

- AREA Board of Directors Conference Call
  - March 12, 2009
  - 2:00 PM EST

**Board Members on Call:** Judy Tumosa, Angela Capello, Steve Marshall, Tom Lang, Marc Sommer, Karina Walsh, Lea Gray, Kevin Cunningham

**Absent Board Members:** Spring Riley, Shahab Farzanegan, Nadine Meyers, Randy Honebrink

The meeting was called to order by Steve at 2:04 EST.

The minutes from the December 8, 2008 meeting were approved.

**Financial Report & Tax Filing Update:**

- Lea reported \$9,927.50 in the AREA account.
- Lea needs the December bank statement from Marc in order to file the taxes.
  - Marc will get in touch with Amanda to track this down but believes that Lea can access the information she need because her name is on the account. *Update 4/20/2009 – Lea cannot access last year's bank statements.*
- Lea reported that as far as she knows AREA has never filed tax papers.
  - Marc reports that AREA lost its non-profit status; as far as the IRS is concerned AREA has not existed since 1996 (which was the last time AREA filed).
  - 2006 was the last time Marc knows of that AREA should have filed tax papers.
- Lea just needs to file for 2008 but is unsure of the process and paperwork that it involves.
  - Jimmy Barnett is filing paperwork for AFS and she hopes to be able to get help from him.
- Steve makes a motion for Lea to solicit outside help for a fee.
  - Karina seconds the motion.
- The floor opens for discussion:
  - Various board members voiced concern about how much AREA might be charged. Suggestions were made to put a limit on the amount of money spent.
  - The board recognized that filing as a 501c3 requires different/more paperwork and if it is done improperly, Lea could be fined.
- Steve edited his motion to include a limitation of \$500 to be spent on tax filing.
  - Angela seconded the motion.
  - The Board passed the motion

**Membership Report:**

- Karina has received the applications to date from Lea, but has not done anything with them yet.

- Karina inquired whether there was an electronic spreadsheet/database somewhere with all the members listed, and if so where? She didn't know if there was a "complete" list somewhere and questioned whether or not all AREA members applying for new membership or renewing had to fill out applications.
  - Marc has an excel file with membership information from TX and Lea. Besides this there is no record.
  - Every person applying or renewing fills out a membership application. – If someone submits a check only, Lea tracks that person down and gets complete information.
- Marc said that some memberships (received in December) may have been lost in the shuffle with the changing of officers. It will be difficult to determine who these people are, they will have to come to us. If we do figure out whom these individuals are AREA will potentially waive their membership dues.
- Kevin mentioned some initial confusion as to where they send money, how long there membership lasts (is it calendar year or from when treasurer receives it?), is there an auto renewal?
  - Clarification – memberships are based on the calendar year January-December (it does not matter when an application is submitted) and are good for 2 years.
  - Everyone receives the same renewal reminder – on the list serve.
- Kevin wanted to know if there PayPal was an option for membership payments.
  - No electronic payment option set up at this time.
  - In order to use PayPal must pay a fee
    - Who would pay the fee? AREA vs. member?
- Many people voiced concern over the confusion/complications members face when the Treasurer changes so often.
  - When states pay for AREA membership they may be paying for multiple people, state may have to set up a new account for billing.
- Karina and Kevin questioned the efficiency of the membership application process – seems like there are multiple people keeping the same information (Lea, Marc and Karina). They questioned whether there might be a better way to streamline the process.
  - Karina suggested having applications come to her first?
    - Steve says he prefers for the money to go strait to Lea to avoid any middleman and increased chance of losing a check.
  - Angela asked if Lea could send the membership information to Karina electronically once she entered it.
    - Lea maintains a database with only the minimal amount of info for each individual person so it would not make sense for the transfer to be electronic.
  - It was determined that Lea will enter the info she needs, send the membership applications to Karina and then Karina will send an electronic list to Marc for the list serve.
- There was a lot of discussion about having the most up-to-date membership information reflected on the list serve.

- Steve will send out a 2<sup>nd</sup> and final letter about paying membership dues. If people do not renew their memberships within 10 days then they will be removed from the list serve.
  - Steve will wait until Marc has had a chance to update the list serve before he sends the 2<sup>nd</sup> notice.
- It is our goal to have only active, paying members accessing the list serve.
- Tom wanted to stress the importance of one-on-one/face-to-face membership recruitment. He pointed out that AREA is still a young group and that we need to focus on a grassroots effort and look outside the box for potential members.

#### **January AFWA Meeting:**

- Steve inquired as to whether anyone had been able to attend the January meeting.
  - No one attended.
- Tom was unclear that the discussions the board had in previous meetings was referencing the January meeting. Tom cleared things up by letting us know that the large AFWA meeting is taking place in the Fall which he hopes to attend.
- Steve wanted to discuss whether or not AREA was going to pay for Tom to attend the meeting.
  - Tom said to wait on making this decision until he finds out if his state agency will pay for him to attend.
  - Discussion was deferred to the next call.

#### **Website & List Serve**

- After a lot of discussion on recruitment and retention, it was suggested that on the membership page of the AREA website there should be a bulleted list of benefits.
  - Tom asked that everyone think about what services we can add to retain membership.
    - Continuing education?
- Kevin suggested having a testimonial page that veteran AREA members could write about what AREA means to them and how they have benefited from it.
  - Steve is willing to write something up for the page.
  - Tom suggested video testimonial – he will look in to the specifics of getting this done.
    - Steve said that this would likely be a project for the future.

#### **Teleconferencing Service:**

- The company Steve has lined up to provide AREA teleconferencing service is charging us \$0.10/minute that we pay as it is used.
- Conferencing capacity is up to 200 phone lines. The number of participants on the call, ranging from 1-200, does not affect the cost.
- Steve wanted to know if we should make the service available to all AREA board members.
- Kevin says that he thinks it is a very useful tool. Especially in his region where it is highly unlikely that they will be able to meet face to face. Kevin

used his own (TX) teleconferencing service for the call he already had with his region members.

- Karina made a move to make the line available to all board members.
  - Steve seconded the motion.
  - The committee passed the motion
- Steve wants interested board members to contact Lea. She will provide instructions on how to use the service and monitor the costs of calls.

#### **Ballot Results for Board Title Changes:**

- Karina reported that the proposed name changes passed.
- Karina will work on updating the changes in all of the AREA documents.

#### **2010 Conference:**

- Tom reported that the National Conference Committee approved Omaha, Nebraska as the 2010 conference location.
- There were no other proposals submitted – both Kentucky and Oregon felt that they could not support a conference at this time. NCTC will be kept as a “rainy day” option if a state is unable to host in the future.
- The event will be co-hosted by South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska.
- Date is October 3-8, 2010
- Some details – host hotel will be the Double Tree which provides a free airport shuttle. Some planned activities are fishing and an airboat ride.
- The Nebraska chapter of the American Fisheries Society has pledged \$1000 in support of the event.
- Tom feels that this is a good location - centrally located which will help keep participant travel costs down. The conference committee will be doing a lot of negotiating to keep conference costs at a minimum.

#### **Regional Coordinator Updates:**

Northeast – Judy

- Judy reported that she just returned from a great visit with the folks in her region. Representatives from PA, MD, and VA were unable to make the trip to Hadley, MA.
- The history of ARE and AREA were discussed as well as where we are now and where do we hope to be.
  - A time line of AREA/ARE was very insightful and Judy feels it would be beneficial for all AREA membership to see and recognize where we have been and what we have accomplished – legislatively and programmatically.
  - AREA and ARE has come a LONG way and it is important for people to see the big picture.
- Judy passed along AREA membership information and discovered that there was some confusion as to whether or not people were members or not (due to inability to access list serve).

- Lea confirmed that she had received the applications of the two people in question and it is believed that Marc has not had a chance to update the list serve. (NOTE: Marc was unable to confirm because he had to leave the call/meeting early.)
- In general the Northeast folks are happy with the active board.
- Judy wanted to point out that as far as her region goes not all members of AREA (Spring for example) are part of an “ARE” division so they were not represented at the meeting.
- Judy mentioned that some people felt strongly enough about attending the meeting that they came on their own time.

#### Southwest – Kevin

- Kevin had a conference call with his region. During the call each state spoke about the aquatic program in their state, Kevin reviewed the AREA board meetings to date, and recruitment.
- A large concern and a lot of discussion occurred concerning recruitment and retention.
  - People questioned “how” to recruit new members when there were no apparent tangible benefits and it appears as though we can’t retain the members we have. Is there something we could add to the recruitment letter?
    - Steve says that he perceives the major benefit as the list serve and opportunity to network. He also wanted to point out that “you pay for what you get.” AREA’s 2 year membership is only \$25. AREA does not have staff and the board members are overworked and underpaid like most state educators.
    - Tom mentioned meeting with equipment reps and getting great deals on equipment.
    - Judy mentioned on a larger scale AREA helps with developing favorable laws and regulations.
    - Steve said he would update the recruitment letter to include these benefits.
  - It was recognized that the state educators are on board but “outsiders” are not.
- People also questioned whether or not it was ethical to be doing recruiting for AREA while on the job?

#### Southeast - Angela

- Angela reported that she has tried to get in touch with her federal aid coordinator but has not heard back from him/her yet.
- She questioned the method people had used to initiate contact.
- Folks said that contacting the federal aid coordinator to get a list of state contacts and then e-mail and call is what they have been doing.

### **Committee Update:**

- Steve wanted to know if any of the AREA committees not already active should be activated.
- Steve suggested an official activation of the education committee.
  - He contacted Bob Jones and Doug Darr about organizing the group. He charged them with recruiting help and a first project of developing a “Fish Facts” page on the website – as was suggested through the list serve.
  - Steve has not heard back from Doug or Bob as to whether they are willing to take this on.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Suggested Action</b>
Conference	Active	
Membership	Not Active	
Administrative	Not Active	
Education	Not Active	Activate

### **Strategic Plan Review**

- Steve reported that Marc has spoken with Doug Darr and up to this point Doug has not had time to review the Strategic Plan.
- Marc has reviewed it and has passed it along to Bob Jones and Jimmy Barnett.

### **Affects of Financial Meltdown**

- Kevin reports that none of the states in the southwest region are having financial difficulty.
- Tom said that he has noticed the price of goods going up. Some vendors are willing to cut deals but many businesses, which have in the past, are no longer able to.
- Angela says that there has been a freeze on all travel in her state – Louisiana. She also mentioned that LDWF's Wildlife Division had a budget meeting which involved the entire division. Administrators informed them of budget cuts being made Department wide. (Much of her division isn't federally funded; however, hunter education and aquatic education are.) Hunter Ed and Aquatic Ed were told that they would have to suspend purchases along with everyone else. Angela questioned her supervisor as to this when they operated on federal funds which needed to be spent. Her boss later went to the division administrators and reminded them of their federal status. The administrators hadn't taken the status into consideration - so they were told to spend their federal dollars.
- Steve said that there have been discussions about 2010/2011 budgets and he is concerned about travel restrictions in Florida.
- We recognized that being 100% federally funded creates some insulation for our programs.

### **Other**

#### **AREA Newsletter**

- Kevin brought up the idea of an e-newsletter for AREA that could have reports from people around the US, interesting article and a resource section. He

mentioned that most states already do some sort of news letter so people could submit articles they use in their state newsletter for an AREA one.

- Angela suggested a show casing of state programs.
- Feature regional coordinator reports
- “Presidential Address”
  - Steve could discuss economic affects, etc.
- Steve questioned who would be responsible for its production?
  - Karina volunteered to take it on
  - Tom suggested putting it out to the list serve to see if someone volunteers and if no one does then Karina can do it.

#### Scholarships

- Kevin wanted to know who was in charge of the scholarship application/process. He was unsure if there was an actual procedure for applying for an AREA scholarship.
  - Steve says that there is a procedure in place and that Ti Piper is heading up this project.
- To date there has been only one scholarship awarded.
  - There has not been a lot of publicity for scholarships.

#### **Future Plans/Needs:**

- Strategic plan assessment – what have we accomplished, what have we not accomplished, are there different things we need to be doing now?
- Tom suggested that an announcement go out to the list serve when the board meeting minutes are posted.
  - Minutes need to be approved by the board before they can be posted.
  - Policy – Karina will send out the minutes for a 1<sup>st</sup> round of edits. Once all edits are made she will send out the minutes a 2<sup>nd</sup> time with a mandatory response/vote of whether or not the minutes are accepted.
- Kevin wanted to know if he should ask his membership about posting regional meeting minutes on the website.
  - After a discussion the board decided that regional coordinator would provide updates vs. minutes to be posted. This will help avoid the “he said,” “she said” comments.
- E-newsletter
- AREA members testimonials
- Membership page with bulleted benefits
- Steve and Angela will work on revising the AREA membership recruitment letter that reflects the advantages of being a part of AREA.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:51 EST.

**NEXT MEETING:** By conference call Tuesday June 2, 2009, **1:00 pm** EST.