

Monthly Flathead Audubon Society

1. March 5, 2007

Location: Jane Lopp & Associates Conference Room

295 3rd Avenue E. North

Kalispell, MT 59901

Attending: Bob Lopp--Chair, Mike Fanning, Bruce Tannehill, Linda de Kort, Dan Casey, Bob Lee, Ansley Ford, Paula Smith, Lewis Young, Leslie Kehoe, Linda Winnie, and Brent Mitchell. Steve Hoffman, Montana Audubon's Executive Director, was a special guest.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. and Bob Lopp introduced Steve Hoffman.

Minutes: A motion was made and unanimously passed to accept the February minutes as read.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Bruce handed out the "Budget Sheet for 2006-2007". He noted the recent drop in the stock market, as well as last month's fence payment.

Birdseed Sales: June Ash has more than 20 sacks of seed. Bob Lopp will check with June to determine the number of sacks to be returned to FAS.

Owen Sowerwine: Linda Winnie reported that Larry Van Rinsum of the Flathead Conservation District approached the Governor's office about supporting long-term protection for the OSNA. There was a positive outcome. Support from the Governor's office will help in getting support from the Department of Natural Resources. DNRC head, Mary Sexton, supports OSNA protection. Linda and Larry have an appointment next week to talk with local DNRC staff. There are three options for such protection:

conservation easement (fastest and easiest)

land trust

land banking

The OSNA Committee is trying to determine what FAS would like a conservation easement to look like. For example, who would hold the easement and what are the funding possibilities? Possible entities that would hold the easement include Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Flathead Land Trust and Montana Audubon. The Committee is leaning toward the first two entities.

The OSNA Committee is proposing a "Voluntary OSNA Monitoring Program". Volunteer monitors will be asked to visit the area at least once during a two-week period for 1-2 hours per visit. A weekend visit is preferred. There will be 17 monitoring periods per year. Volunteers will be given a checklist and asked to take photos. The purpose of the monitoring will be to assess management needs and how visitors use OSNA. Documentation of monitoring will be forwarded

to Brent. Volunteers may be Board members, FAS members and OSNA neighbors. A summer/fall sign-up sheet was passed around. The checklist may be posted on the website.

Brent showed one of 20 "State Lands" signs that will soon be posted at the OSNA entries and along the boundary. Brent picked up the signs from the DNRC.

Steve Hoffman asked whether Montana Audubon's Important Bird Area signs could also be posted. The Committee was receptive to the idea.

OSNA's Treasure Lane entry gate will become handicapped accessible.

(Something was said about the "Kiosk", but we have no further note.)

Bylaws Revision: Linda Winnie explained why three bylaws should be amended and articles renumbered.

* FAS membership is a local chapter option.

* The Board may elect interested committee chairs to one-year director positions.

* The name of the Newsletter Committee is inconsistent with bylaw.

The Board voted to recommend the proposed changes to the membership. The proposed changes will be published in the next newsletter and voted upon at the May general membership meeting. Finally, the Board will continue to fulfill the charge that every standing committee must have at least three members.

Education: Ansley reported on the Beauty of Birds course content and 2007 dates. Dan Casey and Bruce Tannehill will be two presenters this year. A third presenter is being sought. Ansley asked if the traditional field trip could be scheduled for the last evening of the class. There was general agreement among Board members that this was a practical suggestion.

Seating for Special Needs Guests: Brent presented Lois Drobish's suggestion to designate the first two rows of seats at monthly meetings for persons with special needs and hearing and sight impairments. After discussion, Board members concluded that preferential seating might not work. However, a microphone could accomplish the objective. Therefore, Bob Lopp will check with The Summit about having a microphone available for future monthly meetings. At the conclusion of each meeting, Bob Lopp will also remind attendees about the need to restack chairs.

Conservation: Lewis reported that a preliminary plat hearing on the Cottage Lane Estates Subdivision in Kila is scheduled before the County Commissioners on Tuesday. Lewis distributed a letter that he and Marcy drafted to the Commissioners in support of the mitigation measures developed by the developer and FWP, with on-site assistance from two FAS Board members, to protect the breeding habitat of the Great Blue Heron rookery at the subdivision site. The developer has reduced the number of lots and designated a "Heron Park". The letter affirms FAS support of the "experiment" about the adaptability of herons. Dan also commented that the communication among the interested parties was productive. The Board approved a motion to send the letter.

Lewis also discussed a draft of "Comments on Proposed Ashley-Herrig Resource Management Project from Flathead Audubon Society" to the Tally Lake Ranger District. The latter is proposing thinning, recreation and fisheries improvements at Ashley Lake. Lewis is most concerned about the creation of new permanent roads in the area. Lewis asked if FAS wanted to comment by March 12. A motion passed in support of sending in the comments on the "scoping document".

Linda Winnie reminded the Board that March 9 is the deadline for commenting on the Flathead County Growth Policy.

Linda also stated that the stream and riparian setback requirements in the subdivision regulations that the Planning Board will soon be considering are too vague. Board members are asked to comment about more stringent requirements. Janet Ellis may help on this topic.

Field Trips: Leslie is working on field trips for April and May. She would like recommendations for new trips. She would also like another volunteer for the Field Trips Committee. Leslie will be out-of-state from March 14-29.

Nominations: Linda de Kort reported that the Nominations Committee will be making the following recommendations to the general membership for 2007-2008 officers and directors: Mike Fanning "President, Bob Lee "Vice-President, Ansley Ford "Director, March Mahr "Director, (need names of two new board directors here). Dan Casey announced that he is stepping down.

Website: Paula said that after almost a year's experience with the new FAS website, that a "One Year Review" by the Website Committee is timely. John Kyle is available to meet with the committee on March 19. Bob Lee said that he could attend a 4 p.m. meeting on that day. Most committee members, plus Bob Lopp and Linda Winnie, stated they would be able to attend. Lewis will be unable to attend. Bob Lopp offered the use of the Lopp's "Conference Room for the meeting. The Board concluded that the first meeting should be an internal review and not include the website developer.

Newsletter: Linda Winnie described the contents of the April PILEATED POST.

Hospitality: Bob Lopp asked Board members to keep encouraging founding members to come to the next meeting. FAS will be celebrating 30 years of newsletters with a cake.

Linda Winnie's suggestion to honor FAS past presidents at the May potluck was well-received.

Sales: Mike received from Bob Lopp two pocket field guides to present to Jill as possible future sales items.

Other: Leslie reported on a March 20 field trip along the north shore of Flathead Lake that a group of concerned persons (to which she belongs) is guiding to educate landowners, developers and public officials about the importance of the habitat to wildlife. The goal of the group is to buffer the Waterfowl Production Area from future housing developments.

Montana Audubon: Steve Hoffman described the educational and professional background that

led to his appointment as the current Executive Director of Montana Audubon. Steve's goal is to build the strongest possible team between Montana Audubon and the local chapters. He said that birds are the best window into nature. He gave a preview of the upcoming Montana Audubon Bird Festival in the Madison River Valley. He has a strategy for enhancing inter-chapter communication by providing a venue at the Montana Bird Festival for brainstorming among local chapter representatives.

Steve described how the Five Valleys chapter in Missoula has identified and advanced Important Bird Areas. The IBA program is valuable because it is (a) international, (b) voluntary and (c) science-based. It is in its early stages in Montana. Dan Casey stated that the Bird Habitat Conservation Area program with which he works juxtaposes well with the IBA program.

Steve then asked each Board member present to describe his/her background and involvement with and hopes for FAS. He also asked for suggestions for Montana Audubon.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ansley Ford and Paula Smith