

SAS Board Minutes

April 27, 2021

Via Zoom call

Participating: Tim Johnson, Michael Babbitt, Maureen Leong-Kee, Carolyn Homan, Judy Brunkal, Mike Williams, Cynthia Donald, Lowell Spring, Doug Spencer (via phone), Laurie Buswell, administrator

Absent: Jenny Ammon

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

Minutes from March – Michael noted one correction under Action Item review: Michael B. “will let Tim know.” (last sentence.) Cynthia moved minutes be approved as corrected; Mike W. seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Review of February Action Items – Michael B. said he was tasked with all the action items (continued follow-up at the Nature Reserve re: downed trees and preparing a letter to follow up on pledges made to support the Nature Center.) He will continue to pursue. Also, AHNC strategic goal revisions need to be added to the SAS Strategic plan. ***Action item: Carolyn will check on this and coordinate with Tim.**

Statesman Journal ad update, Tim – Tim had made arrangements with the SJ to run an ad April 28, May 1 and May 3 to feature the May SAS classes (Beginning Birder and Mike’s sessions.) The SJ did not follow through and the ad did not happen. Since the funds are not in the budget, Tim asked for permission to spend the \$450 for a future ad. Carolyn moved approval of the ad expenditure; Mike W. seconded. Motion carried. Tim said there is \$510 in Clear grant funds remaining and we are approved to spend the money on environmental education.

Mike Unger put the Beginning Bird class information on Facebook and there have been 1,000 views – the most ever. We’ve also received four registrations, three before the information appeared in the Kestrel. Board members were urged to share on their FB pages in order to extend the number of views.

Diversity goals – Tim said we need to avoid losing sight of the need to diversify throughout the range of SAS aspects, from the Board to the audiences served, etc. He wants to make SAS’s website, Facebook page and newsletter bilingual and target events that feature ethnic diversity. Michael B. wondered if Audubon could sponsor Spanish classes as a way to raise awareness. Judy said the two Willamette students who presented at the April Birder’s Night were fluent in Spanish and might be interested. Mike W. said translating the Kestrel, Facebook etc. can be pretty easily done, following the example of the AHNC website.

Tim said he sees Latinos in family groups at Ankeny NWR frequently and the City of Salem talks about this aspect of Latino culture. He thinks SAS could have activities for such groups, including special family/friends field trips. SAS could charge a small fee for the service. SAS has also been asked by the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde to do bird surveys, which is another way SAS is reaching out.

Maureen said the refuges have Spanish language pamphlets available and Cynthia cited new Spanish translations of Sibley’s and Kaufman’s birding guides, so field trips could be handled using those references. She said Fish and Wildlife has had very successful bilingual programs that could be used as models. Tim also said we need to help market the programs the refuge has developed as a way to serve diverse populations.

SAS office move – Tim said Marion Soil and Water Conservation District has SAS in their budget as a partner in the new Stayton office space so there’s no doubt they want SAS to move with them. Remodeling is under way and Tim and Laurie need to visit to see what the accommodations for SAS would look like. There is the option to stay put at Hawthorne but Tim needs to talk to the property owner. It would be a matter of compatibility with whoever the new main tenant is for that space. Maureen noted that the Nature Center is an option for Board meetings that would be closer than Stayton for several Board members.

Financial Report – Tim said the annual payment from National has come in. He and Laurie now have a way to use the data base to find out which members have renewed so non-renewals can be emailed. Sustaining memberships are increasing, which is positive. Tim said we need to find ways to save money and new ways to raise funds in order to avoid a big dip into reserves. Additional fund raising is difficult with the ongoing Covid situation. A fall Wine and Birds event might be possible, as well as a 2022 Birdathon.

Another unbudgeted expense is removal of at least two trees at the Nature Reserve that were damaged in the ice storm. Lee is hiring R&R tree service to remove them and the cost will be at least \$1,500. Lee doesn't know when the work will take place. Also unbudgeted is any cost associated with the office move to Stayton. SAS was able to handle the last move without hiring anyone.

Nature Center – Tim said a lot has been accomplished in the last month, including progress on the interpretive elements, signage and other work on the Nature Explore area, which may be ready in May. Internet and a Ring camera for security have been installed at Gehlar Hall Center. The security gate is working to keep vehicles out of the Nature Center area but people are still walking in. It was decided to hold the May Board meeting back at the Nature Center in order to see the progress that's been made.

FWS has hired two interns. Hope Pressley has won a nationwide fellowship and is coming to help Samantha get ready for opening the Center to the public. Another intern has been hired to help Graham with Center projects.

Re: the Partner Design-Construction agreement, FWS was expecting SAS to take on project management for the next phase but Ray and Doug have advised against that since everything has to be done to federal standards. Tim talked to Damien and he agreed that contractor selection, etc. should be handled by FWS regional office personnel.

The infrastructure bill may have money for FWS for roads, etc., and it's possible there could be funds for the second and third phases of building at Ankeny Hill. The advice is to think big since we have the plans for Gehlar Hall extension and the utilities are in place. A meeting is planned to discuss the details. Regional has not agreed to take on project management, but there's a lot already invested so strong arguments will be made to that end.

May general meeting for SAS – This will be held as part of May Birder's Night. Election of Board members will take place before the Birder's Night presentation. Tim said Eugenia is resigning as Birder's Night chair after the May meeting. She is moving to Redmond. No one has stepped up to take on the job so the committee is working to line up a whole year's worth of programs in the hopes it will encourage someone to take on the job with a whole year's structure in place. Tim will advertise the opening in his next President's message in the Kestrel. He urged Board members to query friends, etc., because Birder's Night is important and the program needs a chair to handle meeting coordination.

Conservation – SAS Board voted via email to be part of the lawsuit challenging logging under way on fire-ravaged areas in Santiam Canyon. The lawsuit seeks to make sure Department of Forestry complies with its own forest management plan. Tim said he did get an email from one SAS member objecting to Audubon endorsement of the lawsuit. On another conservation issue, David Harrison was asked to write letters in support of Marine Conservation Area proposals discussed at the March meeting.

Adjourned at 7:20 p.m. **Next meeting:** 6 p.m. May 25 at the Nature Center