

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, FWP Conference Room, 3/7/22  
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Directors in attendance: Cory Davis, Jake Bramante, Rod Walette, Tom Roberts, Cindy Roberts, Kay Mitchell, Pam Willison, Gael Bissell, Margaret Parodi, Darcy Thomas

Directors participating virtually: Dave Manuwal, Will Beyer, Dan Casey, Derrick Rathe

Others attending or participating: Denny Olson

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 pm by President Cory Davis. The agenda was reviewed.

**Minutes:** The minutes were reviewed and no changes were made. Kay made a motion to approve, Darcy seconded, no discussion, unanimous vote.

**Financials:** Rod reviewed the monthly financial report with bank balances, revenues/expenses, investments, and memberships. Gael asked if we are tracking national memberships also. Kay inquired if we are using a multiplication factor for family memberships. Jake will work to find the answers to these so we have a more comprehensive membership number. Rod commented that our investments are down due to markets, but because of our conservative investment position, the impact hasn't been as severe as it might have been.

Rod also reviewed the checking account activity and the budget report. There were no questions. Gael made a motion to approve and file the financial reports, Margaret seconded, no additional discussion, unanimous vote to approve and file.

Rod also re-opened the conversation about changing our equity investment ratio. Back in January, our financial investment advisor (Dan Short) had suggested we make some progressive changes (3%/month) to change that ratio to 45-50% equity. At this point, because of the volatility of the market, Rod suggests that we rely on the expertise of Dan and let him manage our investments within the ratio limits that have been set by the Board. Rod said it's not necessary for us to make the decision and make a motion. The Board is comfortable with this.

Rod also re-opened the conversation about establishing an endowment and/or investment account with Whitefish Community Foundation with the \$50,000 the Board set aside. Rod remarked on a couple benchmarks, such as the minimum to establish an account with WCF being \$15,000, but mentioned the risks of losing the funds if it drops below the \$15,000 as a result of poor performing markets, so suggested avoiding that investment amount. Another benchmark of \$30,000 in order to avoid paying fees. Rod inquired whether it might be a good idea to retain some of the \$50,000, in light of upcoming expenses related to the Conservation Easement for OSNA. Gael clarified that the goal of our fundraising for the Conservation Easement is to not dip into any existing funds, such as the \$50,000 that we have been holding to put with WCF, so need not be a consideration in our WCF decision.

Therefore, the decisions we need to make are: are we ready to establish a fund with WCF, which type of fund (endowment or investment), and how much we want to put into it. Jake

brought up the balances of FAS investments so we could consider the impact of our decision. Kay encouraged that we establish an endowment because the return is higher, and it gives people an avenue for giving money to FAS and receive tax benefits, or leaving money for FAS in their will. The discussion indicated agreement of doing an endowment, and Rod said the procedure is fairly simple and he and Kay can complete it. Rod made a motion to go forward with using the \$50,000 we had set aside to open a permanent endowment fund at Whitefish Community Foundation. Tom seconded the motion. No additional discussion. Unanimous vote to approve.

### **Board/Committee Changes:**

\*Membership Committee – Jake has agreed to become the Chair, Mike Fanning will step down and continue to help Jake if he can, as the Little Green Light program transitions into full operation. Jake noted that Michele Tohtz is willing to continue to help with membership. Darcy made a motion that Jake be approved as the Membership Chair; Gael seconded; no additional discussion; unanimous vote to approve (Jake recused himself from the vote).

\*Newsletter – Linda Winnie is stepping down as Chair of the committee after May, but would like to remain on the committee. She won't continue with coordinating the content, but has offered to support and assist the person who takes over the position. There were no suggestions for a replacement at this time. There was discussion about reorganizing the position and having two people who could alternate months, or split the duties into 2 jobs - organizing the content and editing. Linda provided a list of the duties she performs. It was noted Lewis Young will continue to work on formatting the newsletter.

\*Board members – Gael contacted one candidate, and she agreed to start helping with field trips, but didn't want to make any additional commitments. Various candidates were discussed, and some contacts will be made.

**Compensation:** Cory checked our By-Laws, and it's clear that no assets of the organization should inure to a Board member. In light of this, he feels we shouldn't compensate Board members. He also commented that WCF really frowns on compensating Board members. Reimbursement, mileage, per diem, or compensation written into a grant will still be okay.

**OSNA:** Cory updated that he, Pam, Gael, Amy Seaman met to discuss roles and responsibilities as will be laid out in the MOU and Management Plan. There will be a meeting at DNRC tomorrow to compare our list with those of DNRC and FLT. Cory also mentioned that FLT received the \$100,000 NAWCA grant. Pam noted that she and Denny are coordinating some buckthorn work days and she will be sending out an email so people can sign up to help. She also commented that she appreciated the feedback she received from the comprehensive OSNA Biennial Report she compiled for DNRC, and distributed to the BOD.

**Field trips:** Margaret reviewed the April field trips, and they will be included in the newsletter. Some additional field trips were added to the list.

Derrick brought up the idea of doing some presentations and field trips through a partnership between Montana Native Plant Society, Flathead Audubon, and Wayfarer's State Park. Kathy Ross is coordinating these and would like to have FAS agree to commit to two field trips and presentations in each of May and June. Darcy is planning to represent FAS, and Kathy Ross will represent MNPS, and Hailey the Native Plant Center. The Board was in support.

**Education:** Cindy reported that the committee met and received an update of the status of our materials and Denny's activities. The Committee will meet again in March. Cindy also gave our Conservation award at the Science Fair, which went to a young man who did his project on winter birds and their feed preferences. Cindy also reported that the entertainment at the Science Fair was the birds of Wild Wings, and Kathy Ross did a great job.

Denny reported that he met with a group of Principals, and some expressed interest in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum - he's following up. He had a busy month with a variety of presentations to groups. He plans to pursue getting the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum and field trips into the schools, and often the planning for next school year results from the information distributed now.

**PP Content:**

\*Cory will provide the instructions for the April meeting.

\*Remembrances for people who have been involved with FAS. There was a discussion about trying to establish a metric for deciding when we would include something in our newsletter and in general the contribution needs to be significant. The remembrance listed won't be done.

\*Forestry Expo and Earth Day events – Denny hasn't heard anything about these being held, but will follow up (including Arbor Day, and Migratory Birds at CSKT). In a quick search, Gael found an active Forestry Expo website which lists the dates for May 2022. Denny will work with Linda Winnie based on what he finds.

\*Earth Day – Pam questioned whether Linda is looking for information about the Earth Day event for Education, or an article about Earth Day for the PP. Denny will call Linda and check.

\*Conservation Corner- it comes out in alternating months, so Dave will write one for May.

\*May meeting – Cory found the Whitefish Center is booked on the May 9 date, so we will hold the May meeting at the Gateway Center in the large room. Cory will check the facilities and rules for food. We will hold a silent auction for all items, including the larger items that were donated (Cardinal print, signed books Joe Batts has, Tom Roberts artwork). The larger items will be mentioned in the May newsletter – they will be auctioned not raffled.

\*New addition to the PP list: Margaret will do a brief report on the field trip to Creston Fish Hatchery.

**Camera Purchase:**

The used camera Jake was investigating won't work for our purposes, so we need to purchase a camera. Jake consulted with B & H Photo and feels he can purchase an adequate used camera for about \$400. Gael made a motion to approve Jake purchasing the camera we need, up to \$500, Tom seconded, no discussion, unanimous approval.

Margaret made a motion to adjourn; Cindy seconded; motion approved. Adjourned at 7:31!