



September 06, 2020

Dear IBA Member,

After some months filled with work, we have a few announcements on IBA business.

Farewell to Mike Hooker

We are saddened by the passing of our friend, colleague, and IBA family member Dr. Mike Hooker. Mike had been an IBA member since 1997 and was especially committed to research and management of American black bears in the southeast US and brown bears in the western US. In his recent work, he focused on population genetics, reproduction, and denning ecology of black bears in Louisiana and Georgia, USA. Mike took up running for the first time in his 40s while at the University of Tennessee working on his Master's project. Running became a big part of his life and Mike was known to travel all of the US to run marathons with his running friends. IBA was important to Mike. He attended his first conference in 1997 and did not miss a conference until 2018. He was always the guy ready to make everybody smile and laugh. Many of you may remember meeting Mike's Mom, Betty, when she travelled with him to the IBA conference in New Delhi, India so they could spend time travelling together after the conference. Always ready to try anything new, Mike learned to snorkel for the first time when visiting the Galapagos after the IBA conference in Quito, Ecuador. Mike passed away suddenly on 12th June and will be greatly missed. Our heartfelt condolences go to his family and friends. In the Summer 2020 issue of IBN, an In Memoria for Mike was prepared by some of his closest friends.



Audit completed

In July 2020, auditor Wayne R. Heitt (Wipfli LLP) provided IBA with its first Audit Report for the calendar year 2019. This has been a long-term goal under discussion with IBA Council since the early 2000s and an important achievement for IBA as it reflects on our progress for providing transparency in our financial reporting. Audits allow non-profits to provide the public and prospective financial supporters an

opportunity to review independently prepared financial reports. Our processes and financial standing were evaluated and found to be at a strong level, well-positioned for the immediate year and into the future. No issues of noncompliance were found. A crucial part of our transition process is to have the necessary resources, such as paid staff and financial expertise, to consistently provide transparency in all aspects of IBA business for additional outreach to the public and donors. A summary of the audit will be made available on our website later this fall.

Additional funding

IBA Executive Director (ED) Christopher Kelley has dived straight into developing a foundation for short-term and long-term fundraising. Despite difficulties and uncertainties in the financial market caused by the Covid19 pandemic, an additional \$70,000 in funds for transition costs was secured in June and Chris has brought in a new donor who donated \$5,000 to the BCF and \$5,000 to transition costs.

Accountant hired

IBA is successfully growing financially and with this growth comes an increased workload to manage our finances. Over the years, the Council has discussed hiring an accountant to decrease the daily workload of the volunteer Treasurer by moving the record-keeping and expertise of managing non-profit finances to a professional accountant. Thanks to the connections and networks of our Executive Director, in May we were able to contract with an accountant and have begun the work transitioning our finances to professional management for non-profits.

Conference Update & Video Presentations

The situation with COVID-19 and travel to the US is still entrenched with uncertainty. The conference planning committee will have a meeting in early October to discuss plans for the IBA Kalispell conference and potentially make a decision to proceed with either a virtual, hybrid (virtual and in-person), or full in-person (if possible) conference for May 2021. Originally, when COVID-19 became an issue, we thought to postpone the conference until Fall 2021. However, the International Human-Bear Conflicts Workshop was scheduled for this time but, it has been postponed opening up the possibility of a Fall 2021 IBA conference. Given this new possibility, the conference planning committee will consider this as an option with input from the full IBA Council. We will let members know once a decision has been reached. If you would like to provide your thoughts on which option is preferred, email Jennapher Teunissen van Manen no later than 6th October 2020 answering these questions:

1. With the current situation of COVID, would you be able to attend an in-person conference in May 2021?
2. If an in-person conference for May 2021 is not possible, would you prefer:
 - a. Plan for a virtual conference in May 2021 or,
 - b. Postpone until Fall 2021 with the hope an in-person conference is possible by this time.

To ease the time until the conference, have a look at IBA's YouTube Channel and watch some of our members giving a preview of the research they will present <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWWp97SkhJjRPrN-xNegDjg>. If you are also wishing to highlight your work this way, contact Jennapher Teunissen van Manen.

If you need a letter of invitation for VISA applications or work requirements, IBA will provide the letters. You can contact Jennapher Teunissen van Manen for the letter. We hope to see you at the conference!

Council business

The situation with COVID has created additional stressors for so many people and the IBA Council is not immune to the effects. Parents with careers are faced with the task of balancing their career and managing kids attending school from home. This does not leave much time to volunteer for an organization like IBA. One of our valued Council members, Jennifer Fortin-Noreus, had to resign because of these personal reasons. We greatly appreciate Jennifer's dedication and hard work during her time as IBA Treasurer and wish her all the best for the future.

Since we are in the process of shifting the role of the volunteer Treasurer to one of oversight and decreasing the daily workload as described above, we obtained advice from our attorney how best to manage this change. As a result, Council has temporarily assigned the various Treasurer responsibilities to our Executive Director, Director of Transition, and the newly hired accountant for establishing a standardized process of daily financial management combined with regular monthly oversight. By using this time to put the new process in place, it ensures a smooth transition and gives Council the needed time to carry out the process of selecting and appointing a new Treasurer without the management of IBA finances being disrupted.

Stay safe and healthy!

All the best, IBA Communications Team

[*Agnieszka Sergiel, Councilor and Communications Team Co-Chair*](#)

[*Alexander Kopatz, Secretary and Communications Team Co-Chair*](#)

[*Andreas Zedrosser, Past-President*](#)

[*Jennapher Teunissen van Manen, Director of Transition*](#)

Council Motions Voted and Passed Since February 2020 Update to Members

- **75-2020:** Council approves IBA acting as an intermediary organisation for fund disbursement for the Disney Conservation Fund application by Sandeep Sharma, with a 5% administrative fee for IBA if the grant is awarded. This is considered an IBA pass-through grant.
Result: 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 3 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **76-2020:** Council to appoint Jack Beardsley and Nadine Bechstein as co-chairs of the IBA Website Committee.
Result: 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 2 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **77-2020:** IBA adopts the standard Whistleblower Protection Policy for non-profits and once Council votes to accept the motion, Council members will receive the document via DocuSign and sign the policy confirming that the policy has been approved.
Result: 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 2 Council Members not voting, motion

is adopted.

- **78-2020:** The layout part of the production of International Bear News has been moved to a professional graphic designer starting from the summer 2020 issue.
Result: 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 3 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **79-2020:** In order for IBA to provide audited financial statements, Council allocated the estimated funds of \$10,000 to cover the costs for an US non-profit financial audit and in support for possible compensation of working hours of IBA's treasurer.
Result: 11 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 1 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **80-2020:** All applicants for IBA travel grants and Research and Conservation Grants are required to have an IBA membership of any kind in order to apply.
Result: 8 votes in the affirmative, 2 votes in the negative, 2 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **81-2020:** IBA Council formalizes the IBA Communications Committee and appointment of Agnieszka Sergiel and Alexander Kopatz as the official co-chairs.
Result: 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 2 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **82-2020:** Council approves a 6-month extension of the position of Director of Transition from July 1, 2020-December 31, 2020.
Result: 10 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 1 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **83-2020:** The oversight of Treasurer responsibilities be assigned to Executive Director Christopher Kelley, Director of Transition Jennapher Teunissen van Manen and our paid accountant in the interim for financial management, until the system of standing committees is in place to support the redefined role of IBA Treasurer as one to oversight and move the day to day management tasks to paid staff.
Result: 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 2 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.
- **84-2020:** The policy for the access to published papers in Ursus is accepted as proposed by the Publication Committee.
Result: 9 votes in the affirmative, 0 votes in the negative, 2 Council Members not voting, motion is adopted.

[Visit the IBA website](#) for more information on your elected council members and how to contact them if you have questions or suggestions.

You currently have a <<Membership Description>> membership with IBA which is current until: <<Membership Due Date>>. If you have any questions about your IBA membership, [contact Jennapher Teunissen van Manen](#). You can [renew your membership online here](#).
