

Flathead Audubon Board of Directors
Minutes - October 7, 2019
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Board Members in Attendance: Joe Batts, Kathy Ross, Rod Walette, Derrick Rathe, Gail Linne, Gael Bissell, Kay Mitchell, Cory Davis, Will Beyer, Margaret Parodi, David Manuwal, Pam Willison, Bob Lopp, Mike Fanning, Jake Bramante
Others in Attendance: Denny Olson, Bruce Tannehill

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm by President Gael Bissell.

Administrative:

Gael gave recognition/thanks for special efforts on projects: Pam for help on OSNA and weed plan/map, Jan for posters for Birds of Prey, Kay/Rod/Linda/Pam for OSNA grant application with Flathead Conservation, Derrick (and Denny) for work pulling together Birds of Prey and his presentation, Kathy (and Barbara) for Hawk Watch planning and recruiting/ training Kat, and Jill for the thank-you notes she has prepared over many years.

May BOD minutes need to be reapproved due to a second made by Derrick while he wasn't officially on the Board. Mike moved, Kay second, motion carried.

Sept BOD minutes were reviewed. David motion to approve, Kathy second, motion carried.

Financials: *Bruce suggested that the Finance Committee hold a meeting and go through the financials and asset reports in full detail. He commented that the label on some categories on the financials sometimes don't match up well and he needs to make some decisions about where deposits and expenses are placed. In addition, sometimes expenses get put into the next year due to timing of when bills come in and when checks are written. Joe commented that our income from memberships is in balance with the percentages seen at National Audubon. Joe reviewed the checkbook activity for September. In addition to being reviewed at our BOD meetings, this activity is reviewed by Bruce on a monthly basis as a check and balance system. Bruce mentioned that in addition to all the checkbook activity, he reviews all the investment accounts for any unusual activity. Bruce wondered whether we are prepared for the Whitefish community grant, which requires a financial report. Mike said he knows what they need and will work with Joe to provide it. Regarding the Asset report, Bruce said he has some trouble getting into some of these accounts because of the strict access security requirements for agencies that won't allow two people to have access. He and Joe are working together on it. Bruce mentioned that we haven't been drawing funds from our accounts, and could do that if needed.

*Gael drew our attention to the line item "West Valley Easement" for \$541. The money is going to be applied to the shared expenses for the bench and scope at the West Valley Viewing Area. Gael suggests that to simplify accounts, that we move the \$541 from the West Valley Easement account at Glacier Bank into our regular account and then just write the check for our

share of the expenses on the bench and scope (estimated at \$750). Bob Lopp moved, Margaret second, no discussion, motion carried.

*Motion to accept and file Treasurers report. Kathy motion, Jake second, motion carried.

*At this point, Gael suggests we table the idea of getting a volunteer CPA because Bruce and Joe are adequately covering our needs for financial records.

Directory Changes: Kathy said she would like to be taken off of Refuges on the Committee list. Gael said that could be handled later when committees are reviewed.

Thank you note preparation: Jan will have a report at the next meeting, as she has been working with Gail Cleveland and Jill on some guidelines for preparation. Jake displayed the new blank FAS notecards that can be used. It's important to acknowledge donations.

Committee Structure and Volunteer Needs: Cory reviewed the matrix he has compiled of the various committees, what they do, and how volunteers could help. A few still need to be completed, and this process will take a little more time. Mike mentioned that he was listed as the head of Finance only so he could do a grant application, but he isn't head of the committee. Gael wondered where the "thank you notes" function would belong. It was felt it was part of Hospitality. David needs to be added to Programs. There is the potential for Website and Publicity to be combined, possibly under the title of "Media". There was discussion about the need for a Sales committee because we aren't selling as much as we used to. Kay reminded that some of these are established by the Constitution, and she read those. As a result, some of the changes discussed may require a change in the Constitution. Bob Lopp mentioned that one of the functions of the committees/chairs is to give members a person to contact regarding certain topics. Gael noted that Hawk Watch and Birds of Prey are currently ad hoc committees. Cory will work on continuing to fill in the list of committees. His goal is to determine 2-3 volunteer opportunities each month that could be published in the newsletter. Send volunteer ideas to Gael and she will mention them in the public meeting next Monday. Kathy is willing to continue as the contact for Refuges, if that is needed. Gael feels it fits under Conservation better than having a separate committee.

Conservation Achievement Recognition awards: We received the current suggestion list in our board information and Cory said we would vote at the next meeting. He suggests we change the format and do one for an individual/couple, one for business/innovator, and at the May meeting to do one for a FAS volunteer of the year. Add new nominees by getting them to Cory. Jake mentioned the guy who bought the glass crusher and reactivated the glass recycling with proceeds donated to non-profits (Jake will provide details). Denny mentioned Pat Jaquith as an individual for her work in OSNA. David suggested listing the award categories on the website and allow membership to make nominations. Jake will look into it. Cory also mentioned a fun award in January as the Birder of the Year, based on e-bird totals.

Committee Reports:

Birds of Prey: Derrick: The parking was overkill and next year they will park people at Foy's so it's closer and faster. Pre-planning needs to be done in May, rather than a couple days before.

The food truck didn't do as well as they thought, so are hesitant to come back. There was discussion of shifting the time to span the lunch more so people would buy food. There was discussion of changing the time to late August, with concern for conflicts with school starting and raptors molting. It was suggested to have falconers there next year for a change of pace from the displayed birds. There will be cautions for people with small dogs!

Denny: having a "real committee" would help divide up the work load and not run it all through him. It's a challenging time of year because the Board isn't meeting. The attendance seems to have plateaued at about 800 people. There were also many competing activities in the valley.

Jan (via Gael): redoing the FAS booth, more obvious donation boxes, more credit to Lone Pine.

Gael: we need to make some improvements, and try to keep it new and fresh. The shuttle worked well, but will be adjusted. More booths for bird-related topics.

A meeting was held last week to analyze this year. What is the next step? Denny suggests setting up a timeline for the tasks. It was suggested there be another meeting in January.

OSNA: Kay reported that Linda Winnie, Rod, Pam, and Kay worked to complete a matching grant for weed control through Flathead Conservation District. They would provide 75%. We have our matching portion in the bank as a result of some money from DNRC. We were able to coordinate with the Welders to the north and the Russells to the south and got support letters from them and from DNRC. FCD will be completing site visits (they have been to OSNA, so aren't doing a site visit), and then will decide how to distribute their money by mid-November. Our fall work day was mentioned in the grant application, and it was held this past Saturday. Ten people worked on a concentrated area of oxeye daisy on the slough bank opposite the bench. Using the FCD money next year, we would be using a contractor to do spot spraying on various areas for various weeds, but we will try to do mechanical work along the water areas. Denny mentioned that we need to emphasize that this work isn't just about killing stuff, but about restoration.

Kay mentioned the license with DNRC expires February 2020. In the past Montana Audubon has held the license and we do the management and work. It was cumbersome because anything we planned and requested through DNRC had to get forwarded through MA in Helena. This past year, we prepared the paperwork to change the lease to include FAS, so that we can work with DNRC more directly. MA likes having OSNA listed as a project they are connected to, but didn't have the personnel to do the work. We will now start negotiation for the lease fee for the next 10-year lease. Kay anticipates it will go up, possibly significantly. Denny said the weed control work we are doing on DNRC land should be a bargaining tool. Gael suggests that we need to coordinate the efforts for OSNA better and rewrite our management plan to reflect what we would like to see done. She feels that DNRC has taken a new approach to OSNA and will be easier to work with. However, until we get a renewal of the lease, we can't proceed with major projects. Gael would like to see an OSNA strategic plan, including improved access, and feels like the Education and OSNA committees should work together on this. OSNA has lots of potential for volunteer opportunities. Jake mentioned that the area we are focusing on is only a small portion of the entire Natural Area. Denny mentioned that he is backing off on pushing for the large grants for the education portion until we know better what the future holds. Currently, Denny is going to focus on writing a natural history trail guide so education

activities can continue. We need to make the guide accessible to people who need it, but keep in mind that access from the north end is private.

Hawk Watch: Currently at over 2000 birds and Kat is doing great. Kathy mentioned that it's helpful to Kat to have someone at the lower site while she is up above, to catch the low birds.

Education: The Committee met October 3. There was discussion of whether to enlarge the committee or just include volunteer opportunities. Next meeting November 7 at 4:30. Trunk and ambassador program is doing well. Two new trunks are in progress – Osprey and Sandhill Cranes.

Field Trips: Cory reported that attendance last year wasn't as bad as thought: 21 trips and just over 250 people. They have identified a few smaller things to improve. If anyone wants to do winter trips, let him know. Derrick mentioned that FWP will be doing about 15 bird related trips and these could be mentioned. Denny will plan a spring trip in OSNA with the new trail guide. He could do one on Trails Day too. Jake had a handful of people on his "Waterfowl Wednesdays" trip, which are directed to beginners. Jake suggested doing a survey of members about what they want in field trips – topics, places, skill level, etc.

Grants – There will be a meeting this coming Thursday at 3 at North Conference. Mike is doing Whitefish Community Foundation. Rod and Kay are meeting with Gina, manager of REI. This committee is looking for 1-2 more members.

Hospitality – It's a work in progress.

Membership – Mike reported that it looks good so far.

Programs – David and Bob are working on programs. Gael suggested Kate Stone, who presented at Birds of Prey, and a guy working in Ecuador. Joe also had a suggestion. Jake would consider doing a program on birding using ebird to find locations and birds.

Joe mentioned the Smile program through Amazon. In addition to the donation based on sales, Amazon now has it set up as a portal to make donations directly.

Publicity/Website/Branding – Jake had the stickers and cards for memberships and the small woodpecker stickers. He found a different source so there was money left over from the amount we approved, so he used it for a new banner and for notecards. There is still the potential for some merchandise sales in the future. In the past we have been good about not using membership information for mailings other than our newsletter. If there is the need to get ahold of people in between newsletters, we could use a program called Mail Chimp that would contact our newsletter list with the message. It would explain they are getting the message because of being an FAS member and would give them the opportunity to opt out. We will discuss this at a later meeting, and let people know in the newsletter. There is a monthly fee to us to use the service. We would be able to gather some demographics on our

membership as a result. Mike mentioned needing to include people who receive the paper copy of Pileated Post. Cory mentioned it would be an effective communication tool during the summer. Jake said we need to take care that they are infrequent.

Finance: Gael will set up a meeting to look at the financial reports in more depth.

November Pileated Post: The Missoulian is asking for comments from FAS about an article they are preparing about the drastic decline in the bird population. and Gael has referred the request to Lewis, Denny and Carole. Kathy mentioned that she is getting information about how some of the numbers were misused and sensationalized. She cautions that we be careful as we proceed on this topic and avoid sensationalizing. This could be a topic for an article in Pileated Post. Other issues for articles related to conservation are Endangered Species Act (Carole), and Audubon Climate Change Report (Lewis).

*Jake reported that Josh Coville is going to be doing a small article on birding hot spots to check in the coming month.

*Gael mentioned trying to include more news items, especially related to members birding experiences. She wondered if this could alternate with Bird of the Month. There was a discussion of changing the format of Bird of the Month to shorten it.

New Business:

End of Year Fundraiser Board Challenge: Kay reported that if we are going to do it, Gael would need to write a letter and get it printed and then set a date to do envelope stuffing. Mike said there is no reason not to do it because we get a good response. Jake said he thinks doing a board challenge is not the slant to take and we should change it. It was agreed that it could just be a year end fund raiser letter.

Denny is looking for someone to film him for his video.

Gael will be using the white board at general meetings to make a list of items to be covered so people know what to expect. The list for next Monday was reviewed and edited.

Motion to adjourn by David, Kay second. Adjourned at 8:40.