

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, FWP Conference Room, 4/4/22  
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Directors in attendance: Cory Davis, Rod Walette, Pam Willison, Jake Bramante, Tom Roberts, Cindy Roberts, Will Beyer, Margaret Parodi, Dave Manuwal, Darcy Thomas

Directors attending virtually: Kay Mitchell

Others in Attendance: Denny Olson, Shannon Donaldson, Bridger Donaldson

The meeting was called to order by President Cory Davis at 5:35 pm.

**March minutes:** Dave made a motion to approve as written; Tom seconded; no discussion; unanimous approval.

**Financials:** Rod reviewed the financial report, including revenue/expenses and investments. Rod noted that the membership numbers will no longer be included in this report due to changes in membership tracking. He also noted that the investments look different because the endowment fund has been created with Whitefish Community Foundation, and the fluctuation of the investment values is due to changing markets. The second report was the checking account activity – there were no questions. Rod also included the Profit/Loss report – there were no questions. Darcy made a motion to accept and file the financial reports; Dave seconded; no discussion; unanimous vote to approve.

Cory mentioned the financial committee will be meeting before the end of the month and will prepare the budget, which would be presented for approval at the May meeting. Rod is gathering the budget information from committee Chairs.

Rod reported he did the annual report for the Secretary of State, so we are current.

Rod and Kay completed the process to establish an endowment fund with Whitefish Community Foundation, and in the process found that we needed to designate fund advisors. Rod made a motion to designate Rod Walette and Kay Mitchell as the endowment fund advisors for the Flathead Audubon Endowment with WCF; Cindy seconded; no discussion; Kay and Rod abstained, otherwise it was a unanimous vote of approval.

**Grant Application for Binoculars:** Pam reported we did not get the Mountain Dew grant for binoculars, which we had previously applied for. However, she has completed a grant application for the Education Program of Flathead Conservation District, for \$5000 to purchase 30 Vortex Diamondback 8x42 binoculars with harnesses (Denny confirmed from Vortex that we can purchase them at a 50% discount in price). Prior to applying, Pam talked to the person in charge of the program for FCD, and she indicated they had funds because they hadn't received any applications this year, that our proposal seemed like a "good fit", and that offering to do matching funds wasn't a vital component. Denny (and possibly Darcy) will turn in the grant

application and attend the FCD Board meeting when our application is considered. Although the application doesn't include matching funds, Pam suggested it might be wise to authorize Denny be able to offer a match if this becomes an issue when the application is being considered, if that will move the application forward and get it approved (note: these would result in a decrease in the amount we seek from the grant, not be on top of the \$5000). There was discussion about the value of this, and the amount we would be willing to offer as a match. Rod noted it would be from General-Unrestricted funds. Darcy made a motion to authorize Denny Olson to offer a match of up to 20% (\$1000), should the need for that arise during review of our application at the FCD meeting; Jake seconded; no additional discussion; unanimous approval.

**Somers Beach Planning Participation:** Cory reported that meetings are being held regarding the creation of a State Park at Somers Beach, and feels we should participate in the process. Dan Casey has agreed to lead the effort to represent FAS, and Dave and other members of the Conservation Committee will assist.

**Building Bird Strike Survey:** Jim Rogers, Mission Valley Audubon, has asked if we would be willing to organize a group of volunteers to complete surveys in our area. He has created a survey protocol and instructions. Dave commented that this will not be easy to do because you would need to do lots of sampling and early morning sampling to avoid the dead birds being eaten or removed. It would take quite a bit of organizing. It was agreed that a group would meet with Jim and discuss the possibilities. Cory thinks Montana Audubon is also involved. Denny noted that part of the value of doing this survey is the publicity and attention drawn to the issue.

**Church Slough Work Group:** A working group is being established by FWP to discuss motorized boating issues in Church Slough. It was noted that this is a popular birding location. Applications to be in the group are due April 8, so Cory suggests we apply as FAS, and decide later who would be able to attend. Cory will complete the application (it's fairly brief).

**May Meeting:** New Board members: Tom has been in contact with a couple teachers, and they are very interested, and plan to attend the May meeting. Darcy talked to a person who is very interested. Gael also was going to contact some people, and Cory will check with her. The candidates in attendance this evening got a chance to ask some questions about the process, expectations, and committees. Elections of officers and Directors will be held at the May meeting. According to our By-Laws we don't have an exact number for the Board, so we are open to numerous new Directors. Bob Lee would need a brief biography for the May PP (deadline April 18), or a candidate can be nominated and introduce themselves when nominations are opened during the May meeting.

The meeting will be held at the Gateway Center in the same room as we've used, with doors open at 5, potluck at 6 (bring your own utensils and plate), and business meeting beginning at 7. Come early to help set up the room and the silent auction. Bring items for the silent auction. The May PP will contain the details.

**OSNA:** The next meeting at DNRC is April 21 to work on the Management Plan. Pam noted that the SURL renewal application is still being processed, so we need to pay \$1000 for our half, in the near future (Montana Audubon pays \$1000 also). Denny reported that he will be leading a field trip into the Education Trail of OSNA on Wednesday, April 6, for the Flathead Land Trust Board. Pam reported that the 4 work days held over the past couple weeks resulted in 141.5 hours of volunteer time, and they completed lots of work on Common Buckthorn.

**Field Trips:** Upcoming: Denny in OSNA; Dan Casey, Sonny Boon trail; Karen Nichols, Lawrence Park. New: Firebrand Pass, May 28, Steve Gniadek and Kathy Ross; Bev Skinner, Lost Trail, June 10 and 11; Lewis Young, bats, August. For the upcoming Warbler Days (June 12-14) Margaret needs people to lead walks – Jake, Cory, and Bridger are potential guides for these. There also needs to be a contact person listed, so Margaret will check and see if Jill and Mike Fanning will offer to do that again. There won't be a group potluck, so each person plans their own food.

Darcy reported that FLT isn't planning to do a Bike and Bird event because of planning for the ribbon cutting at Bad Rock. Darcy also inquired about the Swan Wildlife Refuge, and Cory will check with Maria Mantas and see if they can do another field trip – it depends on when restoration work begins there. Darcy also suggested that in May, after Bad Rock opens, we hold a tour for our BOD to get to know the area (especially where the private land/roads are located), before we offer public field trips. Darcy also spoke with Linda Winnie, who mentioned that Last Chance Audubon was offering a field trip about how to use ebird, and Darcy thinks that's a good idea for us. Cory suggested using Lone Pine so you could use the classroom to do the training, and then go out on a field trip. Jake suggested a classroom setting would accommodate ebird training and addressing some of the challenges people will come upon when making ebird entries (groups of waterfowl). He noted that Cornell has a training video we could use, and it might be better to conduct it more as a class, rather than a field trip. Darcy is willing to help coordinate it. It was suggested that Dan Casey might also have some training resources for this, so Darcy will talk to Dan, and will also inquire with Last Chance Audubon about their training resources and format. It could be scheduled in late summer or early fall.

**Education:** Cindy reported that they met last week and assessed the completion of the Strategic Plan and objectives. The meeting coming at the end of April will be to make changes or updates to the plan. Discussion also centered on the trunks and the lack of use. As a result of the discussions, Denny took the very large Riparian Trunk and used parts of it in the Osprey and waterfowl trunks, and then used the rest of the contents to create more focused trunks on water and on wetlands.

Denny reported that Cayuse Prairie school is interested in starting the Birding Curriculum in the fall and Smith Valley will begin participating in waterfowl training this spring, including a field trip to Smith Lake. He will also offer a teacher workshop for PIR credit to be held this spring. Jake suggested that Denny scan the "Where's the White" duck illustrations Denny created to create a PDF that others can use. Denny will scan them before loaning them to Smith Valley for their waterfowl training.

**Great Fish:** Cory will coordinate a meeting of the committee members sometime the end of April to be ready for upcoming activities related to Great Fish 2022. Related to WCF, Rod will be working with Jake to make it possible for people to use our website to learn about and make donations to our WCF endowment. Donations to a true endowment (with tax benefits) have to go through WCF, not us. Until we are set up to handle these questions and donations, it would be best to refer people to WCF.

**Membership:** Jake will have up to date membership numbers for our BOD next month.

**PP list:**

\*Endowment – Kay will do a small “teaser” in May PP

\*Warbler Days – Margaret and Darcy (article separate from field trip section)

\*Field Trips upcoming - will be a long list (Margaret has mentioned this to Linda)

\*Field trip report – Smith Lake FT report (Darcy). Freezout FT– Darcy will check with Bob/Leslie for details and if she gets information, will combine it with her Smith Lake report.

\*Global Big Day/Migratory Bird Day – No article - Denny feels it isn't being done as the Tribes are very busy with the transition of the Bison Range.

\*Ed Program – Denny - brief summary of specific events held and major ones upcoming. This is separate from his Niche story.

**Next General Meeting:** Darcy - CAR award Center for Native Plants; Denny - will do Bird Brain, Cory - mention field trips, and May meeting.

Dave moved to adjourn; Jake seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm