

Monthly Flathead Audubon Society

April 7, 2008

Location: Jane Lopp & Associates Conference Room
295 3rd Avenue E. North
Kalispell, MT 59901

Attending: Mike Fanning--Chair, Bob Lopp, Bruce Tannehill, Linda de Kort, Bob Lee, Leslie Kehoe, Linda Winnie, Mary Nelesen, Jill Fanning, Marcy Mahr, Rod McIver, Brent Mitchell, Ansley Ford and Paula Smith. Lex Blood was a special guest.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

Minutes: A motion was made and unanimously passed to accept the March minutes as corrected for the spelling of nominee Richard Kuhl's name.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Bruce handed out the "Budget Sheet for 2007-2008" at April 3, 2008.

Education:

BEAUTY OF BIRDS-- Ansley reported that the Beauty of Birds course is going well, with 27 enrollees. Denver Holt's owl program was well-received. Jami Belt will present a loon program. Lisa Bates will present a cavity nesters program. Bob Lee will lead a field trip on the last evening.

FILM FESTIVAL--Ansley reported that Flathead High School is available for a film fundraiser for many weeknight evenings in May for about \$100.

FORESTRY EXPO--Ansley asked for volunteers for two hours at the FAS booth at the Forestry Expo on May 10-11. FAS shares the space with the raptor display. Let Ansley, Sonja or Bob Lee know if you would like to volunteer. Bob Lee will be at the booth on May 10. Rod said that he may be able to volunteer.

EXPLORING WETLANDS WORKSHOP--Linda de Kort said that Nancy Zapotocki also needs a volunteer to talk about web-footed birds at the Exploring Wetlands Workshop on April 19. Dan Casey and Josh Covill were suggested as possible presenters.

CRESTON FISH HATCHERY DAY--Linda de Kort will do an education exhibit with another person at the Creston Fish Hatchery Day on May 30.

FLOOD AWARENESS DAY--Linda de Kort asked for a volunteer to talk about riparian birds at a FAS booth at the May 1 Flood Awareness Day.

CROWN OF THE CONTINENT MAPGUIDE--Linda de Kort said that Nancy is quoted in National Geographic's Crown of the Continent Geotourism Mapguide. Steve Thompson

would like to speak about the mapguide at a FAS meeting. Linda will ask Steve to talk at the April meeting.

HOT SPOT BROCHURES--Linda Winnie said that more Hot Spot brochures are needed. She will obtain a quote from American Printing for reprinting the brochures. Leslie described an international visitor's appreciation of the brochure.

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT FEES--Mike talked about how the activities of the Educational Consultant, Nancy Zapotocki, are totally in line with the FAS mission statement. He stated that Nancy is underpaid and that raising her salary to \$25 an hour will match her other consulting fees. Mike also said that the FAS partnership with the Sustainability Fund is valuable.

Lex Blood talked about the 50 percent financial partnership that the Sustainability Fund has, and will continue, with FAS in support of this human resource. He stated that Nancy's involvement has moved the conservation education goals of FAS and the Sustainability Fund ahead. He agrees with Mike's assessment of Nancy's contributions. He talked about the place-based Flathead Core, a virtual nature center, in which the education mission will be wrapped.

Linda de Kort said that Nancy's job is conservation education, not just to promote FAS.

Bob Lopp said that the Billings Nature Center is breaking ground this month, but that a virtual center is a more workable approach in the Flathead. Additional financial participants focused on the same areas as FAS are needed.

Mike suggested increasing the Educational Consultant contract by \$5,000 annually. He recommended funding the Educational Consultant contract out of existing capital for one year and also beginning fund-raising activities.

Bruce stated that FAS may need to become a fund-raising organization as it will be unable to fund the position beyond FYE 6/30/09. \$12,000 will be required from FAS and \$12,000 from the Sustainability Fund. Both FAS and the Sustainability Fund will each be contracting for 10 hours per week.

Lex Blood stated that the Sustainability Fund will support the position for the next fiscal year.

Bob Lopp talked about a new fund-raising approach based on the Madison, WI model.

Jill stated it will be easier to raise funds for a conservation program than for a person filling the program.

In discussing the costs and benefits of the Educational Consultant's contract and the proposed change, board members further noted that Nancy has a master's degree in conservation education and that she brings experience to the position. She also pays her

own benefits and works half-time. Further, Nancy works on a Flathead Lakers program, with the Flathead Conservation District and with the Educational Cooperative.

Mary said that she would be willing to work on a fund-raising letter as there would be a specific reason for members to donate to FAS.

Linda de Kort said that Nancy can apply for a \$10,000 Toyota fellowship grant and, if awarded, the grant could be applied toward contract fees.

Bruce made the motion that FAS budget \$12,000 for the Educational Coordinator contract for the next fiscal year, assuming the Sustainability Fund matches the FAS share, and funding the budget item will be at the discretion of the board, and the Education Committee will negotiate with Nancy the tasks to be performed under the Educational Coordinator contract.

Rod and Bob Lopp seconded the motion. The motion unanimously passed.

Field Trips: Leslie is working on the summer field trips schedule.

MARTY COHEN BIRD-DAY STROLL—Both Linda de Kort and Bruce Tannehill will be unavailable to lead the field trip. Leslie and/or the Fannings may be possible substitutes on April 19.

Montana Audubon Board Meeting: Brent reported on the April 5-6 board meeting in Choteau. He said that MT Audubon is doing all right financially. It may hire another person. Amy Cilimberg, who works on climate change, may be qualified to be the Director of Bird Conservation and be a full-time staff person. Steve Hoffman is an energetic fund-raiser. Benefits and personnel policies were discussed. The next edition of the Skaar's Montana Bird Distribution book is scheduled for 2009. Birders may go online to www.mtnhp.org/tracker and add birds they have seen. They may also enter GPS coordinates and query birds seen at a given qtr/qtr lat/long. MT Audubon is also working on endowment funds and policies. It is still involved with the Claiborne/Ortenberg grant. The MT Bird Festival is well organized. The new office manager, Sandy, has a background in event planning.

Owen Sowerwine: Linda Winnie said that four monitoring periods remain for which members can signup. This can be pointed out at the April meeting.

Brent reported that he has photos to document the burning of the old cabin. He also stated that OSNA monitors need to be specific on noting where there is water on the trails, as well as its width and depth. He would also like monitors to describe on their checklists any animals they see. Recent monitors have found no trash.

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

May Potluck: Bob Lopp said the fees for the Bethlehem Lutheran Church will be the same as last year. Two separate checks will be required—one for the custodian/audio person and one for the rental fee. Nancy will present the MEEA Award to Ansley. Marcy will present the Conservation Achievement Recognition Award. Linda de Kort listed next year's board nominees.

Website: Paula recommended that board members view the web trends report that Hillary Smith created for FAS at <http://www.flatheadaudubon.org/report/>. Numbers for the last two months are:

February

Total Unique Visitors – 801
Visitors who visited more than once – 229
Average visit length – 6 mins., 5 secs.

March (thru 3/23)

Total Unique Visitors – 889
Visitors who visited more than once – 253
Average visit length – 8 mins., 35 secs.

National Audubon and Toyota Alliance: Linda de Kort participated in a MT Audubon telephone call regarding the \$20 million Toyota grant. She reported that Toyota's target audience is 22-55 years of age. There are four prongs to the grant: 1) Conservation Leadership (200 fellows sought), 2) Innovation re Habitat, Water and Energy, 3) Pennies (?) for the Planet, and 4) Together Green Website. Each chapter can apply for a fellowship and a grant. Grants may not be used to buy land or for construction. Requests for Proposals will be issued by the end of April and have a June 27 deadline. The website will be live in May. Linda also presented ideas for grants for which FAS may apply.

Other: Bob Lopp noted that Mountain Press is publishing Ansley's book, SNOWY OWLS-- WHOO ARE THEY? Jill will contact the publisher about obtaining copies to sell at FAS meetings.

Bob Lopp also drew attention to the new FAS letterhead. Brent made a motion to reimburse Bob \$114 for the cost of the letterhead. The motion was seconded by _____. The motion passed unanimously.

Bruce may produce a CD of local bird sounds that could be sold at FAS meetings for \$10.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Smith and Ansley Ford