

Flathead Audubon Board Meeting, via Google Meets On-line, July 13, 2020  
Minutes by Pam Willison, Secretary

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

Others in attendance: Denny Olson

Meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by President Gael Bissell.

**Birds Rock! Update:** Jake reported that the video is mentioned on the front page on the FAS webpage and linked to the blog and FaceBook. He would like to do a Fly-By email next week to membership to promote it. Denny has seen the posting on the website and would like it to be a bigger presentation – feeling that it's too subtle. He will work with Jake to add an image. Jake feels the bigger attention-getter will be the Fly-By email. Jan wants to be sure the dates of activities aligns with Great Fish events. She suggested that she, Denny, and Jake work with a calendar to select dates. Gael would like to see a video promotion going to different groups every 2 weeks. Kay would like to include it in the Sept 12 Great Fish event at Depot Park from 9am-1pm, but there is no power. Denny feels he has the equipment to accommodate this and also feels the second video will be done by then. Gael would also like to see it included in the September newsletter, which will be planned during the August BOD meeting.

Gael mentioned that Josh Covill is available for some time in August and September and is willing to work with Denny on the next videos.

### **Financials:**

Rod reported that the COVID grant was received and deposited. It will replace money we would have received from our silent auction, Birdathon, etc. The purpose for the money was indicated to be for education materials about Birds and Humans for K-12, and for creating power point education materials for 7<sup>th</sup> graders. Pam asked that the products that are produced from these efforts be in a very useable format that fits the needs of the teachers, with lesson plans and everything needed. This is very important, or they will not get used.

### **Budget – Income:**

\*Kay asked about the budget amount for a Flathead Conservation District grant of \$1000 for education. Denny said he has not applied for this grant – should be zero.

\*OSNA – we paid the full \$2000 permit fee for this year and Montana Audubon will pay the \$2000 next year, so the expense for 20-21 should be zero.

\*Road Scholar income – all were cancelled so it is zero.

\*United Way is money we receive from them – leave at \$200.

\*Rod mentioned that as a result of information provided by a CPA and financial advisor, we are creating a financial plan and it will include adding an income line to our budget to spend some

of the interest on our investments. Therefore, we need to change Line 33 to Investment funds and enter \$8524.00.

\*Margaret asked for clarification on the \$1800 from National Audubon. Kay confirmed that it is an amount we receive from them to offset our expenses for serving people who are national members but not local members, and it's accurate.

\*Silent Auction would be May 2021 so this income was left in place.

#### Budget Expenses:

\*Great Fish: Rod feels it should be increased to \$500 because we have already spent about \$200.

\*Donations out: the \$2000 donation to Flathead Land Trust for the Danford or Split Pond Conservation Easement would go in this line item.

\*United Way is for the meeting room at \$50 each so it would be \$400. Even if we don't hold meetings, we want to leave it in place.

\*Education: a potential raise for Denny would require this to be adjusted up.

\*Birds of Prey: Denny would like to see some money left there so we could consider some replacement activities. Ideas include kites, or silhouettes. Derrick is looking into things for Parks to do also, and they would share costs with us. Right now, there are only ideas, and Denny feels \$300 would be plenty. Kathy reminded that in the past we mentioned doing something with Wild Wings to replace Birds of Prey and there would be some expense to that. Denny wondered how that would look with COVID safety. Kathy said they are displayed outside and the handlers talk about them. There would have to be a limit (like a field trip), and there is plenty of parking. Kathy said Beth would need to work out the details, and Kathy will talk to her.

\*Newsletter printing/postage – Rod said we need to add \$300 for the August edition, and another \$100 for postage.

\*OSNA: Weed control – we added \$1700 in expense and matched it with a reimbursement for half of expenses as an income item for Montana Audubon. It seems more understandable to list the entire expense, and then show the MA reimbursement of 50% as an income item. We also added an income item for the FCS grant for \$2000 to reimburse weed spraying.

\*Warbler weekend – we will plan to hold it next spring because it can be done fairly safely. Kay asked Mike if he was able to get his money back from the reservation this June. He did get it, and since he had already been reimbursed, will use the money to reserve it next year. So, the budget can be zero.

\*Special projects – this is catchall category for odd expenses and contributions.

The final line shows \$5000 over in income. Rod suggested we balance it with a decrease the Great Fish income number because we don't know what that will be.

\*We discussed and agreed that if Josh Covill is available, we would contract with him to assist Denny. We allotted \$3600 maximum for that contract, and Denny will formulate the work plan, and timeline to match the that amount. Kay suggested it be considered a flat rate rather than a monthly rate, in case his work isn't evenly distributed over the next three months. Rod agreed.

\*Mike asked if we needed to increase the amount for the Education Coordinator. Mike suggested the increase be 4% (\$988). Mike made a motion, Jake seconded. Motion passed. Kay mentioned to add \$1000 back into Great Fish income to cover this.

\*Gael wanted to look at Jewel Basin Hawk Watch. The numbers are okay as they are.

Gael feels the amended budget is good. Kay made a motion to accept the budget with the changes made this evening, Jan seconded. Motion passed.

“Thanks” were offered to Rod for getting our financials switched over to a non-profit system because it is much easier to use and understand.

Kay made a motion to donate \$2000 to FLT for their Danford project. Cory seconded. Motion passed. This was included in the budget that was just passed.

**OSNA Negotiations:** Cory has replaced Kay, and Amy Seamen from MA has joined, so along with Gael they are the negotiation team. They are looking into options to finance the transfer of ownership for a long-term solution. We aren't in a strong position for a permanent (use) easement because FWP would have been the entity to hold it, and they have some other locations they are working on instead of OSNA. So, our next best option would be a private easement and she is working the Paul and Laura of FLT for the details. FLT is excited about developing this as an easement project in conjunction with FAS. Right now, the easement might be about \$300,000. At the next negotiation, Gael has asked DNRC to specify what “no action” would look like for the future of the area included in OSNA. Amy is also researching designation as a Natural Area. After the next meeting, or so, they will know their final options, which are diminishing.

**Great Fish:** Kay reported that the campaign starts on July 30. Between July 30 and September 19, we are trying to get as many people to donate to the Community Foundation in our honor. After the first \$5000, the Foundation starts giving their matching money. From here on, Kay said it's up to the PR/publicity team to get the word out (Jake, Jan, Gail Cleveland). Will has volunteered to help write thank you notes, which have to be done right away.

July 30 – in the Community Foundation there will be an event in their parking lot. Jan will go in at 12:40 to get our packet for promotion. Also, members of the organizations can come and do a standup promotional speech, so the PR team will decide. Several suggestions were made for this to be Denny.

There are numerous incentive grants for number of donors, amount of donations, etc. There will also be a weekly pop-up event at the major sponsors (Interstate Bank, Glacier Bank, Big Sky IV, etc.). During that time, we can go by the booth and put in a good word for FAS. Another incentive is anyone who makes a \$25 donation at a popup event goes into a drawing, and if drawn, they can designate what organization receives \$500. Organizations that do better

overall, are the ones that participate in all the smaller events and donate, participate, and inspire others to donate. As a result of our energy and involvement, we can attract donations from people who are not FAS members, but hear about us through the events.

Kay made tailor-made masks for anyone who works on any of the events – they are bird fabric.

Kay reminded us that all donations must either be dropped off (Glacier Bank or Interstate Bank or the Foundation), or mailed to the Foundation. All donations must specify that it is for FAS. Jake mentioned that in all of our promotion will have a link to the FAS donation site for the Foundation.

Denny asked that everyone who promotes FAS (conversations, emails, etc.), be sure to route people to watch the Birds Rock! video and to support us through Great Fish. It can be used as an example of the great things we are doing.

Jake said in the Birds Rock! Fly-by email he is doing on Wednesday, Great Fish be a soft mention, and people can go to the Great Fish site ahead of time to see how it works and who is participating.

Will, Jan, Gail Cleveland, and Gael will write the thank-you cards. Jake has those.

**Status of public meetings:** It's an option for us to hold a fall general meeting by Zoom to take care of business, as long as it fulfills our by-laws. Jake wondered if we could include a mail-in ballot on the September newsletter. Kay has been in contact with FEC (Wendy Ostrum-Price) regarding how they passed a motion (via a mail-in ballot) to allow them to put voting materials on line. Carole wondered if we have membership numbers so voting could be done on-line. Mike said we don't currently have them, but could look into creating them. Denny wondered if it could be done by mail-in (similar to REI). Carole feels people won't mail in their ballots. Pam wondered if we could offer a drawing for prizes from the ballots that are received and offered 2 bluebird houses she made. Gael feels we can find a way to do it legally. She said North Fork Preservation Association sent out candidate information by newsletter, and is holding a Zoom meeting for the vote. Joe said email votes have to be 100%, which is nearly impossible. MA has decided to do a vote by zoom. Joe mentioned that it's important to ask for the Ayes, and also the Nays. Jake feels it might be a technical mess. Gael asked about Google Meets and the fee to participation fee is fairly reasonable. Several Board members will check the limitations of various platforms, and what other organizations are doing, then we will use that information to decide on this at the August meeting.

**Programs:** Dave Manuwal has speakers set up for Sept, Oct, and Nov. Because we don't know the status of holding meetings, but it's highly unlikely, Gael has asked him if their presentations can be on-line. Jake feels like they could be made as a podcast and stored in perpetuity.

Gael questioned whether this is the direction we are going. It was felt it is. Margaret questions how many people will be willing to turn on their computers and participate in the programs. It

was agreed that there will be lower participation. We need to come up with more ideas to stay as connected as possible with members. Instructions could be included in the newsletter. Carole suggested doing a calling outreach to encourage people to participate because some people would appreciate the personal contact of a phone call. We will deal with the details of this in our August meeting. Joe pointed out that if we can get people adapted over to Zoom meetings, that it allows them to participate during poor weather/driving conditions, or time when they can't be at the meeting, and MA has seen increases in participation.

**Field Trips:** Gael wondered about offering viewing opportunities for Sandhill Cranes, with sign-ups for time slots and FAS field trip leaders there to assist. Gael want the field trip committee to come up with some ideas of ways to have people participate in outside events. Denny said he did a field trip in OSNA and it wasn't difficult to do. It needs to be in small groups, wearing masks, giving reminders of social distancing. Kathy would like to delay these decisions and the work on this because with the seriousness of the current infection situation, we might see restrictions put back into place and it would be wasted effort. Gael said more discussion will be held in August when we know more.

Carole mentioned that she sent an email about 2 conservation issues and she encourages you to make calls or write about supporting them. Also, Lewis will be writing a note about the Lost Trail Conservation Plan.

Pam mentioned if anyone wants to cut seed heads from Hounds tongue or thistle in OSNA that there are plenty. They need to be bagged and removed. Gael asked about work on the oxeye daisy. Denny mentioned that they are very pervasive and he feels like spraying is the only solution. Pam said Derrick, who is licensed to do spraying, contacted her and offered to spray weeds, so maybe we could give him the task of attacking daisy.

Jake made a motion to adjourn, Kathy seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:56.