

DRAFT: Flathead Audubon BOD Meeting, August 3, 2020, via Google Meet up
Minutes prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

BOD members in attendance: Gael Bissell, Cory Davis, Kathy Ross, Pam Willison, Cindy Roberts, Tom Roberts, Bob Lee, Dave Manuwal, Will Beyer, Kay Mitchell, Margaret Parodi, Rod Walette, Jan Metzmaker, Carole Jorgensen
Others in attendance: Denny Olson

The meeting was called to order by President Gael Bissell at 6:05 pm

Minutes: Margaret corrected the newsletter dates as September, not August. Cory corrected Josh's name as Covill, not Colvill. Bob motion to approve, as amended. Kathy seconded. Motion passed.

Linda Winnie informed Gael that John Hughes has ended his role as the coordinator of Bird-of-the-Month for the PP. He suggested that we broaden the view to include other critters or topics, which is something we had already discussed. Gael asked for ideas about how to fill this role, because it's too much to add to the people who do the newsletter (Linda and Lewis). Gael would like to acknowledge John's many years of service. Bob suggested we revisit the ideas for both at the end of the meeting.

Kathy is resigning from the BOD but will continue to help Margaret with the field trips. She will still be as involved when we need her, including helping Denny with the script for the Bird Help video. Kathy told us she has loved being on the board and is very grateful to have had the opportunity to serve with everyone. Gael will continue to send Kathy the BOD meeting agendas and minutes, in order to keep her informed.

Finances: Rod issued an updated/final budget for 20-21. Rod reported that in the process of working with the CPA (Kim) to get the Quick Books switched over and set up correctly, that she spent some time looking at our taxes and she felt there were some issues that needed to be clarified with the 2018 tax filing. Rod was able to talk to someone at the IRS and arrange for them to basically forgive our situation and close the books on the 2018 tax filing, and future filings will use the form they would like us to use. In 2018, the 990-EZ form was completed in conjunction with the Great Fish application because they wouldn't accept the 990-N form. Rod also has arranged for us to receive information and documentation about our 501(c)3 status, which no one seems to be able to locate. Kay is now also up and running with Quick Books, so once a month Rod will send her an update so she can provide a level of security by reviewing all activity on our accounting system. Rod will be presenting information to the finance committee about some components of an official Financial Plan, which is a recommendation made by the CPA for being a 501(c)3 organization. Also, Kim didn't need as much time as she thought, so only billed us \$150, although we had authorized \$300. Many, many thanks were offered to Rod for getting our financial information updated and corrected.

Great Fish: Kay reported that our next events will be the Pop-ups held each Thursday from 10-3, at locations all over the county (check their website for schedule). These have live coverage, and are designed to make a lot of noise and bring attention to Great Fish. It's best if we have someone from our organization attend each of these and say a few words on our behalf. We benefit through incentives by having people attend these and donate \$25 or more in our name. Gael would like to select a couple of them and promote having our members attend and make a big push for us. Kay thanked Jake and Jan for doing a good job with our publicity and promotion related to this. Kathy wondered if we want to promote each one, and if the list can be put on the website with information about incentive grants we could receive. Kay will get some of this information to Jake to add to the FAS website. Jan said she will coordinate with Jake to do this. Kay reminded that the minimum donation is \$25 and only the ones given at the pop-ups will count toward these incentives. Gael said the final 3 could be mentioned in the September newsletter to encourage people to attend them (Aug 27, Sept 3, Sept 10). Gael suggested each Board member select one to attend and reach out and invite at least one other member to attend. Kay will send the BOD a reminder for each and suggest they invite friends.

Then, on September 12 (Saturday), at Depot Park in Whitefish, from 9-1, there will be booths for each organization. A booth can have no more 3 people and should be interactive with the public who are attending. The plan is for Denny to have the Birds Rock! video running. Denny reported that the new banners will be ready for this event, and will be very eye-catching. At the next BOD meeting, we will discuss the final details of the celebration in Whitefish.

Jan reported the kickoff went well and we received 6 donations. Jan picked up our packet and Denny presented. Jan and Gail sent the thank you notes for those donations. Will and Gael have also volunteered to write the thank-you notes.

Public Meetings: Dave has spoken with the 3 speakers he had arranged for September, October, and November, about doing their presentation digitally. One is willing and has the skills, one is not willing, and one isn't excited about it, but likely will be willing to do a digital presentation with some assistance. Cory suggests we do the September presentation in a digital format and see how it goes before we try to schedule further into the year. Cory feels that for a larger digital gathering such as this, we should get a Zoom Pro account (estimated at \$65) to handle the volume. Bob reported that Montana Audubon has a Pro account and before making the purchase, we can borrow theirs for one time to see how well it serves our purposes. Cory feels that maybe we should wait until October for a presentation to allow time to get organized. Bob reminded that we can't do an election over Zoom unless we change our By-laws to allow that. Kay suggests that for our first attempt to have members use Zoom, that we do a canned program where they don't have to participate, so members would be more comfortable. Bob pointed out that with that format, we would lose the interactive Q and A session at the end. Gael feels we should roll it out slowly, but doing it live. Bob and Cory agree and say to keep it short and fairly simple, but use the speaker Dave had arranged because he is very willing to work with us. Pam agreed. Cory suggests it not be put on the website, which would allow random guests, but to stick with our membership list only. Denny suggested asking members to send in their bird sightings to someone via email and then they could be

read as part of the on-line presentation. Bob said that Larry at MA can help Cory set this up because he sets up their meetings, so knows how. Cory has been working with Amy Seaman using the MA Zoom Pro account for OSNA so feels he is able to do the set-up. Carole cautions about opening to the public because Zoom has had instances of people joining a Zoom meeting and making inappropriate statements.

Bob noted that we have elections at the annual meeting, which we pushed to the fall because of COVID. However, our by-laws only allow votes by proxy or face-to-face, but not via an on-line meeting. Bob has checked with a lawyer for another situation, and he said it's a pretty tricky situation. Bob suggests we publish a ballot in the newsletter and have people send them in (proxy), and at least 3 board members would get together and count the ballots. Bob said that at worst, the results of the vote would be invalidated. Gael wondered about changing the by-laws, and Bob said they have to be changed at a general meeting. Gael suggested that the newsletter contain a vote on both the election and the by-law change. Bob said he feels that the by-law change can't be made until May 2021. Gael feels any meeting can be set up as the annual meeting as long as there is a 30-day notice.

Kay read from our by-laws, which say that the by-laws can be changed at a general meeting or any special meeting that is called for that purpose. Bob suggested the by-law change and elections be on the same ballot, which would be issued as a proxy vote in the newsletter in September. Kay said that in her research on this, she found that FEC used some specific language to inform members that the wording for any by-law changes were posted on the website, as were the bio's for people in the elections, so the actual ballot could be very simple and not contain all of that.

Gael said if it's ready, the September newsletter could contain a ballot for a by-law change to allow voting on-line, and for the elections for candidates and officers. And, it will inform members that information will be on the website. Bob said he feels he can get it done for the September meeting – he will work with Joe and have it to the BOD for any feedback or edits, and then have it done by the newsletter deadline. Bob would like to see the BOD members who are on the Board as a result of being committee chairs, be elected for 3 years as an at-large member, instead of one year. He will check with each of them and gather bio's for them for that to be included in the election.

Field Trips: Kathy said they would like to have an OK from the BOD to go ahead with planning and holding field trips, before they put the work into the arrangements (there is a list on the meeting agenda). A poll of BOD members showed complete support. Gael mentioned that Amy Seaman does a raptor ID presentation, and is planning to record it, and it would be available to us as if we would like. Margaret will work with Laura on setting up multiple days of Sandhill Crane viewing, and Denny volunteered to help and will work with them. Denny suggested that our waiver form include some specific language related to COVID safety. Kathy and Margaret will review the existing form and add some guidelines, including masks and using your own personal equipment. If scopes are shared, wipes will be used between viewings. We have \$300 in the budget for Birds of Prey, and that would cover 2 presentations at Wild Wings,

so Kathy will schedule 2. Denny and Derrick are still working on some large silhouette cut-outs of raptors.

PP for September: Everyone should look at the list, and complete their assigned items, and contact Linda Winnie or Gael, only if they have questions.

CAR awards: Cory will coordinate these. More in the future.

OSNA Negotiations: Cory reported that the next meeting is tomorrow. They are still waiting to hear what threats exist for moving toward securing a Conservation Easement, and DNRC is supposed provide this at the meeting tomorrow. If we get a Conservation Easement secured, Cory feels we shouldn't have the same level of management responsibility as we currently have. In particular, we shouldn't have to be finding funding and doing weed control. He would expect some of the money DNRC would receive from the CE, should be used toward management expenses for the area. Kay thinks that's an excellent position to take with DNRC and encourages that the negotiation team go forward on this. Denny, Rod, and Pam agreed.

Conservation Issues: Two letters were distributed in the BOD packet that cover 2 conservation issues, including opposing a large subdivision proposed near Pete Fishers property, which has a conservation easement. Gael wrote the letters, but hasn't sent them, and would like input. Discussion followed about how these issues are going to become more critical in this valley because of the cumulative effect, and that we need to be vocal about conservation issues. There was support for sending both letters.

Education: Tom reported that on the contract with Josh Covill, saying they are working with Denny to get clear about the assignments and responsibilities for Josh. He also said that the Ed Committee has agreed in the past about the best way to contact teachers was a paper list of the available resources, placed in their mailbox, because emails are easily overlooked. Cindy and Tom are working on putting together an Ed Committee meeting and would like emails from committee members about their comfort level with a meeting setting (virtual, outside, at Lone Pine Visitors Center, etc.).

Jewel Basin Hawk Watch: Scheduling has moved to a Google calendar and Jake sent an email to everyone who has served as a primary and volunteer so they know how to access and use the calendar. Gael would like people to get signed up on the calendar, especially in the end of August and into September, which is prior to Josh Covill serving as the contracted primary observer. Dan Casey will be moving back in mid-September, and looks forward to being more available, but can't help much with the organizing because of the many things he needs to take care of related to moving.

Membership: There are some issues related to membership recruitment that need to be resolved because Mike won't have the opportunity to speak at a meeting.

Next meeting: September 8, in an outdoor setting, and will start at 5:30, bring your own dinner and chair.

Margaret motion to adjourn, Kay seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.