



Communications Team Transition News

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Dear IBA Members,

As you may have heard at a membership meeting during the last conference or read in recent IBN issues, IBA is changing as a result of feedback we received from the membership survey in 2015. In the survey responses, IBA members overwhelmingly expressed a desire for IBA to transition into a more effective and global player in promoting science-based management and conservation of bears. IBA Council used this feedback to develop a plan and has started a process to transition IBA towards this goal. To better introduce this process to you, we present answers to the most important questions below. Moreover, we will continue to keep you posted in future IBN issues as well as on our website!

Why does the IBA need to change, and why now?

The strategic membership survey provided IBA Council with valuable insights about how our membership (you) perceives us as an organization. Most notably, you have expressed a desire to explore how IBA can become a more effective organization in promoting science-based management and conservation of bears in all parts of the world. Building on your wishes, IBA Council worked with the management consultant company Oliver Wyman, who provided us with their service pro bono, to prepare a road map for IBA on how to provide more resources for our membership. As an organization, we want to better address your needs and concerns for science-based bear management and conservation in your part of the world. **But why now?** At the same time, the workload to maintain IBA's business has increased over the recent years to a point where it is difficult to manage on a voluntary basis. To alleviate this workload and to better prepare for the future, IBA Council applied for a foundational grant to hire a Director of Transition (DT) with the main responsibilities of (1) coordinating the transition with IBA Council and activities among committees working on different aspects of the future development of IBA; (2) managing electronic membership;



and (3) working closely with Council and a future Executive Director to help coordinate the fundraising and logistics of the transition. We welcome our new employee DT Jennapher Teunissen van Manen. As Jennapher has moved to this new role, IBA Council voted in Alexander Kopatz to finish out the term as Secretary for Council.

What is changing in IBA?

The goal of the transition is to make IBA more efficient and effective for our members while increasing our capacity for providing grants to support bear research, conservation, and management around the world. This entails some changes to our organizational structure to be able to meet these new challenges. However, at the same time it is key to preserve what we all appreciate and love about IBA for our members. IBA will maintain its membership as a diverse professional society of wildlife managers, biologists, educators, and conservationist working with bears. The core of our organization will always be a Council elected by the IBA-membership (you). The essence of IBA, i.e., the close contact and communication between its members, the conferences, IBN and Ursus, will remain the same and continue to be what makes IBA unique. IBA plans to hire an Executive Director (ED), reporting to Council, who will run the day-to-day business of IBA as well as be the central figure responsible for fund raising. We will try to enhance the organizational structure of IBA from a volunteer-based organization to an organization where employees will carry out many of the tasks. This also includes changes to responsibilities and decision-making processes. An overview including more specifics and details of the future plans will be made available for you on the IBA website, with the opportunity for feedback and comments.

What is going to happen during this year and what does that mean for you?

IBA committees are working on the organizational structure, strategic planning, finances, fund raising and communications, aiming to increase IBA's ability to execute its mission. By hiring dedicated staff, we will be able to increase the capacity of science-based programs in bear management, expand conservation impact worldwide, as well as to explore new and better ways to serve IBA's professional members and enhance opportunities for professional development. As a first step we have hired a DT, and an ED will follow later this year. We will also add legal, fund raising and communication advisers to our network. An important part of the future organizational structure will be a strategic plan on how IBA plans to distribute funding for management and conservation activities and projects on a global scale. Different parts of the world have different needs for bear conservation and management. A manager in North America dealing with bears in a suburban area has different needs and concerns compared to a manager in Asia trying to conserve a highly fragmented and endangered population. Common to both, is the need to exchange ideas and experiences with colleagues, to receive additional training, as well as opportunities to apply for funding to better understand or solve their specific management and conservation



challenges. It is the goal of IBA to better address needs and concerns for science-based bear management and conservation in all parts of the world. Therefore, we are working on plans that address needs and concerns on a geographic basis, and access to increased funding opportunities for all IBA members.

You will be informed with regular updates about all the steps towards improved services for our membership and more efficient and effective science-based management and conservation of all bear species across the world. You will probably have more questions or concerns about the transition. Please do not hesitate to contact Jennapher at jennapher.teunissenvanmanen@bearbiology.org. Also, follow IBA's website, Facebook and e-blasts to keep updated on the newest announcements.