

Flathead Audubon Board of Directors Meeting (online) 4/5/2021
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

BOD participants: Gael Bissell, Cory Davis, Rod Walette, Pam Willison, Will Beyer, Jake Bramante, Cindy Roberts, Tom Roberts, Margaret Parodi, Carole Jorgensen, Kay Mitchell, Darcy Thomas, Dave Manuwal, Jan Metzmaker, Joe Batts, Mike Fanning

Other participants: Dan Casey

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

Minutes: No changes. Motion to accept as written by Dave, Margaret seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Financial: Rod reported that there was no unusual financial activity this past month. Investments have made good gains since July, which is good. However, because of the fairly aggressive position of our investments, this exposes us to large losses if the market drops. For the Finance Committee, he will bring up the need for a change to a more conservative investment position.

Rod reported that through the Treasurer's Bootcamp training, he learned that he should be providing a more detailed actual vs. budget report in addition to the two he has been providing. He walked through an analysis of the existing condition of our income, and compared it to the upcoming fiscal year which will not have the COVID grant for income, making it helpful to carry some cash balance into the coming fiscal year. He also mentioned that we can draw out up to \$10,800 from investments to use for operating expenses. The Finance Committee will work to determine the amount to draw out annually. Kay commented that when we have a strong year with good income, such as this year, it's a good thing to be able to carry over some cash balance into the next year. Kay also mentioned that we need to anticipate making a substantial cash match for fundraising related to the conservation easement for Owen Sowerwine. Pam also mentioned that the weed treatments this spring will need to come from our funds because the grant covered last year, and if we secure a grant again, it would cover 2022. She said that could be up to \$2000. Kay suggested that if we would prefer to move some of the cash out of checking, it would be very safe to put some into Whitefish Credit Union. Cory commented that much of this is for discussion in the Finance Committee, and that he will send out a poll to set up a meeting the end of April. Rod added that the 21-22 budget will be prepared in that meeting.

Cory made a motion to accept and file the financial reports Rod provided. Kay seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Rod has been working on the components of the financial policy. When it's ready to review, he will send it to the entire BOD, even though the Finance Committee will be doing the work to fine tune it and bring it the BOD for approval. He said he has developed a short version, and a

longer version. He mentioned that within the policy, there is a position of “Financial Reviewer”, and that would be a role that Kay has agreed to fill. Gael reminded Joe that he had offered to do a Charter for the Finance Committee, and he confirmed that he has started it and will finish it for the meeting. Gael would like to see these policies for guiding financial management completed and in place before summer.

Bad Rock Canyon project: FLT (Laura) has offered a field trip for our BOD. They are also seeking a contribution from us toward the project. They would like a pledge, so they know where they stand in commitments. Gael will do a poll to see what day the last week of April would work for most for the field trip. The consensus was that mornings would work best for birding.

Donations: Gael accepted the Dave Chapple limited edition print (Cardinals) which was offered as a donation, and has it in her possession. She also has the Zeiss scope that was donated, and it’s available for field trips.

Meeting Rooms: Numerous FAS people have visited and viewed the large United Way meeting rooms, and we have requested to reserve a large space for next year for public meetings. However, there are potential conflicts with other tenants, so we won’t know for sure which room we will be assigned until June or July. Gael also completed the paperwork for BOD meetings in one of two spaces that are adequate size (including a new conference room). There will be a new procedure for room use, and Dave will go through some training for us. Mike asked about the cost, and Gael confirmed that it stayed the same at \$50 for large rooms, and \$25 for a 2-hour meeting in a conference room. The September 2021 BOD meeting will likely be held at the Lone Pine Pavilion. The May 2022 general meeting location will depend on the status of the Whitefish facility, which needs to be renovated.

Hawk Watch Report: Gael said that Dan Casey completed the entire report, and she commended him for doing a terrific report. Dan said that he added a few more graphs to present the data in an effort to show trends, and included more species photos. Jake confirmed that the report will be posted to our website, but the location is uncertain right now.

Montana Audubon field trips: In lieu of a state festival, Margaret and Gael tried to find someone to complete a field trip in our area on June 5, but most of the main trip leaders were not available. Jake said he might be able to do a field trip, and Joe mentioned that Bob Lee was also a possible trip leader. Gael will follow up.

Committee Reports/Discussion:

CAR – Linda Winnie suggested that the Volunteer award be presented in September. The article will be in the August newsletter. The Board thought Denny would be the best person to inform the recipient of the award and write the article.

Day of Giving – Kay clarified that there are 2 events sponsored by Whitefish Community Foundation. In May, it's the Day of Giving, and late summer is the Great Fish event. For the Day of Giving, it's a 24-hour event on May 4-5, and if we receive \$2000 in donations, the WFCF does a \$1000 match. Kay will have the application completed and in by the April 15 deadline. We had voted to participate in a previous BOD meeting.

Great Fish: Kay made a motion that Flathead Audubon apply for and, if accepted, participate in the 2021 Great Fish Community Challenge. Jake seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously. Kay made a motion that the Board designate the Flathead Audubon Conservation Education Program as our Primary Use of Funds in the 2021 Great Fish Community Challenge. Mike seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously. Kay made a motion that the Board designate all Flathead Audubon activities and programs other than the Conservation Education program to receive our Secondary Use of Funds from the 2021 Great Fish Community Challenge. Rod seconded the motion. Discussion: Gael asked if this needed to be more specific. Kay said the motion is okay as written, but within the application, there will be more detail about primary and secondary designations for the funds. Rod asked for clarification about what can be put into Education (the primary designation). Kay said the first \$15000 + appropriate percentage of the match needs to go for the primary designation. However, there isn't a problem putting more funds into the primary designation, and distributing remaining funds to the secondary designations. For next year, we could make it more specific. Motion passed unanimously. Kay made a motion that the Board approve Jan Metzmaker and Gail Cleveland as Flathead Audubon's Fund Advisors in the 2021 Great Fish Community Challenge. Jan asked for clarification about the tasks involved, and Kay said it's similar to what she did last year. Mike seconded the motion. Discussion: Kay clarified that the dates are late August to early September. Motion passed unanimously. Kay will be sending an email to each BOD member because she needs some background information on each Board member for the application. This includes listing your affiliations with any other organizations in the valley. She will need these returned by Thursday of this week.

Publicity: Gael mentioned that last year (our first) we had some issues with the getting publicity pre-approved for Great Fish, so there needs to be a meeting later to get everyone on the same page, and identify the content and avenues to use for our promotions. Kay said the publicity for the Day of Giving is a simply a basic mission statement.

Tech Soup: Kay needs to order some software from Tech Soup, which is available to non-profits at a low cost because it's been donated by technology companies. If others need upgrades for their computers, send the information to Mike or Jake, who can place the order for FAS. Mike clarified that it covers stand-alone or annual subscriptions. Also, as has been done in the past, we will offer to update the computers for Linda W. and Lewis Y., who prepare the FAS newsletter, and FAS has paid for these purchases. Joe made a motion that FAS pay to provide software upgrades for BOD members and Linda and Lewis. Mike seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Website and FB Calendars: Jake reported that Shannon Donaldson has agreed to keep the FAS Facebook calendar updated. She will receive information via Jan, who keeps the website calendar updated. Carole also provided our information for the Climate Smart Glacier event calendar and would like feedback about whether people mention that they are attending our fieldtrips/events by seeing it there.

Programs: Gael wondered if the link for the May meeting is the same as we've been using. Cory will confirm and let Linda W. know. Jan asked whether she should include the zoom link in her press releases, or refer people to the website. Jake confirmed that she should refer to the website to help prevent Zoom crashers.

Field Trips: Margaret reported there are numerous field trips coming up in April and May, and details are in the newsletter. Margaret will see if Laura Katzman can hold some spots open for Audubon members on the birds and bike trips because we are co-sponsoring it – we haven't publicized it yet, and they have, so they might fill up. Cory wondered if there is supposed to be a birding field trip co-leader, and Margaret said that hasn't been arranged, but she will talk to Laura. Darcy has offered to drive a car for traffic control. This set of 3 bike and bird trips are on May 15 and cover lower valley.

Upcoming: Kathy Ross will do wayfarers in May, Warbler days will be June 8-10 (plans are being formed for leaders and an article will be written by Mike), June 5 - Jake for Montana Audubon, Lost Trail on June 11 and 12 (Bev Skinner), Cory and Maria Mantas at Swan Wildlife Refuge in early July after it opens, and July 15 public Bad Rock Canyon tour by Laura.

Liability forms will be completed by trip leaders. Trip leaders will scan those and forward to both Margaret (for count totals), and Rod (for insurance records). Jan suggested we give people the opportunity on that form, to provide their email address to receive additional information from us. It was agreed that it should be added, and Margaret will look at the form and see how it can be done.

Conservation Article: Carole is willing to provide one, but asked for suggestions for the topic. She encourages people to continue to contact their representatives about wildlife issues. There was an article in the paper about the Miles City Hatchery getting a permit for shooting birds to deter them from feeding in the hatchery ponds. She spoke to the hatchery manager and feels they have tried numerous methods of deterrent, and none have worked. Discussion implied that we shouldn't get involved as an organization.

Elections: We need new Board members and a nominee for Vice-President. Bob has talked to some people about joining the Board, and so has Denny. Pam declined the offer to be a candidate for Vice-President. The nominations need to be set for the May newsletter.

Education: Denny provided a written annual summary in the packet. He's currently continuing to work on switching his PowerPoints to video. Cindy reported that the promotion materials for the video series are being distributed this week to all middle-school and high-school science

teachers across the valley. The committee will meet in a couple weeks, and will discuss planning for Birds of Prey. Denny would like suggestions for a theme and ideas for speakers.

Girls Who Code: Carole asked about the “Girls Who Code” project from a few years ago. Kay reported that the material was provided to us, and given to an instructor at FVCC who was going to assign a student to complete the project and produce a useable app for birding. Kay has contacted him numerous times, and feels that he has basically abandoned the project.

Membership – We are in need of a new Chairperson for the Committee. However, right now, it’s not totally clear what duties this person will have. Mike will write a small piece about it for the newsletter. Jake feels the job will adjust according to their skills, and they don’t have to be a strong technical person.

OSNA: Pam reported over the past 3 weeks, volunteers have contributed over 200 hours working on clearing some dense common buckthorn in an area between the Stillwater River and the large water channel. The next couple work days are cancelled because the ospreys are returning. We will continue with quiet work: Pat and Denny will continue to identify and mark buckthorn in that section and Pam will switch to cutting daphne. Pam thanked Will for all the work he did on houndstongue last summer and said the effect is visible. Will has also offered to work in OSNA again this summer. Pam is finishing the Flathead Conservation Grant application, due April 30. Contractor weed spraying is scheduled for May, prior to flooding activity. Denny and Pam will also work to restore the trail markers on the Education trail.

Cory reported they met with DNRC last week and Flathead Land Trust is moving forward with a draft conservation easement and appraisals, and everyone is still on board. Gael reported that everything is pushed out another year, because the results of a major grant wouldn’t be known until 2022. This will result in the need to continue the DNRC permit for an additional year.

Pileated Post: Items needing decisions have already been resolved in prior discussions.

Other: Carole mentioned that Montana is getting \$3 billion as a result of the latest economic relief bill. She suggests that we join some other organizations and provide some suggestions about some good options for spending the money for something constructive and related to wildlife or habitat. She feels that wildlife crossings on highways would be a good idea. Pam suggested a program for addressing common buckthorn infestations and programs for eradication. Carole also mentioned sage grouse.

The next BOD meeting will be at Lone Pine pavilion on May 3. If someone wants to go light the grill, we could hold a bring-your-own-food or pot luck meal at 5, before the meeting at 6.

Motion to adjourn by Jake, Carole seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.