

## **SAS Board Minutes**

**Oct. 1, 2019 (September meeting, moved from Sept. 24)**

**338 Hawthorne Ave. NE**

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

**Guest:** Ray Temple

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

**Cats and Birds policy discussion** – Ray had shared an email with the Board his thoughts on why a policy is needed, how a policy might function and necessary parameters for a proposal, including basing deliberations and assertions in fact and producing a policy that can be implemented. He also shared a proposed policy statement consistent with SAS values.

Discussion addressed various approaches to separate cats from birds and wildlife by reducing feral cat abundance and keeping owned cats from roaming. Efforts include the “Cats Safe Inside” program organized by Audubon of Portland and the Feral Cat Coalition. This latter program promotes home enclosures or “catios” that allow cats to be outside the home but not free-roaming. Trap-euthanize, endorsed by some organizations, is controversial and not an option. Trap-neuter-release is popular with some cat advocates but not seen as effective by most conservation groups.

Discussion resulted in a few changes to the proposal Ray offered, including more narrowly defining outreach efforts to say “We aim to educate cat owners and others about responsible pet care, including the value of keeping cats indoors and not feeding feral or free-roaming cats.”

SAS opposes the maintenance of feral cat colonies, including the feeding of cats and trap-neuter-release. (eliminating references to “near places where native wildlife may be impacted, including state and local parks, wildlife refuges and other natural areas.”)

Added was: “Salem Audubon will not support” before “programs to trap and euthanize feral cats.”

Also added, a final point: We support a trap, neuter and adopt program where adopters agree to prevent their cats from roaming.”

Tim moved adoption of the policy proposal as amended; Lowell seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ray agreed to write a preamble to an article in the Kestrel sharing the policy. Discussion then centered on what SAS can do in terms of outreach, including flyers, the website, sharing information on Facebook, etc. Maureen said she could share an animated video from Cornell Lab that addresses the issue of cat predation. This can be posted on the SAS Facebook page.

**Review of previous meeting's minutes (August 2019)** – Carolyn asked for a motion to approve. Tim so moved and Judy seconded. Minutes were approved as submitted.

**Review of Action Items** – 1) Re: bird specimens at Baskett Slough. These have been moved to the Nature Center. The best ones will be mounted for display and the others will be used in programs. Graham said he has some shelving for storage. Michael said space for books also is needed. 2) Michael has not been able to launch the profile of an SAS member. Tim said a new Board member candidate has emerged and she might be a good subject for the first profile. He said Cynthia Donald, who previously was active with Audubon in Arizona, has agreed to Board membership. He also said he has talked with Laurie Aguirre and Kurt Bosket about Board membership. Laurie will help with the SAS Education Program. Kurt said he will think about Board membership. 3) Re: Lowell to contact Geer Crest Farm – this Saturday is their open house/fall fest event. 4) Nest box pricing list included in tonight's Board packet.

**Treasurer's Report, Tim** – The report sent via email to the Board contained an error. The Unrestricted Operating Investment fund has grown about \$79,500, despite our having drawn \$18,545 (not \$27,262) from this fund to cover expenses over that same period of time. He said we'll have to move more funds to cover year-end expenses this year – about \$10,000.

He said that, faced with raising about \$1.4 million to finish the Nature Center, we need to evaluate whether we need \$400,000 in an operating fund when we've only drawn a few thousand to cover SAS expenses. It's possible we could free up \$200,000 for the next phases of the Nature Center. Another \$50,000 could possibly be drawn from the Nature Center operating fund, since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be covering maintenance and some other expenses at the Center after it's open.

Tim shared the basic campaign document he has developed, including the vision, campaign goal, campaign partners, accomplishments so far, funding prospects and next steps.

#### **Updates:**

#### **Nature Center priorities–**

**a) Select water treatment approach** – From the DMT call, Tim said testing has shown there is no surface water contamination in the Center's well water so a decision just has to be made as to which treatment to use for coliform. Because of the iron content, prefiltration is necessary if UV treatment is used. The second approach is chemical, which is cheaper to start but requires more maintenance. Graham said, however, that the Service has personnel who are already performing that maintenance at other refuge complex facilities. The matter should be resolved at the next DMT.

**b) Bird strike protection for the Center** – Tim is testing this at his house. He needs to get someone to handle the installation at the Nature Center.

**c) Transfer ownership; cancel builders insurance policy** – This will be done as soon as water treatment issue is settled. Tim said another \$38,766 is owed to Dalke for “retainage,” per the contract.

**d) Road construction update** – The drawings are done but comments are not back from the federal roads people. Construction should begin as soon as the rains stop.

Other priorities include creating operating procedures for the Center; plan for opening celebration; Center website design and development; WiFi installation; ID potential SAS events to hold at the Center; posting Center updates on the Friends of Ankeny NWR and SAS Facebook pages; recruit volunteers for the Center opening and ongoing operations.

**Nest Box price update** – The updated price list was shared, showing a new \$20 price for assembled nest boxes, vs. the kits at \$15. and a new \$95 barn owl box price.

**Reschedule October Board meeting** – Tim asked that the October meeting be moved to Oct. 29 because he has family visiting the prior week. The change was approved.

**Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

**Next Board meeting: NOTE DATE CHANGE** – 6 p.m. **Oct. 29**, 338 Hawthorne NE, Salem, OR