

Flathead Audubon BOD Online Meeting, May 4, 2020
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Board members participating: Gael Bissell, Pam Willison, Rod Walette, Cory Davis, Bob Lee, Dave Manuwal, Kay Mitchell, Joe Batts, Mike Fanning, Will Beyer, Jan Metzmaker, Margaret Parodi, Cindy Roberts, Tom Roberts, Jake Bramante, Kathy Ross, Carole Jorgensen

Others participating: Denny Olson

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

Birds Rock! Video: Discussion was held about changes/edits, and the plans for using it.

*Cory mentioned he has some concerns about the use of the Money, Money song. Denny said he has wondered about it, but isn't sure it will become a problem. Jake mentioned that if it's an issue, You Tube might suspend the video or make it available for a fee. He also said someone felt that song seems too loud and covered the narrative. In light of both of these concerns, Denny is leaning toward changing the song. For all the other music, Denny has purchased the rights to use it, so there are no issues with other songs. Denny has a bank of music from past work that he will look at for a new song.

*Gael was interested in a way to put options for people to make donations at the end of the video (both FAS and WIN). Jake mentioned there is an addition you can put at the end for a way to subscribe.

*Regarding marketing and timing, Kay wondered about a way to mention the video to people after Great Fish starts so they can go view it. After Denny makes the few changes, he will send it off to the Interlake reporter he has been working with and see if she wants to do something with it. Jake mentioned that it is on Denny's personal YouTube channel and it should be made available through FAS YouTube also (that will give it a different URL). Dave feels that it would have a good market through schools. Denny feels that we all should work to spread the word. Gael would like to have it included in a press release and made available to other Audubon Chapters in Montana. Denny asked Bob if he can use it as the opening for the September meeting, and that will be coordinated through Dave.

*Denny referred to the comment he made in his report, about ideas for creating additional videos on other topics. He wondered if people are in support of the idea. Everyone who checked in supported the idea of a series of videos.

*Denny would like any final critique comments for Birds Rock! to him ASAP, so he can finish the final edition – possibly tomorrow.

*Gael wants a plan about the timing of a video release and press release. Jan suggested the PR committee and Denny communicate and make a roll-out plan. Send any ideas about who should receive it to Denny very soon. Jake feels that we can use various stages and timing to get it distributed. Denny said some input from Kay would help if we want to tie it to Great Fish, so she will work with the committee.

Minutes: Margaret noted a grammar error on the last page (register, not registered). Kay corrected the date for Great Fish notification – it's May 15. Mike made a motion to approve minutes as revised, Margaret seconded. Motion passed.

Financials: Rod provided the bank activity for April with a corrected balance (Board packet). Nothing is unusual. There were 5 new members last month. Rod contacted our representatives and got updated investment balances, which indicate we are gaining back some of what was lost in the recent stock market drop.

Regarding the profit and loss statement, because our CPA will not be available for a couple more weeks, Rod went ahead and created a new chart of accounts to tie the accounts to Quickbooks. Some of the old accounts can't be removed right now, but will eventually drop out as we move into new fiscal years. Rod is working to load the budget for 2019, and even though there are still some glitches to resolve, it's getting cleaner and closer to being set up to be compatible with Quick Books.

Joe mentioned that there was a minor problem with our 2019 form 990, and he will make the corrections to that. Joe and Rod will resolve getting Rod listed as the contact for access to the IRS records. He needs a set of minutes with Rod listed as Treasurer (Pam will provide). Joe is also still listed as the contact with the State for our license and he will get it changed over in 2 places with the State. Jake suggested using a more generic contact email such as "Treasurer@flatheadaudubon.org" so it won't have to change when officers change.

Motion to accept and file the financial reports made by Kay. Bob seconded. Motion passed.

Budget: The draft version of the 20-21 budget was made pretty conservative (without income from Great Fish) and leaves us about \$8-9000 short. Rod explained that the line "other grants and from savings" is a balancing amount that non-profits have to add in order to balance the budget. He mentioned that should we be included in Great Fish, then that amount should be taken care of. Gael mentioned that we didn't include Birdathon money or a year-end appeal. There is some income shown for the silent auction because that would occur in the next fiscal year. Kay mentioned that it was important to participate in the Day of Giving (tomorrow) because that income would go into the current fiscal year, whereas, Great Fish would go into the coming 20-21 fiscal year.

Bob asked about the Day of Giving and how to make those donations. Kay explained that you use the Whitefish Foundation website to access the Day of Giving information and make the selection of Flathead Audubon and provide some brief information. Jake said a Flathead Fly-by email will go out tomorrow morning (first day of the event). Jan said it's also on our Facebook page and Website. Gael mentioned that if you prefer a check, you can drop those at Interstate or Glacier Bank. Kay said that it's important for those who made pledges during the Finance Committee meeting make those donations fairly early so we can meet the \$2000 threshold for a \$1000 match. Jan said there is also a drop box at the Whitefish Foundation office. On a related note, Gael mentioned the new tax law to receive benefit from donations and Kay

clarified that there are 2 different benefits based on whether you itemize or don't itemize your income taxes for 2020.

Gael also noted that the Birds of Prey Festival is uncertain at this point, and would have an effect on the budget if it were cancelled.

Communications: Gael wanted some clarification of responsibilities on this committee. Jake clarified that sometimes Linda Winnie serves as his backup for the blog. Jan takes care of the website and does the press releases (needs about a week of lead time). Jan reminded that the website is the most up to date and people should check there. Jan mentioned that once notices are written and approved, they shouldn't be changed. As an example, information for the Day of Giving didn't get posted the way it was written and reviewed and approved by Gael.

Montana Audubon By-law changes: Two documents were included in the Board packet. Bob explained that this was an updating that MA did in order to clean up their By-laws. The only item he thought we should note was about Montana Audubon not being a membership organization. Bob feels this will not change the relationship of MA to Chapters and their participation. Joe also mentioned a decision on environmental research by the Trump Administration is being challenged in court and they feel it will be overturned. As a result, participation by MA in on-going bird research projects will not be affected. Bob encouraged people to join in the next meeting, which will be on-line. He will provide the agenda and link so Gael can distribute it to our BOD. Joe also noted the impact of coronavirus resulted in closing down the MA learning center in Billings. They are looking to start up their activities for children again in the summer.

Field Trips: Gael and Kathy have been talking about the use of self-guided field trips, and/or field trips that are very restricted in size. Cory had mentioned adding a waiver for coronavirus. Gael has received input from some people who are opposed to any field trips. Kathy wondered if she can take some pictures within areas to make them available for people to use for self-guided trips. Jake said he would be able to insert that information into "birding hot spots" on our website. Gael would like to see this organizing with some leadership so it's a coordinated effort. Kathy noted there are only 2 remaining field trips (Bats and Beverly's) offered in July and she would like to leave it up to the leader and see how they want to handle it right up to the date of the trip. There was discussion about how to complete a waiver without handling materials/clipboard. Cory still has concerns about doing any field trips. Kathy said spoke with her Dr. and she feels it's a good thing to offer people activities as long as they follow the safety guidelines – use of masks and social distancing, no carpooling, small groups. Jan mentioned the need to put those requirements front and center on the website. Gael asked about the virtual field trips, and Denny reported that he has talked to Derrick, and he feels he would rather focus energy on helping people get outside, rather than on recorded field trips. Gael asked whether Mike or Bruce would write a self-guided trip through Tally Campground, if it's open. Jake said that if people go to areas and want to write up a summary with some detail and/or with photos, you can send it to Jake or Linda Winnie and it can be put on the website. Linda, Jan, Jake, Denny will serve as the contacts for self-guided field trip reports/photos.

Education: Denny had sent out his report which included the on-line contest activities he is doing. He's considering restarting it with a less competitive format, such as using a lottery for every right answer, because anyone who joined later will never have a chance to catch up. He will give the current leaders their field trips he promised, but try to level the playing field and restart with new prizes. Jake could do another fly-by email about the restart of the contest.

Jake and Denny have talked about the potential of podcasts, such as discussions of bird songs between Bruce and Denny. Gael also suggested Dan Casey or Josh. Jake said the issue is his lack of time to record and edit any podcasts.

Tom mentioned that they sent out the strategic plan for input, but now realize that the strategic plan does not fit the coronavirus situation at all. Tom, Cindy and Denny are going to work together this coming week to modify the education plan to include alternatives with contingencies to connect with the future plans the schools are making to adjust to the education during the coronavirus situation.

Road Scholar classes – Denny is holding off on asking for volunteers to fill the schedule until we know better if the classes will be held. Right now, they have scheduled 4 classes and there are some factors that could make them easier to hold (being outdoors, being small groups, room to spread out). He has almost enough volunteers at this point, so will just hold tight.

Birds of Prey: Gael mentioned that it's unlikely we will be able to hold a gathering for several hundred people, so she wonders if we cancel the big event if we could hold some smaller events and have a week long focus, including coordinating with the 2 raptor rehab programs. Denny feels it's too early to make the decision to cancel it and suggested that the committee go ahead and plan with two alternatives (large event/multiple small events). Kathy supports a scaled down set of activities, rather than expend lots of energy and then cancel. Cory and Dave agree with Kathy. Kay feels that September is getting overloaded with many events for us, so it might be a good idea to cancel BOP this year. Margaret agrees with a smaller format, especially with the busy schedule in September. Mike agrees that there isn't an advantage to expending the energy for a large event, and supports the smaller event. Carol concurred. Tom and Cindy agree. Gael wondered about paying for and offering a raptor video through our website. Cory said it might be more effective to provide a list of them on our website so people can locate them, rather than try to provide one. Denny offered to work on some on-line raptor ID games. Jake encouraged us to not do a half-baked substitute because we feel like compelled to offer something to replace BOP, and to be sure that the things we do actually offer people something of value. Cory asked if we had any grants that are tied to BOP that we would have to return. There are none. The money for the display was for the display regardless of BOP. Gael said Jewel Basin Hawk Watch should be able to be held and can be tied to BOP as usual.

OSNA: Gael mentioned issues with more users and more dogs. Parking has been an issue and it has increased. Gael had sent a list to Pam of issues she wants the Committee to address (see agenda). Pam said she's been to OSNA numerous times and has not seen any dogs, and that if

concerned neighbors feel people are parking illegally, they need to call the Sheriff. Kay noted there are 2 problems here: how to deal with parking, and how to deal with neighbors. Kay offered to contact the road department – Dave Prundy. Gael also has issues with the pink spray paint marked Buckthorn and would like to see it painted over. Denny felt it was needed in order to show DNRC the extent of the problem. Denny is willing to work on Buckthorn in OSNA as he has time, but needs someone to work with him and treat the newly cut stumps. Regarding the agenda item about the bridge replacement, Kay mentioned that DNRC has been very clear that we should not do anything for structures or additions, such as a bridge, without their permission. Gael referred the list of concerns to the OSNA Co-Chairs and Committee.

Jewel Basin Hawk Watch – The new FS agreement for the next 5 years has been drafted, but not signed. We provided comments back the FS and are awaiting a final draft. We received \$400 to use for Hawk Watch from Montana Audubon, from their Wildlife Fund. With help from Rod, we applied for it last December. Also, we will invoice the FS for \$720 remaining in the existing agreement before the end of June. We need to complete the annual report by the end of May.

Wylie Blind – Kathy talked to Dean Robbins, who owns the land, and he now has a conservation easement with the Land Trust. She asked what he envisions for our access to the blind we built there, and an arrangement with us. He is OK with a limited few small field trips with his permission, but otherwise FAS will not have access to the blind. He harbors no ill will to FAS, but things have changed because of the limitations for development in the conservation easement and he has changed his view of how the property will be used.

Great Fish – Kay said that at this point it is still going to be held, and she doesn't need help, but as it gets closer, she will be in contact with the people who want to help with the marketing. She will also send out another copy of the rules because they are very strict and it's important that we follow them. The next scheduled activity is June 18, when they need to have a meeting with our people who will be doing publicity.

Gael announced that Jennifer Graham donated a very nice Zeiss scope and tripod, and she gave it to Paula Smith. It can be used for field trips, activities at Lone Pine, etc. Rod will need to add it to our assets. Gael will send a thank you.

Gael wonders if we could benefit from a BOD meeting in August, which would be a month early. Many people felt this would be a good idea, especially with all we have to deal with in September, and all the changes related to coronavirus. It will be held as usual on the first Monday in August (the 3rd). Gael encouraged committees to keep meeting over the summer to keep us moving forward.

Jan reminded people to donate tomorrow for the Day of Giving.

Jan made a motion to adjourn, Jake seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:17.

