

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, 10/2/23, FWP Conference Room

Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Directors in attendance: Darcy Thomas, Pam Willison, Margaret Parodi, Ronda Howell, Kay Mitchell, Carole Jorgensen, Rod Walette, Bob Lee, Gael Bissell, Tom Roberts, Jake Bramante, Dan Casey, Bridger Donaldson, Shannon Donaldson

Others in attendance: Denny Olson, Dee Baginski, Geri Meireis

Minutes: Tom made a motion to approve the September minutes as written; Bob seconded; unanimous approval.

Financial Report: Rod mentioned that in past years we had gotten our Great Fish funds by now, but haven't received it yet this year, so the numbers differ from last year. Gael asked for clarification about the balance for the proposed conservation easement, and it was noted that there is a total of \$109,344, and a portion of that (\$23,447) is already at Flathead Land Trust. Rod noted that investments continue to go up and down. Technical difficulties prevented review of the check register for this month. Jake made a motion to file the financial report; Gael seconded; unanimous approval.

Operations Coordinator: Darcy introduced Dee Baginski who is the new contractor who will work as an Operations Coordinator. Her FAS email has been set up and she will email each of us so we are connected with her email address. Jake will also get her set up with access to other areas she will need to use. Darcy would like Gael, Pam and Denny to work with her on the Group Use and Calendar, and the guidelines and application process. Darcy would also like someone to walk through OS and make sure she is familiar with the areas and trails. She can also include the fall work day in her assignments. She may also attend the Great Fish award ceremony with Darcy.

Kalispell CBC: Pete Fisher is stepping down as the organizer, but is willing to train someone this year. Dan gave a description on the of work involved, and said that if no one takes it over, he might consider doing it this one year only.

Education Committee: Denny reported that he will be working in OS with Laura from FLT doing Evergreen 8th grade field trips. He is also working on the Hawk Watch video and has rescheduled the drone shoot on the ridge. The month of October he is focusing on school contacts, and has a number of appointments scheduled. Denny also noted that the COVID money is gone now, so school buses are more challenging to schedule, so he is moving his focus to classroom presentations and activities without the field trips. Keanu (Flathead HS Senior) and Denny are going to go assess the status of the deer enclosure and may consider taking it down after a final assessment of whether it was effective. They will also be looking at the spray/pull/control test plots. Denny will be doing a presentation for Montana Native Plant Society, including showing the new video. Tom reported that Cindy is still working on updating the learning kits and she and Denny are updating the list of resources.

Newsletter: Geri reviewed the list and filled in the missing details. She will send it out with a deadline reminder. Some items were removed from the list, and a few new items were added, including information about a couple of films relating to birds that are being shown in a film festival in Columbia Falls.

Road Scholar: Darcy brought up the issue of whether to continue participating in the summer intragenerational program. Issues include: road construction causing rough/dusty roads, not having access to the Johns Lake area again this year because the bridge isn't done yet, poor coordination by Glacier Institute, reductions in our time allotment, and challenges of getting volunteers in the summer. Dan made a motion that if we can't access John's Lake Loop for the classes in 2024 then we will skip 2024 and then we would revisit the idea of participating again in 2025; Carole seconded. Unanimous vote. Denny will make the contact about our decision, and will also discuss the problems associated with the coordinating and scheduling.

Owen Sowerwine: Gael reported that DNRC has invited the staff of the Land Board to visit OS in mid-October, and then the staffers will have the documents for 6 weeks for review. The grant notification for the Conoco/Phillips grant is in early November. Pam reminded people of the work day October 7. Kay reported that the 5-year vegetation survey is nearly completed (one plot yet to do on work day). Volunteers were Kay, Brent, Pat, Pam, and Will.

Sliter's Grant: Pam reported that about 10 days ago she submitted a grant application to purchase 2 EZ-ject Lances for killing buckthorn with glyphosate capsules. She hasn't heard anything, but will follow-up by the end of this week.

Hawk Watch: Dan reported that the results this year were above average, until the weather changed. We've had 1892 birds (4 below average for this date). He anticipates that the weather will clear and there will be several more good days.

Programs: Ronda reported that she has some months open, and wondered if we wanted to do a Conservation Easement celebration in May (provided it's approved). Ronda has received several suggestions and will follow up with them. November will be the Owl Research Institute.

Field Trips: Margaret reported on fall options: Darcy will do a raptor count route, and Bridger and Shannon are willing to do one in November.

Membership: Linda sent a note saying electronic renewals are coming in each day. Jake reported that they are reconciling the Great Fish donations in order to appropriately give credit to donors and their spouses.

Conservation: Carole reported that MEPA is being reviewed as a result of the lawsuit settled by the Supreme Court, and comments are due by the end of November.

Scholarship: Kay reported that Gary Olson (wildlife biologist out of Great Falls and friend of the late Lewis Young) is working with the family of Lewis Young and The Wildlife Society to try to start a scholarship fund in memory of Lewis. He would like to see it operated through TWS, and co-sponsored by Flathead Audubon. There is no financial commitment on our part, but would show us as a co-sponsor. The scholarship would be offered to students in Wildlife Biology at Montana colleges. Gael suggested that we receive something specific in writing before the Board takes action, so we are sure what we are agreeing to when voting. The consensus of the Board is that we are in support, but want a written proposal.

Great Fish: October 24 is the awards ceremony and will be held at the Wachholz Center. Darcy plans to attend, and Dee may attend. Others can let Darcy know if they want to attend, and she will check on how many people can attend. The reception is at 5pm with the ceremony at 6pm.

Mission Statement: Darcy asked whether we should revise and update our Mission Statement because it's wordy and cumbersome. It was suggested that we look at a couple options, including it being one sentence. Darcy will work on it and bring some proposals, and others can submit proposals if they want.

Announcements: Darcy will give a welcome to new members (newsletter), give a Great Fish thank-you, mention field trips, ask for bird sightings, and cover the list of needs for helping hands. Jake will do Tricky bird ID.

CAR awards: Darcy would like us to vote on the Lifetime, Business, and Volunteer Conservation Achievement Recognition winners. Paper was distributed, and secret ballots were completed and compiled. Results were announced, but will not be publicized yet.

Tom made a motion to adjourn; Margaret seconded; unanimous approval. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 pm.