

SAS Board Minutes

June 27, 2017

338 Hawthorne Ave. NE

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

Guest: Niles Brinton from Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Guest speaker: Ray introduced Niles Brinton, with Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture (PBHJV) to provide some background on what that joint venture is and, specifically, his work on a current project to restore the Streaked Horned Lark in the Willamette Valley. Introductions were made around the room.

There are Joint Ventures all over North America from Canada to Mexico and including some Pacific Islands. They look at conservation at a landscape scale, since birds know no borders. The effort has 8 to 10 staff members in Alaska, Hawaii, Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and some Pacific Islands. They focus on developing programs and projects in partnership with other groups. In addition to the Pacific Birds venture, there is also the Intermountain West Joint Venture east of the Cascades in Oregon.

Priorities for Joint Ventures include Hawaii, Wetland and Water Birds, Oak and Prairie in the Pacific Northwest, and Coastal Wetlands of the Pacific Northwest.

Some project examples are landscape level risk analysis of Coastal wetlands to decide the top conservation priorities. There is a big initiative at Fraser River Delta in B.C. Because it's the last coastal wetland stop before Alaska along the Pacific Flyway and it's under heavy development pressure.

Funding for his position comes from the American Bird Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S Fish and Wildlife Service. His oversight committee includes American Bird Conservancy, PBHJV, USFWS, NRS, Oregon Farm Bureau, Joint Base Lewis/McChord in Tacoma, Oregon Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Streaked Horned Larks were listed under the Endangered Species Act as a threatened species in October 2013. Their range has significantly contracted and most of it now is in the Willamette Valley. There are an estimated 1,300 to 1,600 larks now, with 900 to 1,110 of those in the Willamette Valley.

The larks are ground nesters; breed end of April to mid-August and can breed multiple times. They prefer early succession landscape habitat, preferably with low growth and wide open spaces. His work is focused on agriculture outreach in the Willamette Valley because ag tracts fit the preferred habitat requirements.

His goals are to identify best management practices for Willamette Valley lands; begin outreach to landowners and ag operators about conservation opportunities for Streaked Horned Larks; and assist interested landowners in obtaining financial incentives for lark habitat conservation. His outreach includes production of a handout called "Help Restore the Streaked Horned Lark," which also will be used as a mailer to the target landowners.

He said he's working to build relationships with farmers and learn more about their operations, while trying to find the best answer to the "what's in it for me" question farmers have. A next step will be working to find money to support conservation efforts.

Previous meeting's minutes

Carolyn asked for corrections to the April minutes and a motion to approve. Doug moved approval of the minutes, and Michael seconded. Motion was approved.

Review of action items:

- 1) Re: a bird box discussion, Ray asked Lowell how best to proceed. Lowell said getting boxes out and placed at the proper time is an issue. Many bird-box programs come at the end of the school year, which is too late for the bird breeding season. He said we need to send notes to teachers and others scheduling the classes and suggest better scheduling. Among other questions are better ways to hang the boxes; should we continue building wren boxes; should we build bird feeders instead? **Action item: Ray wants to schedule a discussion. Ray and Lowell will identify the key questions for and invite Chet Zenone to participate in the meeting.**
- 2) Sale of books from the old office – Michael has taken this on and is selling them at meetings. Even more books have been contributed. **Action item: Michael will sort through the stock and send a list of books SAS should keep to the Board for review.** Doug suggested putting a list of “for sale” titles in the Kestrel as a way to generate interest.
- 3) Cost of buses and drivers for field trips – Laurie has called and emailed Salem-Keizer School District but has not heard back. **Action item: She will try again and Ray asked that the answer be emailed to the Board.**
- 4) **Continued Action Item: Lowell still needs to contact Laurie Aguirre to help gauge the interest for birding field trips for students, best timing and other issues. He will email information gathered to the Board**
- 5) Re: trips to see mitigation properties purchased by the Grand Ronde tribes in the North Santiam area. Ray said a visit was made to a property near Baskett Slough. **Action item: Ray will follow up to get a date for a North Santiam trip.**
- 6) Re: Laurie to research expiring Board member terms – The April minutes noted that Doug, Judy and Lowell were Board members to be voted on in May. It was noted that further research showed that Michael's was the only expiring term to be voted on. The minutes were not corrected, since the original information was deemed correct at the time.

Treasurer's Report – Tim

Tim emailed financial summaries to the Board prior to the meeting.

Nature Center update – Doug and Michael

DMT call – Michael said that progress has slowed a bit because of some bureaucratic issues that have arisen around the Memorandum of Agreement (format particulars) and the NEPA process. The Design/Build process can't proceed until MOA and NEPA are done. Service officials estimate the NEPA being done in 30 to 40 days, but then a Request for Qualifications has to go out before a Request for Proposals on the Design/Build and Design/Build needs to be awarded by the end of 2017. Under the CTA contract, some task 1 elements (Design/Build solicitation package development) have expired and task 2 (Design/Build award and design) are close to expiration. The timeline is tight and extensions are being worked on. The RFP is under review and looks good.

On the bright side, the project got \$35,000 for archaeological compliance and sampling will start at the construction site. Also, \$95,000 was received from USFWS for Phase I signage and other education elements. The money will go through the Friends of the Refuge organization. It's possible additional money will be available for education, too.

Ray and Graham met with Marion County regarding traffic concerns raised by neighbors to the Ankeny project. Ray said that SAS can't be an intermediary in the issues but wants to encourage residents to meet with the county and press their concerns. **Action item: Ray will share a letter with the Board and DMT from SAS to residents laying out the background, the result of Ray's and Graham's meeting with the County, and the need for residents to take the issues forward.**

Discussion topics

1) Planning for Ankeny open house and Dave Marshall recognition, Sept. 23 – Ray said the from 9:30-11 a.m., a private gathering will be held to honor Dave Marshall, who was instrumental the creating the Willamette Valley refuges. From 11 to 3, the refuge open house will be held. Ray said discussion is to come on logistics.

Action item: We need to discuss SAS participation in the open house, focused on the Nature Center. Maureen will need to put out a call for volunteers. Other issues are whether we want stations other than the Nature Center (such as at Eagle Marsh kiosk and/or Pintail)? Do we want to conduct bird walks?

Doug suggested the “passport” concept, when visitors get stamps at various information stations and suggested having one station set up just for kids. He said Samantha can get volunteers from the Friends group as well. It's possible there could be 300 visitors, depending on the weather.

2) Events and volunteers email list – Ray requested generating an email list to use to announce events, including chapter meetings, Birder's Nite, volunteer opportunities, etc. **Action item: Ray wants an article for the September Kestrel that we are developing this list and encouraging sign-ups.**

We should also solicit sign-ups at Chapter meetings, Birder's Nite, etc. Mike Unger has been getting names at his bird ID classes. Maureen has used Eugenia's Yard/Garden list but we are unsure what guarantees have been made about use of that list. Ray suggested compiling all the lists and sending out the information so that people can opt out if they wish no participation or notification.

Action item: Ray will follow up with Eugenia about use of the Yard/Garden and Birder's Nite lists and organize a future discussion of this between Ray, Tim, Maureen and Laurie. He said it would be good to announce creation of the list in the September Kestrel.

Ecofest volunteer recruitment and presentation materials – Ray was encouraged by the volunteer turnout. He, Carolyn and Lowell said the event itself had little to really draw people to it and attendance was low. Also, with Ecofest attendees, you're preaching to the choir, given that most already have a nature/conservation bent. Comparing Ecofest to the Yard/Garden show, it was agreed Yard/Garden has elements that really bring people out to it.

In addition, SAS didn't have anything that was interactive or that reached out to draw people to the table. Ray has emailed Jonathan Pope and David Harrison, who both volunteered, for ideas they discussed about interactive displays. Maureen also said that she has used a habitat display in the past, asking kids which birds would be attracted to which habitat. **Action item: Ray asked Board to email display ideas to him as concepts pop up.**

What did we learn? SAS needs a Nature Center display and needs to be more selective about events we attend.

Next meeting – 6 p.m. July 25 at 338 Hawthorne. Ray is having shoulder surgery and will miss that meeting.

Adjournment – 8 p.m.