

SAS Board Minutes

June 28, 2016

2110 State St.

Present: Ray Temple, Tim Johnson, Michael Babbitt, , Maureen Leong-Kee, Lowell Spring, Doug Spencer, Carolyn Homan, Laurie Buswell, administrator **Absent:** Judy Brunkal, Tom Robertson **Guest:** Mike Unger

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

Guest Speaker, Mike Unger: Mike presented an update on the bird identification workshops he's been offering and the SAS Facebook page, which he updates.

Bird ID workshops – The two workshops so far, one on raptors and one on songbirds, have attracted 65 attendees and brought in \$640 for SAS (plus 1 membership and sales of 3 SAS hats.) Five people, four who've already paid, have signed up in advance for Songbirds Part II in July. Evaluations have been very good, with all responders (75% return rate) saying the workshop met expectations and that they would recommend it.

The workshops are meeting Mike's goals of bringing in at least \$300/workshop and reaching as many people as possible. The workshops have drawn at least 18 non-members. In future, he hopes to present six workshops a year, breaking the songbirds material into three sessions, since there is so much to cover. One idea: to charge \$25 total for all three sessions for those who sign up for all three at once (regular cost would be \$30). He hopes to schedule 2017 workshops soon so public relations and other planning can take place. He hopes to develop two or three new workshops, along with a repeat of the raptor and songbird sessions. He has material for 12 to 15 classes in all. Each takes about 40 hours to prepare. His goal is to have them all ready when the Nature Center is open.

Workshop PR has included the SAS website, Facebook page, Kestrel and Statesman Journal event calendar. For the Songbirds Part 1 workshop, he attended the SJ's "Holding Court" session, which yielded a good article. He plans to continue using this effective venue for PR. Fifteen songbirds workshop attendees listed the newspaper as their info source vs. 6 for raptors.

Mike gave special thanks to Ray, Tim, Stephanie and Kathy for their help. He believes the sessions are filling a need and increasing the community's awareness of SAS.

Facebook page – He started what he calls the "Facebook Enhancement Project," 21 months ago. The page then had 35 "likes." It now has 356. He's increased the page's content significantly – 80 to 100 items posted each month. An Events Calendar lists all SAS activities for the coming 3 months. He receives many photos from friends to post on the newsfeed. He also posts relevant research and conservation articles. An average of 225 people a day sees the posts.

In answer to a question from Ray, Mike said he hopes to get more Nature Center information and updates on the page. **Action item: He also said he could post the list of resources from the Capitol Subaru event, in answer to a request from Michael Babbitt.**

The Board thanked Mike for his contributions.

PREVIOUS MEETING'S MINUTES:

Minutes from May: Carolyn noted these had been distributed via email. Michael noted the need for a correction to the item on Page 3 under Nature Center update: Ray said "the Service is **committed** (not connected) to maintenance in the current Memorandum of Understanding...."

Ray moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Tim seconded. Motion carried.

Review of Action Items:

- 1) **Subaru event resource list posting** – Tim apologized for not getting this on the website and (**New Action Item**) **will follow up.**
- 2) **Emailing resource list to participants** – Has been done.
- 3) **Exploring idea of sustaining memberships** – Tim said this would be covered later in agenda.
- 4) **Detailing insurance items and costs** – Tim said he will get a list of coverages needed so the Board can consider in July.
- 5) **Naming the Nature Center** – Board has chosen Ankeny Hill Nature Center for use in the MOA and other construction-phase documents. Ray noted this is not for public use until USFWS has signed the MOA. Board briefly discussed need for a separate account for proceeds from any future Nature Center fundraising, which is mentioned in the MOA. Ray said it's not an issue until the MOA is signed. **New Action Item: Ray asked Doug to send the MOA draft to the Friends of Refuges Board.**
- 6) **Ray to ask Jon Yoder to come to SAS with a specific proposal for SAS involvement with Yoder's new lecture/outdoor adventure enterprise** – Ray said Jon declined to present a specific proposal. SAS is listed as a presenter for a couple of upcoming session in Jon's River Currents series, under way at Riverfront Park. Tim said he and Mike Unger will handle these. Tim attended the recent forum and said about 25 people attended the presentation on Willamette River fish.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Tim

Insurance review – Tim said the agent had reviewed policy language regarding the wood shop and said SAS is covered for injury, theft, etc. The next question and **New Action Item: What isn't covered and what does the chapter need? Tim will get information for July discussion.** Lowell asked about protection for those presenting programs in schools. The assumption is that the school covers these situations but Tim will check.

Fundraising update – 1) **Bird-a-Thon** – Despite a big increase in activities this year (the feeder tour, Birds and Wine repeat, more field trips, Birder's and Chapter night presentations, expanded sponsor outreach, PayPal links for donations sent to all past field trip participants) proceeds were down -- \$2,400 total this year.. Getting pledges, which is how other chapters organize their Bird-A-Thon, doesn't work.

An idea for 2017 is a Big Day Challenge, inviting teams to compete and getting prizes. Doug said New Jersey Audubon has a statewide contest that raises a lot of money. Tim suggested organizing a committee to explore this idea.

2) **Summer Appeal letter** – This is ready to go and will be sent to SAS members and local National Audubon members who have given within the past two years. Results have shown it's not cost effective to continue to mail to National Audubon members who have not given. Michael asked about new National members. **Action item: Tim said he would check the list received from National Audubon to see if it indicates when a person became a member.**

Tim said the appeal also is pushing sustaining memberships, using the incentive of automatic membership renewal with a gift of \$10/month or more on a sustaining basis. Tim is rebuilding the Access database to accommodate tracking of these sustaining memberships.

3) **Financial summary** – Tim referenced the account balances email he sent to the board and noted that despite lower income, the unrestricted income is keeping pace with expenses. Depending on the Summer Appeal results, he may still have to withdraw some funds from the reserve account created for instances of income shortfall.

Maureen shared a new book she is offering to use as a membership renewal incentive. Names of members who renew by a certain date will be entered in a drawing for the book.

4) **Investments** – Tim met with Garry Falor to review the portfolio. He said they use an asset allocation model that is rebalanced periodically. One suggestion: to reinvest money market funds into a CD but the move would only gain about \$50.

Possible new office location – SAS’s lease expires the end of September but the decision to renew must be made by mid-August. Laurie said the Fluent operation has gone through layoffs and the future seems a little uncertain. She responded to an advertisement in the Marion County SWCD newsletter for office space for rent in their facility on Hawthorne near State. The space is larger than at State St. The list cost is more/sq. ft. but SWCD said just give them a bid. There are two conference rooms, a copy center, full-time receptionist, etc. **Action item: Laurie to send the Letter of Intent to the Board, along with her Pros/Cons list, for comment.** If there are no objections, Ray will sign and put the process in motion to relocate.

NATURE CENTER UPDATE – Ray, Michael, Doug

Draft Nature Center MOA highlights – Ray asked the Board to read and understand the draft MOA. He said he felt SAS is treated very well in the document. USFWS has been agreeable to covering much more than the utilities and maintenance, two issues broached, but not spelled out, in the MOU. Final OK of the draft is pending but Doug said Service officials are aware of the MOA and on board so far.

Another issue – Who will oversee construction. In the MOU, the Service agreed to “oversee construction” Michael, Doug and Ray are talking with Graham and others about approaching the USFWS Regional Office about having the Service either oversee construction or provide funds to hire someone, since SAS doesn’t have anyone with the expertise to handle this.

Ray said drafting of design/build documents has begun and we’ve also asked the Service to review those documents and think that will happen.

Tim questioned an MOA statement about SAS handling future fundraising, mentioning doubts SAS has the capacity for fundraising. Ray said that the stance is that we’ll live with Phase I if we can’t raise money for other phases. Doug said the Service is vested in the facility and will be seeking funds. The project is in the pipeline for federal funding of roads and parking lots for the project. The time line looks like 2017 for the access road; 2018 for the parking lot and late 2018 for opening of the Center.

DMT call update – Ray said that Marion County will allow access via the current entrance for the construction phase, which eliminates a potential hurdle for the project and prevents a significant delay in the start of building construction. There currently is much uncertainty about all dates associated with the project. The NEPA process is moving more slowly than anticipated. Completion of NEPA is necessary before solicitation of a contractor can begin. Availability of federal Refuge Roads funding in 2017, 2018 and 2019 will also shape how creation of a new access road and construction of the building are sequenced.

The Environmental Assessment and NEPA are moving forward. The Service will plan a public meeting, probably in September, to share the EA findings.

Ray said he’d talked with Tim and Barbara Dolan regarding concern among field trip leaders and others about removal of trees at the Ankeny Overlook and a comment card left there, which has now disappeared. Ray would like to find the comment card, because it had a negative comment and contact phone numbers.

But in addition, he said we need to reach out to members and others with information about the Nature Center. Samantha Bartling and Graham have agreed to lead a site tour and share long-term habitat restoration goals for the site.

Ray said he thinks another meeting beyond the EA meeting is probably needed, to give people an understanding of what’s going on. Once they have the information, they can decide how to feel about it.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Volunteer management concepts and implementation – Maureen

She would like to move forward to get committees for major events. Tim said the Yard and Garden Show would be a good place to start since Eugenia, long-time coordinator, is seeking a back-up to help with volunteers. Mike Unger is on board to handle all other aspects of the show. **Action item: Maureen will contact Eugenia.**

Ray said he would like to get a real volunteer program in place that would work across all SAS activities, particularly as we get closer to a Nature Center. Perhaps the Yard/Garden show can be a model, but we also need a calendar/catalog of the annual event cycle and a mechanism so that we can respond in a timely way to new opportunities that require a volunteer presence.

Maureen said outreach is a big challenge. Discussion included reaching out to colleges – Willamette has a process. Corbin was mentioned; no connection with them right now. Perhaps a regular listing of opportunities in the Kestrel and Birder's Nite announcements, also Facebook. The key is talking specifics with people about the opportunity and what's needed/expected. Ray suggested checking with all committee chairs re: their volunteer needs.

Maureen also had two fundraising ideas – the Fred Meyer Community Rewards program in which shoppers designate a charity for support. Tim said he is pursuing a similar program with Life Source. Another opportunity Maureen cited is Amazon's SMILE program.

Funding for programs at Title I schools – Ray and Laurie

The issue arose when Auburn School contacted SAS about having a nest box program but could not afford the fee. Lowell personally covered the cost. He said he would not do it again because it seems the issue was more a lack of planning than lack of funds for the program. Ray reiterated that if an occasion does arise where it's appropriate to provide funding, the Oregon Community Foundation education account could be used.

Retention of storage items related to SAS history – Carolyn

She said the work she and Barbara Dolan are doing (with help from Lowell, Stephanie and others) to organize the SAS storage unit is progressing. In answer to Ray's question, she said items pertaining to SAS history are being retained and she and Barbara are trying to consolidate them so that they can be better organized and accessed in the future. There are a lot of dated financial records that will need to be shredded. Items pertaining to the Nature Center process are being kept.

INFORMATION TOPICS

Straub's Environmental Education Round Table – Ray

About 25 people attended the recent round table. He said it was interesting but there were no real outcomes. It may improve and it may be a venue for enlisting other people for the Nature Center.

Future topics: Ray said he wants to review the strategic plan in August. He also would like to move ahead with a nominating committee for Board members, which the board can discuss at the next meeting.

Next meeting: 6 p.m. July 26 **Adjourn:** 8:15 p.m.