

**MINUTES OF THE FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF BENTHOLOGISTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC) MEETING
16 MAY, 2002**

Location: Reedy Creek Environmental District, Orlando, Florida.

Members Present: Michael Crikis, Member at Large; David J. Karlen, President; Palmer Kinser, President-Elect; Marc Minno, Immediate Past-President; Douglas G. Strom, State Government Representative and EC Chair; Alternates included Chris Mason (for Bonnie Hall, Treasurer), Eric Pluchino, and Marianne Pluchino.

Doug Strom called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM. The minutes of the December 2001 Executive Committee and Business meetings have not been published in the F.A.B. Newsletter, so approval of the minutes from these previous meetings was postponed.

Reports of Officers

Dave Karlen, President of F.A.B. began discussion of the 2003 spring taxonomic workshop. A workshop for three or four days is anticipated. Mark Wetzel of the Illinois Natural History Survey has agreed to coordinate a workshop on the Oligochaete annelids. Mark would give a section on the freshwater Tubificidae; Mike Milligan would address the marine Tubificidae & Naididae; Dee Dee Kathman of the Aquatic Resources Center, Tennessee would present instruction on the Naididae, Opisthocystidae, and Parvidrilidae; Kathy Coates of the Bermuda Biological Station for Research would give a section on Enchytraeidae & Propappidae; and Steve Fend of the USGS, California would give instruction on the Lubriculidae & megadriles.

With this many instructors from such far-flung locations, providing for travel and accommodations expenses is an issue of concern. Palmer estimated that these expenses would be around \$3,000. If twenty participants attended, a fee of \$150 each would allow F.A.B. to break even for this meeting. Some of the participants may need to receive additional compensation besides expenses. A possible way to compensate instructors may be to invite the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to be a partner with FAB for this workshop, with FDEP providing funding for compensation. Dave will inquire about the need for this additional compensation, and will contact FDEP about potential cooperation for this workshop. Otherwise fees would have to be higher to cover these additional costs; at some point the fees become so high as to discourage attendance. Whatever decision is made regarding compensation for workshop participation, the Executive Committee agrees that the process needs to be fair and open.

The workshop will be scheduled sometime in the period between mid-April and mid-May, 2003, with the latter period preferred, since the workshop could be scheduled to fall between academic semesters. It was suggested that it might be desirable to schedule the workshop near to the time of the North American Benthological Society (NABS) 2003 meeting, which is to be held relatively nearby in Athens, Georgia.

Potential locations for the spring 2003 workshop include:

- Pinellas County Environmental Education facility (Carlos de la Rosa is the contact person)
- Rookery Bay Estuary Program offices
- University of Florida at Gainesville
- FDEP in Tampa (contact is Peggy Morgan)
- University of Central Florida in Orlando
- FDEP office in Orlando (contact Eric Pluchino)
- Florida Marine Institute in St. Petersburg

With so many instructors traveling by air to this meeting, a location near to major airports (i. e., Orlando or Tampa) may be desirable.

Marianne Pluchino suggested that it might be a good idea to schedule the freshwater and marine/estuarine portions of the workshop separately, so that specialists in one of these disciplines could attend only those sessions relevant to their waterbody type of interest. She also suggested that F.A.B. might be able to defray some costs by selling the proceedings or workbooks from the workshop to interested benthologists who cannot attend the workshop.

Dave suggested that either a meeting of the EC or the Workshop Committee may be necessary later this summer to report progress and detail challenges yet to be met regarding the spring 2003 workshop plans. The Annual Meeting for 2002 at Whitney Laboratory near St. Augustine will be held November 21-22. Dave has issued the first announcement and call for papers for this meeting, and will arrange a hotel block reservation. The Whitney Lab. also has dormitories available. Representatives of the Workshop and Certification Committee may tour the facilities of the lab prior to the meeting.

Committee Reports

Palmer Kinser, chair of the Workshop and Certification Committee, led a discussion of general issues regarding workshops. The certification issue in particular is a thorny one requiring careful consideration. FAB Constitutional issues also need to be resolved. Compensation issues need to be carefully considered. Above all the workings of the society and its officers need to be open and equitable. The text of the Constitution in Article 3 should be altered to clarify what types of expense reimbursements are allowed. Allowance for acquiring services for normal and/or nominal fees should be added to this section. Presently all expenses over \$150 must be approved by both the President and the Executive Committee Chair. It was suggested that a tiered system replace this previous policy; expenses up to \$250 would require approval of the President only, expenses between \$250 and \$2,000 would require approval by both the President and the Executive Committee Chair, and expenses over \$2,000 would require approval by a majority of the EC. Palmer and Marc Minno (chair of the Bylaws Committee) volunteered to draft a text proposal to resolve these issues for consideration at the 2002 annual Executive Committee and Business meetings. A system of checks and balances to prevent potential abuses is prudent in this area of organizational business.

Marianne Pluchino (chair of the Membership Committee) mentioned the Constitutional clause regarding dropping names from the membership lists. The EC consensus was that the bylaws

should be changed to make this process optional, since F.A.B. benefits from larger membership rolls, and keeping contact with latent F.A.B. members facilitates their possible future participation with the organization. It was suggested to make this membership list purging process optional through a slight change to the bylaws text. Marc will draft this change for consideration at the 2002 annual Executive Committee and Business meetings.

Eric Pluchino, chair of the Endowment Committee, reported that this committee is now receiving adequate income from the endowment to assure student awards of \$250 for the best oral presentation, and \$75 for the best poster. Since the transfer of \$3,000 from the general fund to the endowment fund, the endowment balance is about \$10,000; this amount should allow FAB to sustain these annual meeting awards for the foreseeable future.

New Business

Doug asked for any additional new business.

As a member of the Internet Committee, Palmer passed around a copy of a Powerpoint® mock-up of a revised front-end for the moribund F.A.B. website. Palmer has a contact that might be willing to convert the mock-up to a functional website for a nominal fee (about \$200). The mock-up impressed the EC; it would be a major improvement to the website if implemented. Palmer will contact Dave and Doug when more specifics are known for approval for the website construction fee.

Dave and Doug approved the expenditure for expenses incurred by Scotty Long and Andy Rasmussen for the current workshop at Reedy Creek.

Palmer moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mike Crikis seconded the motion at 4:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Doug Strom, acting for Robert P. Rutter, F.A.B. Secretary