

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, 2/5/24, FWP Conference Room
Prepared by: Pam Willison, Secretary

Directors Present: Darcy Thomas, Pam Willison, Linda Du Lac, Kay Mitchell, Rod Walette, Jake Bramante, Margaret Parodi, Bridger Donaldson, Shannon Donaldson, Dan Casey, Carole Jorgenson,

Others in Attendance: Dee Baginski, Denny Olson, Geri Meireis, Michele Tohtz

The meeting was called to order by President Darcy Thomas at 5:35 pm.

Minutes: No changes, other than the two edits sent to Pam via email. Jake made a motion to approve as corrected; Carole seconded; unanimous approval.

Finance Report: Rod reviewed the banking, revenue/expenses, investments and check register. Jake made a motion to accept and file the financial reports; Bridger seconded; unanimous approval. Rod also reported that the 2023 taxes for FAS are done.

Draft MOA/Resolution: Pam explained the Owen Sowerwine Memorandum of Agreement document, which designates Flathead Audubon as a Third-Party Cooperator, and also includes Montana DNRC and Flathead Land Trust in the Agreement. She highlighted a few sections: Section 2 listing the eligibility criteria for the Third Party Cooperator; Section 3 showing the list of tasks for DNRC, FLT, and FAS, and commented that the tasks for FAS are essentially what we are already doing but that our record keeping will need to be improved in order to prepare an annual report for the annual meeting, as specified in Section 10; Section 6 clarifies that we can withdraw from the agreement with a one-year notice; Section 7 explains that FAS can be terminated for severe infractions such as illegal activity or neglecting to complete our tasks; Section 8 deals with records and assets, including that all funds specifically raised/donated for Owen Sowerwine need to be easily tracked so that should we withdraw or be terminated we are able to transfer those funds either to FLT or the new Third Party Cooperator, and all improvements stay with the property, and personal property purchased with restricted, directed or endowment funds will remain with the Owen Sowerwine property (funds from grants will be handled case-by-case). Pam noted that any personal property FAS purchases with FAS funds that were not designated to for Owen Sowerwine can remain FAS property (sprayers, weed trimer, injection lance). Following a question-and-answer session, Pam made a motion that the Board of Directors of the Flathead Audubon Society have reviewed and agreed to the Owen Sowerwine Third Party Cooperator Memorandum of Agreement between Montana DNRC, Flathead Land Trust, and Flathead Audubon Society (Third Party MOA) for the purposes of cooperatively managing the Owen Sowerwine Property effective March 1, 2024, following the recording of the Owen Sowerwine Conservation Easement by Flathead Land Trust; and that Darcy Thomas, current President of Flathead Audubon Board of Directors, be authorized to individually sign and execute the Third Party Cooperator MOA on behalf of the Corporation. Linda seconded the motion; unanimous approval.

Pam also explained that DNRC feels that it's important that there not be a gap in the management of Owen Sowerwine, and that our SRUL expires the end this month (February 2024), and provided the closing on the Conservation Easement is finalized on February 29, 2024, there should be no gap. However, should there be a complication that delays the closing, FAS would seek a short-term extension of our SRUL and pay a prorated fee. Therefore, as a safety measure, Pam made the following motion: I make a motion to extend the DNRC Special Recreation Use License for Owen Sowerwine, should an extension be needed to ensure there is continuous management of Owen Sowerwine, and to pay a prorated fee. Dan seconded; unanimous approval.

Operations Coordinator: Dee reported that she received training on how to send the newsletter, and will be doing that in the future. She also submitted an order for merchandise (all hat styles) and Glacier Clothing has our logo and will be doing the embroidery. The hats should be available at the March meeting, and can be preordered online to pick up at the meeting or purchased in person. The vests will be listed on the website to preorder and there will be an end date so that order can be completed in time to distribute them at the May meeting. Jake clarified that all items are local pick-up only, but that could change in the future if there are enough requests, and someone is willing to do the packaging and shipping (we would add a fee). He also wondered about offering a couple pickup dates/times other than the meetings, and Darcy will consider doing that. The vests will be promoted through the March 11 meeting, and will orders due by March 13, so the order can be compiled, placed, received, embroidered and vests available for pick up at the May meeting. Dee has also been communicating with Beth (ORI) about the baling twine/osprey issue, and it will likely be an educational only, rather than an actual cleanup, due to a shortage of volunteers for ORI. Dee will get the baling twine brochure printed, and we brainstormed a list of good contacts/locations for the brochures. Dee is also posting the field trips on Facebook. She asked whether to post them even if they are already full, and it was decided that she should because it's still good publicity and shows how many activities we offer.

Committee Reports:

Education: Denny and Dee did the field trip in Owen Sowerwine and had enough demand to split into two groups, plus schedule a second date. Denny will be judging in two science fairs and will also present. He attended the River-to-Lake meeting and reports that the Flathead Guide is out, with the purpose of informing and guiding people who recently moved here. He's working with a small Scandinavian school in Whitefish and gave a fireside presentation to the kids. The school would like to be involved in the young birders group. Senior Institute starts February 16 and several FAS people will be helping Denny. On February 20 there will be a Somers School 5th-graders walk-about for Great Backyard Bird Count and more helpers are needed. This group will also be doing a day in Owen Sowerwine in late April to do the Woods Detective activity, and he will need help then also. Hedges 3rd graders will do a Backyard Bird count also, and are currently using the chickadee kit. Hedges 3rd graders will also do a field trip at Lone Pine and Denny will help. Denny will judge the county spelling bee and is involved with

the County Science Fair, which still needs judges. Also, Earth Day events is being coordinated, and Denny is working on an activity and table for it (held at FVCC).

Junior Bird Club: Shannon reported they will hold a monthly event April through September at a variety of locations, as a way to judge the level of interest. They are also working to develop a good waiver. Denny mentioned there are special terms in waivers when working with kids who don't have parents in attendance. They are working out details of membership kits and will add a Kids Corner to the March PP, and in April will announce the dates and trip locations. There was discussion of giving the kids who participate a free FAS membership so they would receive the PP. Carole suggested there be a system for kids to "earn" a membership rather than giving it to them for free. Denny suggested they might consider a separate newsletter that's just for the kids. The cost of printing and postage for hard copies is unknown at this time. Jake said it's possible to enter data in LGL to send a PP without having a membership. Jake noted that these first events are a way to research the demographics of those who are interested and use that to guide the future activities.

Newsletter: Geri reviewed the list. She will add something to the calendar for Earth Day. She will also include the merchandise information. It's best to get the information to Geri as early as possible, especially with a short month.

Outreach: Jake is working with Pam on getting the new pages ready for updating Owen Sowerwine website information, and he will also be adding the merchandise to the website.

Membership: Linda continues sending reminders of membership lapses. Linda has been working with Rod and Jake to get the LGL membership and financial membership records synchronized. She provided membership numbers to Darcy for the Annual Report. Linda noted that the complementary memberships from the Great Fish donations are not included in the membership count, and only paid memberships outside Great Fish donors receive reminders. Pam asked whether paid members who donate to Great Fish have their renewal date reset based on the Great Fish donation, and Linda confirmed it does. Linda also noted we have more supporting members than regular.

Programs: Ronda wasn't in attendance, but Darcy reported that she is arranging a speaker for Warbler Weekend. Ronda wants clarification on when donations/honorariums are given/offered. It will be offered to each speaker and they can decline. Also, in the case where they are working in a paid capacity, a donation could be made to a related organization; such as last month when they were presenting in their official capacity (Jami, Jess, Dee), so we will make a donation to Glacier Conservancy in their honor. Rod noted that this used to be a budget item, then wasn't used for several years, so was removed from the budget, so will need to be added again.

Field Trips: Margaret wasn't in attendance, but Darcy reported that they really need a field trip leader for the mid-March lower valley/Church slough field trip (Dan isn't available). Several people will consider it and get back to Margaret. Also, Darcy will lead the Freezout Lake trip.

Conservation: Carole said they could use some additional people. Carole wanted clarification about what happens to conservation articles, and Geri confirmed that she edits them and includes them, provided there is room (which there wasn't last month). Darcy reported that Grant Pegram plans to send us an article on animal crossings for the March PP.

Owen Sowerwine: Pam reported she is applying for a 310 permit to be able to go in and repair the bridges. The work days for that will depend on weather and the water in the creek and it will likely cost around \$1500 for material. She's considering applying for Roundup for Safety money. She also mentioned that she isn't planning to schedule any Buckthorn work days this year because she doesn't have the time. However, she walked the areas we've already cut, and there are many remaining seed trees, so if the lance treatments prove to be effective, small teams of 2-3 could rework those areas that have already been cut and stacked. Pam has also rewritten and reorganized all of the Owen Sowerwine website material, and Jake will assist in getting that onto the website. It was noted that in the MOA there is a requirement for monitoring, and Pam keeps a log of all the times she goes through OS and checks entrances and trails. Darcy asked that people send Pam an email when they have walked parts of OS, so it can be included on the monitoring log.

Great Fish: Kay reported that she's gathering the information for the application, and also doing a complete review of our standing on "Candid" that reports how organizations operate and spend their money. For Great Fish, we are required to have at least bronze status. Our status was bronze several years ago, then moved to silver and last year was gold, so Kay's goal is for FAS to reach the top standing. Several FAS members attended the mandatory Great Fish meeting, and the Great Fish organizers explained that they are offering an abridged application to a limited number of non-profits, and Kay confirmed we were offered that. The abridged application is on-going, so each year should continue to involve the easier application process.

Audubon in Action Grant: Darcy mentioned the grant offering and noted the applications are due April 5. No one could think of anything for an application, especially with short notice. Pam mentioned that although we don't have anything in mind for an application this year, we might have a habitat rehabilitation plan for Owen Sowerwine next year that likely will fit the criteria.

FAS History Committee (Ad Hoc): Karen Nichols, Ben Long, and Linda Winnie will be working to document the history of FAS and schedule some interviews of some long-term members, officers, and directors.

Bridger made a motion to adjourn; Carole seconded; unanimous approval. Meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm