

Flathead Audubon Society Board of Directors, 9/3/24
Creston Fish Hatchery Pavilion
Prepared by: Linda Du Lac

Directors in Attendance: Darcy Thomas, Rod Walette, Pam Willison, Kay Mitchell, Cindy Roberts, Linda Du Lac, Ronda Howell, Margaret Parodi, Jake Bramante, Bridger Donaldson, Shannon Donaldson, Carol Jorgensen, Tom Roberts

Others in Attendance: Denny Olson.

The Meeting was called to order by President Darcy Thomas at 5:38.

Minutes: There were no corrections to the May 2024 Board meeting minutes. Margaret made a motion to accept; Pam seconded; unanimous approval.

Elections/Board Members: Kay motioned to approve the May elections as written, Bridger seconded and they were approved. Darcy asked if there were suggestions for anyone that might join the Board. She will contact the individuals who were suggested to see if they are interested.

Jason and Will were contacted regarding trying to attend more Board meetings, and more options may be considered to keep them involved if they aren't able to attend, such as being committee members but not on the Board. Darcy will contact them again.

There was discussion about what constitutes a quorum. The FAS constitution was checked and it is: "The majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum at any meeting of the Board provided such quorum includes the majority of the elected Directors."

Conservation Leadership Awards. The Flathead Audubon Society along with Montana Audubon received Conservation Leadership Awards from the Flathead Land Trust during the Owen Sowerwine Conservation Easement completion celebration. FAS received a Thank You card from Flathead Land Trust and DNRC for FAS's work on the Owen Sowerwine Easement and Celebration.

Financial Report: Rod reviewed the 9/1/24 Financial Report covering revenue, expenses, and investments. Investments are over \$300,000, which is good news. We have a check and balance system with two sets of eyes, Rod and Kay. Jake made a motion to file the financial report; Kay seconded; unanimous.

Operations: Dee resumes her position October 1. Linda Winnie sent the digital newsletter in Dee's absence. Darcy suggested we have a backup so that we don't impact Linda Winnie. All press releases should go through Jake before they are issued. Jake received all of Dee's Press Releases including where they were sent.

Pam does the Owen Sowerwine scheduling when Dee is unavailable. Shannon will do Birds of Prey on Facebook. The OS workday needs to be on Facebook and a Fly-by issued.

It was suggested that the New position start on August 1 – May 31, so that they can be involved in Great Fish tasks. Starting on that date also supports the education school programs.

Birds of Prey Festival: Denny stated that Festival planning is complete and volunteers lined up.

Education Committee: Our education high school student, Keanu, has left for college. He was unable to complete a report so Denny will submit a report using Keanu's buckthorn and deer exposure data at OS. Annabelle Church is the new student replacing Keanu. The buckthorn study will continue by either the new OE position or Pam.

Denny is concerned about the Education and Operations position. He worries the education portion will be reduced. Darcy reassured him that our intent is for the school programs to continue. Education and conservation are the major thrust of our organization. The new position will have to comply with the Education Strategic Plan and will carry out all the Programs that are now being offered. The style might be different but the education programs will be carried out. We need to find additional Education Committee participants.

Osprey Nests: Devin Harshbarger has offered to GPS nests for baling twine. Since it would identify nest locations, it was agreed he should contact and coordinate with the Raptor View Research Institute, which has ongoing osprey research, including in the Flathead.

Conservation Committee: FAS submitted comments on the Bureau of Management's Sage Grouse plan. FAS signed the Center for Biological Diversity's "Petition for Rulemaking to Allow Permits Authorizing the Foreseeable Killing of Migratory Birds in Building Collisions". If successful it will allow permits authorizing the foreseeable killing of migratory birds in building collisions. It was agreed to send a copy of the petition to the Flathead Planning Commission.

We were asked to become engaged on the U.S. Forest Service's Forest Management activities that affect birds in decline in forested habitats. The Conservation Committee is consolidating information that can help the Forests in their management decisions affecting these birds.

The Conservation Committee evaluated a proposed fish eradication of invasive trout in Swan Lake to enhance bull trout population and potential impacts to loons. In discussion with other experts, it was determined loons should not be affected.

FAS sent comments supporting a public hearing on the proposed Echo Lake cell tower, regarding the cell tower's effect on birds.

Field Trips: Margaret listed upcoming trips starting October 2 and 15th for Saw-whet Owl banding with the Owl Research Institute coordinating with the Flathead Lake Biological Station. This will be for FAS members. There are other sessions for the general public. She is working on scheduling a Sandhill Crane field trip in West Valley and needed a leader. Denny volunteered. Darcy is leading a field trip on Sept. 17 to Bad Rock. The trail has been completed and is 3.5 miles.

Great Fish: As of 9/3/24 seventy-two donors have contributed \$15,325. We have met the \$10,000 matching but need to get to \$25,000 for full matching reimbursement. Jake has been extremely busy with G.F. correspondence.

The Fun Run is this Saturday and several Board members have volunteered to help.

Hawk Watch: Season total of 179 birds to date. Observers are using Trektellen this year to standardize the recording between our site and others. There is excellent information on Hawk Watch and numbers to date on our FAS Website. We have two new paid observers. Darcy will check on the Hawkwatch Partnership Agreement with the U.S. Forest Service.

Membership: Linda reported 237 members as of 9/2/24. She wasn't concerned since memberships are slow in the summer and will pick up after Great Fish. She will start sending out expired Membership reminders after GF closes.

She asked that Committees look at the Committee hand out for corrections.

Kay and Linda are working on a "Board Member" notebook that will have essential information that Board members need. Information will include FAS History, meeting dates/times, a list of FAS Resources and Equipment and where to find them, who holds keys, events, Board Responsibilities, and much more.

Newsletter: Geri is resigning as the Newsletter Editor at the end of December. We are now doing a color Newsletter. We need to consider the work involved as Editor with doing re-writes and getting photos. It is very time consuming to coordinate with those submitting to the Newsletter. Articles should be in final form and not require any re-writes. It was suggested that the submission requirements be included with the monthly contents list.

Website: Jake is working on press releases for the Birds of Prey Festival and postings for Great Fish. All Newsletter articles are posted to the Website. The website has had some crashes, which Jake has been troubleshooting.

Owen Sowerwine: Pam. Coming on the 10th is the Ag Dept. Invasive Species Department show and tell on treating loosestrife in OS. Buckthorn will also be discussed. People are planting loosestrife in their yards not knowing they are weeds.

The brochure has been on hold due to other workload tasks for Susie. Pam will start working on it again.

All of the paperwork for the Conservation Easement is done.

Pam has been working to assure all OS information from website, brochure, and signs is consistent. OS workday to repair the bridges is on the 28th Sept. at 9 am. The work and materials have been approved by DNRC. There was discussion about the materials used for the bridges. At this time, the current approved materials will be used knowing that more weather resistant materials may be considered in the future. There is other work to be done on the work day, such as weeding. Lots of help is needed. Pam needs to borrow a cordless skill saw.

OS bird list is complete and on the Google Drive.

Ravenwood is no longer in existence.

Pam will send a "Thinking of You" card to John Sturzen, neighbor of OS.

Programs: We have Sept – Nov presenters. Jake will do January. There are several conservation experts in our community that members are referring to Ronda. She is doing a great job as Program Chair.

JR. Bird Club: There were 14 kids at the last field trip. Pine Grove had 8 kids. We had a field trip each month. There was discussion on how kids are finding out about the field trips. Many see it from Homeschool website, Daybook, FAS Website. The question was asked on whether we should keep offering events or to form a club. Shannon felt monthly field trips rather than a club. We don't know if there were repeat participants. She recommended once-a-month kid events. Lone Pine has offered to

let us hold events at their location. Perhaps a winter trip to Lone Pine. Shannon will work on a schedule for future field trips.

Shannon will look into purchasing kid's binoculars. There are kid's binoculars in the Bat Kit. Darcy saw that Amazon had 5 pair of kids binoculars for \$25.

The Newsletter Kid's Corner is very time consuming and overwhelming. Shannon suggests we stop the Newsletter Kid's corner for several reasons: it is less likely to reach kids via the Newsletter; it is taking up too much Newsletter space; and the work load is too great to create a monthly Kid's Corner. It was agreed to eliminate the Newsletter Kid's Corner.

O/E Coordinator Position: The job posting is different from the job description. Job posting is a condensed message. We should have an article about the job in the next Newsletter. The number of hours needed for training will be determined by the skill of the selected individual.

Brochures: Making your Home Safe for Birds. It will cost \$119/100 color copies. Suggested to check with Montana Audubon on printing it up for all State Chapters. Darcy will print some for the Birds of Prey Festival distribution. Bridger would like some to hand out on his field trips. He often gets questions on how to eliminate birds from hitting windows.

Bridger made a motion to adjourn. Jake seconded. Adjourned at 8:02.