

Public Education Committee

Committee Members: G. Feldhamer, D. Ginnett, A. Joachim, R. Larsen, M. Merrick, D. K. Odell, J O'Neill, B. D. Sasse, B. Shaw (Chair), S. Sheffield, K. K. Thorington, M. Wolf.

Mission:

Established as a standing committee by the Board of Directors in 1993, the Public Education Committee seeks to make education about mammals accessible to grades K-12. Committee members foster outreach projects to raise awareness about mammals for students in their formative years. The committee coordinates its efforts with the assistance of other ASM committees, sister societies as well as elementary and high school science teachers.

Responsibilities:

The Public Education Committee conducts several activities including the Public Education Partnership (PEP) that is an initiative to encourage activity and visibility of ASM members in their local K-12 classrooms. This initiative was launched at the 1995 Annual Meeting at the University of Vermont with 64 charter members.

Information Items:

(1) State Lists of Mammals (George Feldhamer, Andrew Joachim, Roxy Larsen, Melissa Merrick, Michael Scott, Daniel Odell, Jennifer R. O'Neill, and Barbara Shaw): One of the PEC's long-term projects is to provide State List of Mammals for all 50 states. **Mammal Species of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference (3rd ed; MSW)** was published in 2005, and the state mammals lists are aligned to this taxonomic system. Members of PEC complete 25 State Mammal Lists prior to 2005. In addition, 4 states were completed with information before 2005 and therefore, were not posted online. None of these state lists have been updated with the **2005 MSW**, and therefore, all states need either writing or revising to reflect those changes. At the 2009 Annual Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska, the Committee determined that the most reasonable course of action is to completely revise the way state lists are written. In place of the individual state spreadsheets, we are developing a single database of all species found within the United States. Once the database of species has been compiled, the individual state lists can be built by simply selecting on the state field for the mammals. We set a three-year deadline, with the completion of the database set for the ASM Annual Meeting in 2012.

The species lists developed in spreadsheets have been completed, and at the time of this report, we are actively engaged in standardizing each spreadsheet for insertion into a single database. We anticipate that at the 2012 Annual Meeting in Reno, we will have completed the off-line searchable database, compiled each state list from the database, and temporarily posted static state lists. We therefore respectfully request membership to review state lists looking specifically for incorrect or missing data.

(2) PEC is working with the Informatics Committee in the current state of website development on the online searchable database system. The final phase of this work will be to tie the Image Library into the database, so those photographs can be searched with the information provided on the state lists.

There are multiple benefits to this system.

- With the completion of the database, all 50 states are essentially completed.
- When the Mammal Species of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference is revised to the 4th edition, it will be a matter of making the appropriate species changes in the database (one time rather than 50 times for each state), and the list will be current within a matter of weeks (rather than years) after publication.
- The new ASM internet website can support a searchable database system. Therefore, mammal species of the United States can become a flexible tool for searching not only state mammal lists, but also individual species, genera, or families throughout the United States. This becomes a powerful tool for further PEC projects and programs.

(3) Science Fair Certificates: The Public Education Committee provides recognition to students participating in Science Fairs with a project related to mammals by awarding a Certificate of Achievement. Certificates were requested this year for the Blue Ridge Highlands Regional Science Fair. We would like to remind the membership to request the Certificate of Achievement if you participate in a science fair, for any student who conducts research on mammals. Please email the Chair.

(4) Clearinghouse for K-12 Teachers: This program connects classroom teachers with mammalogists but is not used. We had no requests this year. We anticipate that this will change as the PEC is able to utilize the newly upgraded website.

(5) Other Projects in initial development: As the state list project is in the final phase of completion, PEC committee members have determined new goals of direction to support the mission statement of this Committee. The projects are:

- Citizen Science (Katherine K. Thorington – lead, Reginald Hoyt and Johanna Varner) Public Outreach and Tracking (hopefully a component of E-Mammal): One of the challenges of education through modern technology is how to get folks off of the computer looking at and exploring the natural world. The proposed project aims to heighten awareness of the mammals that share our neighborhood and landscapes by making tracking and track ID more accessible to the general public. A very little bit of knowledge about track and gate structure can be a powerful tool for both a scientist and an amateur naturalist. More exposure to tracking techniques and track and sign identification, of course, gives people a better understanding of the stories animal trails tell and better understanding of what the animal that left the tracks or signs was doing. The beginning steps of this process, how to measure and identify a track, how to find the next piece of information (footprint scrape mark, etc.) should be readily accessible to the public. The goals of this project are to find and implement ways that people can use photographs and descriptions to identify tracks and sign and get help with those identifications and/or confirmation of their identifications so that the tracking skills can improve. With the collective knowledge on passive track and hair traps within the ASM we should be able to provide instructions potentially including YouTube videos on how to make

and use these traps. These tools should be aimed at both children and adults to get them tracking in their neighborhoods and sharing what they find with each other and the scientific community. One of my goals for the Committee to be bringing the public outreach mammal tracking project to the 2013 Philadelphia Annual Meeting as a poster to solicit involvement from the membership of the Society.

- Teacher Workshop 2013 (Andrew Joachim Verity Mathis, Virginia Naples, and Barbara Shaw): PEC has started initial communication with the Program Committee for holding a collaborative teacher workshop in Philadelphia, PA during and after the 2013 Annual Meeting in collaboration with either the Academy of Natural Science of Drexel University or The Franklin Institute. PEC anticipates offering graduate or continuing education credit with the host institution. The workshop would be over 2 days, including attending one day of the Annual Meeting (both papers and poster session) and the second day for material presentation on incorporating good mammal science in the classroom. One of the lessons will be scientific presentation through posters. We would like to ask members to donate their posters with ASM logo as well as their own university logo to the teachers taking the workshop. The posters would be used in the lesson as well as “parting gifts” from ASM to be displayed at the local schools.
- Conservation Education (Lily C. Aris, Steve Sheffield): Initial steps have been taken to work with the Conservation Committee to develop resources for K-12 educators, informal educators, and the general public on conservation issues. Now that Phase 1 of the upgrade is completed, we can begin to develop this collaboration for K-12 and the public and the ASM Conservation Committee’s projects.

Action Items:

(1) In preparation for the teacher workshop in 2013, the Public Education Committee will require postage for mailing fliers, pre-meeting lesson plans, and other forms of advertisement. We request a \$25.00 budget to cover the cost of postage.

Respectfully submitted,

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