

Committee Report December 2014

Synopsis and status of IAN Traveling Exhibits Committee for IAN Executive Committee December 23, 2014 compiled by Ann Burns, committee chair

The IAN Traveling Exhibits Committee started as an idea presented at the Fall 2006 IAN meeting in response to the positive reception the Lions! exhibit was receiving. Lions! was brought to Iowa by Friends of Hartman Reserve. The result was a December 8, 2006 inaugural committee meeting at the Polk County Conservation Office, Jester Park. Minutes from meetings are available from the committee. Ann Burns was selected to chair the committee and Hilary Markin was selected for the secretary. The purpose of the committee is to develop a series of medium sized traveling exhibits that would be available to IAN members for display at facilities in their areas

At the December 8, 2006 meeting the group discussed the following:

1. Investigating existing available larger exhibits from nature centers and museums outside Iowa similar to the Lions! exhibit brought to Iowa by Hartman Reserve, as well as other agencies such as FWS. This is being done by individual IAN members and their agencies. Examples are the Snake Exhibit obtained by Dallas CCB and the Songbird and Prairie exhibit by Friends of Hartman Reserve.
2. Discussion of existing IAN member exhibits that could be made available to share.
3. The possibilities of a team from this committee creating a medium sized exhibit utilizing grant funds and matching funds from IAN member agencies and foundations as well as other partners. It was felt that a medium sized exhibit would be used by more IAN members.
4. Logistics for traveling an IAN owned exhibit around the state
5. Possible topics
 - a. Prairie,
 - b. Birds
 - c. Mussels/Water Quality/Fish
6. Established sub-committees
 - a. Grant Writing/Funding Sources – Evaluation:
 - b. Design, text, activities, research – by topic/project?:
 - c. Logistics
7. Actions to be taken were:
 - Survey rest of committee members on topic choices we want to run with – vote by email
 - Report to Ex-Com with the three top 3 choices and we will prioritize them

From this initial meeting two teams were established – a Prairie Exhibit Team and a Watershed/Aquatics Team. The Prairie Team moved forward immediately with research and design work and in June of 2009 IAN was awarded a REAP CEP grant to allow development and fabrication of their exhibit concept. Additional fund raising made the exhibit a reality and in the spring of 2010 the exhibit was ready for its first site. The Tallgrass Prairie exhibit is scheduled into October of 2015.

In the meantime, several IAN members who had small to medium size exhibit available for traveling/swapping posted their exhibits to the IAN website. A number of these have been shared via this method. A portion of the exhibit, “Turtles: Secrets of the Shell”, from the Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium is currently touring nature centers around the state. Other than posting to the website or on the IAN listserve, IAN members who own exhibits that they are willing to share handle the logistics of loaning their exhibits themselves. The Traveling Exhibits committee has no part in these other than to answer occasional phone calls when a potential borrower doesn’t remember who has a particular exhibit they are interested in.

The Watershed/Aquatics team has struggled to move their project forward. A number of people on the Watershed 1.0, Watershed 2.0 and Watershed 3.0 teams moved away, were re-assigned duties, or otherwise

lost their ability to participate in the project. This brings us to Fall of 2014. We have discussed partnering with the Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium on a watershed exhibit project they have in the research phase. Their intent is to develop an exhibit for their museum with sections of the exhibit available for travel at a future date. We have not had any updated communication from MRMA since the Fall 2014 IAN meeting.

Issues that need to be addressed in the coming months:

1. What to do with the Prairie Exhibit at its “end of life” if there are no IAN member hosts after October 2015? The committee and team have discussed options, including offering second chance hosting for a reduced rate of \$100. (one county has already booked a second stay). Offering the exhibit to museums in the state through the Iowa museum association is another suggestion. We have not advertised or actively pursued that at this point.
2. We need to get an answer from MRMA regarding the watershed exhibit development and our partnership level. Our connection with the museum, Mark Wagner, has had difficulty getting responses from his superiors and exhibit department people regarding the partnership. This will be pursued after the first of the year.
3. Decide what to do with funds that were already received from IAN member agencies/foundations as matching funds partners for the Watershed exhibit IF progress is not made with the Mississippi River Museum folks. **see below*
4. Determine if there is a need for the committee to continue beyond maintaining the Tallgrass Prairie exhibit to the end of its life if the Watershed exhibit partnership with the Mississippi River Museum does not happen.

Items already addressed by the committee:

Jeny Meyer, Jackson County Conservation assistant naturalist, is interested in taking the Exhibits Committee chair position when Ann Burns steps away from those duties in 2015. Ann will help with that transition.

Jessica Wagner and Michelle Olson have expressed interest in becoming the Eastern Iowa site visit people for the Tallgrass Prairie Exhibit, to ensure that the exhibit remains in excellent condition by visiting host sites to check for needed repairs and make sure all parts continue to stay with the exhibit.

*Known funds received for Watershed Exhibit

Marshall CCB	donation	4/2/2013	\$	250.00	\$	250.00	CCB
Mitchell CCB	donation check #123828	5/20/2013	\$	500.000	\$	500.00	CCB warrant # 34073
Dickinson Co. Conserv Fdn	donation check # 3086	9/9/2013	\$	1,000.000	\$	1,000.00	Fdn check
Linn CCB	donation #70559718	6/12/2013	\$	1,000.000	\$	1,000.00	warrant 70559718

What else does ExCom want to know?