

Minutes - FAS Board Meeting January 7, 2019
Prepared by Pam Willison, substitute secretary

Board Members in attendance: Kay Mitchell, Joe Batts, Bob Lee, Gael Bissell, Cory Davis, Kathy Ross, Carole Jorgensen, Pam Willison, Rod Walette, Diane Boyd, Darrick Rathe, Gail Linne, Jan Metzmaker, Jake Bramante, Mike Fanning

Others in Attendance: Denny Olson, Jill Fanning

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by President Kay Mitchell

Minutes: Derrick motion, Joe second, approved.

Financials: Checking activity reviewed, Profit/Loss reviewed, Joe reported that the year-end fundraising was very successful with the 2018 End of Year Board Challenge to Membership fundraiser bringing in nearly \$8000. Members won the challenge! Mike moved, Jan second, approved to receive and file the reports.

Presidents Report:

*Conservation roundtable will be 1/9/19 regarding trail plans; Denny will be there and can represent FAS. Gael mentioned there are some issues related to trying to get the trail plans approved by the county and our members may be asked to show up at a future committee meeting to show support and get it passed.

*Kay will attend a meeting with Joe and Bruce to review our investments.

*Marylane is dealing with the illness of her husband and may not be available for several additional meetings.

Business of Outdoor Recreation Summit: Jake attended the Summit, which is coordinated by the Governor's Office of Outdoor Recreation, and focuses on outdoor recreation, conservation, planning, and economics. Outdoor Recreation generates millions of dollars a year for the Crown of the Continent area. The conference has recognized the value of people, organizations, and businesses coming together to make progress together. Some key points were:

—Build it and they will come, such as the West Valley Viewing area. There needs to be a way to count and record the usage rates in order to document the success.

—Government agencies work better with long term plans and established groups.

—There were grants available at the Summit, and many of them went to younger groups, such as high school classes or programs.

—Many of the people who promote use of areas recognize they contribute to the human impact. There are ways in which for-profit organizations can contribute to the remedies or protections needed related to excessive impact.

-- We are motivated by what represents our values. Jake feels that our organization could do a better job of letting people "virtue signal" about FAS. We might explore more ways to allow people to get more involved because they are aligned with our values, and to get more people to join our "tribe". Ideas include: annual membership stickers, welcome packets to give to new people at meetings, a regular "brew and birds"

day so people can meet with other birders (especially to involve new birders), an annual order of a prepaid high-quality garment/promotional item with logos, seek better corporate sponsors for the Birds of Prey Festival and consider other ways to engage them with the festival, and working with visitors bureaus to try to find better ways to get more birders here. There was discussion about what to include in a welcome packet for the next meeting. Carole asked that we be sure to include information on ethics, conservation, and the impact people are having when they recreate in the habitat of birds/animals. Kay would like Jake to keep us moving forward on some of these ideas, realizing we aren't going to be able to implement them all quickly, but that we don't want to lose the enthusiasm and value of the ideas in this direction. Jake will investigate membership stickers and garment embroidery, Diane will look into special pricing from Patagonia for garments, Jill will put together a welcome packet for next week, and everyone is asked to think of other locations where the birding map brochures would be effective.

West Valley Viewing Area: Kathy reported on the meeting she and Gael had with Chris Hammond and Alan Wood at FWP about the West Valley crane viewing area. FWP has the money to do most of the restoration work and will take care of fencing out the livestock, weed removal and native plantings in the surrounding grassland area. Kathy is coordinating a work group to plan and install native plantings in the 3 areas near the parking areas. Kathy would like to see the future maintenance of the plantings incorporated in the school mentoring program Denny is working to develop.

Hawk Watch: Gael reported on the meeting she and Kathy Ross had with Chris Hammond of FWP and about them having an annual role in the support and funding. They reported they could provide \$500 per year. There is a possibility of getting a trailer (one they use for check stations) for the month of September, or the use of a wall tent. Kathy said she has talked to some of the regular volunteers and there is a strong feeling that someone needs to be hired for at least 30 days in order to insure a more consistent coverage of count days. Bob said Montana Audubon supports 2 other hawk watches so might provide some funding.

Committee Reports:

Membership: Mike said there have only been about 10 more memberships received since the last meeting. We are a little low from last year, but close. Joe reported that Pay Pal has been used for a year and about 18% of memberships came through Pay Pal. 40% of our members are basic, and half the people who pay at the supporting level pay more than the \$40.

Newsletter: Jan asked for changes or additions on the preliminary Pileated Post list and there were none. The Board contact information will be changed to correct some errors.

Awards: Gael is planning to give the Conservation Recognition Achievement award to West Valley Landowners in March and to the MacCarter brothers in May or September, when Doug will be in the valley and able to accept the award.

Field Trips: Cory reported that planning is being done for spring and summer trips. Some people may be asked to repeat trips they have done in the past, and others are invited to contact them to add new ones. Cory and Bob will present a fund-raiser field trip idea at the next board meeting. Gael suggested a kayaking birding trip in late May or early June at Smith Lake fishing access and northwest up Ashley Creek. Joe knows a person who might lead it.

Conservation Educator Report by Denny Olson:

*A written progress report on the Bird Education Proposal was sent to Board members: work is proceeding and ideas are being formulated. He will meet with the elementary principals in February. The meeting with Flathead Land Trust went well and they are interested in an education program at West Valley ponds. They would like to do a sandhill crane education trunk. They will handle most activity at that location, and our focus will be more on OSNA.

*Ambassadors training was held today. They were asked what they would like their role to be and whether they are interested in going beyond just transporting trunks - they will report back to Denny on this. Some checked out trunks to take home and study. Gail mentioned that 4 new ambassadors were at the training.

*The Cross grant didn't come through for the "Birds Rock" Facebook/website video. BJ is still willing to offer film clips and Denny has the music selected and work done on the lyrics, so it will still happen.

*Denny said enrollment has been diminishing for the bird class he does at FHS in April and maybe has run its course and needs to be discontinued.

Adjourned at 8:02 pm

Denny demonstrated the use of the new sound system.