

SAS Board Minutes
Sept. 25, 2018
338 Hawthorne Ave. NE

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

Guests: Samantha Bartling, USFWS Visitor Services manager for the Willamette Valley Refuge Complex; Pam Weiss, Salem Audubon member and volunteer who is organizing and revamping the chapter's Bird ID program.

Call to Order: Ray called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Guest presentation

Ray introduced Samantha to lay out information on Salem Audubon's responsibilities and opportunities in Nature Center Phase I operations and programming. To start, she mentioned that some questions and logistics, and their answers/solutions will be evolving. They will be worked out by Salem Audubon, the USFWS and the Friends group all working together. Another element is the Design Management Team, which will be transitioning as the construction phase continues toward completion. This group later will need to shift focus, and perhaps add or change some members, to focus on operations and programming.

The Facility Use Memorandum of Agreement for the Nature Center – This contains parameters for normal uses and activities at the Center – Standard Operation Procedures. Some things will need permission from the Service. A reservation request form will be developed, making shared use of the Nature Center easier.

Bringing in volunteers will be a central part of Nature Center Operations for all of the partners. If they are helping the Service, they will be signed up as Refuge volunteers. If they are volunteers of SAS, then SAS follows its normal volunteer procedures. If they are with a 3rd party group, the Service, Friends and SAS will have to work out whether they need a representative of one of these main parties with them.

The Refuge closes at dusk but there will be more flexibility for evening events on the 25-acre Nature Center Campus (vs. the rest of the Refuge). Events such as a nighttime owl watch led by SAS would be a reasonable use. Overnight use is an issue to be worked out.

Among other issues: **1. Use of intellectual property and commerce** – SAS has agreed not to sell things at the Nature Center but a question area is the SAS classes, which charge a fee and where memberships usually are offered for sale. Ray said he would like explicit language in final agreements to iron out any gray areas. **2. Operating hours** – These need to be worked out and depend on what is happening at the Nature Center. Right now hours coincide with a scheduled event; there are no “regular hours.” **3. Storage** – Each party has to maintain their own materials and equipment, but storage space is shared, so this has to be worked out. **4. Website** – Samantha said this would be contracted out and should include an online calendar and reservation service.

Nature Center Operations – **1. Website** – Samantha said this is key. It will be a “home base” of its own where volunteers can sign in and potential visitors can learn about activities. This platform would provide information on the basics, the FAQs, provide access to curriculum kits and program opportunities and provide volunteer management, including a link to an application form. **2. Volunteer “base camp”** – Samantha said a small building to use as a volunteer site is on the need list. This would be a place where volunteer vests, equipment and tools (riding lawn mower, etc.) could be stored and a desk and computer station for volunteer check-in would be available. This is for use by habitat maintenance volunteers and others who need to be there when the Nature Center itself is not in use. She envisions this at the overflow parking area on the new access road. Since there is no office space in the main building, this volunteer facility would be very important and a big value-add to the Nature Center operations. **3. Permittee/concessionaire:** Some centers around the country handle operations this way. **A permittee could conduct programming, such as Outdoor School. Concessionaire is similar to a permittee except that the “permittee” is allowed to make a profit. The permittee option is the most likely. Operations of the permittee would be controlled through USFWS. A local example could**

be Straub Outdoor or another entity's interest in using the Nature Center for an Outdoor School day camp. She cited this as a way to get more exposure for the center, and use of the center, and it would grant opportunities to a lot of kids with no staff or volunteer involvement on the part of SAS or USFWS. 4. Staffing – This could be looked at depending on the level of programming and how the groups want to operate the building. There are options, including a shared intern. Samantha shared an example of an intern she hires, which costs about \$9,500; up to \$15,000 through one program. This could be divided among the three partner groups and could provide supervision for a volunteer program.

6. Programming & Curriculum – The current Environmental Education/Interpretive Committee may turn into an advisory group of sorts to help guide programming and curriculum after the building opens. Curriculum plans could include kits to be used on site. These would be developed to meet curriculum standards. Funding would be needed. Ray said the upcoming “reach out to partners” survey will help with this by providing information on what people want from the Nature Center.

In Q&A, Lowell asked what will we have for the casual visitor once the Center is finished. Samantha pointed out that the Nature Center is not a visitors' center, which would be open on a regular schedule. But the restroom facilities and the overlook will always be available. Options at Ankeny Hill include a kiosk with brochures and self-guided trail maps. Temporary exhibits that correlate to what's going at the Refuge at the time could be available when a group such as SAS reserves and opens the Nature Center for a program. There will be a bulletin board for postings and events. Regular hours could be established if a broad pool of volunteers is assembled to “staff” the facility or if funds are found for a shared intern.

Samantha invited Board members to send her any other questions that might come up. Ray thanked Samantha for her energy and drive to help the partner groups prepare for the operations phase of the Nature Center. In answer to a question about planning for the Overlook, he said a new drawing has been submitted.

Previous month's minutes – Tim noted one correction on Pg. 2 – he said he misstated the builder's risk insurance coverage. It's \$2,500. Regarding that, Ray said that Dalke Construction has had some tools stolen from their site trailer and he wondered if builder's risk would cover that. **Action item: Tim said he would check.**

Tim moved that the minutes be approved with the one amendment. Doug seconded. Motion carried.

Review of Action Items – 1. The Board has the marked-up bylaws and these are a work in progress. Ray asked to postpone tonight's discussion of the bylaws. **New action item: Tim will get some ideas to the Board for their consideration and input.**

Discussion topics –

Bond funding of Phases 2 and 3 of the Nature Center – Regarding Board member concerns surrounding accounting of funds and whether we would be holding the contract for these future phases should be obtain bond funding, Ray has talked with FWS manager Damien Miller. He said funds, whether through foundations or bonds, could be donated to FWS. They would charge an overhead fee but would take on the contracting and all fund accounting from there. SAS would be obligated to report to funders so they would have to set performance standards. One question: The IRS does have donation limits on pass-throughs.

Doug and Ray are willing to approach some local legislators about the likelihood of a successful ask for the Nature Center. End of November was agreed upon as a good time to start outreach, given the upcoming legislative session. Michael suggested starting with the county commission, to get them on board at least. Dave Landkamer, president of the Friends, also was noted as an ally in any pursuit of bond funding.

Misc. Items

1. Fundraising note – Ray said that September's Birder's Nite guest speaker, wildlife artist Jon Janosik, offered to donate a piece to Salem Audubon. He will paint what we want (Tim suggested a Kestrel) and he wants the proceeds to be used toward the Nature Center. **Action item: Ray will get contact information to Tim and Tim and Carolyn will work with Mr. Janosik on this project.**

2. Ray will be gone in October; Tim will guide the meeting, which will include the by-laws update discussion. He also will plan to do a year-end financial report.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m. **Next meeting:** Oct. 28, 6 p.m., at 338 Hawthorne NE.