REDACTED MINUTES

Pennsylvania Wildlife Rehabilitation & Education Council
Meeting Minutes

Date: January 13, 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 11:25 AM
Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees

- **Sue DeArmant** – Chairperson
- **Leah Stallings** – Treasurer
- **Sandra Acosta** – Secretary (absent)
- **Peggy Hentz** – Council Member
- **Alexis Fitzgerald** – Council Member
- **Katie Kefalos** – Council Member
- **Chad Eyler** – Law Enforcement, PGC
- **Dr. Erica Miller** – Veterinarian Council Member

Novice Wildlife Rehabilitator Interview

- The Council conducted a Novice Wildlife Rehabilitator interview for one applicant who had passed all three required examinations and was sponsored by a Council member.
- Motion to approve the applicant as a Novice Wildlife Rehabilitator was made and carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

- The July, September, and November 2025 redacted minutes, and the full November 11, 2025 meeting minutes, were reviewed. No corrections or amendments were required.
- Sue D. moved to approve all minutes as submitted. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

- **Current bank balance:** Approximately $44,000.
- **Lead Grants Fund:** $5,700 remaining. Rehabilitators treating eagles for lead toxicity may be eligible for reimbursement of lead test kits.
- Post-conference speaker and committee reimbursements are being processed; all transactions are reconciled. A full P&L will be distributed prior to the March 2026 meeting for Council approval.
- Sue D. moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented and corrected. Motion carried unanimously.

Law Enforcement Updates – PGC

- Officer Class 36 graduates January 31, 2026; all districts are expected to return to full staffing complement upon graduation.
- Permit renewals will be distributed at the end of February 2026 to allow newly graduated officers time to orient before handling administrative workloads.
- Transporter training sessions are being planned for rehabilitation centers statewide, including outreach to Western PA, to help build local volunteer transporter networks. Sessions will be offered in-person or via Zoom.

Wildlife Disease Update

- **HPAI (Avian Influenza):** Active in 12 Pennsylvania counties as of the week of the meeting, concentrated in the Northeast (Northampton, Lehigh, and surrounding areas) and Northwest regions, with some cases in Franklin, Cumberland, and the Southwest. Scavengers are already testing positive, earlier than typical due to an early start to the waterfowl season in December.
- Rehabilitators should treat any neurologically impaired bird as a potential HPAI case and follow appropriate biosecurity protocols.

Best Practices for Open Houses & Education

- A working draft of a best practices document for wildlife rehabilitation open houses and public education events is under development.
- Topics include regulatory compliance (federal and state), zoonosis protocols, public and animal safety, patient visibility restrictions, organizational messaging, and audience engagement strategies.
- The document will be developed collaboratively and shared with Council members for input.

Post-Conference Discussion

- Post-conference survey responses and certificates are being finalized. A full conference debrief will be conducted at the March 2026 meeting.
- Research for the 2027 conference venue has begun, with focus on Central and Western Pennsylvania locations. A shared venue comparison spreadsheet is available in the conference Google Drive folder for Council contributions.

Outreach – PAEE Conference Exhibitor Participation

- The Council approved participation as an exhibitor at the Professional Association of Environmental Educators (PAEE) conference, March 8–10, 2026 in Gettysburg, PA. The goal is to connect environmental educators with wildlife rehabilitation resources and recruit potential volunteers and rehabilitators.
- Sue D. moved to approve up to $1,000 for PAEE exhibitor participation and associated outreach materials. Motion carried unanimously.
- This participation reflects a broader Council commitment to outreach at environmental and animal-interest events.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 AM.
- Motion to Adjourn: Sue D.
- Second: Peggy H.
- Vote: All in favor.

Next Meeting: March 10, 2026.