



WFA Election Information:

Terms are 3 years. Elected officers and Council members are limited to 2 consecutive terms in the same office. Vacancies may be filled from the membership by a majority vote of Council or special election.

Council Make-up according to WFA bylaws (n=11):

- ✚ Officers (n=5)
 - President
 - Vice President, North America
 - Vice President outside North America
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
- ✚ General Council (6 positions: 5 elected, 1 is the past president)

Below are the descriptions of Council and officer duties, as they appear in the Bylaws (***Bold italics***), along with additional information on how these positions have evolved to function (similar to the functioning of the International Bear Research and Management Association or IBA).

President:

“The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and the Membership. In the event that the President is absent or unavailable, the presiding officer shall be as described in Article III, Sections 3 and 4. The presiding officer shall appoint all committees, including those established by the Council, and shall be the spokesperson for the WFA, except when others are appointed as spokespersons by the Council”

The president does a lot to set the tone and the example for WFA and WFA Council. As the chief executor, the President is ultimately responsible for making sure that when issues come up or tasks need to be done, they are adequately and appropriately discussed and acted upon in a timely manner, and that actions are in keeping with the goals and objectives of WFA. As the spokesperson for WFA, the president is key in establishing a welcoming, collegial and respectful culture within the organization, maintaining a scientific and discerning framework for WFA actions, and accurately communicating the goals and perspectives of the WFA to those outside the organization.

Vice-President:

“The two Vice-Presidents shall assist the President with administrative duties and will be under the direction of the President. When the President is absent, the Vice Presidents will alternate acting as presiding officer, unless by a vote of Council, the location of the WFA function makes it more appropriate that a specific Vice President presides.”

The vice-presidents essentially assist the president in whatever way necessary. They, along with the secretary and treasurer, serve as an executive team to provide feedback, bring up issues,

discuss options, and generally help create direction for the WFA. The executive team takes care of lots of minor decisions and helps decide which issues go to the full Council.

Because the position of vice-president of WFA comes with few specifically defined duties (e.g. in comparison to secretary or treasurer), and without the authority to make decisions or speak for the WFA (as granted to President), it is easy for those in this position to let themselves be leaders in name only. Vice-presidents must fight entropy in this regard, and always view themselves as leaders within the Council. It is their responsibility to help make sure that business gets done thoroughly and in a timely and professional manner. Because so much business is conducted by email, discussions and decisions are often left hanging or slip through the cracks. To help keep Council on track, the vice-presidents, may think about preparing periodic business updates for Council, ideally on an approximately quarterly basis, that summarize Council actions since the last update, identifying tasks that were completed and business that is waiting to be completed. This is something that IBA now does.

Treasurer:

“The Treasurer shall maintain records of all financial transactions of the Wild Felid Association. The Treasurer shall keep accurate books of expenditures and receipts of funds, maintain the checking account, manage investments, pay bills, receive payment for dues and publications, process credit card payments, arrange for preparation and filing of tax returns, maintain US tax-exempt status, issue checks to selected projects as directed by the Chair of the Wild Felid Association’s Grant Review Committee, maintain all financial records, and bill for proceedings’ page charges and reprints as needed. The Treasurer may delegate or contract some of the duties to others with the concurrence of the President. The Treasurer and President will arrange for an audit of the financial records following completion of the incumbent’s term and will present the audit for review by members at the primary conference of the Wild Felid Association.”

Enough said. It’s a big job. Sometimes the treasurer has provided mid-year financial summaries to Council, as well. It also falls to the treasurer to play the role of fiscal conservative, safeguarding the treasury against unwise or untimely spending decisions by Council.

Secretary:

“The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings, maintain a file of all past minutes and newsletters, receive and process all membership applications and renewals, maintain the membership data file, generate mailing labels for newsletter distribution, sell and distribute Wild Felid Association proceedings, act as primary contact for questions regarding the Wild Felid Association, maintain all non-financial records, coordinate Council input on the Wild Felid Association’s web site that may include suggestions for additions or improvements, and posting 2 copies of each Wild Felid Association publication in the official Wild Felid Association archive collections at locations designated by the Council. The secretary may delegate or contract some of the duties to others with the concurrence of the President. The secretary shall report to the President on these matters and will be subject to the instruction of the President. The Secretary shall preside when the President and Vice-Presidents are absent. ”

The secretary has a big job. In the WFA, some of this work, including receiving memberships and maintaining a membership database, has been contracted out to Sophie Amirsultan (WFA Membership Coordinator), at the University of Arizona, Tucson for the past 1.5 years. In the IBA, developing and maintaining the website, as well as serving as first point of contact for many people, comprise a major portion of the secretarial duties and responsibilities. This is the approach we would like to take with WFA in the future. At present the president (Linda Sweanor) keeps the WFA website up and running.

Councilors:

“The Council shall enact policies and procedures to further the objectives of the Wild Felid Association as stated in Article I, Section 2, but must comply with Article VII. The Council shall, by plurality vote, fill vacancies for unexpired terms in its membership; develop further objectives and policies of the Wild Felid Association; organize the structure and function of all publications; and recommend changes in the Wild Felid Association to the members. The Council shall be responsible for actions taken by the Wild Felid Association on public issues. The Council may be responsible for proposing, writing, and amending the necessary Bylaws of the Wild Felid Association, and for presenting them to members of the Wild Felid Association for approval, subject to Article VII.”

These are the only instructions provided for Councilors in the Bylaws. More specifically, the primary task for each Council member is to provide thoughtful consideration of issues before Council and participate **actively** in discussions and decisions about these issues. Council members should be engaged in forward-thinking about how to improve WFA and further its mission. Key tasks for Council include: deciding on venues for WFA conferences, maintaining a healthy treasury, overseeing the direction of WFA programs, including publications, grants programs, web-site development, conferences, and student involvement, and occasionally developing WFA policy or position statements regarding felid conservation issues.

It was decided that each WFA Council member would also be expected to take on at least one specific task or responsibility. Examples include: perusing the website periodically to find out-of-date information, developing a photo image library for member use, developing new educational information for the website, preparing materials to enhance various aspects of the website (e.g. updating the News items page), becoming involved in 1 of the committees (scholarship, election, grant writing...) etc.