NEERS Business Meeting minutes (Fall 2020 NEERS meeting, October 20, 2020, ‘virtual’ Block Island, RI meeting)

* Minutes of last meeting approved
* President’s Report (Susan Adamowicz)
  + Sue thanked Team NEERS for all their help and support during her Presidency
  + The members-at-large (Tristen Taber, Pam Neubert) and student member (Claudia Mazur) are now released from their duties and Brett will appoint these positions. If people are interested in being reappointed or newly appointed, please contact Brett.
  + The 50th Anniversary celebrations have been impacted by COVID, but hopefully we can continue the celebration into 2021
* Past President report (Sara Grady)
  + This meeting concludes her 6 years as President-Elect, President, and Past-President, plus 6 years as NEERS Secretary. Thanks to all for their support
  + Judging is part of the Past-President duties
    - This year 13 students and 18 judges for Ketchum and Rankin Prizes
    - Students will have a report with scores at the end of the meeting
  + Past-President is responsible for awards, including honorary membership
    - Anyone can nominate someone. Submit a paragraph detailing the scientific and academic contributions of the awardee to the field, and their connection/service to NEERS. The nomination will then be taken up by the Executive Committee
    - At this meeting we are happy to confer an Honorary Membership and Award to R. Scott Warren  
      ” R. Scott Warren has been an outspoken advocate of wetland and tidal marsh preservation, focusing his research primarily on the wetlands and salt marshes of New England. Scott taught at Connecticut College from 1970 until his retirement in 2007. He has been the recipient of many research grants and contracts and has published extensively on wetlands and marshes. His research has involved numerous Connecticut College students, many of whom he encouraged to present at NEERS meetings. In recognition of Scott’s dedication to inspiring undergraduate students, the Warren Prize for Best Undergraduate Student Poster was established in his honor in Fall 2002. Scott served as Member-at-Large 1994-1996 and as NEERS President 1998-2000. He was the local organizer of the Spring 1998 NEERS meeting in New London, Connecticut. NEERS is pleased to present Scott Warren with an Honorary Membership in the Society.”
  + Past-President also coordinates elections occuring later in the meeting. This year we are electing a new President-Elect and Treasurer
* President-Elect (Brett Branco)
  + CERF Governing Board
    - Meeting later on this week – he will provide updates on CERF 2021 after the meeting
    - The Board has been working on the Goals and Objectives of Vision 4 (primarily communication)
      * Journal submissions are up to an almost overwhelming number, and the move to Open Access is changing the journal financing/business model
      * Additional communication vehicles have been introduced including the CERFs Up Bulleting, edited by our own Stephen Hale. The latest volume highlighted Special Symposium talks from the Salem Spring 2020 Meeting, and additional talks from that Symposium will be featured in an upcoming volume.
      * The board is trying to coordinate communications between CERF and the affiliates. From the Strategic Plan: 2. Enhance communication and collaboration among Affiliate Societies and between the Affiliates and CERF.
  + Future NEERS Meetings
    - The Spring 2021 meeting was to be a joint AERS/NEERS meeting. Brett advocated for NYC, while AERS wanted to have it in a Holiday Inn on Long Island, the site of the 1st meeting. Brett will reach out to AERS to see how we might have a joint virtual meeting
    - Fall 2021 is CERF in Richmond, VA. The board will decide whether this meeting will be virtual. There are likely financial repercussions (lost deposits, etc.), but there is still high uncertainty about COVID
    - Spring 2021 – maybe Salem State in Spring 2022 since logistics had been worked out and we weren’t able to go there in person
    - Fall 2022 - we have suggested that it be in NYC to 1. Increase membership in NEERS with the large number of colleges in the area with very diverse populations. There are also many beautiful field sites including the Hudson-Raritan area and southern Long Island estuaries
* Treasurer (Courtney Schmidt)
  + Courtney is outgoing Treasurer!
  + There is a specific student savings account – money is not going into the CD due to low interest rates
  + Spring 2020 virtual “Salem meeting”
    - Sponsors (Cerf, Xylem/YSI, Normandeau, MIT Sea Grant) said to keep the donations – and most were unrestricted
    - There were 114 ‘free’ registrations (112 members, 29 student)
    - However large donations to student/early career, stuck boot funds ($1500)
    - We had a $12 loss from this meeting
* Secretary (Peg Pelletier)
  + There were 2 surveys sent out – one for the meeting itself (virtual Salem Spring 2020) and another more generally asking about virtual events
  + The virtual Salem Spring 2020 meeting was generally highly rated – although people were more positive about information transfer and communication, but less positive about interpersonal communication. However, people were very positive about the social sessions that were provided
  + The survey on virtual meetings in general echoed the Spring 2020 meeting responses – information transfer and communications were rated more highly than interpersonal connections. People expressed concern about losing out on serendipitous interactions that happen at in-person meetings. Most respondents suggested that a mix of in-person and virtual meetings could work well. Many also suggested having an in-person meeting with a virtual option.
* The membership approved the Treasurer and Secretary reports
* Committees
  + Awards (Sara Grady) – no new business
  + Webmaster (Brett Branco)
    - Jamie has done a lot of work to transfer the web site to Wild Apricot, but she is also CERF Secretary, so she needs help
    - We will be recruiting for additional help from the membership
* Newsletter (Sara Grady)
  + She is still editor but needs help. We will be lo so we will be looking for an Assistant Editor soon
  + We also need the membership to submit content – not just articles but also pictures (or picture-heavy stories)
* New Business
  + Elections for President-Elect and Treasurer
    - Courtney Schmidt was nominated for President-Elect
    - Tristan Taber was nominated for Treasurer
    - There were no nominations form the floor
    - Both were voted into their new positions
  + Brett Branco is our new President – although he went to graduate school at UConn with Jaimie Vaudrey, he has been in New York for years and is looking forward to getting to know the membership better.
* Announcement – Hilary Neckles mentioned that the CERF business meeting is open to CERF members to join virtually. If you are a member in good standing, you should have received an email.
* Meeting adjourned

Awardees (after business meeting):

Honorary Award R. Scott Warren

Ketchum Award Joey Loffredo  
APPLYING DREDGED SEDIMENTS TO BUILD COASTAL RESILIENCE IN SALT  
MARSHES: SOIL BIOGEOCHEMICAL RESPONSES

Rankin Award Emma Casale

BASE-EXTRACTED PARTICULATE ORGANIC MATTER OF THE QUINNIPIAC   
RIVER ESTUARY

Rankin Honorable Mention Beck LaBash

ASSOCIATING UNDERWATER IMAGERY WITH GEOLOCATION FOR THE   
STUDY OF EELGRASS HEALTH