

## Executive Director Report: 11 Feb 2019 – 21 days and counting

### Observations:

Category	Strengths	Opportunities
Leadership	Board is extremely focused on funding through events and sponsor work—unusual for a vol board but very significant...	... board may be less focused on overseeing and coordinating mission work beyond events, or replicating initiatives across state; (e.g., AWA, Abrams, wood, etc.)
	Diverse professional experiences of Directors builds stronger decisions.	Board organization not aligned with mission work – some missions not rep'ed on board; and some mission work is siloed
	There is some deep experience on BoD; Good hands-on experience with WWA grassroots	Uneven Director engagement
	Director willingness to pitch in where needed; Great Board energy; real pockets of significant energy	ED is new to org and role, while similar to previous experiences, is new.
Strategy	WWA should be of <u>increasing</u> relevance to WI waterfowlers (W2)	Limited strategic focus of organization / board... what are WWA goals? Generally status quo, or some personal initiative of particular vols
	Good budget planning practices	Without a future “vision”, lost opportunities for increasing revenue, impact, membership
	Good historical info captured on website...	... Website rear-facing (historical accomplishments vs. how we will build on it into a relevant future)
	Some really good stories to tell (AWA, projects, history, LTH...)	... but no marketing, branding strategy
	Timing with various waterfowl plans is very good...	SPOF (single point of failure) risk –individual staff or Directors
	Good connectivity with important partners (WDNR, S4W, etc)	Broader communications approach is ad hoc
Customers	Can be a loyal bunch... membership holding consistent around 3500-4000 (~7300 with calendars)	No differentiation of “customer” type (members/ volunteers/ donors/ partners), or what they are looking for from WWA “services”
	12,000 “good” emails--Newsletter is something to build on	How do we engage more customers—no clear path articulated
Operations	Strong event management ownership at grassroots...	... Uneven staff support builds distrust/frustration at chapters
	Habitat project work runs autonomously with consistent results from consistent grantors	Project comms could be improved with significant marketing impact
	Strong AWA program momentum...	... but AWA not truly rep'd at BoD level - disconnected from goals
	Status quo works, mostly...	... little impetus for “more” (projects, acreage, members, hatchlings, etc)
	RD has good insights / experience, and has expressed willingness to ensure a smooth turnover as retirement looms...	... RD organizational skills uneven, impacting chapters, state view of monthly financial results. Unlikely to change in next 6 months
	Well-respected voice for W2	Small % of W2
Measurement	35 years!	No important data identified or structured consistently; While a lot has been done in 35 years, data are missing, making story-telling anecdotal and less compelling (not entirely clear to me)
		Database not entirely reliable for numbers... basic database not optimized for donor outreach
		With no organizational strategy, unclear how WWA is going to adapt to

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		changing W2 environment
Workforce	Strong AD, with remarkable corp knowledge	Physical diasporas of staff impedes coordination
	Talented HRP with good project history	Comms with HRP are atrophied, but getting better
	RD Transition opportunity to address uneven event support	RD is stretched beyond personal capacity; Uneven event support means some duties picked up at Board/ED level, diluting effectiveness; RD departure will create temporary gap
	Truly committed volunteers!	
Results	35 years!	No philanthropic strategy or organization or message: what are we selling, to whom?
	Financial results healthy/adequate for 2018...	... funding is fragile; Single chapter failure risks.
	Consistent habitat effort...	... but small percentage of wetlands “touched” by WWA effort (less than .1% in past 8 years)
	Membership consistent	Small percentage of W2, and market share (vis-à-vis DU, or other benchmarks) is small
	Well-respected by partners—ready for WWA to play larger role	
	Strong base of landowner work over 35 years	Difficult to “touch” for future fundraising

### **Some early—and potentially premature--conclusions:**

1. Absence of comprehensive forward-looking goals (and associated action planning):
  - a. Retards organizational focus, and therefore, WWA impact;
  - b. Reduces WWA efficiency in using its resources;
  - c. Reduces attractiveness of WWA to potential donors, volunteers
  - d. Limits recruitment of vols with needed skillsets / interests
  - e. Risks WWA irrelevance in a changing “environment”
2. BoD organization not aligned with full range of missions
  - a. Means some important mission-work goes without Director attention
  - b. Risks director burnout when they try to do too much
  - c. May confuse vols, partners, Directors who don’t know who to turn to.
  - d. May make serving on BoD less attractive
3. Staff support is thin, uneven, and not well documented, making
  - a. Single point of failure more likely and costly
  - b. Staff focus more diffuse
  - c. BoD role diluted with filling staff roles

### **Discussion on possible WWA Vision/goals - -just for consideration/discussion—to be worked on....**

*WWA works to...*

1. *Create the conditions for quality waterfowling experiences;*
2. *Build community respect for waterfowling as responsible users of state natural resources;*
3. *Pass our waterfowling ethic to the next generation.*