

Public Education Committee

Committee Members:

S. Bartel, R. Green, W. Ingle, V. Mathis (Chair), S. Mech, M. Merrick, V. Naples, S. Neiswinter, D. K. Odell, J. R. O'Neill-Englund, P. Owen, Z. Rossman, L. Schlitter, S. Sheffield, E. Siracusa, M. Swanson, G. Turner, 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.

Information Items:

(1) K-12 Outreach PowerPoint:

Steve Sheffield and Pam Owens continue to work on a PowerPoint presentation on ecological importance of large carnivores. Meant for K-12 education, it focuses on eight of the large carnivores in North America, covering ecological services, scavenging, ecological impacts, benefits, and importance, etc. We still need an accompanying white paper for any unknown technical terms. Steve is having issues getting photos that can be used but has made some progress, using either ASM-owned images or open source photos. Once completed, we need to determine the best method for disseminating the resource (e.g., webpage, an ASM article, various list-serves, teacher groups, etc.).

(2) Mammal Species List

We continue to work with the Biodiversity Committee to find the best way to make sure the Mammal Diversity Database and the Species Lists are matching in taxonomy.

(3) Bio Blitz

We are thinking about putting on a workshop at a future meeting (potentially Boulder) where the goal is to train ASM members on how to put on a BioBlitz.

(4) iNaturalist

Steve is developing state mammal guidebooks on iNaturalist. We have developed instructions to download our state database as an Excel file and then upload it into iNaturalist using the ASM-PEC account. Pennsylvania is complete, but we want to roll out the other states into iNaturalist.

(5) Ask a Mammalogist/Interview a mammalogist

Rebecca Green had the idea of setting up interviews between students and ASM members. Part of the interview done by college age student about what they do in mammalogy. The other half interview with kids, either classroom group or individual. Short, 30 seconds to 2 minutes, interviews would be ideal. This could also highlight diversity in the sciences including underrepresented groups in ASM. Maybe set up a recording session between established mammalogist and a new student member.

(6) Science Fair Certificates

The PEC provides recognition to students participating in Science Fairs with a project related to mammals by awarding a Certificate of Achievement. This year we awarded one certificate at the Blue Ridge Highlands Science Fair (project entitled “Observed Differences Among White-Tailed Deer Populations in Private and Public Land” by Jonathan Distler at Blacksburg High School). 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.

(7) Future workshops

We have discussed the possibility of hosting a “workshop” modeled after the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections’ Share Fair, where meeting attendees bring public outreach activities that they have developed for demo and sharing. This would be a great way for mammalogists to share their K-12 outreach and for other attendees to get ideas on how they can adapt and use those activities in their communities. Something to develop for a future meeting.

Action Items:

None

Respectfully submitted,

Verity Mathis, Chair

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