

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, 3/4/24, FWP Conference Room

Prepared by: Michele Tohtz

Directors Present: Darcy Thomas, Linda Du Lac, Kay Mitchell, Rod Walette, Jake Bramante, Margaret Parodi, Bridger Donaldson, Shannon Donaldson, Cindy Roberts, Tom Roberts, Bob Lee,

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

The meeting was called to order by President Darcy Thomas at 5:36 PM

Minutes: No corrections or additions. Bob made a motion to approve; Margaret seconded. Approved unanimously.

Finance Report: Rod reviewed the financial report that was included in the Board Packet. Rod and Jake explained that Stripe has been dropped and Woo Commerce will now be used. Jake explained the difference between the two. Rod reported that expenses are at the budgeted level, and the revenue has increased. Jake made a motion to approve the financial report; Tom seconded. Approved unanimously

Rod explained the reasons to consider closing the Glacier Bank and Whitefish Credit Union accounts and moving the FAS accounts to Three Rivers Bank. He feels it will be best for our organization. Jake wondered if it would be best to keep some money in Whitefish Credit Union. Rod reported that the accounts will have a higher yield with Three Rivers.

Rod made a motion that Flathead Audubon Society open a Flathead Non-profit checking account at Three Rivers Bank with Rodney Walette, Kathryn Mitchell, and Darcy Thomas as the representatives on this account. Jake seconded. Approved unanimously.

Rod made a motion that Flathead Audubon Society open a Pinnacle Savings account with Rodney Walette, Kathryn Mitchell and Darcy Thomas as the representatives on this account. Linda seconded. Approved unanimously.

Rod mentioned the upcoming Financial Committee Meeting on March 25. This will include a budget meeting. Please let Rod know of any anticipated changes or additions to next year's budget.

Operations Coordinator: Dee continues to post field trips on the website and the newsletter has been sent. She brought the hats and visors for us to see. The new vests will have the medium green font. She is still working on the baling twine/ osprey project. Murdoch's in Columbia Falls has brochures. Group signups are posted online for Owen Sowerwine. You can check before you go to see if a group will be there. Dee is already at work on the May meeting. Jake discussed how to order vests and hats at the March meeting.

Committee Reports

Education: Cindy is pleased with the number of kits that are in use. Four are at Glacier High School and the Discovery Center is also using them. The kits are being returned in good shape; Cindy and Tom check them upon return. Denny is looking for help with judging the science fair Thursday, March 7th. Judging is until noon; then the judges can leave. Linda Du Lac offered to help. Denny still needs help on April 22nd with an Owen Sowerwine field trip for Somers School. Denny would like to split the students into two groups; one before and one after lunch. There will be a total of 73 kids. Volunteers will demonstrate the Merlin App and teach the students how to become wood observers, stressing quiet observation. Denny reports that the Senior Institute is doing well, and the Native Plants Extravaganza is coming along nicely.

There are two Linderman field trips at the end of the month, and Denny is also working on a STEAM workshop. Denny needs more help for Arbor Day. He will be gone the end of March and the end of May.

Newsletter and PP contents: Geri will contact Carole on swapping Grant's conservation article with Carole's avian flu article or something else written by Carole. Dee agreed to do an article on animal crossings. Darcy asked about a "Bears and Bird Feeders" article. She agreed that a simple reminder might be fine. Shannon will add a Kids Korner. Geri will add a merchandise reminder, and Bridger will do a Flathead Valley Bird Report since Dan is out of town. Linda mentioned two deceased members. She asked if this should be noted in the PP. Group consensus was that only those who have been prominent members will be noted in the newsletter.

Jake addressed possibly printing a PP that would be more colorful and generally more attractive. It would be 75% more expensive to change. Jake suggested that a change would elevate our standing as a non-profit in the valley. This elicited a lot of discussion regarding the pros and cons of a change. FAS would need to mail 200 to get bulk pricing; this would help offset the increased cost. 244 print copies are presently mailed. Many of these are sent to members of National Audubon. Unfortunately, the national organization doesn't require email addresses, otherwise many of these PP could be emailed. Linda asked whether saving trees should be a consideration, given that FAS is a conservation organization, and Geri wondered about extra pages adding to the cost. Rod believes that some articles could be shortened because the newsletter is getting quite large. Darcy wondered if we should stick to a set number of pages. Denny feels that the PP is loved by many who refer to it a lot and they would be unhappy with a condensed newsletter. No consensus was reached at this time.

Warbler Weekend Info for the PP will be provided by Margaret. Geri will use an ADD THE DATE when Margaret forwards the info to Geri.

Owen Sowerwine: Pam was not present, but it was noted that the Owen Sowerwine Conservation Easement was finalized.

Outreach: Jake will send out the Fly By this week. He has feedback on members needing to hear presenters better both online and in person. Jake will make a point of reminding speakers to use the microphone and use it correctly.

Membership: Linda reported that two members have passed away, Phillip Dyneson and Glenn Graham. A generous donation was received from Franklin Schroeter. She asked if we should buy extra caps to use as awards. Linda commended Dan and Jake about their reply to an out of state member who questioned a bird sighting. The member was impressed with Dan and Jake's prompt, courteous reply.

Linda Winnie and Linda Du Lac (at a party), discussed not having a past history with the organization and agreed that the History Project will be useful to provide information on past members. Linda W. has records of all board members and Linda Du Lac would like this info on LGL. Darcy says she gets questions about board members often. Regarding the History Project, Darcy needs a projection of monies needed for the project. She will ask Linda W. if money should be budgeted for a publication. Kay wondered about a published coffee table publication. Darcy will talk with Linda W. and Jake feels it will need to be a soft cover publication.

Programs: Ronda was not present. Darcy will check on a speaker for the April meeting, and for Warbler Weekend.

Field Trips: Margaret reported that the April Freezout Lake trip will be led by Darcy. Erin Braaten of Dancing Aspen Photography will do a two-day photography workshop. The first will be in the late afternoon at the library, and the second will be on the following Saturday at an outside location. The attendance may be limited to ten people. Dan will start Sonny Boon walks in late April, and Denny will lead a breeding bird trip on April 27th at Owen Sowerwine. There are quite a few trips lined up for May, Darcy will go to the Bison Range and Margaret is thinking of a walk along the Whitefish River. Kathy Ross and Karen Nichols might lead a field trip at the Creston fish hatchery.

Junior Bird Club: Shannon is working on the Kid's Korner in the PP. She also needs a better idea of volunteers for Saturdays. June, July and August are up in the air; she is exploring who can help. She will tie in with the Birds of Prey Festival in September at Lone Pine and she knows that the pavilion there can be used during the summer. She is interested in drafting a thorough policy about the program and providing safety for the participants. She would like guidelines to follow and Denny suggested using existing policy from other programs. Shannon talked to Parks and Recreation about using the pavilion at Lawrence Park. The rental fee for groups is pricey and there was discussion about whether the trails can be used for public groups without incurring a fee. Jake says the county only requires permits for groups over 20 people. Creston Fish Hatchery might be used again for the Bird -A-Thon. Shannon is also checking on the possibility of a Bird Walk while the logging is occurring behind FVCC. The May PP could have locations for other events for kids. Shannon will write something for the times of bird walks for kids at Tally Lake. Jake suggested exploring ideas for other activities for the Junior Bird Club.

Great Fish: Kay has been working on the FAS Candid Profile. The Platinum designation is out of reach because there are too many requirements. We will stay with the Gold designation. Kay updated all the paperwork and we are in good shape. April 5th is the day to start the Great Fish application and Kay is taking care of this. We will receive approval in June. There will be more workshops in April.

Events: Denny needs more help setting up exhibits on Earth Day, April 20th at FVCC. Contact Denny if you can help. Dee is making a bigger poster for the table at Earth Day. Darcy continues to address the osprey/ baling twine project. There was recently a nice article in the Daily Interlake. Brochures have been given to several outfitters and Murdoch's in Columbia Falls. She is still trying to contact the Back Country Horseman. More brochures are needed. Darcy checked pricing on printing more and it seems expensive. Jess Garby might have more and Jake suggested checking on printing 500 instead of 250. Michell Tyler is donating four brochure holders. Margaret asked what can be done about the existing nests with twine in them. Denny has a contact who could use his drone to pinpoint the location of nests that have twine, but it's unclear who will remove the twine. Both Rob Domenech and Erick Greene in Missoula might help occasionally and Flathead Electric will remove twine on utility poles. It was agreed that we should start working on this project earlier next year. Darcy hopes to have a bench in place at Tally Lake and she's talking to the Forest Service about the details. FAS will donate the bench. Darcy mentioned that Karen Nichols is concerned about the FVCC logging project. Denny suggested that it might not be acceptable to leave snags and brush piles on the ground due to pine bark beetle infestation. Kay provided information about the beetles and their life cycle. She says piles of wood can't be left on the ground and longer, hot summers also stress the trees.

Bridger moved to adjourn, Rod seconded, and with unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.