

SAS Board Minutes

Jan. 26, 2020

Via Zoom call

Participating: Tim Johnson, Michael Babbitt, Maureen Leong-Kee, Carolyn Homan, Judy Brunkal, Michael Williams, Jenny Ammon, Laurie Buswell, administrator, Doug Spencer (via phone, part of the meeting)

Absent: Cynthia Donald, Lowell Spring

Guests: Joseph Youren, David Harrison, SAS Conservation Committee members

Call to Order: Tim called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Board Conflict of Interest forms: Tim to have Laurie send form to Board members for their signature and return. These forms must be updated annually

CBC wrap up – Tim directed Board to the February Kestrel article for details.

Webinar update – Mike Unger emailed his report. Some highlights: Two webinars so far in 2021 with 5 more schedules. Of 23 people who signed up, 83% attended and 61% are SAS members. Financial outlook good. No expenses so far this year with income of \$220. Next expense should be August Zoom subscription renewal -- \$340. Facebook likes up to 855 and 955 people follow the page. The YouTube channel has 11 videos including 5 Birder's Night videos. There have been 215 views and 9 likes, no dislikes, as well as 14 subscribers to the channel. Views and viewing hours both up.

Minutes from December – Mike Williams moved minutes be approved as submitted and Michael Babbitt seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Potential lawsuit participation – Tim had shared an email from Jim Fairchild, Conservation Chair of Corvallis Audubon, about a potential lawsuit against Oregon Department of Forestry over logging in the Santiam Canyon. Because of the logging's potential to affect Salem's water supply, Salem Audubon may be asked to support this lawsuit. Conservation Committee members Joseph Youren and David Harrison joined the meeting to explain the particulars.

The potential suit targets ODF's proposed clearcutting of 3,500 acres following the canyon forest fires this past summer. ODF's plan to recoup commercial value from the burned timber led officials to revise their 10-year implementation plan. The level of proposed logging apparently is well beyond that allowed by the existing implementation plan. Joseph said it could be seen as a way to fill budget losses due to Covid-19.

Jim's email stated that the implementation plan revisions won't be finalized until March but ODF is moving ahead with auctioning, selling, and logging these sales now. The lawsuit apparently would halt logging at least until all relevant agencies can review the changes to the plan and potential effects.

Joseph said the lawsuit is being prepared to stop any further implementation of the Santiam Forest Restoration Plan. He said salvage logging in the aftermath of the Beachie Creek and Riverside fires includes 12,900 acres in Marion County that are part of Salem's watershed. He said the land is already damaged by the fire and having logging equipment activity on the fragile ground increases the potential for harmful watershed effects. In addition, herbicides would be used in conjunction with clear-cutting, increasing potential watershed effects. He argues that the forest burned but was not destroyed and needs to be allowed to recover naturally. David noted that leaving the trees also sequesters the carbon and logging cancels that benefit.

A group phone call was planned to discuss the potential lawsuit. Joseph, David and Tim will participate and Tim will share the link for other Board members who might want to participate. David saw no downside to joining the lawsuit unless SAS would be called on to share expenses. Another party has offered to pay the costs of filing the suit. Joseph will get more information together for the Board.

Nature Center Update

Notes from DMT call – These have been emailed.

Public opening – Tim’s position has been to postpone the Center’s opening, perhaps even until summer, because of the potential to spread Covid. He said he has not gotten any pushback from Refuge staff. Mike W. said he felt it was wise to hold off. Michael asked what the situation would be when the trails open at Ankeny this spring. Tim said the Center gates will remain closed, although people can walk in to enjoy the Nature Explore area and trails around the site.

Partner Design Contract – Graham is working on this and the Board may be able to take action on it in February, along with the Site Use and Obligation Agreement. Tim said SAS may have some obligation to help with operational costs. The Board has OK’d funds for this already. Costs might include the website, wifi and security systems.

Website update – Mike W. reported that it’s ready to go live. Tim said he will begin publicizing it via SAS email list and plans a Kestrel article to emphasize that the Center is not yet open to the public but that there are opportunities to support the next phases of construction.

Strategic plan update re: Nature Center – Tim said the Nature Center section needs to reflect the current status and include measurable goals and a plan to achieve them. ***Action item: Carolyn and Mike volunteered to work on a draft.**

Tim suggested including the role SAS can play in bringing others to the Center, including school groups, Willamette U., even Oregon State. The Center is free of charge to other groups as long as their programming is a fit with Salem Audubon’s values. Mike also emphasized the need to include diversity goals for programming and activities. Tim said Samantha is doing work with bilingual programming and SAS can help promote that.

Bird strike prevention – Tim said there is more to be done but the weather hasn’t been conducive to application of tape. Another option is use of a wide marker to draw lines on windows, which seems to work for him at home.

Law enforcement – The Service has hired an officer for the Willamette Valley Complex.—Scott Neumann. Tim said he would share Scott’s email and phone so Board can report any problems. The Service has asked the information not be shared with the public.

Deferred maintenance – Tim said the Service is expecting funding in the summer. The priority is to hire an operations person for the Complex. Some of the potholes at parking lot entrances have been fixed. Other work remains to be done.

Fundraising

Duck stamp prints – Tim has 40 of these and is getting 6 more. He suggested having raffles at Birder’s Night once these return to in-person. Carolyn asked if they could be sold at the Friends’ store once it’s open again. ***Action item: Tim will check on this prospect.**

Jenny suggested Brandon Reishus might be interested. He is a member of Ducks Unlimited and other organizations that might have a place for these or perhaps could organize an auction.

Discussion items

Future of Traveling Education Program— Tim said Lowell cannot continue with the nest box program because of mobility issues and Tim thinks Lowell also would like someone to take over the entire Traveling Education effort. The program has been mostly inactive the past year because of Covid and schools in recent years have not emphasized environmental education.

Judy said SAS needs to recruit a younger person to take over the effort. She is willing to help a volunteer get started. Jenny suggested a lesson plan be developed so a new person isn't overwhelmed. She said there should be plenty of time because kids aren't going back into the classroom this year. Maureen will check the volunteer list for people who have helped out in the past.

Tim asked Judy to outline a plan for someone who could take over. He sees the program as a priority because of its history with SAS and the involvement of the woodshop. *** Action item: Judy will take this on and work with Lowell on it.**

JGEMS request – Tim said Harry Fuller has stepped up to handle a request from the Jane Goodall school

City of Salem request – Tim will contact Salem's park ranger at Minto Brown who is setting up the eagle nest viewing station this year.

ODFW bird survey request – Tim and Mike Unger will be doing bird surveys again at Minto Island.

Turtle Ridge referrals – Tim wondered if SAS should continue to refer people to Turtle Ridge when they have questions or injured wildlife to turn over for help. Laurie said Turtle Ridge (which is involved in a dispute with its landlord) is still fielding calls for advice but is not accepting any birds or animals.

Chintimini, at Lewisburg north of Corvallis, is an option as a backup. ***Action item: Laurie will check to see if Turtle Ridge is referring people on to Chintimini.**

SAS end-of-year tasks – Laurie is working on year-end thanks and donation report letters, as well as confirming membership numbers. Tim said he wants to ID the larger donors and is considering Board thank-you calls to the major donors. Tim and Laurie will work on the list.

Tim will sign the SAS tax returns Wednesday and then work on the annual report to National Audubon.

MSWCD office space – The lease is up in August but the move may happen before that. SAS is still welcome to share space at the Stayton facility. Laurie said there may be a cost to help with maintenance but the cost will be low. Current rent at Hawthorne is only \$360/month.

Bird Burial update – Michael said this will be planned in February and to let him know if you want to be involved. He will pick a Saturday when Judy and Cynthia can participate and may set up a Google poll to select a date.

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Next Board meeting: 6 p.m. Feb. 23 via Zoom