

SUMMARY OF TWS MANITOBA CHAPTER CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP

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Chair CSTWS Certification Committee

On Saturday, September 22, 2018, a Certification Workshop was held at University of Manitoba. In attendance were nearly 50 students from the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg's TWS Student Chapter. Justine Josephson-Laidlaw, Student Chapter representative on CSTWS Executive Committee and President Elect for TWS Manitoba Chapter, did a fantastic job organizing the event. The proceedings were video taped and will be made available soon.

In addition, we passed out our newly created Certification brochures to all participants. In talking to Dr. Rick Baydack, he endorses the idea that we should be blanketing the country with this brochure. The more students and other biologists are made aware of TWS certification, the better.

For your information, I have supplied a brief overview of the workshop below:

- Justine welcomed all the students and introduced the guest speakers.
- Dr. Rick Baydack, University of Manitoba, gave a brief talk about TWS and why it was important for student to consider becoming members.
- I gave a presentation on TWS's certification program
- John Wiens, a recent CWB®, gave a presentation about how certification has helped him in dealing with other professionals and work.
- Melanie Dubois, another CWB®, talked about how certification has enabled her to communicate with more confidence to other professionals involved in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Her professional status was a must, as she is the only biologist amongst several other agricultural scientists.
- Rick presented a talk focused on the wildlife curriculum which allows University of Manitoba students to fulfill the course requirements necessary for certification. He gave the students some sound advice when filling out the application. His pass experience on the Certification Review Board was very beneficial as he was able to give students a unique perspective from someone involved in the evaluation of applications.
- After a break, Justine introduced the panel discussion session. Rick, Melanie, and I served as the panel members—unfortunately John Wiens had other commitments so could not be the 4th panel member. There was a barrage of questions dealing a wide array of subjects.

Below, I have tried to give you a flavour of the types of questions that were asked and the panel's responses:

- What advice can you give to help us in preparing a case for course deficiency areas, like botany?
 - The panel supplied some useful suggestions about using experience to cover course deficiencies

—field work dealing primarily with plant identification

—your participation on committees, student chapters, any work where you are talking to people, etc. will be useful in fulfilling deficiencies in the communication category. The bottom-line here is that you must be creative in building your case.

- Guidance was also given about the amount of time required to cover off a course deficiency—the amount of experience should be at least as much time as a typical course
- In making a case for covering a course deficiency, it is always a good idea to use a professor or supervisor as reinforcement.
- How did certification help in the panelist's career?
 - We each gave our perspectives. I have tried to summarize the panelists' responses: 1) improving the working relationships with other professionals; 2) being recognized as professionals opened a lot of career opportunities; 3) being certified made it easier for us to communicate more effectively with students and young biologists about its benefits; 4) being recognized formally as a professional in your field.
- What advice do you have for a student filling out a certification application?
 - When the Certification Review Board is looking at an application, they look favourably on applications which show a certain amount of intensity. As a guide, a student should think of the application as an assignment to convince the Board that you really want to be certified.
 - Document all courses on the application, as the CRB will move courses around to help the applicant meet the course requirements.
 - Make sure to supply a lot of information when presenting courses, as well covering off course deficiencies.
- What is considered professional experience when applying for a CWB®?
 - The panel had to agree that the Certification Manual's guide to professional experience may be a little ambitious. This is something that the Certification Committee must look at more closely. At present, a lot of working wildlife biologists are not working at the levels expected for certification.

I hope this short summary gave you an insight into what was covered in the workshop.

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