



Report of the Executive Board Chair

As I write this, I realize that this is my last report as the Executive Board Chair. My term on the Executive Board ends in July. It has been my honor and privilege to serve as the Chair of the Executive Board these past six years. I believe we, not only as the Executive Board, but all of us as a national organization, have accomplished a lot during that time. We have made great progress on raising the visibility of the Izaak Walton League through the great work our staff and members have done via the Clean Water Challenge and Salt Watch initiative, as well as the hard work the League's staff and members have undertaken under the agricultural program. We have also made great strides on improving communications between the national office and our local chapters and members.

I must also say that I am proud of the hard work of my fellow Executive Board members, which includes our national officers, during my term on the Executive Board. Yes, I admittedly challenged them on many things, including things that took many outside their comfort zone, but they lived up to such challenges, which only strengthened the organization. The Executive Board has put great resources and building blocks in place so everyone knows what is expected of them when they join the board so you as members can rest assured knowing that the Executive Board and the national officers will continue to do what they can to move the League forward in a positive direction. I know that I am leaving them in good hands with the next to-be-elected chair and vice-chair.

While I was hoping to see folks in person at the convention this summer, we are unable to due to the COVID pandemic but at least we will be able to see each other virtually this year. By offering the convention virtually this year, we are able to provide an opportunity to those members who have not attended a convention in person. Although the convention will be an abbreviated version of what one would typically experience at an in-person convention, attendees will still have the opportunity to experience the important business undertaken at the national convention, including the voting on new policy resolutions.

The virtual convention format this year also allows members to experience some of the changes we have planned for future conventions. For example, by holding resource committee and nominating committee meetings electronically prior to the convention, we can shorten the amount of time spent on committee business at the national convention and communicate with our members in advance so everyone comes better informed as to what issues they may be discussing and voting on at the convention. For those who are not aware, the National Directors approved amendments to the national bylaws at the February Mid-Winter meeting. The revisions allow us to restructure the convention format to allow more members to attend and participate. The Executive Board has been looking for ways to reduce the amount of time that one needs to be present to conduct business, as well as open up opportunities for chapters and members to learn and share ideas; holding virtual meetings by the nominating and resource committees is one way to accomplish those objectives.

The League's 100th anniversary next year is an incredible milestone that also provides great opportunities for the League. This is an opportunity to strengthen the League's position in the conservation and outdoor recreation communities. During this past year, we have sought the input of our members and leaders via surveys and direct engagement. We are using that input, along with the expertise and assistance of an outside communication and marketing firm, to shape the vision for the League's future. Be sure to watch for more details on the vision that our members see for the future as the national office releases details over the coming months. After all, we will need the support and energy of our members to maximize this opportunity. In fact, I encourage every chapter and member across the country to capitalize on the 100th anniversary. By doing so, chapters are likely to raise their profile in their local communities, which in turn can increase chapter membership. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to sign up for the workshop that the national staff will be presenting on how chapters can leverage the 100th anniversary within their own community.

Although I will no longer be serving as the Chair of the Executive Board, I plan to remain active at the national level. Excited about the possibilities for the League's future, I have agreed to co-chair the League's 2nd Century Fundraising Campaign that we will be kicking off during the convention. One key purpose of the 2nd Century Fundraising Campaign is to raise funds that will allow us to position the League as a leader in conservation for the 2nd Century of its existence. The 2nd Century Fundraising Campaign will also be a great opportunity to tap into outside resources for funding, again raising the visibility of the League. Watch for more details in the coming months, including how you can support the 2nd Century Fundraising Campaign and how the League hopes to leverage those funds raised during the campaign.

In closing, I look forward to working with our members to shape the vision for the future. I see great things happening!

Jodi Arndt Labs
Executive Board Chair