

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, December 6, 2021, FWP Conference Room  
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Directors in Attendance: Gael Bissell, Pam Willison, Rod Walette, Bob Lee, Dave Manuwal, Jake Bramante, Cindy Roberts, Tom Roberts, Kay Mitchell

Directors attending virtually: Cory Davis, Margaret Parodi, Will Beyer

Others in Attendance: Denny Olson

This meeting was held using a hybrid format of both live and virtual attendance, as a test for doing monthly public meetings in a similar way.

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 by Gael Bissell, Past President/Acting President.

**Minutes:** No changes; Tom made a motion to approve; Bob seconded; unanimous approval.

**Financial:** The Board Financial Reports were sent out in the packet, and Rod explained that the top section of the Revenue reports displays the total funds available. Rod noted that the membership numbers on this report result from tying the number to the revenue generated by the membership payments. Rod also included a copy of a Profit/Loss statement, which he offered to do monthly along with the revenue report, if the Board wants it. This Profit/Loss report is generated Fiscal year-to-date (currently July 1-Dec1), and compares the Profit/Loss YTD to the Budget YTD. Gael suggested seeing it quarterly, in order to avoid having Rod spend additional time on preparing an extra financial report. Rod noted that it is easy to generate and he's willing to prepare it monthly. As a result, Cory asked that Rod prepare it monthly as a useful management tool for tracking progress and comparisons to budget.

Rod also commented that our investments have declined some over the past month because the market has had several swings up and down. The check activity report was also reviewed and there were no questions. Dave made a motion to accept and file the financial reports; Jake seconded; unanimous approval.

Rod also mentioned: Day of Giving by WCF (originally created in 2020 to counter the effects of the pandemic) has been discontinued; he renewed our SAM so that it doesn't expire; he is working on getting quotes for our Directors/Officers insurance and Liability insurance, and will be getting quotes from Payne West and HUB. He noted that although it's nice to work with someone locally, it's not difficult to do insurance long-distance, and our decision can be made based on the lowest price quote.

Rod has been doing the Montana Audubon Wildlife Grant application for the past several years, and would like someone else to take over completing the application. Dan Casey would be a likely person to take this over, because it has been being used for Hawk Watch. Since Dan isn't in attendance, Rod will contact him, and if Dan is unable to do the application, Rod will complete it this year. Rod noted that it is a simple application, but is due in a couple weeks, so needs to get done.

**Whitefish Community Foundation Endowment/Investment:** Rod would prefer to not transfer the funds we have set aside until after the end of the calendar year so it will be easier to close out the books. Rod is seeking input from people as a result of the presentation from WCF last month. Bob suggested a person from Montana Audubon who manages two endowments for them, who might be a useful contact for Rod.

Feedback from Directors: Kay stated she's in favor of setting up an endowment rather than investment because we do have members who might be interested in including FAS in their estate planning, and an endowment would be an appropriate place for people to contribute. Rod mentioned, that at the present time, we have \$50,000 we are holding to invest through WCF, regardless of future additional contributions, and we will make money either way. Jake mentioned that having a set return from the endowment will make it easier for budgeting. Rod reminded that for a permanent endowment, the purpose has to be specified. He also noted that the \$50,000 we transfer would set up an initial (quasi) endowment which would show on our books as an investment, and be controlled by us, and that any additional money people contribute to the quasi-endowment would be considered a donation. However, if we establish a permanent endowment through WCF, it would not show on our books, and we would receive the payout which would be included as income for the purpose(s) specified for the endowment, and by the contributor. Pam asked for clarification about how these funds and purposes are tracked through WCF, and then through our financial records for the specified purposes. Kay noted that there is a good tax advantage to the people who contribute to permanent endowments. Rod informed us that the process to trigger WCF to create the endowment would be a 3-page application that he and Kay could complete, and when the account is set up, we would transfer the \$50,000 to WCF. Bob said that Montana Audubon receives a specified amount each year. Jake said his understanding is that we can also request a specific amount of money be disbursed when we need it for certain projects. Cory suggested that we continue to generate questions that need to be answered, and hold future discussion. It was agreed to set the deadline for a decision as the March 2022 BOD meeting.

**Hybrid Meeting Setup:** Jake did a test run during the meeting this evening, and the equipment set-up is adequate, but there are a few improvements that can be made, such as reducing the echo-sound, and using high-speed WiFi instead of Jakes cell phone. Jake reported that he was able to take advantage of Black Friday deals and coupons to get a good price on a mid-range Dell computer, which should arrive soon. He noted the purchases that still need to be made include: a tripod (about \$80), a good quality camera (unknown cost), and he has selected a screen that has a folding aluminum frame with a stand and is 100 diagonal inches (\$180).

**Website Transfer:** Jake has made a change to a new web hosting service (In-Motion Hosting) and it will be similar in cost. There were increasing issues with the previous service.

**Website Data Base Management:** Jake demonstrated how we currently have numerous disconnected data bases being maintained, and as a result of our complex situation, some parts of the system are not current with other parts. Jake has been testing the Little Green Light

program for our data management, which would eliminate a need for numerous people to keep similar data bases because it's capable of doing all the coordination. During his testing, he has been working on addressing issues specific to FAS and how we record memberships and member information. Jake suggests we continue to do a general annual membership drive, but said that using the new program we can base that on when people last contributed (donation or membership payment), allowing us to avoid the possibility of telling someone they need to renew shortly after they have donated. Jake also feels that we should use our newsletter as a way to stay in contact with people regardless of their membership status because he has seen instances where people have had gaps in their giving, but then came back with generous contributions during Great Fish. He advocates not threatening to cancel the newsletter if a membership hasn't been paid, but continuing to use it to stay in contact with people who support our causes and potentially will contribute again

At this point in the program testing, Jake will start to allow access to some of the key people who are currently working with membership data information, so they can do their own assessment. The access will not contain the dollar amounts, in order to protect privacy. The existing data systems are still in place and being used, but once the full changeover to Little Green Light happens, Mike Fanning will be finished as Membership Chair. Jake will serve in that role temporarily until the full transition is complete, but then wants someone else to take over. Jake mentioned that the person doesn't need to be highly skilled in data-base management because the Little Green Light program takes care of the management. They do need to have some computer experience because they will be doing data entry, in addition to doing more of the personal contact and responses to inquiries, and coordinating with Linda Winnie for the newsletter labels/lists.

**Zoom Account:** Jake noted that we should get our own Zoom account, which would cost about \$30 per month. This evening we got bumped out of the Montana Audubon zoom account we have been using because someone else started a meeting.

**Cats and Birds Brochure:** Gael distributed the latest version with some changes, which included some wording changes Denny contributed. A veterinarian also reviewed it and contributed some suggestions, especially about making the numbers more understandable - Gael and Denny will look at some more changes in response to this. Denny also suggested adding a reference to the Birds Rock and Bird Trouble videos. Gael and Linda Hunt also will be taking the final draft for a review by a representation from the Humane Society. Jake made a motion that we move forward with the Cats and Birds Brochure, including taking it to the Humane Society for their response. Kay seconded. Unanimous approval.

**OSNA Update:** The Conservation Easement is moving along. Gael commented that the DNRC staff have been phenomenal to work with and the document is very well written.

**Field Trips:** Derrick is leading one on December 21. Denny will lead one in OSNA on National Trail Day in January. Bob Lee is working on the Freezeout trip in March.

**Education:** Denny reported:

\* He is working on the script for the Native Plant video and has identified the need to purchase some clips from bj worth, and confirmed there are funds in the budget to proceed with that. He will need to do some filming in the spring when things green up, but will continue to work on the parts he has.

\*Work is being done on an Osprey power point which would fit into 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Cindy is working on some new activities. He would like an Osprey skull and leg with talons (possibly via FWP or a rescue center).

\* The Riparian education trunk is being divided it into various grade levels because it's too large.

\*The OSNA Deer Exclosure area structure is done. Denny is seeking some teachers to work on it annually to monitor the changes. When asked about Breeding Bird Surveys, Denny said there is potential. There is also potential for a regeneration study after removal/treatment of Buckthorn.

\*Gael asked whether FAS will be participating in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Evergreen School winter raptor and spring migratory bird activities with FLT and FWP. Denny will follow-up.

**Conservation:** Cory, Lewis and Dave met and discussed the committee status. Since then, Dave has volunteered to be temporary Chairperson. Dave has sent out some inquiries to some people about participating on the committee. The focus is working on spreading the burden to avoid burnout. Gael mentioned that the committee should be diverse people with areas of expertise.

**PP Content:**

\*Hybrid In-person and Zoom public meeting in January: It was agreed to give it a try, and we suggested that Cory write the article as the President message. Dave, Cory, and Jake will work with United Way to coordinate everything. Bob will try to contribute a box of masks and we will provide hand sanitizer. Jake suggests a message that says we've been wanting to do this, and encourage people to do it safely so we can continue. Related to United Way, Gael suggested we add our items being stored at Gateway to our insurance policy. Rod will add a \$2500 property loss policy to our insurance and we need to do an inventory.

\*OSNA Exclosure research – Denny will do an article separate from his column.

\*Conservation Corner – this committee is just getting their feet under them, so they will take this month off. No article this month.

**Board Recruitment:** Gael noted that because of the pandemic and lack of in-person meetings this last 20 months, we lost the opportunity to recruit new Board and Committee members through our meetings, so Gael and Cory encourage Directors to keep this in mind and think of ideas for new energy, skills, and people. She noted that several of our committees are depleted and need members. We have to get new people as some of our Board members may be burning out.

**OSNA** – Pam had made a suggestion to Gael and Cory that we need to formulate a list of topics for articles about OSNA as a build up for support and contributions toward the proposed

Conservation Easement. The articles would be included monthly in the PP (and possibly other publications). She has a list of suggested articles and will share those so others can contribute ideas. Also, the OSNA bird list is being updated by Dan.

**Annual Report for National Audubon** – Gael offered to do this annual report for Cory and then let him review and submit it. As such, she will need all of our volunteer hours. This report is due in January, so each Directors needs to provide a number for their volunteer hours before, or at, the January BOD meeting.

**Montana Audubon** – Bob Lee will be participating in their BOD meeting in the next few days, and will report about the Deer Exclosure project in OSNA.

Dave made a motion to adjourn; Jake second; unanimous approval. Adjourned at 7:35.