

## MINUTES OF THE PACIFIC SEABIRD GROUP EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

25 May 2022 Conference Call

16:00-17:20pm (Pacific Standard Time – UTC-8)

Amended and approved on 29 June 2022

**Present:** Roberta Swift (Past Chair), Rachel Sprague (Chair), Sadie Wright (Secretary), Alexis Will (Alaska/Russia Regional Representative), Sarah Ann Thompson (Northern California Regional Representative), Karen Lau Alarcon (Student Representative), Laura Koehn (Washington/Oregon Regional Representative), Kerry Woo (Canada Regional Representative), [8].

**Absent:** Dick Veit (Chair-Elect), Jenny Howard McKee (Treasurer), Peter Hodum (Vice Chair for Conservation), Tegan Carpenter-Kling (Europe/Africa Regional Representative), José Ramirez-Garofalo (Non-Pacific U.S. States Regional Representative), JB Thiebot (Asia/Oceania Regional Representative), Cristián Suazo (S. California, Latin America, Hawaii Regional Representative) [7].

**Others present:** [0].

**\*\*Note:** Karen Lau Alarcon joined a few minutes late, giving the group its needed quorum.

Review of participants/roll call. Discussion about lack of quorum initially, and what we can cover without votes. Group determines to begin a review of the Action Items.

Comment: The first action item is for Peter, and he's not here today. I haven't seen a listserv post from him, so I'm thinking he didn't get to this because he's busy. Let's leave this one on the list for next month.

Peter will draft a listserv post requesting team input from PSG regarding development of new swag and share it with ExCo for review/input.

Comment: Action item two. Sadie and I did catch up on potential future agenda items and there are a couple of things we've added and will discuss today. Sadie, could we add one, being a listserv moderation discussion. That's worthy of being an ExCo agenda item.

Comment: So an action item would be to add an agenda item regarding the listerv moderation?

Comment: Yes.

Possible future agenda items for ExCo meetings: a) listserv moderators, b) making 2022 annual meeting content available after the meeting, c) workshops between meetings.

Comment: Action item three. Sadie, you talked to Louise about adding an agenda item to talk about Marine Ornithology?

Comment: Yes, I spoke with Louise, and initially she was thinking it would work for her to come to this meeting, but she later determined it would work better if she could come to the following meeting. So I'm expecting she will attend our June or July PSG ExCo meeting for a discussion about the future of Marine Ornithology.

Comment: In our action items, we had to appoint a delegate to the American Bird Conservatory, so Roberta and I reached out to Brad Keitt who is the director of Oceans for the west coast region, who is with ABC. We were confused. I looked at ABC like they are the Audubon society, not an organization made up of other organizations. And Brad said that ABC facilitates a group called the Bird Conservation Alliance, which is sort of a membership organization, of which PSG is a member. It's supposed to be a

network around legislation about regional and national bird issues. Membership is \$150 annually per organization, and it very much makes sense for PSG to be a member of something like this. He's going to give us a little more information and put us in touch with the group's coordinator. It make sense to him for PSG to have a rep to this group. We could have a new action item to, once we have more info from Brad, find out who is interested in being the contact.

Comment: We have a quorum! Yay!

Comment: Let's approve our agenda and minutes!

#### WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, & REVIEW AGENDA

Comment: We have our quorum, we have our roll call. Let's look at the agenda. Does anyone have anything to add to the agenda? Any discussion?

Motion to approve the Agenda: moved by Kerry, seconded by Roberta.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously

#### 1. APPROVE 14 APRIL 2022 MINUTES

Questions: Any comments, questions, additions for the draft minutes from the last meeting's minutes? Is there a motion to approve the minutes?

Motion to approve the 14 April 2022 minutes; moved by Kerry, seconded by Laura.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously

Comment: We'll jump back into action items. We had finished with number four.

#### REVIEW APRIL 14 ACTION ITEMS

5. Everyone should send suggestions for a new PSG delegate to the Ornithological Council to Roberta. Roberta didn't receive any suggestions. Roberta will confirm with Doug and Pat want to be replaced as reps on the Ornithological Council.

6. Roberta will bring to a future meeting a report regarding the PSG Honorarium Policy for invited speakers and panelists and ExCo will finalize a PSG Honorarium Policy. Done.

7. Rob and Roberta will coordinate to send a listserv email asking for more Code of Conduct Committee rep volunteers. Keep this.

8. Rachel and others will examine the PSG Bylaws to determine the process for amending a PSG policy. Done.

9. EXCO: Determine process for revising the Code of Conduct, and adding acknowledgment to PSG-associated activities (membership, listserv, award nominations, etc.). Done.

10. EXCO+EID: Develop language for monthly reminder to be sent out to members from EXCO email. Combine 10-13 into subcomponents of one action item: Rachel will meet with EID to address these 4 subcomponents.

11. EXCO+EID: Develop protocol and language for written statement responses to potential Code of Conduct violations and/or incidents.

12. EXCO+EID: Develop language for guidelines for appropriate listserv content to be distributed monthly to listserv users.

13. EXCO+EID+Communication Committee: Develop plan for listserv moderation including identifying a group of moderators.
14. Anyone with a recommendation for a new PSG Endowment Fund trustee should send Jenny their suggestions. **Keep this.**
15. Rob and Wieteke will coordinate about how to create an email group or other group format for “PSG institutional knowledge” including former chairs and others. **Keep this.**
16. Jenny will bring to the next meeting details about a proposed audit and possibly consolidating checking accounts for an ExCo discussion/vote. **Let’s remove this until Jenny wants to bring this back up with ExCo.**
17. Wieteke and Anna will send Rachel a link to the post-meeting survey. Rachel will send the post-meeting survey to PSG 2022 meeting registrants via CVent. **Done.**

## 2. PROPOSED SPEAKER HONORARIUM POLICY

Overview: I don’t know if we can vote on this today, because we kind of need the people who brought it up. Essentially, I put together this document, the attached report, and included everything that we decided last year when we were talking about honorariums. This gives us a written history. Dick is wondering how much he should provide this year and I thought this would be a helpful policy or guide that we could use year to year. I feel like we need some EID reps and LOCO and Program chair to really talk about this. I think for now they are going to put some proposed honorarium in the budget. They have to have the budget approved, so we can talk about it then. So please everyone read this and we can maybe talk about it at the next meeting.

Comment: Thanks for bringing this up and writing this up Roberta. I think this helps us understand the scope of the question. Does anyone have thoughts or initial reactions?

Comment: I looked at it quickly. When you are looking at hourly rates, which is fine, do we want to cap that? It depends on the presentation.

Comment: The hourly rate is just sort of a guideline so we can think about the set rate to provide. If someone on a panel only took an hour of their time would get maybe \$100 as an example. But someone who put together an EARS presentation for example, would spend hours preparing, so \$300 would be a more reasonable scale to pay them. It’s more for justification than an hourly rate. We wouldn’t pay someone \$2000 for participating. Does that make sense?

Comment: Fair enough. That rationale is helpful. But we wouldn’t want to pay someone \$2000.

Comment: But then maybe we set fixed rates instead of something on a scale. Then we could remove the per hour rate. Maybe some people spend less time putting a presentation together but a set rate would remove the need for an hourly rate.

Question: With this policy, we would offer honorarium for virtual meetings, but not for in person meetings, right? Or is there a scale if we don’t pay travel and instead offer honorarium?

Comment: I think that’s up in the air. I think if we provide air fare, that’s sort of like an honorarium. This policy doesn’t really cover in person meetings. Maybe we should draft something up and people can edit it.

Comment: I think this is a great starting point Roberta. What do you think about moving it into the Google Drive so people could comment on it between now and our next meeting?

Comment: Yeah, I think that sounds good.

Roberta will move the draft Honorarium Policy into the Google Drive and enable ExCo folks to provide comments on the draft.

Comment: I did like the clarity, when we were having this discussion before last year's annual meeting, there was a set rate for different levels, where we perceived different levels of effort. I'm not sure if this hourly rate makes it confusing, if someone is spending 10 hours vs 2 hours for the same sort of presentation. A set rate for the different roles in the meeting was helpful.

Comment: Ok, I'm glad you brought that up. I didn't look at the notes from that meeting before I put this together. Was that the Annual ExCo meeting?

Comment: It was either the January or February ExCo monthly meeting.

Comment: Ok, I'll look at those notes and update the policy.

Comment: I think this is a good starting point Roberta.

Comment: Thank you Roberta.

Comment: I think we need the LoCo Committee. Does anyone know what they're thinking for San Diego? Maybe we need to wait for their budget?

Comment: I went to the LoCo committee meeting and they're definitely thinking about this. We asked them not to offer a specific amount yet.

Comment: I think you guys identified a big difference. It can be a significant difference in cost to pay an honorarium versus travel costs. Travel costs are a lot for travel and hotel. That adds up fast. Maybe there is a middle ground. Honorarium for virtual versus travel costs for invited speakers or something like that. I think it will be helpful. It sounds like we want to put this into a Google doc where people can comment.

### 3. COMMITTEE LEAD WAIVER DISCUSSION

Overview: Okay this next item is kind of related, but different. It had come up at a post-meeting discussion or debrief of committee leads. EID and Communication committee leads had noted that they sometimes have trouble paying for registrations because their employers won't pay it. So when people are contributing, how do we provide support for folks who can't pay it?

Comment: I'm wondering if instead of waiving registration completely if we could offer reduced registration so we still have some money coming in. Reduce it to \$100 instead of \$170? If they were seriously strapped they could go to HELPS or something?

Comment: I'm happy that my work will pay my registration, so maybe it's something where we can offer it as an option if an employer won't cover the cost? If we have funding available?

Comment: I think it would be nice to have, I don't know how much you can tailor it in registration, but committee leads could select to pay the full amount versus waived. I don't know anyone in PSG who is trying to sneak through without supporting the organization, so if they can pay it, they'll pay it. But we don't want it to be a hindrance to participation.

Comment: I agree. And we had talked about asking the Local Committee to think about whether they want to include waived or reduced registration. We can ask Laney about a category in HELPS where folks can choose "I'm a committee lead and I would like to have registration waived." A lot of folks are not necessarily early career scientists, so I'm not sure if the fund raising in HELPS would cover that. Maybe they think the funds should come from the local committee budget. Let's ask them. I can ask at the next LOCO meeting.

Rachel will ask at the next Local Committee meeting if they would add waivers or reduced registration costs for committee leads to their annual meeting budget.

Comment: Any other thoughts?

Comment: I agree. I think reduced registration fees is a good move. We don't want to undercut ourselves. I work for the government and can pay the whole fee. But having some sort of reduced fees may increase the number of volunteers we attract too.

Comment: Good point. It's kind of hard to get help sometimes. The membership committee is doing a lot of work and it would be great to give them half off registration.

Comment: Ok, we'll bring it up with the local committee.

#### 4. REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT FUNDS

Overview: I want to know how much I have. I'm not asking for an increase, I want to understand the total amount. Last year I think we awarded \$3200, but the basic amount is \$2000. And then \$1200 was from the former chairs fund. And ExCo awarded another \$300. I was hoping Jenny would be on the call and I could ask her. But I'll go ahead and email Jenny and Rob with my questions. A lot of students will request \$1000 each, but sometimes we give them only \$600, but I don't think I can resolve it today.

Question: Do you think there is any type of proposal that you could run by us that we could approve for a couple 100 extra dollars? Or do you need info from Jenny?

Comment: I think I'm leaning towards just using what we have. We have 9 applicants this year, and last year we had 6. But with 9 we are not going to be able to fund all of them. So we'll make some tough choices. If I had to, I could send an email to be voted on by ExCo.

Comment: It seems like a good year going back into an in person meeting, it's a good year to not push our budget.

Comment: Yes, this year is going to be expensive. I think I'll just go with using what we have.

Comment: I don't think we need to vote under a certain dollar amount.

Comment: If it's in the budget already, we don't need to vote. And there is another \$2000 a year that the chair can apply without a vote.

Comment: The former chairs fund was used last year. There is more money in that this year because Julia was running a competition with former chairs. But I'll figure it out with Rob and Jenny. I'll cc you Rachel.

## 5. CVENT CONTRACT RENEWAL DISCUSSION

Overview: Oh, this one is easy. Our PSG Cvent membership contract/account is running out in August. Adrian Gall has been the contact for that because she was the program chair when they moved to Cvent. She's going to be stepping out that role. We need to appoint a new person, and I think that's going to be Dick. And I think he said he was okay with that at our chairs meeting a couple of weeks ago. The point is, the path of least resistance is to go with Cvent again, but if anyone else has any platforms that we can use. We use it for registration, abstract submission, memberships. So if anyone knows of another service that does all three of those things, let us know. Someone can look into those. We also need someone who is interested in doing that sort of research to compare services. If no one has any ideas, we're probably going to go with Cvent again.

Comment: I started to do some research and found this group called Wild Apricots or something but it does membership and events management, but don't think it would manage abstracts. But we've talked about how Google Forms could be used instead. We were still checking lists of abstracts by hand using Cvent. Google Forms could help with that. Does anyone else have experience with other third party platforms? Or people or friends who might know?

Comment: Have there been issues with Cvent or areas of needed improvement?

Comment: The scheduling part is not useable. People submit their abstracts and there is supposed to be a calendar grid, but it didn't work, and you couldn't move or delete anything. It's not flexible or useable for scheduling. Easier in Excel.

Comment: It's not user friendly for membership or emailing groups. The website could be made nice, but it takes too much effort. They may be taking away some features. It's not the cheapest either.

Comment: But some get really expensive.

Comment: I could ask folks who are organizing the Society for Marine Mammalogy.

Comment: Yes, that would be great. I could ask Charles Littnan.

If anyone has ideas or suggestions from other groups for platforms that can provide registration, abstract submission, and memberships, let Rachel know.

## 6. POLICY UPDATE PROCEDURE DISCUSSION

Overview: This item is coming out of a discussion where we were talking about if we want to revise the Code of Conduct to include acknowledgement of following the code. I went into the Bylaws to understand how PSG makes and amends policies. In a little report that I sent out, there is a not a lot in our bylaws that talks about organizational policies. There are sections that talks about resolutions and other matters, and public statements by PSG. In one place, in the first section in annual group meetings, these are meetings where membership may vote on resolutions or other matters. And further down, in a section about resolutions, says that resolutions proposed at any meeting must have prior approval. When an issue is highly controversial, the view of the membership shall be solicited by the ExCo. All the other PSG policies about sexual harassment and listserv, were only voted on by ExCo. In my experience, that's how it works. The governing board's job is to vote on operational issues. I'm guessing that the Code of Conduct, because at the time it was a hot button issue, they took that step to solicit views via surveys, that is all to say it makes it unclear or unprescribed about how ExCo should move forward if we

want to move forward amending the requirement for the Code of Conduct to be followed. I can ask Rob. One reading would be that it's the duty of the ExCo, another way to look at it is that there was a lot of input from the membership and get their thoughts, solicit input. And then ExCo votes on it. Or the furthest route is to have membership vote on it. But nothing says we have to do it any one way. I'm curious your thoughts. I wasn't on ExCo when we voted on the Code of Conduct.

Comment: I wasn't there either but I do think it's a good idea to have membership vote. And if the members voted on the first version, they should probably vote on the revision.

Comment: Did they vote on a specified election date for representatives? Or could it be a separate vote? That's a side question. One way of looking at it, is that if we had several proposed changes to the Code of Conduct, we could vote on several items? If we ask for the Code of Conduct to be non-voluntary, but applies to all PSG associated activities. I want to go back and look at the notes on that. My point there is that we the ExCo could come up with changes to clarify expectations for the application of Code of Conduct in how PSG members engage with each other. We could put it forward to the membership for a vote. I think it will be supported by a majority of membership. It is more defensible if it is vote on and approved by membership.

Comment: Exactly. I think you've answered the question. We don't have to put it to a vote by membership, but maybe we should.

Comment: I think that makes sense.

Comment: I was going to throw out there a different view. The modifications that you're talking about sounds like not a change to the Code of Conduct, but not much more than what you'd add as an introduction. An expectation. I don't think the changes being discussed are substantive enough to warrant going back to the membership for a vote. I think a lot of people won't even notice that the application is being changed. That's an assumption. I don't disagree that's good for transparency, but if there is a timing issue and it's better to have the modification made sooner rather than later, I don't think anyone will notice those small changes. Just to toss that idea in there.

Comment: I guess it depends on how you phrase it. If you go from this is voluntary, to this is an expectation, that doesn't seem like a big deal. But if you go from this is voluntary, to this is a requirement,,, I guess when you're signing up, you tick a box and it would say this is a requirement. Expectation is interesting.

Comment: I know there were some interesting comments around the original Code of Conduct about it being voluntary.

Comment: It seems pretty basic to be kind and respectful to people. That's a basic tenet.

Comment: It seems like an apparent thing. Whether you call it voluntary, an expectation, or mandatory, you've still said that you're going to hold them to consequences. It shouldn't matter.

Comment: It could be a moot point. The next step of the Code of Conduct is that someone is going to come up with a list of consequences. It's voluntary to follow the Code of Conduct and voluntary to follow consequences.

Comment: Some people read the voluntary application of the Code of Conduct and think that doesn't have enough cache for application. It depends on if you are looking at the Code of Conduct as the 9 numbered items, or including the introductory language.

Comment: I don't think it's unreasonable to expect people to be kind in order to participate in this organization. I don't think anyone should be opposed to that. Having that as an expectation or requirement is good. Voluntary seems easier to blow off. The Code of Conduct should be a minimum.

Comment: There are a couple of people in this organization that don't want to comply with normal standards of kindness and professionalism.

Comment: Fair enough. But maybe there is no place for them in the organization. I don't see that as acceptable.

Comment: I completely agree that it's a reasonable expectation for people to follow the Code of Conduct. I have a process question. Right now is the Code of Conduct written so that it says that it's voluntary?

Comment: Here is the Code of Conduct. There is a sentence at the beginning that says "The Code of Conduct is voluntary and is not retroactive." If you scroll to the bottom it says this is what is submitted to membership for approval.

Comment: So what you're suggesting is to change that, and say that members are expected to follow the Code of Conduct, right?

Comment: Yes.

Comment: It seems like it would clarify things to change that sentence and would be more aligned with everything we've been saying. Because membership voted on this in the past, it strikes me that it would be nice if they could vote on that change. To get that buy-in.

Comment: And it's possible, I'm going back and forth. It would be good to get the buy-in but maybe ExCo could just vote on this. I think membership would support the change. It doesn't have to be tied to ExCo elections. We could have suggested language and a way forward and have ExCo vote on that first. We could vote on being behind going out to membership for a vote immediately, not wait for elections. That could have this updated relatively expeditiously.

Comment: I think that would be great. From what I recall in the past, I think people would support this and it would open the conversation again, and that's fine. It's more transparent that way.

Comment: You could head off some of the negative comments by prefacing it by saying this is the application of the Code of Conduct, not the Code of Conduct itself. So they know what they're voting on. We not opening up the entire Code of Conduct for debate.

Comment: That's a good point. It would focus the discussion on clarifying the application of the Code of Conduct, not all the pieces of conduct that we're asking people to adhere to. Over the last several years it's become clear that we need to clarify this.

Comment: Yeah, we're refining the language about how this code is implemented.

Comment: Like the pre amble.

Comment: Yeah. Who at the last meetings had interest in refining this? We could have several folks come up with draft language for the ExCo to discuss?

Comment: I think Katie Stoner suggested that the code shouldn't be voluntary.



Comment: I'll reach out to her and Derek, and EID and Communications committee. Does that sound good? Does anyone else have a burning desire to be involved?

Comment: You could cc Rob since he's been in charge on that.

Comment: Yes, that's helpful. I think that gives us an expeditious and productive way forward on that. We are at the point of action item review.

Rachel will reach out to Katie Stoner, Derek Harvey, Rob Suryan and others on the EID and Communications Committee regarding drafting revised language to indicate that the Code of Conduct is expected to be followed by PSG members.

Sadie reads through all the action items from the past action items list and other items in red text above in the notes.

Comment: Any other items? It sounds like Dick and the LoCo have picked a theme for the 2023 PSG meeting. They are working on a budget for ExCo to review. They are working through some of the ideas about hybrid and virtual components. There are a lot of budgetary implications. They are moving forward and it's going to be exciting. If there is nothing else, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn the meeting; moved by Sadie, Kerry seconds.

Abstentions, 0: Nays, 0: Yays, 8, motion passed unanimously