

Flathead Audubon Society Monthly Board Meeting
January 4, 2010

Location: Jane Lopp & Associates, 295 Third Ave., E.N. Kalispell, MT 59901

Present: Bob Lee, Chair; Lois Drobish, Linda deKort, Steve Gniadek, Dennis Hester, Richard Kuhl, Bob Lopp, Brent Mitchell, Mary Nelesen, Paula Smith, Bruce Tannehill, Ansley Ford, Linda Winnie, Ben Young, and Lewis Young.
Guests: Dan Casey

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes. Motion: To approve the December minutes. Moved – Lewis Young, Second -Brent Mitchell. Motion Approved unanimously.

Dan Casey gave a summary of the results of the Christmas Bird Counts in Kalispell and Big Fork.

Treasurer's Report. Bruce Tannehill advised the Board that IRS Form 990 was submitted late because of confusion regarding the appropriate fiscal year and what constituted "income" and the amount. The IRS has assessed a \$2,900 penalty. Bruce will submit a letter of explanation seeking to have the penalty waived or reduced.

Bruce submitted the Treasurer's Report which was discussed.

Bob Lee observed that recently the Treasurer's duties have become more time consuming and complex. The Finance Committee has discussed the benefits of obtaining the services of a bookkeeper. However tax reporting would not be included in bookkeeper's service. Linda deKort suggested looking to the membership for a CPA who might assist or assume the duties. Richard Kuhl observed that it would be helpful to simplify the budget reporting, possibly combine some funds, and set up the reporting so it could be clearer.

Motion: That the Chair be directed to contact a bookkeeper to find out what services could be provided and the cost and report back to the Board. Moved – Linda de Kort; Second – Brent Mitchell. Motion Approved unanimously.

Education.

Beauty of Birds - *Note: Post-meeting Ansley Ford reported by email that the dates for BOB are April 7, 14, 21, and 28, from 5-7pm at FHS. The last date will be a fieldtrip.*

Salvage Permits – Bob Lee informed the Board that there are 2 types of permits: 1) a permit issued by FWP that allows possession of our bird skins and, 2) a salvage permit issued by the Migratory Bird Office which allows FAS to replace the birds and parts used in the educational program. Both permits must be renewed annually but FAS has not had either permit renewed since 2003. The yearly cost is approximately \$125. In discussing this with the agencies and MTA it was decided that FAS will become a "sub-permittee" to the 2 permits that MTA has been issued.

Owen Sowerwine Natural Area. Linda Winnie reported that based on expert advice the rip-rap on the Stillwater will not affect OSNA.

Linda and Brent Mitchell met with Jeff Harris of the Flathead County Planning Office and an assistant planner and discussed the following:

- The County will notify FAS of new projects that may impact OSNA;
- FAS asked for a map showing prior projects to determine possible cumulative effects on OSNA. No such map has been produced;
- Regarding the possible Super Fund Dump site the County suggested that FAS contact the City Of Kalispell (owner) and the EPA;
- The primary criterion for the County to consider when reviewing a Floodplain Permit Application is the safety of the public and emergency responders during a flood event. Other agencies such as the Flathead Conservation District, US Army Corps of Engineers and DEQ consider other criteria including environmental impact.

The Flathead County River Commission will meet to discuss “river restoration” on January 26, 2010 @ 6 pm in the Earl Bennett Building. Steve Gniadek said he might go. Linda will contact Amy Chadwick to get her opinion on what the River Commission is doing and can do, but doesn't know whether Amy is going to the meeting. Richard Kuhl will attend and report to the Board.

Linda and Brent informed the Board that negotiations are ongoing with MT DNRC for a new 10-year license for OSNA. Also it should be noted that Janet Ellis of MTA is also involved in the negotiations, along with Brent and Linda.

Brent advised that there is no firm cost estimate yet for the kiosk repairs. Thicker plexiglas will be used and small maps will be made available to the users. Brent plans to approach the County Weed and Parks Department to discuss access to OSNA through Leisure Island.

Fund Raising. Mary Nelesen reported that sunflower sales were down this year. FAS earned approximately \$250.

Brent Mitchell discussed making and raffling bird baths using the Montana State Flower which would sit above the ground approximately 10 feet high.

Conservation Award. Richard Kuhl will prepare a write-up for the next meeting to nominate Milt & BJ Carlson.

Lewis Young mentioned Leonard Howke of Whitefish and he will look into this more.

Linda de Kort encouraged the Board to keep in mind for the future non-individuals that for example recycle computers or develop alternative energy projects.

Conservation. Lewis Young – a letter of support was submitted regarding the Haskill

Mountain Ranch land exchange.

Steve Gniadek drafted and sent favorable comments to GNP regarding native fish management. He also suggested he would like to prepare FAS comments for: the Flathead County Trails Plan and rip-rap proposals. Steve will attend the next Flathead Conservation Round Table.

Programs. Richard Kuhl gave the following programs preview:

- January – The Tester Bill
- February – Aquatic Insects
- March – Butterflies
- April – Don Jones Photography (possibility) and Birds of GNP

Hospitality. The Board commended Lois on the fine job she is doing with treats at the regular meetings.

Website. Paula Smith reported the new address for data about the website:

www.flatheadaudubon.org/webtrends.html

The FAS website address remains the same.

There was discussion regarding the Bigfork Bird Club. Neal Brown would like to reactivate the group. The Board supported his endeavors. Information will be put on the FAS website.

Kathy Ross has graciously volunteered to take care of publicity for FAS programs and field trips between January 17 and the end of February. Her phone number is 837-3837. This is to substitute for Paula Smith who will be out of town for that period.

Steve Gniadek explored membership with various local Chambers of Commerce to access their websites as a public service. It was agreed that the Chambers are not a good fit for FAS. Steve will follow-up with the Flathead Convention and Visitors' Bureau to discuss their fee. Steve will also talk with other members of the Conservation Roundtable to get feedback from other conservation groups about working with these agencies. Ben Young suggested accessing the Flathead Beacon website calendar to list our activities.

Newsletter. The February issue will contain: Bird of the Month (Lewis Young), February Program (Paula), Board Member Viewpoint (Kathy Ross), Field Trips (Bill), KidzKorner (Nancy Zapotocki), Sunflower Sales (Mary), Beauty of Birds (Ansley), Freezeout Lake Preview (Dan), Science Tidbit (Bruce), Great Backyard Bird Count, and IBA on North Shore of Flathead Lake.

Quality of Life Committee. Linda deKort advised that a celebration of the life of Ferne Cohen will be held on Saturday January 30th between 4pm – 6pm at the O'Shaughnessy Center in Whitefish. People can share stories about Ferne and display photographs. Please bring "finger food." Contact Linda regarding needed supplies and other preparations.

Montana Bird Festival.

Bob Lee informed the Board that because the 2010 MBF will be held in Missoula, MTA has not yet decided whether it will ask FAS to host the 2011 or 2012 MBF

The Meeting was adjourned 7 minutes ahead of schedule at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Dennis Hester

Filling in for Gail Sullivan
Secretary