

## NCF-Envirothon Operating Committee – Winter Meeting

New Orleans, Louisiana

2/11/2023 and 2/12/2023

Called to order: 10:10am ET (9:10 am CT)

### **\*\*Potential action item of committee underlined and bold**

- Attendees:
  - *See attached for in-person attendance*
  - Brooke Myres (virtually)
- OC Membership update:
  - Northwest seat and Midwest seats vacant
    - if interested talk to current member or reach out to Jennifer to learn more
  - Ashley Melvin is now filling an At-Large seat (formerly Kerin Humes' seat who had to step down at the end of 2022 due to a new position) – Ashley will also be chairing the Scoring Committee going forward.
- Nomination of 2023 Operating Committee Officers
  - Chair – Millie Langley, Vice Chair – Wendee Dodds, Recorder – Brooke Myres
  - **Carrie Milligan moved to reappoint the current officers again in 2023 – Mark Hedge, seconded – no other discussion – all in favor – none opposed – motion carries**
- NACD Update
  - Overview of NACD annual meeting
  - Several new NACD staff in past few weeks
    - Including Stewardship and Education position
    - Organization growing by leaps and bounds
- NCF Update
  - Please attend the NCF auction Monday night – funds go to NCF for education (Envirothon and NGLI), raised ~\$86,000 last year
- NCFE Update
  - Program membership
    - 2023 Membership went well, everyone turned in dues by deadline – 51 state, provincial, and partner nation programs have paid dues
      - Hawaii, Alaska, Wyoming, Nevada, Oklahoma (would like to start again), Michigan do not have programs at this time
    - 52<sup>nd</sup> member – Singapore has joined as a partner nation! Organized by the same educational org. that sponsors the China program.
      - China and Singapore have the option to send 1-3 teams per program
    - Trying to reach out to US Territories
    - Newfoundland has an interest in re-starting a program
    - Mark discussed having connections in Mexico and will be pursuing contact
    - Reach out to Jennifer if you know somewhere who would have interest in starting a program!

- Working on the NCFE Members Only site message board. The message board will allow members to ask questions and get feedback from other program representatives (1-2 reps per state that coordinate and plan the program, not teachers and advisors)
  - Operating committee will get link first to work out kinks then open it up for whole group
- NCFE Education Specialist Update
  - Part A of resources are on the website and Part B will be posted in May
  - Working with New Brunswick Education Committee to work on all resources and rules and policies guide and tests
  - Working with New York on current issue, key topics, and resources for 2024, blurb will be posted on website – tests will be a bit different because they will have a bank of test questions that could be included
  - Correlating resources to next generation science standards – forestry is almost finalized then will start other topics
- Guest Presenters
  - Alice Cohen, US Forest Service - Discussion USFS support with state Envirothon programs
  - Michael Crowder (President NACD) joined us to thank everyone for being here – fully support program
  - Jeremy Peters (director NACD) joined to be available for questions, comments, and concerns to relate back to the board – Millie, Jennifer, and Stephanie are great support of the program
- Competition Updates and Presentations
  - 2022 Ohio Wrap-up
    - Preliminary Budget Report:
      - Income - \$373,669
        - \$179,995 – grants from NRCS – OH Federation CEO handled this – still pending for reimbursement (NRCS has donated for years)
        - \$121,340 - event registration – not including tours – 10% went to NCFE (\$12,134)
        - \$72,334 – sponsorship (\$10,000 raised to get leader of organization's head shaved) and tours (\$5-6000), volunteer registration
      - Expenses – \$277,520
      - Profited - \$96,140 (reminder – haven't received the NRCS funds)
      - Will provide more detailed expense report and number of volunteers in future
    - Student Behavior Issue:
      - One bed check had to happen – turns out there were several teams that were out on campus in the middle of the night – may need to have a better system for communication for issues in the night – have a staff member on call to mitigate safety issues – stress in beginning that teams will be disqualified if not following rules – be sure that the rules are clear to advisors so that they know how they are to manage the kids too – maybe couple of volunteer security type people in each dorm – also good to have this number in case there is an emergency in the middle of the night – have staff on hand for emergencies as well – be sure lodging security knows what

the parameters are for the kids and has the number to call as well – they have some amount of responsibility as well –

- 2023 New Brunswick – overview of upcoming 2023 competition:
  - If flying – very few will go directly into Moncton, NB (Host will have shuttle, airport is ~ 25 minutes away) – recommend coming on Saturday because it will be a very long travel day
  - Other airports:
    - Halifax Airport 2.5-hour drive
    - St John Airport 2-hour drive
    - Fort Frederick Airport 2-hour drive
  - Went over schedule – lots of space to arrive early
    - 2 team tours offered on Saturday, July 22, as well as the Operating Committee meeting
    - All information will be in event guide
    - Will be able to send box of trading session stuff ahead of time
    - Education Day – traveling to Saint John – oldest city in province, on harbor/bay, beautiful, career fair with exhibitors (open to public),
    - Will have dance party after awards celebration like in Ohio!
    - Will have team advisor and captain meetings each morning
  - Great partnership with Mt. Allison – have offices and people watching campus - Boys and girls will be on opposite side of campus but not far (short walk)
  - City renamed to Tantramar from Sackville – can still Google Sackville
  - One hotel in Sackville – *not a great hotel* – Moncton has tons of hotels, ~25 minutes away – It is peak season for vacations so prices will be high
  - To get in Canada you need passport
  - Currently there is a mask mandate on campus inside of buildings
  - Parking is free
  - Will have a merch store available on site and preorders on registration
  - Everyone planning to attend go fill out the volunteer form on website to let them start gathering information
  - Working on laptop rental/purchase – cost between renting and purchasing is similar – would like more than one per room but not realistic – discussion of what states do for their programs for computer use – some reach out to high schools for program use – discussion on programs and options for releasing scenario prior to competition – pros and cons discussed
  - Oral presentation rules, guidelines and procedures – handed out with changes included – no additional changes – **Wendee Dodds moved to approve OP rules, Mark seconded motion – no further discussion – all in favor – none opposed – motion carries**
  - Some fees increased from last year that host is allowed to adjust – handout with all fees was distributed and discussed to be sure all were aware of changes prior to publishing in Event Guide (published in March)
  - Weather will be humid, hot and windy
  - Team Registration Fee Increase – discussion on inflation, increases in everything, haven't been increased since pre-2018, current fee barely covers food, discussed small increase for now so that people can budget for it and do incremental increases in future. The actual team registration cost (for 7 individuals) in 2023 is \$2600, but the current fee is only \$1800, and \$800 difference the Host has to cover.

- **Shonny moved to increase the Team Registration fee in 2024 to \$2,000, Mark seconded – no discussion – all in favor – none opposed – motion carries.**
  - This has to be carried to NCF-board to get final approval. Jennifer will present it and make formal announcement afterwards.
- 2024 New York – presented by Blanche Hurlbutt and JoAnn Kurtis
  - Working to find funding. Have Environmental Education Foundation that is assisting with this. Chasity Miller is publicity person – worked with Jennifer to create funding packet. Had meeting with Chobani Greek Yogurt for sponsorship – must apply for grant. NYCM Insurance Company is also supporting them. Districts are also sponsoring event.
  - College is secured (*will be doing construction for upgrades in 2024*), opening guest speaker is secured, all buildings on and off security are secured, free parking, no COVID restrictions, everyone coming on campus must take a child protection training online – takes about 45 minutes and is free
  - Reached out to Hawk Creek Wildlife Center to have a presentation of wildlife during the event
  - Student activities going on while other teams are doing their oral presentation
  - Advisor and guest tours will be along Finger Lakes
  - Joanne is working on current topic and test writers are in place
  - Activity Day ideas - Rockets Fun Raceway may be the activity day – waterpark has closed that was visited in 2007
  - Will have a hospitality suite throughout the week
  - Shuttle at Syracuse airport
  - Dates: July 28 – August 3
  - Current Issue Topic has to do with energy – will be announced mid-spring
- 2025 and beyond – No one has volunteered for 2025 – biggest hangup is the cost of fundraising
  - Utah would like to host in the future but cannot host in 2025 because of other national conferences to be held
  - New Mexico would consider – concerned about volunteers
  - May be helpful if NCF give up front money like Cannon used to - Need to find a few big sponsors that back up the program all together instead of one big sponsor – burden on host state for paperwork and coordination is becoming less of a burden.
  - New marketing and sponsor coordinator for NCF has started that will be reaching out for sponsors
  - Indiana considered but committee is not ready to move forward yet
  - Next state rep meeting – include survey in discussion – ask about why wouldn't your state/province host, what would it take for your state/province to host, etc.
  - O.C. needs to consider options and a Plan B if a Host can not be found soon.
- Envirothon China – Discussion on current issues the Envirothon China program is facing due to political climate.
  - In November, NCF-Envirothon staff, select Operating Committee members, and National Association of Conservation District (NACD) representatives met with Jason Zhu, Envirothon China's Executive Director, via videoconferencing to discuss the status of the program and future initiatives and projects.

- Due to increasing governmental policy changes, the China Envirothon program has been experiencing issues that have impacted their website, emails, and use of “China” in the name of the program for example.
  - The Chinese Ministry of Education has imposed a new regulation that all K-12 contests (such as Envirothon) be run by the government departments only.
  - Envirothon China is sponsored and organized by a non-governmental educational organization. Due to these policy changes and increased scrutiny of “western” institutions/programs, the Envirothon China organizers have proposed to market future China-based Envirothon events as “EnvirothonX” programs and use a revised ratings/certificate system for student performance that meets the government regulations.
  - Envirothon China is seeking NCF’s endorsement of the “EnvirothonX” concept for their use within China.
  - Discussion:
    - They will still be competing the same way US and Canada teams will be competing – state and provincial programs are allowed to tailor the materials to however they want but NCFE materials remain the same
- Day 1 adjourned
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#### **Winter Meeting Continued (Day 2) - 2/12/2023 called to order 10:05am ET (9:05am CT)**

- Attendees:
  - *See attached for in-person attendance*
  - Brooke Myres (virtually)
- Approval of minutes from October 2022 virtual meeting – **Carrie moved to approve, Mark seconded, no discussion, all in favor, none opposed, motion carried**
- Guests:
  - Keith Owens, NACD Director of Education, introduced himself and gave an overview of the NACD Stewardship and Education team
    - Aimie Figgat from West Virginia is new content creator for education for NACD
  - Kim Atkins, NCF Director of Development (contractor) – Contracted to seek out additional funding for NGLE and NCFE
    - focusing efforts on corporate sponsorships for foundation as a whole – working on fall and spring campaigns for fundraising – (Bayer, Corteva, CNHI Foundation)
    - Millie explained to Kim about the dilemma to find a host for 2025, mostly due to funding – need consistent funding – maybe talk to NRCS about consistent funding – total cost for hosting is \$300,000-\$400,000 (room and board of all teams and volunteers, transportation, supplies, facility rentals, prizes) – currently funds are raised locally (grants, sponsors, donations, in-kind) – have received money from NRCS every year since 2017, but it wasn’t guaranteed funding – it would be helpful if there was some sort of agreement that NRCS will fund program for each year for so many years – maybe similar agreements with USDA Rural Development, Department of Education, Forest Service – host state needs 2 to 3 years to get prepared for competition prior to hosting which is why 2025 is so concerning

- can we track the numbers of number of students who have gone through the program and gone into environmental fields?
  - Kim suggested getting an Americorps position to do an alumni research project – increase alumni outreach (social media, information in registration paperwork, need more from state reps.) currently have Facebook, TikTok, linkedIn
  - discussion around various options of sponsors being foundation sponsor but not have advertisement at NCFE (beer companies, tobacco companies, certain ag companies)
- John Redding, NCF Board of Trustees
  - Treasurer of NCF – has been around since Canon pulled out of funding Envirothon – trying to work towards getting the money to fund the program – states that host the program typically do make a little money off of it – would like to find an ag company that would sponsor similarly to Canon did in the past
- Patti Lardie, NCF Board of Trustees
  - Secretary of NCF - introduced herself and expressed support of the foundation for the NCFE
- Standing Committee Reports
  - CAT Team – oversee and make sure rules are followed during testing and training
    - helped in Ohio and plan to help in Canada
    - as we get closer to competition will work with Becky to cover her needs
    - boots on the ground that have participated in multiple competitions to ensure that rules are followed the same each year
  - Scoring Committee – Kerin Hume has left this role and now Ashley Melvin will be the committee chair
    - Will be collecting volunteers as we get closer - to competition
  - Diversity Grants
    - 2023 cycle closed late last week, 11 applications that can get up to \$4000 each (Canadian Provinces up to \$2000)
    - Have 14 months to implement project
    - Everyone is not necessarily funded, committee ranks projects – important for projects to be clear with a budget and impact and plan is clearly explained
  - Education Committee
    - accreditation of Envirothon course of study to receive high school or university credit – decided to provide support to states who are interested in this because things differ so widely – may host workshop for state coordinators for how to do this (Manitoba has done this)
    - university is challenging with the materials changing each year and confirming that the credit is transferable between universities
    - high school is complicated as well because standards vary between states and also quite a bit
    - development of core curriculum of Envirothon – study resources use each year – approach for 2024 is the start of that and then it will be consistent from year to year with core concepts that stay the same – will still leave room for host state to personalize to local area
    - recruitment of test reviewers
    - working towards correlation of science standards
  - Rules/Program Policy Committee

- NCFE Operating Committee Guidelines (hasn't been updated since 2014) – before NCFE took it on – each state had a rep on the committee
  - Ask for potential changes – these will be approved at our spring virtual meeting then presented to NCF board at the summer meeting – send additional changes to Jennifer
  - Name of NCF-Envirothon will be changed throughout document
  - IC - Need to add Singapore and China, change “Far North” to Canada, “Far West” to west
  - II A and B - change leader to chair in leadership section
  - IIID – Meetings of the state and provincial representatives shall be held one each year.
  - Discussion on how to get more state reps involved – send out personal invitations to state reps to the NCFE competition – things they can do to be involved and how they can be engaged – invite them to volunteer; possibly don't charge or reduce state reps registration fees; have one operating committee member assigned for competition to be the state rep host – Courtney will lead the way to set up state rep activities for Canada
  - Should we change the regions to reflect NACD regions? – not at this point – going to focus on engaging state reps in general
- No other old business
  - No new business
  - Millie adjourned meeting at 12:24pm (ET)

NCF - Environment Winter Mtg 3/11/23



## Sign-In

Jennifer Brooks	MT ENVIRONMENT
Willie Langley	MT ENVIRONMENT
Jeane Dryburgh	MT ENVIRONMENT
Farrie Milligan	MT ENVIRONMENT
Stanny Nordlund	MT ENVIRONMENT
Tenile Atkinson	MT ENVIRONMENT
Teresa Wilhelm	MT ENVIRONMENT
Linda Doe	MT ENVIRONMENT
Blanche Harbutt	MT ENVIRONMENT
Alice Laker	MT ENVIRONMENT
Arken Melvin	MT ENVIRONMENT
Becky Geneau	MT ENVIRONMENT
Emily Hopper	MT ENVIRONMENT
Wendee Dadds	MT ENVIRONMENT
Mark Hedge	MT ENVIRONMENT
Wayne McKeever	MT ENVIRONMENT
Courtesy Quentin Baker	MT ENVIRONMENT
Shawn Smith	MT ENVIRONMENT

TRAVEL BRILLIANTLY



## Sign-In Day 2

Willie Langley	Montana
Jennifer Brooks	Montana
Erin Apple	Montana
Stanny Nordlund	Montana
Tenile Atkinson	Montana
Teresa Wilhelm	Montana
Linda Doe	Montana
Larry Davis (assisted)	Montana
Arken Melvin	Montana
Becky Geneau	Montana
Courtesy Quentin Baker	Montana
Wendee Dadds	Montana
Jeane Dryburgh	Montana
Mark Hedge	Montana
Kaitie Davis	Montana
Kim Atkins	Montana
Stephanie Tolar	Montana
Wayne McKeever	Montana
John Redding	Montana
Patti Landre	Montana

TRAVEL BRILLIANTLY