

## **Public Education Committee**

Committee Members: B. Buttler, C. Collins, G. Feldhamer, D. Ginnett, A. Halsall, A. Joachim,

M. Merrick, D. K. Odell, J O'Neill, K Rowe, B. D. Sasse, B. Shaw (Chair), S. Sheffield, A. Shenko, J. E. Smith, 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) Public Education Partnership (PEP) is a program to increase the visibility of ASM through outreach of the members to their communities. In an effort to revive this charge, PEC distributed a survey at the Annual Meeting in Alaska. Thirty-eight members returned surveys. The respondents indicated that they participated in a total of 139 outreach events during the prior year. Seventeen indicated that they had 83 students (undergraduate and/or graduate) who participated in a total of 130 outreach events. The breadth of outreach ranged from participating in filming for NOVA and the History Channel to talking to youth groups and participating as a judge in science fairs. One question specifically asked what the PEC could do to support our membership in their outreach efforts. The responses included: better advertising of ASM services to the public, how to find appropriate outreach efforts, small dollar sources to pay for classroom supplies, pair volunteers with local teachers, database of outreach opportunities by geographic area, colorful handouts about programs, promote idea exchange within membership, and simple curricula available on-line.

(2) One of the PEC's long-term projects is to provide State List of Mammals for all 50 states. Members of PEC completed 25 State Mammal Lists. None have been aligned with the 2005 Mammal Species of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference (3rd ed), and therefore, all states need either writing or revising to reflect those changes. As it stands, this task is overwhelming. The committee determined that the most reasonable course of action is to completely revise the method by which state lists are written. In

place of the individual state lists, we are developing a database of all species found within the United States. Once the database of the species has been compiled, the individual state lists can be built by simply selecting those mammals found there, and make additional comments as appropriate. When the Mammal Species of the World: A Taxonomic and Geographic Reference is revised, it will be a matter of making the appropriate species changes in the database (one time rather than to each state individually), and all state lists that have been completed also will be updated. Currently, B. Shaw has completed Didelphimorphia and Cingulata (all two species!) and A. Joachim has completed Carnivora. J. O'Neill is working on Soricids and M. Merrick is working on Sciurids. We are asking for anyone interested in helping us prepare the North American mammal groups to please contact B. Shaw (email on the ASM website).

(3) The Public Education Committee provides recognition to students participating in Science Fairs with a project related to mammals by awarding a Certificate of Achievement. Two certificates were requested this year. We would like to remind the membership to request a 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 is a program to connect classroom teachers with mammalogists. We had one request for an ASM scientist to attend a job fair in San Diego, but the lead-time was less than two weeks, and we were unable to comply. No other requests were made this year. The survey distributed during the 2009 Annual Meeting asked the respondents if they would be willing to have their names given to local teachers if requested. This is the first step to developing a database of available mammalogists by regions who would be willing to act as ambassadors to K-12 students and informal educational groups.

(5) K. Thorington and D. Ginnett's report on ASM Education Website Redesign Recommendations was submitted to President McLaren.

(6) 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.

**Action Items:** None.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
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