

Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution Council Meeting - Minutes

Sunday 25 May 9:00 -17:30
McGill University, Montreal, Quebec

In attendance: Judy Myers (Chair), Anne Dalziel, Andrew Gonzalez, Jill Johnstone, Jeremy Kerr (electronic link), Fanie Pelletier, Heather Proctor, Andrew Simons, Julie Turgeon (electronic), Locke Rowe, Miriam Richards (recording)

Guests: Andrew Hendry (G2B LOC), Steve Heard (CIEE), Albrecht Schulte-Hostedde (CCAC)

1. Adoption of Agenda

Judy opened the meeting with introductions, a welcome to new Council members, and a short summary of the agenda. Before the meeting formally began, Andrew Hendry, chair of the Genomes to Biomes delivered an update on the Genomes to Biomes preparations.

2. 2014 Montreal Annual Meeting – Genomes to Biomes (G2B) - Andrew Hendry

The meeting will be quite large, with >900 participants and 792 presentations, including 193 posters to be presented in three sessions. An unexpected notification from McGill of pending construction in the buildings originally reserved for the conference led to last minute changes to another building with a couple small rooms. The total budget for the conference stands at \$356,000, including profit of \$10000 to CSEE (and to other societies scaled by membership).

Andrew noted that this is the first meeting that actually had to pay taxes since a new legal entity had been created to run the conference. However, Julie noted that if the societies run the conference, taxes do not need to be paid because running the conference is an extension of the society's mission and we are a non-profit organization. Future LOC's may need more formal advice on this topic.

3. Minutes of the meeting of December 2013 (Ottawa)

MOTION (Fanie, Andy G): to accept the minutes of the previous Council meeting.

PASSED

4. President's Report – Judy Myers

The major items in the agenda are the major issues to be reported by the President.

5. Treasurer's report – Julie

Julie presented her proposed final budget for 2014, noting that the interim budget was presented at the December meeting. In the context of a forecast budget deficit, discussion of the budget focussed on the following items:

Environment Canada contracts – this is an item that has appeared in the budget for at least 4 years. Originally, Environment Canada paid \$8000 to the Society to

commission reports on biodiversity; \$4000 remains in the budget as a potential expense. However, former Councillor Arne Mooers has already followed up and there is no expectation that this money will be used or returned. Council therefore decided that this amount can now be written out of the budget.

MOTION (Locke, Fanie) that the remaining \$4000 from the Environment Canada be removed from the budget.

PASSED

Intecol - CSEE has received a request from Intecol that we consider joining the group and that a reasonable membership fee would be \$1 per member; this potential expense was included in the budget proposal. Council discussed the request but concluded that we do not really have enough information yet to evaluate the benefits to the members of joining Intecol.

MOTION (Locke, Andrew S) that the decision be postponed pending further information about the role of Intecol and that the item be removed from the budget.

PASSED

Outreach - The 2014 budget allocation to the Outreach committee was used as part of CSEE's contribution to the speaking fee of Paul Nicklen, the National Geographic speaker engaged to deliver a public outreach talk at G2B. This leaves the Outreach committee with no addition funds, so \$1000 (?) was added.

MOTION (Locke, Anne) to increase the Outreach budget by \$1000.

PASSED

CSEE Symposium – CSEE does not usually pay the registration for symposium speakers because in the past, the LOC has taken care of this. Payment of registration fees for invited speakers in the CSEE symposium at G2B led to an email discussion over the winter because of an assumption made by the LOC that CSEE was sponsoring registrations as the other societies were doing. Council decided to pay those registration fees that are necessary (e.g. for post-doc speakers) and that a policy is required for 2015.

MOTION: (Locke, Fanie) to include the registration fees of post-doc members of the 2014 CSEE symposium in the budget as a one-time item.

PASSED

ACTION: A policy should be proposed for discussion at the next Council meeting.

Council then considered the budget as a whole. Although the final 2014 budget does include a deficit, CSEE does have considerable cash in the bank, which is not earning any money. Council will discuss investment ideas with the aim of investing the cash at the next Council meeting.

MOTION (Fanie, Locke) to accept the budget as amended.

PASSED

The final budget as accepted by Council, will be presented to the membership for approval at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

ACTION: Members of Council should consider how to invest CSEE funds in order to provide the President and Treasurer with suggestions over the next few months.

6. Secretary's report – Miriam Richards

The major item is the preparation of the new CSEE By-laws and Standing Rules. Both were circulated to the membership with a request for comments. Only two members responded and some minor changes were made. Both documents will be voted on at the AGM. Assuming a favourable vote, the By-laws will be forwarded to Industry Canada by the Treasurer.

Reports of Committees

Judy announced the following new assignments: Heather Proctor with chair the Biodiversity committee, Jill Johnstone will be the new CIEE representative, and Andrew Simons has already taken over as the Bulletin Editor. Locke noted that additional members may be required on the Awards committee. A discussion is still necessary on the role and future of the Membership & Communications committee.

7. Membership & Communications committee

Miriam reported that membership is quite high and seems to consistently be between 700 and 800. Andrew Hendry commented that he has collated a list of Canadian ecologists and evolutionary biologists that we can perhaps use to increase membership.

8. Nominations committee – Judy Myers

The new Standing Rules include changes to term lengths, so a new election schedule must be devised shortly. The new terms will begin and end at the Annual Meeting, so the next election would likely be held in February or March. This means that nominations must be secured in the fall.

ACTION - A new electoral schedule and nominations must be prepared for September or October.

9. Awards & Recognition committee – Locke Rowe

a. Nominations for Honorary membership in CSEE. The Society has received nominations for Harold Harvey, C.S. Holling, and E.C. Pielou. The nominations will be presented to the membership for approval at the AGM.

MOTION (Jill, Anne) to rename the honorary lifetime memberships to Honorary Fellows of the CSEE.

PASSED

MOTION (Fanny, Andy G.) to present all three nominations as Honorary Fellows to the membership for a vote at the AGM

PASSED

ACTION: A website update is required to celebrate the Fellows' accomplishments.

b. President's Award – more nominees are required for the list from which the President chooses the Awardee.

ACTION: Solicit names from the membership, and advertise in the Bulletin and on the website for further nominations.

c. Early Career Award – The application deadline will be 15 November.

ACTION: Heather will propose the format for the nominations.

d. Student Awards – Due to the popularity of the student awards competition it is becoming quite difficult to manage the judging process. It will not be possible to give out the awards at the meeting because there is insufficient time for collating the result. Anne suggests that the whole process may need rethinking.

10. Outreach committee – Fanie Pelletier

As there were no kids' outreach activities planned for the G2B meeting, Fanie's activities focussed on finishing the last few Vignettes, which have been forwarded to Miriam to post on the website. Fanie wondered if anyone is looking at or using the Vignettes. Their original purpose was to showcase NSERC-sponsored research, but it now seems more appropriate that they evolve towards research highlights. To keep the page fresh, new topics should be solicited from the membership.

11. Biodiversity & Conservation committee – Heather Proctor

An impediment to taxonomic research is that the work of taxonomists is not cited as often as the work of other biodiversity scientists. For instance, identification keys are often not cited in scientific literature, even though they are an integral part of the methodology. This is in contrast with the use of molecular taxonomy – methods used to identify specimens by DNA sequences would certainly be cited, but morphological methods often are not.

ACTION: Heather will compose and circulate to Council, a draft letter to editors of appropriate journals, that suggests improvements in acknowledging assistance of taxonomists, for instance by explicitly including such considerations in Instructions to Authors.

Society Business

12. Graduate students and post-docs – Anne Dalziel

The only outstanding issue was a request for workshop funding which was dealt with in the budget. Other issues were already discussed.

13. Bulletin - Andrew Simons

The suggested deadline for submissions will be mid-June, aiming for distribution in July.

14. Website – Miriam Richards

Approved Council meeting minutes will be posted, as well as a summary in bullet points of meeting shortly after the meeting.

15. External requests for funding

a. The Intecol request for funding had already been discussed (see above).

b. Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) – a request was received from Sally Otto (UBC) that CSEE consider a one-time contribution to support the travel of member as a Canadian representative. The IPBES mission is appropriate as it is aligned with CSEE objectives.

MOTION (Jill , Andy Gonzalez) that CSEE contribution \$500 per year from 2014-2016 to IPBES to support travel of a CSEE member who will be travelling to these meetings.

PASSED

In future Council meetings, final approval of the budget should be scheduled for the end of the meeting, as inevitably, additional budgetary consideration arise.

Society Liaisons

16. NSERC

Hugh MacIsaac, the Ecology and Evolution 1503 Group Chair, will attend the AGM on Thursday to discuss this year's competition, including the pattern that Discovery grant success rate is now much lower in small and medium universities than in large universities.

17. CIEE – Steve Heard

CIEE is making progress in its process of self-renewal. Ten proposals for new working groups were received, three of which were funded. Other CIEE-sponsored activities include the R workshop taking place before the conference, as well as a one-week R course planned to take place at the University of Regina.

CIEE has adopted a new structure, creating a College of Representatives, which comprises one representative from as many institutions as possible. Currently, there are representatives from 30 of 52 institutions. The latest sustaining member is Simon Fraser University.

Discussion focussed on the continuing issue of whether CIEE is doing anything that could not be done by CSEE. It was suggested that perhaps CIEE should be acting as coordinator for a network of independent research groups that are working on similar topics.

18. CCAC - Albrecht Schulte-Hostedde

CIHR and NSERC have cut funding to CCAC, and now universities are going to be asked to contribute about \$5000/university. A complete change in the organizational structure of CCAC is in the works, to a model where any institution can be members of CCAC as non-profit. Albrecht will be on the board for another 2 years. Albrecht identified the relationship between CCAC and local university veterinarians and animal care committees as the fundamental problem with CCAC – local committees really make most of the decisions that affect researchers.

Fanie noted that in addition to CCAC fees, additional fees are charged for veterinary consultation for certain wildlife projects, and requested that Albrecht to look into these charges.

19. PAGSE – Jeremy Kerr

Jeremy summarized recent PAGSE activities on Parliament Hill. CSEE's financial contribution to PAGSE supports such activities as Bacon and Eggheads breakfasts, Science Pages – one page summaries of particularly topical scientific topics, and the secretary of the Royal Society of Canada, who spends a lot of time on PAGSE administration.

20. Future Meetings of the Society

The 2015 meeting will be held in Saskatoon and the LOC will be chaired by Eric Lamb. Proposed dates are 20-23 May 2015, and the theme will be "Ecology and evolution in managed landscapes". The LOC anticipate about 400 attendees and the preliminary budget suggests that they will break even at 350.

A proposal was received from Tom Chapman and Ian Fleming to host the 2016 meeting at Memorial University. One suggestion is that the LOC consider summer dates to accommodate potential attendees who do spring fieldwork and who consequently miss out on the conference every year.

MOTION (Lock, Jill) to accept the proposal to hold the 2016 meeting at Memorial University.

PASSED

21. Other Business

a. Consultation Workshop on Big Data and Digital Scholarship

CSEE members, Arne Mooers and Michael Whitlock, had proposed a policy that was forwarded to NSERC, which is in the process of devising a new policy about data access and management, especially for large data sets. NSERC has not yet completed its policy. NSERC was not able to accommodate a request for CSEE participation in meetings on the policy in February.

b. The 100th anniversary of ESA will be in two years. Judy solicited ideas for a CSEE contribution to the celebration. One idea is to sponsor a symposium emphasizing Canadian ecology or "cross-border ecology".

MOTION (Heather, Andrew Simon) to adjourn.

PASSED

The meeting concluded at 4.30 pm.