she worked on updating the learning objectives, she found that many programs do not have dedicated learning objectives and look to those presented by the NCFE. These learning objectives will be a working document and will continue to be further developed. She also noted the cultural inclusion statement that she included in the learning objectives. Stephanie was commended for the work that she put into this document.*

*Jennifer noted that these will be put into practice for the 2022 competition year. Do we need to wait to put them onto the website until after the 2021 event to avoid confusion? Is there a way that we can include them on the website, but keep them separate from what is required for 2021?*

*Lorelle moved with Becky's second to approve and make the recommendation to the NCF-Executive board; motion passed.*
  - b. Rules/Program Policies – Lorelle - *(staff Jennifer)*
    - i. *Nondiscriminatory Statement revision update – Jennifer reported on the nondiscriminatory statement that the NCFEOC recommended from the winter meeting. The NCF asked for further research to be done by looking at our partners' and sponsors' statements. Jennifer compared many of these statements to find key words and phrases. Most of our partners use the USDA statement. The NCF statement mirrors the USDA statement. It is recommended that we use the NCF statement or revise the NCF statement to include the "Envirothon." Wendee moved to approve the revised NCF Nondiscriminatory Statement with the recommended changes with Debbie's second to be sent to NCF for approval; motion passed.*

*The statement reads as follows: "In accordance with applicable civil rights laws, the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon (NCFE), its offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering NCFE programs are*

*prohibited from and shall not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by the NCFE.”*

- i. Program Policy update – *Jennifer referenced the revised document which was updated and presented by the Program Policies Subcommittee. We went through the document line by line, with discussion of several items in question. It was recommended that Jennifer send a clean copy of the Program Policies to the OC for final review before they are recommended to the NCF for approval.*
- ii. Rules – *revisions may need to be done to include virtual events.*
- c. Competition Advisory Team (CAT) Committee – *Wendee - (staff Stephanie) – No report.*
- d. Scoring – *Kerin - (staff Stephanie) – No report*
- e. Diversity Grant – *Jennifer – All 2020 diversity grant recipients received their reimbursement. Virginia received an extension on their 2019 funds because they could not spend their funds because of COVID-19.*

#### 10. Operating Committee Membership

- a. Vacancies – *Western Region Rep, SE Region Rep, At Large (Vacant in Aug 2020) – Jennifer will send out requests for nominations to fill these vacancies by the end of August. When nominations are received the OC may need to meet in early October to review the nominations and make recommendations to the NCF for consideration.*

#### 11. New Business

- a. Mission Statement Update – *Tabled until the next meeting.*
- b. Regional meetings – *Jennifer is anticipating holding regional meetings in late October or early November. One item of discussion should be the updated Program Policies.*

#### 12. Save the Dates:

- a. 2021 Winter Meeting – Sat-Sun, Feb 6-7, 2021 (NACD 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting: Feb 6-10)
  - i. New Orleans, Louisiana
- b. 2021 Summer Meeting – Saturday, July 24, 2021 (2021 NCFE: Sun July 25-Sat, July 31, 2021)
  - i. Lincoln, Nebraska
- c. 2022 Winter Meeting – Sat-Sun, Feb 12-13, 2022 (NACD Annual Meeting: Feb 12-16)
  - i. Orlando, Florida

#### 13. Next Meeting – *Millie adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.*

*Respectfully submitted by*

*Lorelle Steach (volunteer note taker)*