

**Organization of
Biological Field Stations**

Newsletter

No. 27

November 1978 1978

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OBFS NEWSLETTER

November, 1978

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Minutes: 1978 Annual Meeting - Eagle Lake Field Station - Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 1978

1. In Attendance: Raymond Barnett, Robert Ediger and Roger Lederer, hosts, Eagle Lake Field Station (ELFS). Burr J. Betts, Lilly White Field Station; Richard Bovbjerg, Iowa Lakeside Laboratory; Paul M. Bultsma, S. H. Ordway Memorial Prairie Biological Station; Jesse F. Clovis, Terra Alta Biological Station; Richard W. Coles, Tyson Research Center; Robert C. Dalgleish, E. N. Huyck Preserve; B. Jeanie Davis, Sierra Nevada Field Campus; Denzel Ferguson, Malheur Environmental Field Station; Robert L. Fisher, Raystown Field Station; Dan Hannan, Aquatic Station, Southwest Texas State University; Peter P. Harper, Station de Biologie, Universite de Montreal; Richard T. Hartman, Pymatuning Laboratory of Ecology; Gordon W. Hodgson, Kananaskis Center Campus; Steve H. Jenkins, Whittell Forest and Wildlife Area; George Lauff, W. K. Kellogg Biological Station; Peter N. Marchand, Babcock Nature Preserve; Brent B. Nickol, Cedar Point Biological Station; David F. Parmelee, University of Minnesota Forestry and Biological Station, at Lake Itasca, and at Cedar Creek Natural History Area; Jennifer M. Shay, University Field Station (Delta Marsh); William F. Sievers, National Science Foundation; Edmund Smith, Pacific Marine Station; John Tibbs, University of Montana Biological Station.
2. Saturday Morning - 9/30/78:
Panels and discussion on: 1. The role of OBFS beyond the annual meeting; E. Smith, G. Lauff, R. Hartman. 2. Present and future enrollment trends: how they affect field stations; J. Tibbs. 3. Teaching and research at ELFS; by staff and students of the host station.

No attempt will be made here to summarize the full discussion which occurred during the morning session; however several points arose which affected later events. These will be mentioned. It was observed that one benefit of the annual meeting is that it acquaints the attenders with habitats and ecosystems in the neighborhood of the host station. Distribution of descriptions of the environment(s) nearby, perhaps with reprints or a citation list of relevant publications describing the area would help the visitors. Many stations have such materials on hand already. Dr. Lauff summarized the present activities and possible future activities of OBFS as follows: compilation of a directory of biological field stations; announcement of summer course offerings at the various member stations; holding of an annual meeting including a review of ecosystems and habitats near the host station; development of a rationale for OBFS, its purposes and objectives; drafting of operating guidelines and procedures for users in effect at the member stations; establishment of biological data bases at each station including physical and biological monitoring; the storage of information in an appropriate data bank; and sharing of information about equipment at various member stations.

During discussion of these activities, it was observed that there might be an expansion of inter-station cooperation. It was suggested that later, in the business meeting, a steering committee be established, and charged with the responsibility of exploring this possibility. ¶ In discussing field station enrollments, John Tibbs reported on some data gathered by David Gates showing a decline in enrollment at his facility and others over the last several years. There is a well known national trend towards fewer students in the college age bracket. Discussion proceeded on methods of improving the situation by advertising, by description of courses offered and other mechanisms to aid the directors in dealing with this problem should it arise at their stations.

The meeting continued with discussion of research and teaching projects under active pursuit by the staff and students at Eagle Lake Biological Station.

3. September 30, 1978 p.m. Annual meeting for business.

- A. The president solicited information from those present regarding their departure plans and then turned to William Sievers for a few comments on the role of NSF and its relation to biological field stations. Dr. Sievers indicated that there may on occasion have been misunderstandings between OBFS membership and NSF. He indicated that his branch of NSF, Biological Research Resources, can support only research and not training. He recognized that our outlook does not separate the two processes and appreciates our point of view but nevertheless, indicated that Biological Research Resources conducted its program under established policies. He said his office would entertain a proposal from OBFS for a study of the needs for funding program support, research, training, baseline data collection, environmental monitoring and so on, as they might be performed at biological field stations. He mentioned that it would be best if proposed activities were dovetailed with existing programs relating to data gathering and other aspects of field biology. He observed that in order to generate funding for biological stations, the scientific community itself, must provide evidence, and even some pressure, to NSF that more support is needed. He cited examples in other areas of activity such as systematic biology and the American Ornithologist Union where such pressures did generate funds to support facilities and research.
- B. The minutes were adopted in the form they had been presented and circulated in Newsletter #25 (November, 1977)
- C. Old business. None was offered.
- D. New business:
 - 1.) President's Report - President Smith indicated that he had contacted a number of West Coast Marine Biological Stations and that three of those had indicated that they would join our organization. With regards to some others he encountered a problem which was - it was difficult for him to describe to them what they would receive from membership in OBFS and what the organization does. He indicated that if we could come up with a concrete statement of our activities, objectives and goals, that perhaps additional numbers of marine or other stations would be interested in joining the organization. It was observed that this was one of the

possible projects to be undertaken by the steering committee which had been suggested earlier in the day.

2.) Secretary/Treasurer's Report - Dick Coles indicated that there was no complete membership list available at the meeting for distribution to those in attendance. Instead he promised to compile a revised membership list to appear in a forth-coming Newsletter. This was partly because the mere distribution of a membership list at the annual meeting seemed inadequate as a mechanism for informing the membership of its composition. The secretary did circulate an old membership list which had been revised on the 20th of September, and solicited from those in attendance, their phone numbers and various other bits of information concerning their vital statistics. It was suggested that the secretary prepare a list of phone numbers of the various members and the directors of the various member stations for distribution to the membership so that communication among us might be improved.

Directories had been compiled from members responding to questionnaires distributed some time ago. The distribution of these occurred in early March, a few copies remain in the secretaries office and are available to members or others who place an inquiry. The secretary also mentioned that it had cost roughly \$50.00 to prepare and distribute peel-off mailing labels of all member stations to the various directors. It was recommended this year that rather than repeat this gesture directly, that the membership list to appear in the forthcoming Newsletter be arranged so that those who have in their home facilities the capacity to prepare Xerox labels might be able to do so from the Newsletter directly. Other members who needed peel-off address labels of the membership would be welcome to contact the secretary directly and he would provide mailing labels to them. This suggestion will be followed. The secretary mentioned eight new members since the last meeting. While some ambiguity remains in a couple of instances, it appears that this brings our membership to roughly 65. Some of the confusion results from the passing of responsibility for a particular station from one person to another without any clear indication to OBFS as to whether the original is still involved or should no longer be regarded as holding the membership.

It was reported that the balance in the treasury as of 9/28/78 was \$430.19 Receipts of note to date had included: interest of Certificate of Deposit (\$1000. nominal value), \$60.00; Dues from membership, \$541.00; Income from those listed in the course announcement, \$650.00; Total receipts to date: \$1251.00. It was observed that dues are still owed by a substantial number of members and there are some outstanding obligations with regard to the course announcement as well, and the treasurer indicated that he would rebill these individual stations in the near future.

Disbursements included: AIBS membership, \$100.00 (including the donation that was arranged for in the previous meeting); Reimbursement to Bob Dalglish for travel to AIBS meetings in 1977 and in 1978, \$150.96; Newsletter expenses, \$50.40; Annual meeting mailing, \$62.40; postage, duplication costs in the office of the secretary/treasurer, \$148.22

Course Announcement expenses, \$723.96; and expenditures on the directory, \$253.39. Total disbursements for the period under review \$1489.44. With the collection of outstanding dues, we will be at about the same point where we were last year. The Course Announcement will then have generated income nearly identical to its costs.

3.) Location of Next Meeting - The president entertained suggestions from the membership as to places where our presence has been invited or might be tolerated for the fall '79 meeting. Several possibilities were discussed; but it was decided that since everyone intended to establish the steering committee, that this chore be delegated to that group.

4.) Report of the Representative to AIBS - Bob Dalgleish pointed out that the former executive director of AIBS, Richard Trumble, had resigned and that Don Beem was acting as executive director while a search was in process. It is also under consideration of the governing board that the category of affiliate membership be dropped. Bob Dalgleish recommended that his vote be to drop this membership category which allows an organization to pay dues but not to vote. He also reported that a few adherent societies appear to be dropping out, owing to some uncertainties over the role of AIBS. Consideration is being given to raising the dues of member organization to \$600/ per organization, but the qualification was that no more than \$1.00 per professional member of a member organization be charged. Dalgleish recommended that we may include amateur members in our group and that it would appear difficult for the AIBS or for anyone else to distinguish between amateur and professional members and therefore recommended that his vote be cast against this particular change. Society dues make up only 4½% of the AIBS income. (OBFS dues to AIBS are charged at a rate of \$1.00 per member, since we fall in the size category where that rate applies. When a revised dues charges were enacted several years ago, we voted to donate additional monies sufficient to maintain our contribution at \$100 per year.)

5.) Editor's Report - Bob Dalgleish pointed out that the effort devoted to compiling and distributing the Newsletter frequently elicited no feedback, positive or negative, on the content of this organ. He reported a hesitation to advance his own point of view in the Newsletter and pointed out that in a recent spring Newsletter he merely duplicated and distributed some copies of material from federal offices which appeared to be of interest. For the upcoming annual Course Announcement Bob needs information concerning the courses to be offered next summer by Dec. 1, 1978. It was moved, seconded and passed that the cost per station for this listing be raised to \$30.00.

6.) Additional New Business - It was moved, seconded and passed that the president appoint a five-member ad-hoc steering committee. Nominating and program committees to be chosen from among its membership, by the executive committee. The president requested that volunteers identify themselves if seriously interested in serving on this committee. During the discussion the following activities would be charged to the steering committee: 1.) Find site for next years meeting. 2.) Develop a document describing the role of OBFS - its rationale and purposes,

and explore sources of support for performance of this role. 3.) Develop a revision of the constitution and bylaws which would accommodate several new activities and extend the term of the president and vice-president to 2 years. 4.) Explore the notion of inter-station cooperation in course offerings. 5.) Consider revision of the membership structure so as to establish two categories of membership, one for individuals and one for member stations, to consider raising the dues to generate greater income to facilitate meeting between annual meetings by the steering committee and to explore as well the possible use of the \$1000. certificate of deposit, again to facilitate additional meetings by the steering committee.

7.) It was moved, seconded and passed that, if the above membership categories are established, the individual dues be kept at \$10.00, the member station dues be raised to \$50.00.

8.) It was moved, seconded and passed to authorize the treasurer to remove the \$1000. CD from the Ohio State Bank and place it at the disposal of the steering committee.

9.) Bob Fisher raised the question of the scheduling of our annual meeting and whether there might not be a more suitable time with fewer conflicts for members. After some discussion, it was decided that probably the present timing is as convenient for as large a number as could be devised. For the present the constitution mechanism of timing for the next annual meeting was followed - to wit, the membership voted to establish the time for the next annual meeting as the last weekend of September, 1979 - that is 9/28-9/30.

10.) The president thanked the hosts for the excellent overview of the ecosystems seen by the touring directors on Friday, the 29th and for its generous provision of libations, food and hospitalities for the balance of our gathering.

11.) After some discussion a recess was held during which time two committees were formed and functioned.

12.) The recess ended and the board of directors returned to report that it had appointed a nominating committee composed of Parmelee, Barnett, and Marchand, and that it had appointed a steering committee made up of Lauff, Dalgleish, Hartmann, Coles and Bultsma.

13.) The nominating committee reports nominees as follows: for President, Bob Dalgleish - for Vice-president, Dick Hartmann, for editor, Jeannie Davis.

14.) The steering committee announced that it had chosen co-chairman of Dalgleish and Hartmann.

15.) It was also observed that content of the Newsletter might be improved with input from member stations describing their current situation, purposes and problems. Five stations agreed to submit descriptive material for future Newsletters to the editor. Presumably this process will continue indefinitely and over a few years, each station will be described for the membership.

16.) Business meeting was adjourned.

4. Program - Saturday afternoon 9/30/78:

The discussion panel session initiated Saturday morning was resumed after the business meeting. Discussions included coverage of the following topics:

A. The rising costs/budget cuts problem facing field stations: Bob Dalgleish, David Parmelee. David Parmelee reported that at his station rising costs were a continuing problem as they probably were at all of our facilities. He reported that the physical plant at his facility had originated in 1909 and had survived with no regularized maintenance budgets. The presence of a new administrator in the University of Minnesota system led to the transfer of maintenance responsibilities from the station itself to the maintenance department of the main campus. This relieved the stations budget of a substantial cost, placed the stations employees under new supervision, enabled the director to forget worries about utility bills, and will enable the director to hire additional staff, should he choose to do so with monies that formerly had been devoted to maintenance. David reported great satisfaction with the new arrangements and that when he made a serious request for some work which clearly needed to be done, it was in fact performed by the maintenance department from the main campus itself or through it making arrangements with a contractor that the job be performed. With regard to the teaching program at his station, David pointed out that the legislature in Minnesota tends to relate the budget for education directly to enrollment. When the latter declines, so does the former. The summer session in which his station participates controls the budget for instruction at the station and with decreasing enrollment he found that his staff was cut by one instructor.

The University of Minnesota has suggested to David that he find a mechanism for special funding for summer faculty at the field station from the state legislature directly. This may prove successful. The department giving courses at the station may be asked to provide instruction, which they do not do now. With regard to research, David reported that at his facility the legislature does not fund research; it expects the faculty to get grants to do this.

David mentioned that his station has been contacted by several persons looking for post-doctoral positions where they themselves might apply to a granting agency and if allowed to indicate an affiliation with the field station would get their own grant and be self-supporting. Overhead income acquired under this fashion would accrue to the university itself. While some historical experiences at the university mitigated against this, David hoped to overcome this resistance where he thought this mechanism might help encourage research programs at his facility.

Bob Dalgleish mentioned to the members present that there are a number of costs to field station operation which sometimes do not meet the eye of the director. These costs have been highlighted in Bob's experience since his station is run as a non-profit private corporation independent from a college or university. This means that for its own survival his station must raise money from its own investments and from contributions. It also sees some costs which may be inconspicuous elsewhere.

Bob reported that there are many new government imposed regulations and chores which are costly. He emphasized that merely the cost of getting one's own books audited and establishing accounting procedures were frequently much higher than perhaps the academic affiliated director would realize, and in some cases more risky. For example, he said that the accountants have worked it out so that the person (i. e. the director) who provides them with the figures from which they do their analysis is not only responsible for the figures but also for the accounting procedures involved in the annual report. He finds the Occupational and Safety and Health Act is very burdensome. In coming into compliance, a station could spend considerable quantities of money. The matter of insurance was another cost which he highlighted and he found that in the last two years insurance costs for his facility had gone up 30%, even though no claims had been submitted. Another director noted that the rates charged for the station were much higher than those charged to the main campus, perhaps because of the assumption that field station operations are much more risky.

Finally, it was observed by Ed Smith, in the course of discussion, that there are hidden costs which can be dragged out by the university administrator who wants to build up a case for disposing of the station. In his particular experience where the Pacific Marine Station has been given the ultimatum of closure by the home institution, Ed says as he went through meeting after meeting with administrators, and tried to answer the complaints about costs. In each case, he would go to the meeting with explanation and justification for the items that had been challenged in the previous meeting only to learn that the administrators had dug up another cost which they felt still invalidated the case for saving the station. In his particular situation, there were peculiarities of the marine station, such as, insurance for laborers on docks, insurance for longshoreman, and insurance under something called the Jones law, which applies to the vessels and the use of vessels for diving. The peculiarities of the marine station notwithstanding, it would appear that any station director would benefit from a clear understanding of what hidden burdens the station places on the sponsoring institution.

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YE OLDE OFFICIAL OBFS BALLOT

<u>OFFICE</u>	<u>NOMINEE</u>	<u>WRITE-IN</u>
President	___ Robert Dalgleish	_____
Vice-President	___ Richard Hartman	_____
Editor	___ B. Jeanie Davis	_____

Return to Dr. R. W. Coles (by December 30, 1978)
 Tyson Research Center
 P. O. Box 258
 Eureka, MO 63025

B. Bob Dalgleish reported in his role as our man in Washington, that the Congress had established a "congressional clearing house on the future" which had solicited input from the academic and scientific community. The input is to be compiled into "foresight packages." There has been a request for input specifically on a package being built dealing with environmental education and research. The clearing house requested a response from our organization or from us as individuals by the 6th of October. Dalgleish got suggestions from the membership and will put together a brief statement of our view on environmental issues related to education and research for submission to the committee.

C. Jennifer Shay presented the results of a survey of biological field station data acquisition systems in use at 46 stations which responded to a questionnaire. The results were of great interest to the membership and it was planned that either a summary will appear in the Newsletter at a later time, or possibly that the Delta Marsh Field Station will compile a publication on this matter and will then distribute reprints to the members of OBFS.

1979 Annual Meeting of the Organization of Biological Field Stations,
Archbold Biological Station, Lake Placid, Florida, September 27-29, 1979;
Dr. James Layne, Host Director.