

Society News, Notes & Mail

GWS Board Meeting Report

The GWS Board of Directors held its annual meeting November 14–15 in Oakland. After the various committees of the Board met, the first order of business was to count the ballots from the election. As is noted in more detail below, Dwight Pitcaithley and Dave Parsons were re-elected for a second and final term. Officers for 2004 also were selected. Pitcaithley was elected the new president, Abby Miller and Gillian Bowser will continue as vice president and secretary, respectively, and Jerry Emory was elected treasurer. Ethics requirements for government employees serving on boards were reviewed.

As always, much of the discussion focused on the Society's finances and operations. We are glad to be able to report that the Society is in good financial shape, thanks to the success of the 2003 conference. This set the context for a review of the GWS portfolio and how our investments should be allocated. This past summer, after consultation with a financial advisor, funds not needed for operations were consolidated into several Vanguard mutual funds, following a balanced, fairly conservative investment approach. The Board continues to count ourselves extremely lucky with the Society's staff, Executive Director Dave Harmon and Emily Dekker-Fiala, and commended them, including their efforts on the conference. The Board also recognized continued volunteer services by Bob Linn, which are critical to the day-to-day operations of the Society.

The 2003 conference in San Diego was well received by participants. The 2005 conference in Philadelphia will be at a smaller venue that will accommodate fewer concurrent tracks. The Board agreed with many commenters that there should be an effort to increase the papers on science and scholarly topics at the next conference. Issues of concern expressed in the committee reports and other business were the lack of success to date in building a capital fund to provide for long-term sustainability, and the need to increase Society membership. Expanded participation by new NPS employees and non-NPS employees, especially USGS employees, is desired. All agreed that the conferences are the best means to do this and tasks were assigned to take advantage of opportunities presented by the 2005 conference. Additionally, the use of potential appointed Board members to help meet this, as well as other objectives, was discussed at length.

The Board discussed and made plans to follow up on several other issues, including increased involvement with the Ecological Society of America and its program aimed at minorities in science; renewal of the Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service and the need to have one with USGS; topics for the *Forum*; a policy on Society publication of manuscripts, in response to a request to publish; and formalizing criteria for GWS awards.

International issues were another focus. The Board supported having a 2005 conference workshop on defining IUCN's protected area categories, to make them more useable and useful. Four Board members were at the World Parks

Conference in Durban, South Africa. These participants shared their reactions—both positive and humbling. The lack of interest by some GWS members in international *Forum* articles and conference sessions on international issues was recognized. The Board would like to help increase the sense of connectedness among protected area advocates worldwide, as well as the ability for us both to assist and learn from others, internationally as well as from nongovernmental organizations in general, where much of the conservation action is centered. After these discussions, the Board adopted a change to a portion of the Society's strategic statement to that effect.

The final order of routine business was to bid a fond farewell to the outgoing president, Denny Fenn, who is stepping down after completing his two terms. Denny was presented with a small gift in recognition of the excellent leadership he has provided to the GWS over the last two years.

Parsons, Pitcaithley Re-elected to Board; Nominations for 2004 Election Open

In the 2003 GWS Board of Directors election, David Parsons and Dwight Pitcaithley were each re-elected to a second three-year term. They bested Costa Dillon in a well-contested three-way race for the two available seats. Parsons, who directs the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, and Pitcaithley, who serves as chief historian of the National Park Service, were first elected to the Board in 2000. Another Board member, Denny Fenn of the U.S. Geological Survey, is finishing his second and final term in 2003. He holds an appointed position on the Board; as of this writing, his replacement has not been decided.

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2004 election. It is for two seats: one, an open seat that is currently held by Rick Smith, who will be completing his second term and is ineligible to run again; the other, for the seat currently held by Abby Miller, who is eligible for re-election and has indicated that she intends to run again. We are now accepting nominations from GWS members who would like to be candidates for these seats. The term of office runs from January 1, 2005, through December 31, 2007. Nominations are open through July 1, 2004. To be eligible, both the nominator and the potential candidate must be GWS members in good standing (it's permissible to nominate one's self). The potential candidates must be willing to travel to Board meetings, which usually occur once a year; help prepare for and carry out the biennial conferences; and serve on Board committees and do other work associated with the Society. Travel costs and per diem for the Board meetings are paid for by the Society; otherwise there is no remuneration. Federal government employees who wish to serve on the Board must be prepared to comply with all applicable ethics requirements and laws; this may include, for example, obtaining permission from one's supervisor, receiving ethics-related training, and/or obtaining a conflict of interest waiver. The Society can provide prospective candidates with a summary of the requirements.

The nomination procedure is as follows: members nominate candidates for possible inclusion on the ballot by sending the candidate's name to the Board's nominating committee. The committee then, in its discretion, determines the composition of the ballot from the field of potential candidates. Among the cri-

teria the nominating committee considers when determining which potential candidates to include on the ballot are his/her skills and experience (and how those might complement the skills and experience of current Board members), the goal of adding and/or maintaining diverse viewpoints on the Board, and the goal of maintaining a balance between natural- and cultural-resource perspectives on the Board. (It also is possible for members to place candidates directly on the ballot through petition; for details, contact the GWS office.) To propose someone for possible candidacy, send his or her name and complete contact details to: Nominating Committee, The George Wright Society, P.O. Box 65, Hancock, MI 49930-0065 USA. All potential candidates will be contacted by the nominating committee to get background information before the final ballot is determined. Again, the deadline for nominations is July 1, 2004.

Work on 2003 Conference Proceedings Nears Completion

Nearly 100 papers from the GWS/CR2003 joint conference will be included in a proceedings volume that will be available soon. The book, which will be published in paperback and on CD, is being jointly edited by Dave Harmon, Bruce Kilgore, and Gay Vietzke. It is expected to be ready sometime in February. Full details and ordering information will appear in the next *Forum*.

Henry Honored with GWS Special Achievement Award

At its November 2003 meeting, the Society's Board of Directors decided to honor Dr. Wes Henry, wilderness program manager for the National Park Service, with a George Wright Society Special Achievement Award. This award is bestowed by the Board on an occasional basis to recognize outstanding individual efforts related to our core mission. Although Henry has dedicated his entire NPS career to protecting natural resources of his beloved national parks, the George Wright Society is recognizing him for specific achievements dating back to 1990. These achievements relate largely to the success Henry has had in bringing recognition and protection to natural soundscapes and wilderness resources and values of America's national parks.

Henry began his NPS career in the Washington budget office, where he had responsibility for shepherding natural resource budget requests. In this role, he was responsible for helping to obtain funding to address congressional concerns about aircraft overflights at Grand Canyon National Park. This was the first funding ever for natural sound protection in the National Park System.

In 1990, Henry transferred to the ranger activities division, where he became responsible for both the aircraft overflight/natural sound program and for wilderness. There, he oversaw the development and delivery of a major 1994 NPS report to Congress on aircraft overflights ("Report on the Effects of Aircraft Overflights on the National Park System"). This report provided the first comprehensive assessment of the effects of overflights on visitors, wildlife, cultural and historic resources, and the natural soundscapes of the parks. Partly as a result of these efforts, there are now new regulations requiring air tour management plans for national parks. Henry also played a major role in the development of the NPS Director's Order 47 (Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management) and its accompanying manual. He managed to address concerns about aircraft overflights and increase the recognition of natural sound values

while also coordinating wilderness issues, until a separate program and funding were secured in 2000 for the current natural sound program and he could devote full time to wilderness.

Since the early 1990s, Henry has provided dedicated leadership to the fledgling NPS wilderness program. During a time when few higher-level NPS managers believed that wilderness was a priority issue or concern for the agency, Henry was an enduring advocate for appropriate wilderness stewardship. He literally salvaged all of the NPS records related to wilderness when he first reported to duty as the wilderness coordinator—in a well-meaning attempt to provide him with a clean office upon his arrival, the files had been taken out of his office and stacked in the hall to await disposal.

He organized the first NPS wilderness task force and coordinated its 1994 report on improving wilderness stewardship in the NPS. This report made recommendations related to wilderness leadership, planning, management, and accountability that continue to provide targets for the agency. In 1996, Henry was the driving force behind establishment of the NPS's national wilderness steering committee. This committee, the actions of which he continues to help coordinate, has addressed specific wilderness management challenges faced by the agency, produced annual NPS wilderness reports, and, most recently, drafted an NPS wilderness action plan for consideration by the director. Henry also was one of the chief architects of NPS Director's Order 41 (Wilderness Stewardship) and Reference Manual 41 (Wilderness Stewardship Guidance Materials). Finally, Henry has long advocated for interagency dialogue regarding wilderness stewardship, serving as the NPS representative on the interagency wilderness steering committee since its formation in 1994, and lending support to the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center and the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.

As a result of Henry's efforts, both natural sound protection and wilderness stewardship are now receiving significantly higher levels of attention within the National Park Service. With such attention, it is hoped that more sustainable funding for these programs may be achieved in the near future. Without the dedication, perseverance, and talents applied by Henry, these important resource values would not be receiving the attention that they have today.

2005 Awards Round Underway

The GWS is now accepting nominations for the 2005 round of its awards program. Every two years at the conference, we recognize excellence in the park professions by bestowing awards for cultural and natural resource management, communications, and career-long achievements. The award includes peer recognition at a high-profile event at the conference, and free attendance at and travel expenses to the conference itself. To learn more about the awards or to make a nomination, visit www.georgewright.org/awards.html.

