



Presidents Column

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IBA 2.0 – prepping for the future

IBA has embarked on a process to play a bigger role in the conservation and management of bears on the global scale. As part of this process, a major goal is to be able to provide more training and funding opportunities for our members to enhance science-based bear management and conservation. But how can IBA become more efficient and effective in reaching our goal, the science-based management and conservation of all bear species across the world, as well as provide improved services to our membership? IBA Council has worked with the management consultant company Oliver Wyman to prepare a road map to IBA on how to become a bigger player and to provide more training and funding.

IBA Council, as well as additionally invited IBA members, held in conjunction with the Ljubljana conference a one-day workshop on the future development of IBA based on the suggestions by Oliver Wyman. Special attention was paid to represent as many aspects of IBA membership as possible in this workshop, ranging from highly experienced to younger (and maybe more modern thinking?) members, from wildlife managers to university scientist and conservationists, from web designers to fund raisers. This working group is currently working on several aspects of IBA's future:

1. Organizational structure: The workload of IBA officers has increased over time and is now at a point where it becomes difficult to manage on a voluntary basis. To alleviate the workload and to better prepare the organization for the future, IBA Council will hire a Director of Transition with the main responsibilities of 1) coordinating activities among IBA committees working on different aspects of the future development of IBA, 2) taking over electronic membership management from the IBA secretary (which has proved to be a very time consuming activity), and 3) coordinating fundraising activities for IBA's future. Legal advice as well as an accountant will be hired on a contract basis to manage payroll, taxes, etc. The seed funding for these positions was obtained from a generous donor. Down the road, IBA plans to hire an Executive Director, reporting to Council, who will run the day to day business of IBA as well as be the central figure responsible for fund raising.

At our workshop it became very clear how important it is for everyone to maintain the democratic structure of IBA and at the same time modernize the organization. IBA as an organization will maintain its membership as a professional society of diverse bear



biologists with an elected Council. The essence of IBA, the close contact and communication between its members, the conferences, IBN and Ursus, will remain the same.

2. Strategic plan: 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. Different parts of the world have different needs for bear conservation and management. A North American manager dealing with bears in a suburban area has different needs and concerns compared to an Asian manager 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 challenge. 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. In the long run, this will ensure relatively equal access to funding opportunities for all IBA members.
3. Finances and fund raising: A financial and business plan until the end of 2020 was prepared, detailing the expected income (for example from donations, Ursus page charges, etc.) as well as the expected costs for slowly building IBA into a larger organization with a larger budget for membership activities and funding opportunities. Based on this cashflow timeline, a fund raising team is working on a diverse strategy to obtain the necessary funds. IBA is also in contact with professional fundraisers to obtain advice on the best strategies.
4. Communications: Modern times come with modern challenges; the new website has greatly increased the visibility of IBA, and we now receive more feedback, requests and questions than ever before from the general public. Many of them are very relevant (“What kind of bear is this?” asked especially by many media outlets), some are rather unique (a group of engineering grad students asked the question: “Who would win a fight between a silverback gorilla and a grizzly bear?” In case you know the answer, check in on Facebook and tell me your opinion!), but common to all is greater interest in bears. But a good website is not enough any longer to attract the interest of potential donors. Therefore we are working on a detailed communication plan, messages and materials that can be used to address different target audiences and potential donors.

Working on these plans is very inspiring and very exciting, as it brings the future to life. But, it is also time consuming and, frankly, hard work carried out by many volunteer brains. Feedback and advice from additional members is essential. We will therefore make an



overview of the future plans available on the IBA website, with the possibility for feedback and comments.

As an organization we want to better address your needs and concerns for bear management and conservation in your part of the world. We would like to make IBA more efficient and effective to our members, which entails some changes to our organizational structure to be able to meet these new challenges. The core values of the democratic structure of IBA will not change. Expressed in computer terms: our goal is not to build a new software, but our goal is to upgrade the existing software to create a win-win situation that benefits all members by increased access to services and resources provided by IBA as well as improves science-based bear management and conservation across the world – IBA 2.0!

IBA Distinguished Service Award for Stephen Herrero

At the Ljubljana conference, IBA's Distinguished Service Award was handed out to our colleague and friend Prof. Stephen Herrero. Rarely has there been an individual more deserving of this award! Throughout his career, Stephen has been a strong supporter of IBA, by serving many years on Council as well as President. His book on bear attacks is THE classic in bear literature and is famous even among the general public. Unfortunately, Stephen was not able to attend the conference personally. Lana Ciarniello accepted the award on his behalf and presented a very humorous and touching overview of Stephen's career and how he has influenced the life and careers of many bear students and biologists through his kind and supportive personality. The Slovenian conference organizers generously recorded and prepared a video of the award ceremony. This video will be presented to Stephen together with the award. Congratulations!