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Bird Conservation Network – Special ExComm Meeting Monday, May 2, 2022 Online Video Conference

Attendees: Vera Leopold, Charlotte Pavelka, Eric Secker, Aubrey Sirman

President Secker called the meeting to order at 8:05 p.m. A quorum was present with four ExComm members.

Review and discussion of RFP responses

Secker gave an overview of the purpose of the two RFPs for which BCN solicited proposals in April. The Media Relations RFP focused on pushing our Trends Analysis (TA) message to media sources and would include a news announcement, developing the media list, potentially broadcasting over a news wire, helping to get interviews with media, and pushing out the message on social media channels. The goal is to reach a much broader range of media by partnering with a PR consultant than we could achieve just with the BCN reps' media contacts on a volunteer basis.

The video/photography RFP is a newer element that would include gathering still photographs and a promotional video a few minutes long about BCN and the TA results. Secker felt creating a separate RFP for this piece was important because it involved a different skillset from PR and allowed us to get more proposals. This is intended to be a high-quality, professional video that piques interest and drives people to the BCN website to learn more about us and our Survey findings. Secker said his hope is that the video footage and photographs gained would far outlive the TA project to benefit BCN.

Discussion followed on value of the video/photography project for BCN. Pavelka noted that this new RFP takes the project further than was previously discussed. Sirman asked for clarification on where the video would be used. Secker answered that it would be pushed out to social media channels, shared with media to spark interest/additional interviews, and could be incorporated in presentations to various groups.

Leopold said that BCN has very little video content to use so far, other than “talking heads”-style long recordings. Reps have done a great job creating such recorded videos without having capacity to go out in the field and film. However, only someone who already has a strong interest in the topic will watch long videos in this style. Sirman agreed that a short video less than 2 minutes is key; people have short attention spans and need to be drawn in quickly. Secker added that we have had difficulty even getting photos to use for our website. There is a great need for more photo and video content.

Secker shared details on the two respondents' proposals that he proposes accepting:

- 1) **Media Relations – Bob Dolgan/Turnstone Strategies, LLC – cost estimate: \$3,000**

Dolgan was the only respondent to the RFP. However, Secker and Leopold said they were impressed to see the amount of experience Dolgan has in PR/communication projects from his resume. This gives confidence in his ability. He has a passion for bird conservation and is familiar with the context.

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2) Video/Photography – Ben Kolak and Kerry Stevens/Truth & Documentary – cost estimate: \$2,360

Three proposals were received for the video/photography RFP. The Truth & Documentary proposal was preferred of the three, as well as the lowest cost. Truth & Documentary has worked with Annette Prince of CBCM on a piece called “Cat City” (<https://truthanddocumentary.org/our-films/cat-city>). Leopold said they provided a detailed, professional, and carefully thought-out proposal. Their other video products covered a wide variety of topics and appeared very high-quality.

ExComm reviewed the discussion from the October quarterly meeting. BCN voted to approve up to \$5,000 for the Trends Analysis communication project. The proposed total of \$5,360 exceeds this, which the RFP team had previously raised as a concern.

Pavelka reviewed BCN’s 2022 budget and how it would be impacted by accepting the two proposals. We had budgeted to end the year with \$4,792, but with the cost of both proposals, we would be down to \$2,240. Pavelka said she is not comfortable bringing our budget that low. She would like to have a plan for raising additional funds to help cover the projects if we are approving them.

Leopold said she thought we would be getting good value for the cost. Working with a PR firm and getting high-quality video can both have a much higher price tag. Some contacts responded they couldn’t do the project for the RFP’s stated amount.

Secker agreed that Dolgan would be doing the project essentially at a discount/charity rate. Based on feedback we received, the original budget was likely low or not realistic. We also realized we still had a lot of needs after receiving Bilderback’s volunteer help on the project that would be valuable to meet. Expanding the TA effort to include the video/photography piece could help infuse new interest and energy in BCN. It has the potential to elevate BCN to another level as a more professional/modern organization.

Pavelka proposed raising funds from member groups and other interested parties with a goal of covering \$2500 to \$3000 of the total cost. Other ExComm members were supportive of this idea. A target date to raise donations was set for the end of Q3 2022.

Motion: The Executive Committee approves the two identified proposals for a total of \$5360 and will put together a fundraising campaign to solicit donations by the end of Quarter 3, 2022, with a goal of raising \$3000 toward this initiative.

Move: Charlotte Pavelka

Second: Vera Leopold

Action: Approved

Next steps are to put together brief language to share for the fundraising effort. Secker will connect with Bob Fisher and others about establishing a fundraising committee.

Updates and ideas on deploying the Trends Analysis

Secker said he wants to make sure the TA findings are useful for land managers and more actionable. He reported we have some good meetings lined up with land

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managers and other partners; they are providing feedback and questions that will be brought back to the TA team. For example, BCN will give a presentation at a Chicago Wilderness Café. eBird will also be collaborating with us more.

Secker shared some new ideas as possible follow-up items to the TA findings. Data from the BCN Survey could be overlaid on forest preserve maps in a way that would be useful for land managers. A report or scoring system for Forest Preserve Districts based on the TA findings could allow managers to “score” their sites’ benefit for breeding birds. This could provide guidance on what to prioritize for habitat management. Finally, a list of potential new research questions has been generated through the TA communication project. Via partnerships, we could find students to take on these research projects, perhaps through the IOS Research Grants program and other initiatives. ExComm members were interested in exploring these.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Vera Leopold
Secretary*