

Public Education Committee

Committee Members: L. Howard, W. Ingle, V. Mathis (Chair), S. Mech, M. Merrick, V. Naples, S. Neiswinter, D. K. Odell, J., L. Schlitter, S. Sheffield, E. Siracusa, J. Stuhler, M. Swanson, M. Theriot, G. Turner, C. Yahnke

Mission:

Established as a standing committee by the Board of Directors in 1993, and the mission statement revised in 2009, the Public Education Committee seeks to make information about mammals accessible to grades K-12 in formal education settings and to everyone in informal settings. Committee members foster outreach projects in our society to raise awareness of mammals for children and adults. The committee coordinates its efforts with the assistance of other ASM committees, sister societies, informal public educational organizations, as well as elementary, middle, and high school science teachers.

Information Items:

(1) K-12 Outreach PowerPoint: Steve Sheffield has completed a PowerPoint presentation on the ecological importance of large carnivores, first started with former committee member Pamela Owens. Meant for K-12 education, it focuses on eight of the large carnivores in North America, covering ecological services, scavenging, ecological impacts, benefits, and importance, etc. It has been reviewed by the committee and he is working on finalizing photos and edits. Once completed, we need to determine the best method for disseminating the resource (e.g., webpage, an ASM article, various list-serves, teacher groups, etc.).

(2) Mammal Species List: We lost our mammal species lists in the webpage update last year. Hopefully they will be re-instated.

(3) iNaturalist: We have created and promoted iNaturalist projects centered around the annual meetings the past few years, which has been a nice way for people to share the wildlife they are spotting during the conference. The committee also started making state mammal guidebooks in iNaturalist. Stephen Mech developed instructions on how to download our state database as an Excel file and then upload it into iNaturalist using the ASM-PEC account. Pennsylvania is complete, but we want to roll out the other states into iNaturalist.

(4) Science Fair Certificates: The PEC provides recognition to students participating in Science Fairs with a project related to mammals by awarding a Certificate of Achievement. This year we awarded four certificates to students at the Blue Ridge Highland Regional Science Fair. The students and their projects were:

- Becca Lowe, Blacksburg High School: “Stand Still! A Comparison of Positive and Negative Reinforcement in Equine Training” Sponsor: Katharine Davis
- Sydney Deane, Blacksburg High School: “Impact of Alternative Marketing Strategies on the Perception of Shelter Animals” Sponsor: Katharine Davis

- Ashley Layne, Southwest Virginia Governor's School: "Exploring the Relationships Between Household Income and Type of Pet Owned" Sponsor: Greg Riffe
- Virginia Vandyke, Riverview Elementary/Middle School: "Fat or Fluffy 2.0". Sponsor: Whitney Vandyke

Action Items:

Hoping to find a new committee chair or co-chair to assist in working with the committee to get more goals accomplished.

Respectfully submitted,
Verity Mathis, Chair
(vmathis@flmnh.ufl.edu)