

Public Education Committee

Committee Members: S. Chavda, W. Ingle, V. Mathis (co-chair), S. Mech (co-chair), M. Merrick, V. Naples, D. K. Odell, J. R. O'Neill-Englund, P. Owen, L. Schlitter, S. Sheffield, E. Siracusa, M. Swanson, A. M. Wurth, 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.

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:

The corrections for the Mammal Species Database have been compiled, at least for Cetaceans, and we need to complete the changes with Sean Maher. We hope to coordinate with the Mammalian Biodiversity Committee to ensure taxonomy in the database is up to date.

Not all fields in the database are active: Zoonotic Disease and Citizen Scientist Projects are placeholders within the database structure. For Zoonotic Disease, S. Chavda is interested in working on populating this field in the database and will start working on that this year. For more information about the Citizen Scientist Clearinghouse, please see information item 4.

Once we finalize corrections for the current database, we plan to then incorporate Canada and Mexico.

Our long-term goal is to eventually incorporate the mammal species of Central and South America.

(2) 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. Blue Ridge Highlands Regional Science Fair awarded two participants our certificates this year. We would like to remind the membership to request the Certificate of Achievement if you participate as a

judge or an organizer in a science fair, to present to any student who conducts research on mammals. Please email one of the Co-Chairs for the certificate template.

(3) Clearinghouse for K-12 Teachers:

We would like to create a more useful clearinghouse of information on the ASM website, where we can have a place for “Ask a Mammalogist”, which could be a database where people can submit their questions and hopefully members of ASM with that particular expertise could answer them. This will be coordinated by E. Siracusa and D. Odell. This could also be a place for workshops and kits that we would loan out to teachers. The latter is under further development of ideas by L. Schlitter and W. Ingle. We also want to have information for teachers, such as lesson plans and citizen science projects they can connect to. P. Owen is developing an action plan on how to best move forward with the education portion of the clearinghouse.

(4) Citizen Scientist Projects:

We are making plans to move forward with potential citizen science collaborations, including informational literature and connecting with other databases. S. Mech has begun conversations with iNaturalist to formalize an agreement to use our species lists and increase ASM’s presence on the site. This will require coordination with the Mammal Diversity Committee and, potentially, the Informatics Committee.

C. Yahnke is working on a citizen science project analyzing bat calls for Wisconsin that we hope to expand nationally. This project could include development of a georeferenced bat call database, but we hope to be able to leverage our work with iNaturalist to accomplish this.

(5) Teacher/Member Workshop

(G. Feldhamer (lead), V. Mathis, P. Owen, L. Schlitter, B.J. Shaw, J. Varner)

In 2017, we developed and delivered a member workshop at the beginning of the Annual Meeting in Idaho. It was entitled **EXPANDING YOUR BROADER IMPACTS TO THE PREK-12 CLASSROOM: THE DO’S AND DONT’S FOR PROFESSIONAL MAMMALOGISTS. Presenters included:**

- Prosanta Chakrabarty, Ph.D., Program Officer NSF, Curator of Ichthyology, Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science, **NSF Broader Impacts Questions and Answers**
- Laurie Schlitter, Ph.D., retired, Emporia State University Emeritus faculty; Working with Elementary Teachers
- **Pamela Owen, Ph.D.**, Associate Director, Research Associate, Texas Memorial Museum, College of Natural Sciences, Vertebrate Paleontology Laboratory, Jackson School of Geosciences, The University of Texas at Austin, Utilizing Specimens with PreK-12th Grade Teachers
- Verity Mathis, Ph.D. Collection Manager, Mammalogy, and Molly Phillips, iDigBio Education and Outreach Coordinator, Florida Museum of Natural History; Utilizing Virtual Specimens with PreK-12th Grade Teachers

- Johanna Varner, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Colorado Mesa University; Incorporating Citizen Scientist Projects with PreK-12th Grade Teachers
- Ashley Wurth, School of Environment and Natural Resources, member of Urban Coyote Research Program, Graduate Student, Ohio State University, Incorporating Citizen Scientist Projects with PreK-12th Grade Teachers
- **Bruce McFadden, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, Florida Museum of Natural History, Professor of Biology, Geological Sciences, and Latin American Studies, University of Florida; Successful Broader Impact for K-12 Education

This workshop focused on ideas and the underlying PreK-12th grade research to support incorporating “Broader Impacts” into these classrooms with relevant, tangible ways to engage youth and their educators in our work. In addition, we examined the best delivery methods for the PreK-12th grade educators to support and enrich their classrooms with your cutting-edge research.

Action Items: None.

Respectfully submitted,

Verity Mathis, Co-Chair

vmathis@flmnh.ufl.edu

Stephen Mech, Co-Chair

smech@albright.edu