



TREC

Training Resources *for the* Environmental Community

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To: Selected Board & Vice-Chairs of Wilburforce Foundation Grantees
From: Dyan Oldenburg, Executive Director
David Thomson, Senior Associate
Re: TREC's Board Leaders Forum
Date: October 20, 2009

*****Applications due December 1, 2009*****
*****Participation Limited to 10 individuals (2 groups of 5)*****

Are you a Board Chair, or incoming Board Chair, who is:

- Relatively new to your Board leadership role or facing major changes or challenges in your Board?
- Experienced as a Board Chair but faced with some new challenges or wanting a refresher on governance and board management?
- Curious about how other Board Chairs handle situations with which you are dealing?
- Seeking additional tools and models for managing and developing your Board?
- Wanting to expand your peer network?

Read on...

TREC is starting its next eight-month Board Leaders Forum series beginning in early 2010. If you answered yes to any one of the points above, this series may be for you.

TREC has received many request from Board Chairs for ideas and customized support to tackle key challenges. This Forum is designed to address their needs. As the leader of a conservation organization who is eligible for this program, we invite you to apply. And it's free!

Goals of the Program

By accepting a small number of participants (5-6 per group), we can customize the content of this forum to the needs of the group. Our goals for the Board Leaders forum are:

1. Participants demonstrate understanding and appropriate application of Board governance guidelines.

2. Participants perceive their current issues and interests are addressed during the program.
3. Program participants are able to articulate Board leadership roles and evaluate their functioning within their own boards.
4. Participants are able to look for opportunities and meet the challenges inherent with Board-Staff relations.
5. Program participants evaluate the overall effectiveness of their own boards particularly in the areas of: structure, recruiting, orientation, roles, skill building, dealing with “dead wood”, fiscal management and fundraising.
6. Participants increase their skills in dealing with conflict and difficult conversations.

Proposed Agenda

The Program consists of monthly 90 minute conference calls supported by various materials. To develop our overall series agenda, we start with governance and board leadership needs and topics that have been identified through our extensive work with board leaders and boards, and take the current needs and interests of participants, gleaned from the applications, to develop a draft agenda. We will also respond to emerging priorities during the program and adjust our agenda to include them.

Session number	Proposed Topics	Approx. date
Session 1	Program overview, Introductions, needs assessment, Governance & Leadership overview	Early January
Session 2	Board Chair role & effectiveness board leadership	Early Feb.
Session 3	Board-Staff relations - Working effectively with our Executive Directors	Early March
Session 4	Board Development e.g. renewing, recruiting, orientation, skill building, ‘dead wood’, evaluation	Early April
Session 5	Boards and fundraising	Early May
Session 6	Dealing with conflict & Difficult Conversations	Early June
Session 7	Board structure and roles and meetings	Early July
Session 8	Board’s role and approach in fiscal management	Early September

Call dates and times: at the first meeting we will schedule all the call dates and times based on participant needs. If you apply for the program, we expect you will be able to make all the dates. If circumstances don’t allow attendance for all sessions, we expect you to miss at most one call. Please call David Thomson for clarification of scheduling questions.

Logistics and Format

This eight-month program will consist of monthly 90-minute conference calls while viewing common material sent out ahead of the session. We find a time of day that works best for everyone (4:00 – 5:30 pm PT has been one popular slot; 8 – 9:30 am may work as well – though other slots might also work).

The format of the conference calls will vary. They will be a combination of discussion of the issue or topic at hand, review of relevant example materials, in-depth brainstorming on an

individual Board Chair's challenge, and presentation by David Thomson or other invited guests with relevant expertise (e.g., fundraising, fiscal management).

If there is another leader on your board, e.g., a fellow officer (President/Chair, VP, Treasurer or Secretary – or Chair-in-waiting) who you feel would benefit from attending this program please encourage them to attend as well.

Program Leader

David Thomson, TREC Senior Associate, will facilitate the monthly conference calls. David brings both hands-on experience as a Board Chair (Six years as Chair of the National Board of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society www.cpaws.org and six as a member-at-large; Board Committee member of Outward Bound; founding director Legacy North Shore Society). He has a wealth of experience working with many conservation and non-profit Boards in the US and Canada, to whom he has provided governance training, consulting and Board Chair coaching for over 10 years.

Cost

Thanks to the tremendous generosity of Wilburforce Foundation, there is no fee for participants in this program. Participants will be asked to assume their own long-distance conference call costs.

Application Process

Please note that your organization must currently be, or in a pending docket to be, a Wilburforce Foundation grantee. If you have received this invitation from TREC you likely are grantee, however please confirm this with your Executive Director before applying.

There are limited spaces available in this program and we expect a greater number of applicants than spaces. Our goal is to have two, five-person 'classes' running concurrently. Please apply as soon as possible to ensure you are considered for acceptance. Admittance to the program is made based on a variety of factors – early application is not one of them.

The application form on the following page is due by December 1, 2009 and should be sent to David Thomson (David@trec.org) or orfax 604-648-8606 at the TREC office (donna@trec.org). If you have difficulty meeting this deadline and are still interested in applying, please contact David.

You will be notified of your acceptance by approximately December 15, 2009. If you have questions about the program and its fit for you, please contact David Thomson, 604-987-3667 or david@trec.org; or Dyan Oldenburg, TREC Executive Director, 505-986-8400 or dyan@trec.org.

Board Leaders Forum Application Form – December 2009—Submit completed form to David Thomson no later than December 1, 2009 to be considered.

Your Name: _____ Organization: _____

Your role on the Board: _____

Your address: _____

Your email address: _____ Phone Number: _____

1. How long have you been this Board Chair or other leadership role? (or when do you anticipate becoming the Chair?)
2. How long have you been on this Board?
3. What other Board experience have you had? (organization, term, position):
4. Tell us briefly about your Board:
 - a. Size
 - b. Name of active committees
 - c. Officer positions (e.g. Treasurer, VP, etc.)
5. What are the three strongest attributes of your current Board?
6. What are the top three challenges your Board faces that you would like to be able to effectively address in your role as Board Chair/leader?
7. What are the top three skill or knowledge areas in which, as a Board Chair/leader, you would like to feel stronger and more confident?
8. If you participated in this program what would be the three most beneficial outcomes you would hope to achieve as a result?
9. If you participate in this program, what times of day/days of the week could you generally be available to participate in a 90 minute call?

Thank you. This information will be kept confidential within the TREC Board Leader Forum program staff.