

FAS General Meeting - Whitefish Montana - 5/13/19  
Minutes Prepared by: Pam Willison, FAS Secretary

Prior to calling the meeting to order, President Kay Mitchell welcomed all in attendance, and offered a special greeting and a welcome packet of information to new attendees.

Kay offered special thanks to Jake Bramante for his regular trips through OSNA, resulting in 4 new species added to the bird list for OSNA. Linda Winnie said that brings the count to 150.

She also reminded those in attendance to participate in the silent auction being held, and to sign up to pledge or participate in the Birdathon.

Kay gave the annual President's Report, saying "we are an organization of people", but her report would contain many numbers in order to summarize our year.

\*Hawk Watch - although our counts were low in 2018, we had 40 people volunteer for the project, and recorded 1,638 birds and 15 species.

\*Owen Sowerwine Natural Area - a new trail to improve access to a new "outdoor classroom" area during the wet/flooded season was made available from the area behind the Montessori school. The 5-year vegetation survey was completed. Bird boxes will be installed this summer.

\*3 Conservation Achievement Recognition (CAR) awards were given this past year, and 2 are already scheduled for the coming year.

\*9 programs were held during the general meetings and were very well attended, with some being standing-room-only.

\*FAS has the highest membership it has ever had, with about 200 local members. There are about 400 national members in the area, but it's important to join your local chapter also.

\*9 FAS members wrote Bird of the Month articles, which are included in our newsletter and are also published in the newspaper.

\*FAS members participated in 6 Christmas Bird Counts around the area.

\*Education programs were held for Arbor Day, Earth Day, Flathead Forest Expo, and Great Backyard Bird Count. This provides many opportunities to increase the awareness and knowledge of students and the public

\*The past year FAS lost some dear friends: Lois Drobish, Richard Kuhl, Jim Jokerst, and Dr. Vernan Eugene Grove.

\*Our Education programs reached 4500 people this past year. In order to make it easier to get our education trunks to teachers, they can now reserve them on-line, and our Ambassador program provides people who will deliver and pickup the trunks.

\*Birds of Prey Festival is reaching about 20% more people each fall. Attendance went from 500 in 2017 to 800 in 2018. We are considering the possibility of a Friday night event to be held in Kalispell.

\*Field trips totaled 41 this year, with 41 leaders and 651 people participating.

\*We produced 9 fantastic newsletters this past year. Many thanks to Lewis Young, Linda Winnie, and John Hughes.

\*13 comment letters on conservation and science issues were written this past year by

Lewis Young and Carole Jorgensen. Some were voicing support and some were expressing opposition.

\*We had excellent publicity for all of our events, thanks to Jan Metzmaker.

\*Our amazing website has been improved and maintained by our web guru Jake Bramante. It now has a “store” where people can purchase the bird call CD’s and memberships. Work is being done to make available an “app” of the birdcalls so you could download them to your smart device.

\*FAS hosted the State Bird Festival in June 2018, and it was very well attended and a great success.

\*Board members and officers volunteered 8,752 hours this past year!!! FAS programs and business run smoothly due to their efforts. Kay had the board members raise their hand.

\*Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs were recognized also. These are the people who run the committees and events and Kay invited FAS members to join in and help.

The Business Meeting was called to order by President Kay Mitchell.

\*Treasurer Joe Batts reported on our current checking balance, on income of \$150 from the evening, and mentioned the income anticipated from the Birdathon. Joe also mentioned that the Treasurers activities are audited, to assure accuracy, by Bruce Tannehill, with Mike Fanning also auditing membership information.

\*Kay reminded people that it’s important to join your local Audubon chapter. Local FAS members will receive a membership card next year that can be used in place of your State Lands permit when visiting OSNA and for a 10% discount on black oil sunflower seeds at Murdocks. Additional benefits are in the works and will be announced in the fall.

\*Bob Lee is the Chair of the nomination committee, and he came forward to introduce the candidates for officers and new board members.

>The slate of officers for a two year term is:

Gael Bissell - President

Cory Davis - Vice President

(Note - Secretary and Treasurer positions will be filled next year for 2 year terms)

>The nominations for Board of Directors are:

Will Beyer

Margaret Parodi

David Manuwal

Bob Lee called for nominations from the floor three times, and there were none. Then he made a motion to accept the candidates as nominated, Brent Mitchell seconded. Motion passed.

Bob Lopp stepped forward to pay tribute to Kay Mitchell for her past 4 years of service as the President of the Board of Directors of FAS. Under her guidance Kay has improved FAS in many ways, including: a digital Pileated Post, reliable management of OSNA and the completion of test plots, organization and completion of Hawk Watch and Birds of Prey, high quality website interface, reliable budgeting and financial management, and defusing many challenging situations.

Gael Bissell presented Kay with several parting gifts and she received a standing ovation.

Kay presented newly elected president Gael Bissell with the official gavel.

Bob Lee, Chairman of the Program Committee, introduced Dan Casey who treated the crowd to an amazing set of pictures and details of his birding trip to the African country of Ghana.