
Call to order: 1:02 pm

Executive Committee Reports

Past President (Anne Nielsen): The Eastern Branch held its first virtual meeting in March 2021, and over 375 people attended. The other Branches also held virtual meetings, which allowed us to pool costs. This along with corporate sponsorship allowed us to provide the Eastern Branch meeting free for ESA members. At this time, it is unclear how many attendees specifically from the Eastern Branch attended the virtual meeting. There were a number of positive comments about the virtual format.

Secretary (Daniel Frank): Upcoming vacancies on the Executive Committee include secretary and president-elect. Other vacancies will include Program Committee chair and Education and Outreach Committee chair. John Cambridge is interested in serving a second term as Education and Outreach Committee chair.

Treasurer (Erin Hitchner): Becky Anthony sent the final Confex payment for our portion of the 2021 virtual meeting which was $1,950.40. This brings our total 2021 expenses to $4,050.40 to date, with total income (sponsorships) at $12,250 for the year. Erin sent payments to the winning Entomology Games teams ($1,000 each for both first and second place). We provided equal amounts for each team because ESA HQ provides up to $1,000 matching for both first and second place winners. The Executive Committee was in consensus about taking advantage of the monetary match provided by ESA HQ. This may be something we make note of for future Entomology Games winners.

A discussion was initiated about the costs of virtual vs. in-person meetings. Holding the meeting virtually allowed us to cut costs associated with catering, hotel av/media, and hotel rooms for certain attendees. However, the costs associated with Confex for a virtual meeting were $18,000. Because other Branches also held their meetings virtually the Confex costs were split; our portion was ~$4,000. It would likely be cost prohibitive to have a hybrid event (both an in-person and virtual component). Rosina would be a good contact to talk through feasible options if we want to look more closely at holding a hybrid event.

Governing Board (Tracy Leskey): Stacie East joined ESA HQ as Membership and Diversity Program Manager. ESA HQ wants to develop a long-term commitment to becoming more diverse and inclusive.
There is a diverse pool of candidates for this year’s ESA Fellows. This is the first year in the new system (five focus areas: research, extension, teaching, administration, military service, public engagement and science policy). Because there is a diversity of careers in entomology, ESA felt that the Fellows should also represent that diversity. Candidates for ESA Honorary Members were not very diverse this year. The ESA Governing Board is working on the nomination wording in hopes that future candidates reflect the diversity of its membership.

This year’s national meeting is being planned as a hybrid event. Virtual content will be available for 3 months after the meeting. This year ESA will also be bringing back 10-minute talks.

The Better Common Names Project has identified two insect common names deemed problematic; gypsy moth and gypsy ant. Concerns on how this will affect regulatory aspects (e.g. labels), and extension and other literature were discussed. If anyone has specific concerns/recommendations they can contact the Better Common Names Task Force.

ESA journal page charges were reinstated. This is one mechanism to make sure the society stays solvent.

Only 10% of ESA membership attend Branch meetings. The ESA Branches need things beside the annual meeting to engage membership and connect the different membership sections of ESA. Activities like tours, webinars, and collecting trips were discussed. Partnering with other entomological societies and Branches was also suggested as a way to collaborate and come together. Any future activities planned will need to have components that justify travel and participation.

**Member-at-Large (Brenna Traver):** No report.

**Early Career Professional Representative (Karly Regan):** A guide book for the ECP Committee is being developed to provide information for when to fill positions, its goals, and ways to support the committee going forward. The ECP Committee is developing a workshop for the national meeting on how to convert an academic CV to a resume.

The Branch has one ECP award, and selecting a recipient is often difficult because of the diversity of candidates (focus on teaching vs. research vs. service). A discussion was initiated about how to make this award more inclusive. It was suggested we have awards for multiple categories, which is what is done at the national level. Because most ECPs want the recognition more than a monetary award, providing a plaque (what is currently done for the award) for multiple awardees shouldn’t be too costly. We could further reduce costs by providing a framed certificate if necessary.

**Standing Committee Reports**

**Awards Committee (Anne Nielsen):** Current members of the committee include Anne Nielsen (Chair), past presidents Brian Nault, Tom Kuhar, Don Weber, and also Amanda Whispell, Early Career Professional Committee Chair.
For the Graduate Student awards (Fitch and Comstock Awards), The Grad Student Committee Chair and members of the Graduate Student Committee, will evaluate applications and notify the Awards Committee Chair of the results.

Award nominations solicited include:
1. L.O. Howard Award (Eastern Branch)
2. Herbert T. Streu (Eastern Branch)
3. ESA Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching
4. ESA Distinguished Achievement Award in Extension
5. Entomological Foundation Award for Excellence in IPM
6. Early Career Professional Award
7. John Henry Comstock Award for PhD student
8. Asa Fitch Award for Masters student

There is now an online portal for award nominations through ESA HQ. Hopefully this will make the awards process easier and more streamlined.

**Program Committee (Simon Zebelo):** A Branch meeting kick-off conference is scheduled for August 13 and will be led by Becky Anthony. More definitive plans about the 2022 Branch meeting will be discussed then.

It was suggested that we look for individuals with diverse entomological backgrounds when recruiting for the Program Committee chair and co-chair. For a number of years both chair and co-chair have been from the P-IE membership section.

**IDEP Committee (Hannah Broadley):** The Insect Detection, Evaluation, and Prediction (IDEP) Committee is a standing committee of the Eastern Branch as described in Article IV of the Eastern Branch Constitution and Bylaws. It aims to educate the Branch on new and invasive insects that may pose a threat to commodities in the Eastern US and Canada. The Committee and the annual symposia that the committee organizes, aids in professional communication pertaining to detection, evaluation and prediction of insect pests, fosters dissemination of insect impact data, promotes the development of effective prediction and detection systems, and encourages taxonomic research.

The committee is currently six members with representation from the states of Virginia, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. They do not currently have any Canadian committee members and are looking to recruit volunteers.

For this past year’s symposium (March 2021) they focused on the impacts of recent invasive pests on forests and managed landscapes. The symposium was titled: “Insect Detection, Evaluation, and Prediction (IDEP): Impacts of Recent Invasive Pests on Forests and Landscapes”. They had 10 speakers and about 65 audience members. For their symposium for this upcoming meeting they are brainstorming a symposium themed around new insect detection technologies, the effect of climate change on invasive insect populations and management strategies in the Eastern US and Canada, or using crowd sourced databased for monitoring new invasive insects. Other suggestions are welcome.
**Student Affairs Committee (Tyler Hagerty):** The Student Affairs Committee is currently working on member recruitment. Currently it has members from University of Delaware, University of Maryland, Cornell University, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Virginia Tech, Rutgers (currently waiting to hear who was nominated). The committee has also reached out to the following institutions for new members (currently waiting for responses): Penn State University (member is elected by PSU’s Grad student association), University of Vermont (has not participated before), University of Massachusetts (has not participated before), University of Rhode Island (has not participated before), West Virginia University (has not participated before).

Future tasks include:
- Survey members for a vice-chair (hopefully during August)
- Investigate making member positions a 2-year term. The SAC chair could then reach out to each institution at around the end of each 2-year term for a new member for the committee.
- In Mid-August Tyler will contact all current members with a shared document so they can start adding ideas for the Eastern Branch symposium, and will then schedule a Zoom meeting for the committee to chat about topics and build a basis for further idea generation and discussion

**Education and Outreach Committee (John Cambridge):** Entomological lunch bag demo kits were distributed to over 1,500 children in the Philadelphia area.

A discussion was initiated on where we want to go with this committee. Do we want to bring together area outreach programs throughout the Eastern Branch? If so, how do we do this in a cohesive manner. What are the goals and metrics for this committee? It was suggested we survey Eastern Branch universities/institutions to gauge existing outreach efforts.

Bug’s World was developed to get good press and acquaint local residents with entomology. It has always been a free event, but John suggested that nominal ticket fees for attendance may bring in more people. Although this may be the case, Bug’s World has been viewed as a public service and there wasn’t much interest in making this a payed event. John suggested that future Bug’s World events should incorporate local arts that highlight insects to draw a greater diversity of people. Traditionally, metrics for Bug’s World have involved surveys from attendees and number of participants in attendance.

**Science Policy Committee (Don Weber):** The current practice of informing membership is through the ESA HQ emailed Science Policy updates on key issues. In other branches, there has been some question as to whether this was sufficient. Consensus among those present was that it was fine for the Eastern Branch. Typical agenda items at the last monthly Science Policy Committee meetings are exemplified by the most recent meeting:
- Better Common Names Project
- Lewis-Burke update
  - Budget and appropriations from various agencies
  - NSF Reauthorization bills
Nagoya Protocol updates
o Infrastructure
  • EPA-OPP SME report (Alan Felsot, WSU, is Subject Matter Expert to EPA)
  • HQ update
    o Science Policy Fellows class of 2021
    o Position statements

Don participated in the Invasive Species position statement (approved Nov. 2020), and most recently Arthropod Biodiversity (almost final). Members are always welcome to participate in formulating ESA Position Statements.

**Entomology Games (George Hamilton):** A list of questions was solicited from Branches to further the existing question bank repository for the Entomology Games. If anyone has questions they would like to submit for consideration contact George or David Plotkin. A survey was sent to Branch winners to see which teams will be coming in-person to the national meeting. Only Maryland and Ohio State expressed reservations about coming in-person.

The national meeting group has asked to have some time with department chairs to try and make the Entomology Games more inclusive by fostering participation from universities without an entomology department.

**Ad hoc Committee Reports**

**Archivist-Historian (George Hamilton):** Please include George on emails for archive purposes.

**Student Competition (Brenna Traver):** Brenna needs a co-chair for the committee.

Finding judges wasn’t a problem last year. However, some judges were harsh on their criticism of some student presentations (particularly Bachelor’s degree presenters). In the future we need to make an effort to have judges provide constructive criticism that doesn’t dissuade potential future student participation.

**Corporate Support (Jim Steffel):** The Branch received $12,250 in sponsorship last year. If anyone has any ideas for potential sponsors (equipment suppliers, etc.) let Jim or Erin Hitchner know.

**New Business:**

The 2022 meeting will be 2-days. Because our 2021 in-person meeting was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic, we had to renew our hotel contract in Philadelphia, PA for 2022. It’s a Bug’s World will be coming back for the meeting. David Wagner (University Connecticut) will be the keynote speaker. The dates for the meeting are February 19–21, which falls on the President’s Day weekend. Virginia Tech will need to bring easels and poster boards for the meeting.
Our 2023 Eastern Branch meeting will be held in Providence, RI. The hotel contract is in negotiations. The proposed dates for the meeting are March 19-22.

It was discussed that the L.O. Howard rubric that was previously developed focused too much on research. It was suggested that we don’t really need a rubric, but we must make sure that applicants address the point of how they “significantly and meritoriously contributed to the advancement of entomology”. This point needs to be highlighted in the online awards portal (i.e. separate box to fill out).

**Adjourn: 3:16 pm**