WSWS Officer and Committee Report
Annual Board Meeting – March 9, 2015

Office or Committee Name: Public Relations Committee

Officer or Chairperson Name: Stott Howard

Date of Preparation (include year): 4 March 2015

Committee Activities during the Year:

1. Selected a chair-person for the committee on 15 May 2014
2. Reached out to other societies to get ideas on their engagement/activities opposite public relations and used this network and their respective society PR activities as a basis for discussion to help identify and set 2014 activities within our PR committee. Examples of contacts include:
    a. NEWSS, Todd Mervosh, public relations representative, indicates they do not have a Public Relations Committee, just him and he does the newsletter.
    b. SWSS, Brad Minton, president-elect, indicates they had a Special Membership Committee 3 to 4 years ago with a similar remit to our newly founded Public Relations Committee. There were lots of good ideas to promote the society (Facebook, Twitter), but not much energy behind implementing the activities. They have recently decided to reinstitute the effort under the direction of Chad Brommer.
    c. ESA, Richard Levine, Communications Manager, coordinates PR for the national society and between the regional entomology societies as well.
3. The committee met on three occasions: 25 August, 27 October, and 12 December.
    a. During discussions about public relations committee activities, we thought it would be important to assess internal and external communication mechanisms and whether those currently used generated interest in the WSWS and associated activities. It was agreed with Drew Lyon that we would develop a membership survey to gather information on these topics:
        i. Effectiveness of the newsletter in communicating key/important society information
        ii. Evaluate the frequency and effectiveness of the society e-mail communications
        iii. Evaluate whether the society website is generating interest and effectively promulgating the mission of the society…in addition to providing clear, easy-to-find instructions for engaging in society activities
        iv. Assess the perception of the NCWSS from inside the society (does the society have a personality that generates interest in its membership).
        v. Are there social media tools that could be used to (more) effectively communicate internally and externally…are we effectively reaching all of the membership from students to fellows?
        vi. What other societies should we be aligning with to broaden impact and increase membership

vii. Which magazines would we focus communications in on key topics, short courses or to advertise our annual meeting

b. During a review of the initial survey the committee got a wrapped around the axel on whether the survey would be effective in generating useful information…in particular, with regard to the very first survey question: how would you rate the effectiveness (frequency, quality and tools) of the WSWS internal communication strategy. Note to successor: unless you are sure that there is an 'official' strategy for something do not ask about its effectiveness!

c. A couple more iterations of the survey were developed, but never reviewed by the committee. A copy of all the survey questions developed is attached to this report. This should be a useful starting point should the 2015 committee decide to take this forward. Initially the committee wanted to limit the survey to 6 or 7 questions.

d. 'Survey Monkey' was agreed as the tool/mechanism for the survey. Stott has the account and experience with developing the survey and the survey analysis tools associated with the software. Stott remains happy to provide this to the WSWS should they wish to take advantage of it.

4. We have lined up Marty Schraer and Brad Lindenmayer for society photography duties...they will have cameras in hand and be at the ready!

Recommendations for Board Action: None identified to date

Budget Needs: None identified to date

Suggestions for the Future: None identified to date

Current Committee Members: Rita Beard (2016), Joan Campbell (2017), Stott Howard (2016), Todd Neel (2017), Ryan Rapp (2015), Phil Stahlman (2015)

Name of Person Preparing This Report: Stott Howard

WSWS Membership Survey

Your WSWS Public Relations Committee is interested in evaluating how effective we are as an organization at communicating internally and externally the activities, events, mission statement and values of the society. As such we ask that you take a moment to complete the attached survey in order to help us understand the strengths and weaknesses of our public relations strategy and identify suggestions for improvement. We appreciate your support!

"Public relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." Stuart Elliott

1) How would you rate the effectiveness (frequency, quality and tools) of the WSWS internal communication strategy
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Needs improvement
   - Poor
   - <comments?>

2) How would you rate the effectiveness (frequency, quality and tools) of the WSWS external communication strategy
   - Excellent
   - Good
   - Needs improvement
   - Poor
   - <comments?>

3) What social media/networking websites do you use in your workplace/job
   - Facebook
   - Twitter
   - Google+
   - Linked In
   - Tumblr
   - Other, please specify

4) What social media do you believe would be most helpful to the WSWS in disseminating or sharing information and promoting its mission? <check all that apply & open field>
   - Facebook
   - Twitter
   - Google+
   - Linked In
   - Tumblr
   - Other, please specify

5) The WSWS is trying to broaden affiliations and strengthen its network. Please list specific local, state, national and international organizations that you believe we could benefit from affiliating or interacting with. <open field>

6) Please rate the WSWS newsletter:
    - Format and appearance:
        i. It gives me vertigo
        ii. I can find what I need
        iii. It is easy to work through and pleasant to view
        iv. What improvements would you recommend? <open field>

    - Information content:
        i. I never read it
        ii. I speed read it
        iii. I hang on every word
        iv. What improvements would you recommend? <open field>
        v. Key information that I am interested in receiving <open field>

7) Please rate the WSWS website
    - Easy to navigate? Yes/No
    - Is the information up to date? Yes/No
    - I frequently check the website for news and updates? Yes/No
    - What improvements would you recommend? <open field>

8) Help identify media where you have seen the WSWS or any of the Weed Science Societies socialized:
    - Social media <please identify>
    - Social news <please identify>
    - Bookmarking sites <please identify>
    - Microblogging <please identify>
    - Media sharing <please identify>
    - Blog comments and forums <please identify>

9) Please share your ideas and suggestions that we may not have captured through the previous questions. <open field>