New England Society of American Foresters (NESAF)

Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

Monday, March 8, 2010

Location: Courtyard by Marriott, Nashua, NH

Members present:
Deborah Boyer  Website Administrator
Paul Dolan  Rhode Island State Representative; Nomination Chair
Andrew Fast  Secretary
George Frame  Immediate Past Chair
Peter Greeno  Membership Chair
Dana Hachigian  Treasurer
Mel Harder  Connecticut State Representative
Ron Lemin Jr.  Chair
Scott Machinist  Co-Editor of NESAF News Quarterly
Ed O'Leary  Vice-Chair
Carol Redelsheimer  Council Representative
Randy Stone  Massachusetts State Representative; Awards Chair

Guests:
Christopher Whited

Members not present:
Don Floyd  Canadian Representative
James Harding  Forest Science Coordinator
J Peter Howland  New Hampshire State Representative
Margaret Machinist  Co-Editor of NESAF News Quarterly
Spencer Meyer  Maine State Representative
Kurt Zschau  Vermont State Representative

Meeting opened by NESAF Chair, Ron Lemin Jr. at 1:25 PM

A. Standard items:
Sign in sheet (Fast) - verify contact information: The standard sign-in sheet was circulated.
Welcome: Ron L. informed the EC that Carol Redelsheimer and Chris Whited are expected to join the meeting.
Antitrust statement: The antitrust statement was presented. Ron L. can provide a copy of the antitrust statement to members of the EC upon their request.
Add/Adjust agenda: Ron L. added “joint NY-NESAF winter meeting” as an agenda item.
Corrections/Additions for the January 13, 2010 EC meeting minutes (Fast): Peter G. suggested changes to the January 13, 2010 minutes. Proposed changes were read aloud by Andy F. A motion was heard from George F. to accept the meeting minutes as amended; a second to the motion was heard from Paul D.
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The question was called and the motion passed unanimously. Andy F. will email a copy of the approved minutes to the EC.

Treasurer's Report (Hachigian): Dana H. distributed and reviewed the NESAF Net Worth Report as of 3/9/10. Under assets, $20,564.28 is in total cash and bank accounts. The CD value is $25,566.67 resulting in total assets of $46,130.95. Presently, there are no liabilities. A motion was heard from Paul D. to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented; a second to the motion was heard from George F.

(Scott M. joined the EC at 1:34pm)

Dana H. distributed the Budget to Date as of March 8, 2010. She reviewed the income line items. 2010 grand total income to date is $15,557.65. Expenses line items were reviewed. 2010 grand total expenses to date is $5,917.99. The income-expense difference in the proposed budget is $7,581.44 in the red. $150 has been pulled out of the bank account as petty cash for merchandise sales at NESAF winter meeting. This money will be returned after the winter meeting.

Ron L. is waiting to hear back about the Forester's Fund grant that will help support the membership drive. The EC should know if it has been awarded by the end of the EC meeting.

Mel Harder asked about historic deficits and clarification on potential future implications of continuing to run deficits. George F. responded that it will put pressure on NESAF's savings and there may be interest from membership to use money that is currently in the CD.

This year's winter meeting has fewer sign-ups than in the past and food is more expensive; as a result, NESAF likely will not make as much money.

B. Old Business:

Form 990 (Hachigian): Dana H. informed the EC that the Form 990 should be completed by May.

Bulk Mail Permit (Machinist): Scott and Maggie M. paid for the bulk mail permit in case NESAF decides to use it in the future. It is an annual cost of approximately $200. The issue will be brought up as a future agenda item.

New Policy/Communications Presentation at Business Mtg. (Greeno): At the NESAF business meeting, Peter G. will update membership on NESAF's progress in policy and communications. The intent is to let membership know what the Sub-committee on Policy Process has done, give membership an idea of the direction NESAF is moving and give them the opportunity to comment or otherwise engage in the process. Peter G. reviewed changes he made to the "Final Report of the Sub-committee on Policy Process to the New England SAF Executive Committee." Changes included less specificity around the Policy Chair stipend, communications was moved up in the report, and an executive summary was added. The executive summary can be emailed with a link to the larger document. Peter G. is looking forward to comments and input from the EC or membership.

Forester's Fund Submission (Lemin): SAF was going to inform Ron of the status of the Forester's Fund grant by the end of last month. Turnover at the National office resulted in the update being delayed. Ron L. will try and get an update on the grant from Christopher Whited.
Report on 2010 NESAF Winter Meeting (Frame/Mulherin): George F. informed the EC that, to date, 283 people are signed up for the winter meeting with additional awardees and walk-ins expected to increase the final number of attendees. 300 banquet meals have been ordered. 135 registrations were online. George F. has researched another online registration outfit that costs approximately the same amount of money, but wants to support SAF. George F. reviewed additional winter meeting items such as the raffle, the hotel’s appreciation for NESAF’s business, and winter meeting logistics.

Scott M. asked how George F.’s workload would shift if there was no online registration. George F. has a system that has worked for years. This year, he thought the online registration would make it easier, which was not the case. Peter G. commented that other divisions have experienced similar problems. Dana H. was concerned that some members may not have registered because of their frustration with the online registration process. George F. reemphasized that he does not think National should be cut out of the process, but they need to do a better job and get money to NESAF in a shorter time frame.

Ron L. raised the issues of a winter meeting planning book. Ron L., Spencer M., Ken Laustsen, Janice Mulherin, Susan Francher, George F. Kurt Z., Dan Kilborn, and Mark Tweery should sit down with the planning book and figure out what needs to be done. Ed O’L. suggested trying to complete it by June or July.

C. NEW BUSINESS:

Review of Business Meeting minutes from Portland Maine 3/18/09 (Fast): The EC suggested no changes.

NESAF Business Meeting 2010, Adjust Agenda (Lemin): Ron L. asked the EC whether the issue of how the principal and interest on the CD is spent should be brought before membership. Paul D. suggested letting let membership raise the issue if there are concerns. A committee was formed a few years back to look at the issue but they did not do anything. Spencer M. is going to look into this issues as outlined in the December 17, 2009 EC meeting minutes.

The EC added / adjusted the agenda for the 3-9-10 NESAF business meeting.

Carol R. informed the EC that the Fellows process has changed a bit in the past couple years and is still being reviewed. One of the suggestions was changing the date of the nominations. One of the biggest problems is that members will submit nominations that are not complete. If the Fellows Committee does not have to track down additional information, there should be a short turn around. Fellow recognition is also a problem: individuals are granted Fellow in June, and are not recognized until the National convention in October then the NESAF meeting months later.

The business meeting should have 100 people for a quorum.

(Chris Whited joined the EC at 3:05pm. He was introduced by Peter G. and welcomed by the EC)
Chris W. informed the EC that the Membership Forester's Fund grant application has been accepted, but he is uncertain whether money has been awarded.

Update on the NESAF winter meeting 2011 in Vermont (Zschau/O'Leary): The GMD has not finalized a location for the 2011 NESAF winter meeting, but they are considering Lake Morey. There is no limit to the number of people that can attend.

Standing Committee reports:

Nominations and Election (Dolan): Maine, Massachusetts and Vermont are looking for state representatives. NESAF is seeking a Chair-Elect. All packages need to go to Paul D. by the end of August. Electronic voting saved NESAF and local units a lot of money.

Policy (Open): Policy was discussed earlier in the meeting. Bill VanDoren and Tom Worthley have done good work in Massachusetts. A member whose membership lapsed has renewed as a result of seeing NESAF/Yankee/Massachusetts chapter's involvement. National was helpful in reviewing comments from divisions on the Massachusetts issue.

Membership (Greeno): Peter G. distributed the membership dashboard membership report. January membership statistics and membership statistics through February were included. NESAF currently has 198 non-renewals down from 415 at the beginning of the year. Peter G. encouraged EC members to check in with individuals who have not renewed and see if they are going to. Erica Shultz and Peter G. will be at the membership booth during the winter meeting if people have questions about renewal. Memberships are up relative to where they typically are at this point in the year. Membership is higher than it was at any point in 2009, in part because of student members. There are 10 more potential student members. A graduate student is willing to sponsor some students if NESAF will provide a match a portion. NESAF continues to grapple with the challenge of student retention. Peter G. plans to help address this issue through tracking when students are expected to graduate and getting more information out to them. 83 members were purged last year; that number needs to be reduced.

Christopher W. identified some multi-state members that renewed in a single state. When multi-state members renew in a single state the database at National makes it look like the member did not renew in both states. National's new system will eliminate that and will be able to have multi-state membership. The new database is beginning testing this week. Dual databases will run for the next couple months until the system is transferred solely to the new database as the primary system.

Any leaders who have not renewed, technically, should not be in a leadership position. If EC members are aware of leaders on the non-renewal list, they should contact them. NH does not have any student leaders right now. They have 15 members and NESAF wants to keep them active.

Peter G. suggested bringing the membership drive line item down $200 and it can be reduced further to $1,500 in order to match the Forester's Fund Grant.

Peter G. suggested further discussion should take place about the $500 scholarship for the candidate forester program before presenting it to membership. It should be dropped from this year's budget but should be left in the 2011 budget.

The NESAF EC was informed that it was awarded the $1,500 membership grant.

Forest Science Coordinator (Harding): Jim H. was not in attendance.

NESAF Website (Boyer): Deb B. sent out a few emails to Yankee Division. A high percentage of members (45%) opened the email as opposed to normal (32%). A problem is that emails to membership come
from Deb B’s account. She is trying to send emails from the admin@nesaf.org account. Member’s internet security may black admin email addresses and people may not recognize Deb B’s personal email address. Consequently, mass emails will likely come from membership@nesaf.org in the future.

Deb B. has received feedback from mass emails and some opt-outs without providing a reason. Jeff Ward suggested getting abstracts from previous winter meeting presentations on the NESAF website. Deb B. would like to work towards that so if there are any records of abstracts, etc. from previous meetings, please get them to Deb B. Laura Kenefic worked to get proceedings out for 6 years straight. The NESAF website had 1033 unique hits during the last week of February including visitors from Russia, and Poland.

A .pdf of a successful grant application is now on the website so members can see how a successful grant is written. Awards dates were changed. For grants information, members can now contact Mel H. The Fellows page has also been updated.

There were complaints about winter meeting not being on the SAF calendar. Since it went directly to National, as opposed to the NESAF CFE coordinator, it did not get on there. Chris W. assured the EC that if it is submitted directly to National in the future, it will make it on the calendar.

Peter G. and Deb B. discussed whether membership@nesaf.org is the best email address to send members both membership questions and bulk emails relating to non-membership issues. Peter G. and Deb B. will examine the issue, figure out what makes the most sense and report back to the EC.

Grants (Open): The NESAF Grant Fund was discussed earlier in the meeting. There was no additional grants update.

Awards (Stone): Awards is all set for the winter meeting although Randy S. will not be there. Ron L. contacted all 9 of the golden members. No golden members will be at the winter meeting; the EC will try to get awards to them at their respective local unit meetings. Ron L. listed award winners and who would present them. Randy S. commented that it is very helpful to have electronic submissions. Randy asked Deb B. to make a note on the website that email contact and electronic submissions are preferred. All past recipients will be asked to stand. Fellows will also be recognized followed by Golden award winners. Lastly, students and faculty advisors will be asked to stand up.

Budget Report (Hachigian):
Dana H. passed out and reviewed the NESAF Net Worth Report as of the end of the year. Checking was $0.89 off in the audit. The $0.89 is supposed to be in the savings account.

Membership will have hard copied of the budget available to them. Dana H. shared with the EC how she planned to present the budget to membership. Specifically, she will mention the following: there was a deficit in 2009 which ended in a surplus; the 2010 budget has a projected deficit; NESAF was awarded a grant to support membership efforts; NESAF is working to reduce the deficit while adding programs. NESAF has projected deficits for some time and there were questions about addressing a structural deficit. In response, it was noted that the volunteer EC is doing work for $5,000 that an employee was doing for $15,000.

Dana, H. informed the EC that the proposed 2010 budget has a deficit of $6,792.44 while the proposed 2011 budget has a deficit of $7,076.44.

NESAF News Quarterly (Machinist): Scott and Maggie M. renewed the bulk mail permit. One advertiser covers the cost of the permit. The last issue of the News Quarterly was 28 pages and cost $1,652.44. Savings can be found in reducing the length of the issues. Scott and Maggie M. are working to stay within the $6,000 budget. March 22nd is the deadline for the next submission. Maggie and Scott M. welcome pictures from the EC or membership.
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State Reports (NESAF State Representatives): Ron L. informed the EC that state reports will be presented at the NESAF Business Meeting.

SAF Council Report (Carol R.): Carol R. thanked the EC for their time and hard work. She is glad to hear about the challenges NESAF faces, such as the online registration, so she can work to address them. Carol R. made the EC aware of hardships at National. They are in a deficit situation; as a result there have been staff furloughs and National staff is doing work outside their job descriptions (cleaning, building maintenance, etc.). Michael Goergen tried to sell the property which houses SAF headquarters, but the neighbors resisted.

The February Council meeting was canceled due to weather, but there was a conference call. Carol R. attended the NYSAF winter meeting and will attend the next council meeting in June. Council members are expected to pay their own.

At the National convention, raffle money goes into the Forester Fund endowment, which currently has 1.4 million dollars. Carol R. posed the question, "when is enough?", and suggested that raffle proceeds could go elsewhere for a couple years.

Dana H. asked how it will affect the SAF budget if the SAF property is sold. Carol R. replied that the real estate is valuable and would result in a significant endowment. The property has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places by members of the community, which will continue to present challenges to its sale.

There has not been a dues increase in 10 years and the Council will be looking more in-depth at the dues issue.

Chair Potpourri (Lemin): The EC should let Ron L. know if they have issues or success stories that should be brought up at the National convention. Online registration was one issue. Peter G. is speaking with Chris W. to get some resolution.

NYSAF will submit regional award winners to national for consideration. NESAF may wish to consider doing the same thing. It may take a minimal amount of work. NESAF can contact nominators to let them know that the award packages are similar to the National awards, and NESAF will help if they want to nominate a candidate. Presidential field forester is an award that has not been submitted recently. Ron L. suggested a field forester should be submitted every year.

Other items for the good of the order: Ron L. has discussed another joint NY-NESAF winter meeting. Paul D. said Yankee would likely be willing in 2012 if it was in a Yankee location such as the Berkshires. Another idea is a rotation where each of the different chapters / divisions hosts a NESAF-Yankee winter meeting. In Saratoga, NYSAF only had half the regular winter meeting attendance because it was too far east. Similarly, NSAF only had half since it was too far west. It would be important to figure out the financial split if there was another joint winter meeting. Ron L. will explore options for a joint NESAF NYSAF winter meeting and report back to the EC.

Calendar: The NESAF EC will next meet on Thursday, June 24, 2010 1:00pm at a location to be determined.
Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at a location to be determined: 9:30am
Wednesday December 15, 2010 at the Conservation Center in Concord, New Hampshire: 9:30am

A motion to adjourn was heard from Ed O'L. A second was heard from George F. The question was called and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
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Andrew Fast, Secretary