

## Kentucky Environmental Education Council

### Fall Meeting for Board Members

October 27, 2010

#### Meeting Participants

The following board members were present for the meeting: Marcus Norton, Cheryl Messenger, Robert Roquemore, W Horace Brown, and Greg Higdon. Absent board members were Evelyn Morgan, Tom FitzGerald, and Allen Branscum.

The following Kentucky Environmental Education Council staff presented for the meeting: Elizabeth Schmitz, Michelle Nevels, and Merin Roseman.

#### Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

Mr. Brown opened the meeting and greeted all meeting participants. Mr. Brown informed the board members their service appointments will expire at the end of the month and they will be notified if they are reappointed. After reviewing the minutes from the board meeting which occurred July 27-28, 2010 at Shaker Village in Harrodsburg, KY, attending board members approved the minutes with one correction. The correction to the meeting minutes is that Dr. Robert Roquemore was not present for the meeting which occurred at Shaker Village. With this being stated, Mr. Higdon motioned to approve the minutes and Dr. Roquemore seconded this motion.

#### Quarterly Budget Review

Ms. Nevels presented the quarterly budget to the board members. The current revenues for KEEC as of October 22, 2010 are as follows:

Balance Forward from SFY 2009	\$365,706.00
Toyota Reimbursements	2,069.00
KY Pride Fund Interest (KRS 224.43-505 (2)(b))	40,859.00
Morehead University KUPEE Refund	239.00
ARRA Reimbursements	35,784.00
Total Revenue and Carry forward Amount	\$444,657.00

Ms. Nevels explained that the annual fund transfer for Environmental Fines and Penalties has not been received in the amount of \$150,000.00. Normally, this money stream is transferred during January.

Ms. Nevels presented the current year-to-date expenditure totals. Agency operational expenditure totals personnel and operational expenses are within expected amounts for this time of year. The

significant events in other budget categories include Jane Eller's accumulated leave time buy out due to her retirement in August 2010 and Eastern Kentucky University's MOA for NCLI. Ms. Eller's total buyout amount was \$26,486.00. This expenditure was budgeted in the agency budget's biennial planning which occurred in October 2009. Board members stated they appreciated Ms. Eller's time investment with the agency and her buyout amount was normal for her salary, years of experience, and demands as director for KEEC. They also stated Ms. Eller's buyout time was likely to be below average relative to other Executive Directors working for Kentucky state government.

The available balance for KEEC as of October 22, 2010 was \$319,916.00. Total expenditures to date are at \$124,741.00. Given the decrease in return from the Pride Fund interest as received in July 2010, the board was advised to consider other avenues for revenues for the agency. For the current fiscal year, the budgeted amount to be received from the Pride Fund was \$100,000.00. Although the difference in return will be removed from the budget category for grants, the agency will not be able to rely on this every year should the trend continue.

Currently, the interest return accumulated in the Pride Fund is approximately \$2,000.00 which is used for administrative fees by the budget office to oversee the fund. So given this information, the prospect of receiving a sizable return for the next transfer in July 2011 is bleak. Ms. Schmitz discussed the administrative burden for granting the money to the universities when the interest return is less than \$40,000.00 and inquired if KEEC would be relinquished of the administrative responsibility to grant this money to KUPEE. Board members explained at prior meetings various options had been considered. One idea considered is to require the universities to apply for the grant competitively and upon award of the grant, KEEC would distribute a lump sum to grantee. Mr. Higdon suggested discussing the topic's past history with Evelyn Morgan, vice-chair of KEEC board.

Ms. Messenger advised the board past discussion was to retain the money within the agency for agency operations. Mr. Higdon said to research statute for this use and the minutes. Ms. Schmitz indicated she would check the past minutes and statutes. Ms. Messenger said this was the situation we did not grant money for last year. Board members identified the key point for this issue is to check to see if board may at their discretion choose to retain the money for the agency or grant as they see most advantageously to the universities.

### **Current Activity for Project WET**

Ms. Nevels presented the current activity for Project WET in the state of Kentucky. Project WET continues to prepare and edit its new curriculum guide, **Project WET Generation II**, tentatively available in the spring of 2011. WET Teams throughout the United States are still reviewing lessons, and they are currently working with publishers. There is a significant amount of existing lessons which will be retired from the existing curriculum guide. Current thought for the retired lessons will be to have them available for free for public use.

Project WET will not require existing facilitators to retrain the normal 2-day training for the new guide. They are considering online refresher training modules for the new guide for its existing facilitators, but the time length of this course has not been determined at this time.

Michelle Nevels attended the annual coordinator's conference in Spencer, Indiana this year which was held at McCormick Creek State Park, June 7- 11, 2010. Michelle Nevels trained a group of new state coordinators and was elected Co-chair of the Instruction and Training Team for Project WET. She also presented a new lesson for salmon sustainability to the group which will be included in the new curriculum guide and another lesson from "Pollution: Take It or Leave It" from *Healthy Water, Healthy People*. Additionally, Michelle Nevels is a member of the Publications and Products Team and the Conference Planning Team.

In 2009, there were 29 facilitators trained for Project WET and 127 participants trained in 6-hour workshops. There were 173 pre-service teachers reached for Project WET training in 2009, 21 formal teachers trained, 16 non-formal educators, and 10 participants in the "other" category trained in 2009.

Current reporting records submitted as of October 26, 2010, indicate 25 facilitators have been trained in Kentucky and 222 participants have attended 6-hour workshops. Two hundred and ten pre-service teachers have been trained in workshops, 1 non-formal educator, and 2 participants in the "other" category.

There is an increase in the number of pre-service teachers trained as of 10/26/10 reported due largely to a grant obtained by Dr. Jeanine Huss at Western Kentucky University. Dr. Huss and Cheryl Messenger have diligently trained pre-service teachers in 2010 (and 2009) at Mammoth Cave National Park. It is planned to recognize this dedicated facilitator team at the 2011 Kentucky Association of Environmental Educator's Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Reporting statistics could change, however, by the current year's reporting deadline, January 31, 2011. At this time, the statistics indicate a strong public interest for Project WET materials and training, especially in the formal educational setting of pre-service teachers. There currently is a substantial number of non-formal educator's participating as facilitator's as their needs require.

Ms. Nevels also explained there may be a possibility for EETAP funding for correlations to standards, since the new standards are in planning. Once these standards are established formally, Michelle Nevels will contact Project WET apply for the grant for the new correlations to the new curriculum guide in 2011. Currently, the existing guide is correlated to the Kentucky Core Content.

Michelle Nevels is arranging the participant list for the Project WET Steering Committee. This committee is planned to meet and establish the number of trainings for 6 and 12 hour workshops in 2011. There are currently 11 individuals to be invited to participate on the committee.

Budget planning for Project WET is \$1,000.00 for one facilitator workshop, \$1,000.00 for 2 six hour workshops, \$1500.00 for the annual coordinator's conference, and \$500 reserved for miscellaneous expenses.

### **Green and Healthy Schools Update**

Merin Roseman reported on the Green and Healthy School's project. We have more than 150 schools participating in the program. Ms. Roseman attended the first annual Green and Healthy schools

Conference in Minnesota this fall. Mr. Brown reflected of the award we received and indicated interest to continue the program. Ms. Roseman indicated people generally were impressed with the state of our agency's advancement in this program. The agency received an award Outstanding Organization Award from KAEE in September 2010.

Mr. Higdon indicated his agency is affiliated with energy efficiency auditing and with Sullivan University. They are currently conducting "Lunch and Learns" across the state of Kentucky. Mr. Higdon volunteered to mention the Green & Healthy Schools program at these luncheons. Mr. Higdon also indicated he would meet with Kentucky's Capital projects director regarding the plan to make all state level school systems be a part of the Green & Healthy Schools program. Mr. Higdon speculated that given the increasing likelihood of energy costs in Kentucky in future years, the Green & Healthy Schools program, including net zero buildings, would increase awareness of the importance of the program with possibility to sustain it with the budget from the Kentucky Department of Education.

Ms. Roseman traveled extensively this past quarter to meet with energy teams in districts marketing the program. Participation from schools is building. Most schools are in existing schools tract. Ms. Schmitz stated that building new, LEED certified structures will automatically qualify as a Green & Healthy School; however it will take one year of operations to indicate the building is actually a "net zero" building. Kentucky currently has 2 net zero schools. Language is now changed and reflected on website for this.

The mentors program and stipends are still in place. Morgan County school district is the first district to have 100 % participation in program. Ms. Roseman also distributed a DEDI publication to group for information. KEEC stimulus money websites are complete.

Grants to schools increased due to increase to \$800 grants. Total is indicative we are gaining with teachers application for grants. The increased amount is a strategy to generate incentive to apply. One example of a current grant awarded is the purchase of bike racks for one school. This purchase is relevant to the transportation category and will decrease transportation costs and encourage exercise for students.

### **Sustainability of Green & Healthy Schools**

ARRA funding terminates April 15, 2012. The agency has remaining 18 months for funding plus a carryover reserve. The following ideas were presented by the board and staff for sustain the program:

1. During Ms. Eller's leadership of the agency, it was considered to move the program to the Kentucky Department of Education. The advancement of this plan is unknown at this time. It is important to note that given the current atmosphere for state government and its hiring, it could be unlikely the Department could afford the new position, fill the position with a qualified administrator with the intent maintain focus of the program. The board agreed it would be better to maintain the control of the program within KEEC to ensure proper maintenance and planning for the life of the program. Although the total grant award from ARRA contribution is

\$ 215,000, the agency need is for \$70,000 annually to maintain current work and allow for growth, after the expiration of the ARRA grant funding.

2. The next idea for finding support for Green & Healthy Schools is to market sponsorship in the private sector, since the agency receives no money from this sector. Ms. Schmitz is checking with legal staff for approval for this avenue. Mr. Higdon recommended for the agency to presently begin looking for funding for the program so it would have proper, usable indicators for decision making in 2012. Mr. Brown explained it is difficult to project increase in work because of the economy. An advantage for this program is the fact that energy costs will increase and this create fuel to mandate the program and secure funding—plausibly.
3. Board members and staff also contemplated changing the current legislation so that the agency will receive additional money from Environmental Fines and Penalties or possibly increasing the Supplemental Environmental Project fund.
4. Staff suggested the possibility of charging a fee to schools already in the program or to those wishing to join the program. Given this the agency could generate its own budget for Green & Healthy Schools or at least contribute to it. The board decided this idea is likely to not be economically realistic since the schools have low participation when the program is free.

Mr. Brown recommended more consideration for the sustainability situation for Green & Healthy Schools and indicated the board would revisit this topic again in January 2011. Mr. Higdon volunteered to arrange meetings with the Senate Head of Education, construction projects director, bonds oversight for the program and present what the program actually is. Mr. Higdon also suggested the agency should contact Stephanie Nelson for the upcoming summits occurring February and March 2011.

### **Environmental Literacy Plan Update**

Ms. Schmitz stated that it is official to use stimulus grants to develop the environmental literacy plan and she modified the budget to include subcontractor awards to KAEE and ECU to help development of plan. The contractors for ECU are Dr. Melinda Wilder and William Bennett. At NAAEE, Ms. Schmitz met with other states to discuss development of the plan. Many states have legislative mandates and executive orders from their governors for their plan. This is unnecessary for Kentucky since it has so many existing programs in place. However, Kentucky may need this later for authority.

The environmental literacy working group has an extended meeting on the calendar in November. The draft is likely to be completed in February. The goal is for Kentucky to be in position to for funding for professional development for teachers available for No Child Left Inside Act which is in the House of Representatives and Senate.

### **New business**

Schmitz went to Creative Services for new brochure design that includes updates for language and graphics. They will also work on modernizing the agency logo that was created 17 years ago with poor resolution. The plan is to create a brand image for the agency by choosing a consistent look for all agency brochures for its programs. Ms. Schmitz will email pdf files of the brochures to the board members once they are complete.

Mr. Higdon suggested the agency to write an article for Green & Healthy Schools for KY Goods Magazine. Ms. Roseman is in the process of writing a periodic newsletter for her program. The agency will have to wait for approval to hire a person to interview a school for us.

Ms. Messenger reminded the importance to keep the agency's name in front of public and its programs in the public's eye. This is beneficial also to the legislators because they will identify with the name recognition and be attentive to our agency's needs.

At this time Governor Brashear has not made any board appointments. The agency has been notified there will be four new appointments, plus an additional appointment since Jim Funk resigned from his seated position on the board.

With all business being said and completed, Mr. Brown asked to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Norton approved to adjourn and Dr. Roquemore seconded the adjournment and the meeting was officially closed.