

Flathead Audubon Society Board Meeting

April 2, 2012

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

Present: Paula Smith, Chair; Bob Lee, Linda de Kort, Denny Olson, Bob Lopp, Steve Gniadek, Richard Kuhl, Kathy Ross, Dennis Hester, Lois Drobish, Bruce Tannehill, Lewis Young, Gael Bissell, Kay Mitchell, Linda Winnie, Ben Young, and John Hughes.

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

Announcements: Lois – Doug and Ashley Mason’s family visited Freezout Lake. Snow Geese described as a blanket of Geese.

Minutes: (Bob Lopp/Bob Lee). A motion was made to approve the March minutes with corrections. The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer’s Report: Bruce – Budget on target. Passed out financial statement with March expenditures.

**Committee Reports**

Sam Bibler Trail: - Terry Welder, Mike Baker, & Alan Sieler –\_Presented a proposal to extend the existing pedestrian/bike path along Willow Glen one mile to Conrad Drive. Terry is seeking Flathead Audubon’s support as a partner to provide extra clout when lobbying the Flathead County Planning and Zoning Office for the funding necessary to complete the project. Specifically, Terry would like a letter of support from FAS. He also wanted to make a presentation at the next general meeting. It was agreed that time would be allotted for a presentation at the April general meeting. A decision concerning the letter of support was deferred until the May, Board Meeting.

Bird Festival Committee: Paula, Dennis, Kay – Dennis – Festival not listed on FAS site yet. Festival is listed on the following sites: Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, Whitefish Visitors, and National Audubon. Kay is coordinating volunteers. List of duties not solidified at present, will be soon. Noted a problem with on-line registration for festival. Problem is costly to fix – registration materials can be printed from the site. Kathy Ross – stated she was going to contact MT Audubon for clarification on which or both of two insurance forms would need to be filled out if driving a rented vehicle; no forms need to be filled out if driving one’s own vehicle. Linda W asked about availability of vehicles for individuals leading a trip. Money is not available to rent vehicles. Doc W asked about upper limits on trips, Kathy believes the maximum is 20. Discussion: How to make the field trips user-friendlier for individuals at the back of the queue or packed into a van. Suggestions included: multiple stops so people can get out; communication between vehicles; carpooling. It was also suggested we check with Hilton Garden re., late checkout for Sunday field trips. Kathy R will need a complete list of field trip leaders – still need some commitments. Bruce will be coordinating the display tables with MT Audubon. Bob Lopp – worked through some issues regarding the baskets with MT Audubon (segregated competitor contributions into separate baskets). Mark Vesser (DNRC) will be auctioneer. MT Audubon’s

surprise raffle item will be a two-night stay at Abbott Valley Homestead. They were offered a table as a condition of the donation. Linda W. needs 30 dessert donations, has 10 at present. Freezer and refrigerator space is available at H.G. to store desserts. She will contact people at a later date.

#### General Meetings Committees:

Program: Program is set – GLACIER NATIONAL PARK FROM THE SUMMIT by Blake Passmore. Richard – Programs are set for April, May, and September. The extra room is available, if needed. Steve Gniadek is a potential speaker for next fall.

Hospitality: Lois – Bob will be there early. People have been contacted on refreshments. People are encouraged to bring their own cutlery, plates, and cups. Seems there was some confusion last year on where certain items were stored so Richard will go before the potluck for an orientation. No name tags at the potluck. Plants for sale will be publicized in the Post.

Sales: Jill – No report.

Conservation: Lewis & Steve – Lewis – has been contacted by MPG Ranch (200 acre property near Condon) to determine if FAS is interested in helping conduct bird surveys 2-3 times per year. Nothing firm yet. Will contact Jim Brown, Bitterroot Audubon, for information on how they conducted a similar project. Steve - Any contributions to FAS would probably be provided through a memorandum of understanding with a nonprofit for volunteer work. This would probably be a long-term project. Richard – doesn't hurt to pursue the opportunity. Bob Lopp – Project might be good for a research paper. Contact person for MPG Ranch is Beau Larkin.

Land Based Wind Guidelines: Lewis – 2007 committee established for land based wind turbines. 2011 draft FAS commented on voluntary part. ABC petitioned FWS to make the guidelines mandatory, FAS signed on. FWS rejected ABC petition, prefers voluntary guidelines. National Audubon is pushing hard for local chapters to sign on with no changes to the guidelines. Discussion ensued over whether or not we should send a letter of support. Pros – better than nothing, wind developers were major players in developing plan so perhaps they will actually adhere to the regulations. Cons – the regulations are voluntary, no enforcement or legal implications. Major objection is lack of mandatory guidelines with no oversight. It was pointed out that FWS has never prosecuted anyone. Richard – one justification for signing on would be that we could try this and ratchet up the process if necessary. Steve – Without oversight how do you determine there is a problem? If voluntary, would hope industry would provide personnel for monitoring. Linda dK. – Better to have something rather than nothing at all/John seconded the notion. They are still covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Richard – would like a commitment to the appropriate resources for monitoring. Bob Lopp – pointed out that National was not seeking input on the issue, just support or not. Question – sign on with National or not. Motion: Moved and seconded, Linda deKort/Denny Olson – For FAS to sign on to the National Audubon's request for support for the Fish and Wildlife Service's voluntary land based wind guidelines. Motion passed 16 to 1. Richard Kuhl was the dissenting vote.

National Forest Plan: Lewis – The draft Kootenai Forest Plan is very different from plans Lewis has worked with in the past. Believed that the changes are to help reduce litigation. Decision-making has been shifted to managers with very little hard instruction. There are four alternatives.

Alternative two emphasizes wilderness and backcountry. No specific designations are given. New plan has nothing specific to wetlands. Deadline for comment is May 7<sup>th</sup>. Lewis will put together an executive summary so the Board can decide which particular alternative to support. Lewis will draft a letter.

Steve G. – Conservation Related – GNP closure on winter range. This is new. Steve will draft a letter. C. Falls Planning Board – Wildlife corridor information is on the radar screen. Flathead Co. Planning Board – updating growth policy/no continuity therefore deleting sections of the policy dealing with riparian and wildlife corridors they don't understand. One more workshop before opening the plan for public opinion. Gael B. – echoed concerns that portions of the plan dealing with wildlife are being redacted. Suggested that we send a letter letting them know we like the growth plan with respect to wildlife. Additional mention was made of some other conservation groups.

Education Committee: Denny and Linda d K. – Denny – Committee hasn't met yet. Not clear on committee members. Kathy Ross and Ben Young are members of committee. Denny reported that program for Samaritan House was fun. Suggested a year end list of accomplishments and that the committee might want to produce an Educational Scope and Facts sheet.

Parks and Rec Update: Due to the extensive nature of the More Kids in the Woods project, Ashley doesn't feel she can pursue the partnership discussed with Parks and Rec. She still wants to do a program for them and pursue the partnership next year.

More Kids in the Woods grant: All funds will come to FAS. Requests for the supplies will be channeled through Linda dK. Orders will be filled and paid for when funds become available. Bruce requested a meeting with Linda dK. – scheduled for this Thursday, next Wednesday, or next Thursday. Linda dK – probably no bills until next fall. \$12,000 of Ashley's salary will come from the grant. The grant has a 2 year duration. Linda dK – seeking support to pursue to apply for a grant from the Smith Charitable Trust (May and Stanley Smith – provides resources for rural and under served communities). Requests permission to go forward and explore this grant opportunity. Board approved. Linda dK will pursue and keep the Board updated. If no one responds, assumption will be there are no red flags.

Cinnabar Foundation update: Paula – FAS received \$1,000 grant this year. Cinnabar is moving to an on-line grant application process. Part of the requirements for the grant is to help Cinnabar by providing information for their website. Paula sent them a lengthy description of projects FAS is involved with.

Newsletter: Linda W. read list of contents and added a few items.

Field Trip Committee: Gael and Kathy – See last months report.

Owen Sowerwine: Linda W. – Ready to have the accessible trail work done. Through grants and donations, have reduced the original cost from \$6,500 to approximately \$1,000 – \$1,200. Linda W. is still trying to whittle down this figure. Future activities include: letter to neighbors informing of upcoming activities; signage to close and open trail upon completion of project; publicity upon completion; an invitation to donors upon completion; and establishing a schedule to oversee the work. Site visit scheduled for next week with the trail maker. September 22 or 29<sup>th</sup> OSNA workday.

Nominations Committee: Linda dK – will send a report around. Gail Sullivan requested not to be on the slate of candidates. Suggested we leave the position open for nominations from the floor. The Secretary's position is a two-year position.

For the Good of the Order: Bruce – Board needs to make a decision regarding filing a 990 with the Feds (short form or long form?). Long form is very long and time consuming to complete. Due to Federal regulations, some funding agencies, e.g. United Way are requiring non-profits to provide a proforma 990. Some question as to whether or not filing a short form would limit grant opportunities. Bruce will file a short form and should a granting agency require the long form, will seek to re-file.

Denny – Birding Trail Brochure – brochure has been turned in. Dan Casey and Gael Bissell did the yeoman's amount of work. Gone to Diane Medler and Jan Metzmaker, Kalispell and Whitefish Chambers of Commerce.

Bob Lopp – MT Audubon doesn't want to pay to have Brett's painting framed (ca. \$300). Richard Kuhl made a motion for FAS to pay \$300 to have Brett's picture frame. The motion was seconded by Bob Lee. There was some discussion on amending the motion to retrieve the funds from MT Audubon. The motion passed unanimously without amendment.

Richard K – A flip video camera has been donated to FAS by Dave Hadden.

Riparian Brochures: Gael – the idea is to distribute brochures to landowners in the area in hopes they will do the right thing. 75 of the general brochures are free. Possibly the brochures can be adapted or an insert added for an additional cost. Richard asked how the brochures would get to the landowners. Linda W responded that they would distribute through local agencies in the conservation district. Bob Lee – Meeting with Swan Wetlands next Monday. There could be a possibility of receiving some funding.

Bob Lee – Forestry Expo – looking for volunteers for May 7-11<sup>th</sup>). Contact Lauren Hicks or Bob Lee. Will announce at general meeting.

Linda dK – Mosquito Board announced it will be treating nuisance mosquitoes (defined as 10 bites/min). People can opt out. Rationale – less toxic than off-the-shelf malathion that many homeowners will purchase and use. Linda dK – problem with increased tolerance to the pesticide thereby rendering it ineffective if needed for a more serious problem like a proliferation of West Nile carrying mosquitoes. Also there are toxicity issues with the pesticide.

Liability Insurance – Dennis – Handout with an overview of Montana Law, FAS's status, companies that can offer insurance for Chapters as listed on NAS website, and local companies or brokers. It is recommended that local chapters obtain their own liability insurance. Dennis will work with Bob Lopp and Bruce Tannehill to explore viable options for FAS.

Motion to Adjourn: Kay / Gael  
Meeting Adjourned at 9:17

Respectfully submitted,

John Hughes for Gail Sullivan

