



## FRIENDS OF TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

April 28, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Bonnie Anderson, Dawn Carovano, Alan Christensen, Cheryl Hart, Tom Hartz, Phyllis Millan, Michelle Miller, Sharon Miller, Louie Olivarez, Michelle Scholz, Willem Stoeller, Irene Vlach.

Excused: Keith Mays.

Staff: Natalie Balkam, Larry Klimek, Eva Kristofik, Jenna Mendenhall.

We have a quorum (7 directors required).

### I. Call to Order (6:00pm)

Voting during a board meeting held by Zoom: since January 2020 Oregon law no longer requires 100% participation for a vote made during an online meeting to be valid and therefore only a quorum is needed for voting on motions. Our by-laws defer to the regulations of State of Oregon.

### II. Approval of Agenda

Motion:

1. Tom
2. Phillis

Passed, with all in favor.

### III. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of the March Meeting Minutes

B. Financial Reports  
Reports were submitted electronically.

C. Visitor Services Report  
Report was submitted electronically.

D. Photo Society Report

No report.

E. Restoration Report

Report was submitted electronically.

F. Membership Committee Report

No report

G. Other reports

Tom would like to see explanations in the financial reports, as to why the percentage of revenue going to programs fluctuates considerably from month to month. Willem pointed out that it was explained in the notes sent with the financial reports: the 95% of revenue going to programs is due to the \$400,000 grant for Chicken Creek restoration.

Willem estimated the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on our revenue. He is expecting a shortfall of \$10,000, compared to the budget, due to the fact that the store closure in April and May. Memberships and donations are also reduced.

He recommends that all expenditures coming out of unrestricted funds be stopped, except for payroll, outstanding bills, and committed contracts.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the reports:

1. Cheryl
2. Willem

Passed with all in favor.

#### IV. New Business

- A. Update on FWS/ budget/personnel, public access and safety; May 1 trail changes Wapato Lake September opening ceremony needs: Larry / Eva

Curt, Larry and John are the only ones not working from home. The current restrictions will stay in place until the state, or the country lift them – following the stricter rules of the two jurisdictions. At this point there is not proposed date for easing the restrictions. USFWS has not been able to spend an important amount of the budgeted funds, due to the restrictions. Larry is waiting for a budget for the new parking lot at the Atfalati unit and parking at Wapato Lake (the funds will come from the Federal Highway Administration). Larry was granted permission to go forward with the hiring of 2 park rangers – hopefully by end of the calendar year.

The seasonal trail will open on May 1, as well as the wayside. Bathrooms and the main parking lot will remain closed, despite issues with safe parking for Refuge visitors.

USFWS is going forward with Sept. 26 Wapato Lake opening. Sept. 26 also is National Public Lands day and National Urban Refuge day. Larry is envisioning an event similar to Bird Fest with a variety of activities. He is inviting the Director of USFWS, various partners, Clean Water Services (CWS), congressional elected officials as well as county commissioners. He would like FOR to play a role similar to what we do at Bird Fest, i.e. be the main sponsor. There will be no parking/bussing cost, as there will be parking on location.

Tom expressed the need to start planning soon so that we can start recruiting volunteers. A small planning team comprised of Eva, Todd, Bonnie, CWS, The City of Gaston and other organizations (to deal with food and parking) will start meeting. This initial small group will then recruit further help. The Tribes will also participate.

The decision on whether to proceed with the event will be made in August.

Eva will write about the planned Wapato Lake opening in the weekly volunteer email.

Tom also is concerned about the possibility that we might have to cancel late in the planning process, after having recruited motivated volunteers. Bonnie reassured him that this is why the planning will start with small group of participants which will be transparent about the status of the event with respect to Covid-19.

Alan offered for the Friends to extend their own invitations to elected officials as the USFWS has to follow a set process to be able to do so. The invitations need to get it on the calendars of our representatives in Congress ASAP. The more invitations they receive from various entities, the better.

Chicken Creek: USFWS got estimates for the bridges from the engineering firm. The cost of one bridge is over \$100,000, with additional costs for the work, for a total of \$200,000. CWS committed to covering additional costs. Meanwhile there is a possibility CWS might be approved for another grant for costs towards the bridge, and Larry would like the Friends to again receive the funds for CWS.

Dawn asked about the USFWS' liability with respect to the public spending time on the Refuge despite the fact that there are no services (no parking, no restrooms, no trail rovers). The only staff on the trail is law enforcement. However, Larry reassured us that the liability is not higher than usually. The Department of the Interior is responsible for the fact that the Refuge is open without any staff or volunteers. Larry is trying to mitigate the situation with signage.

Bonnie reported that we received \$30,000 from the Washington County Visitors Association for Wapato Lake ADA certified trails.

Eva reported that the public comment period for the Hunt Plan is now closed. Currently the E.A. for public use is being reviewed. Eva has to add to it the Visitor Services plan for Wapato. As soon as it will be released for public comments Eva will notify us, to make sure we will have a chance to comment. Eva is presuming we will be neutral on the Hunt plan, as in the past.

B. Update on Virtual Bird Fest: Bonnie

Promo for the Virtual Bird Fest is being posted on Facebook (FB) and on our website. A small group is working on it. 80% of the content will be pre-recorded with the remainder being live. The theme is Retro 80's. The content includes a photo contest, trivia, games, art & crafts, as well as Q&A with refuge staff. The event will be promoted on a national level by USFWS. Bonnie requested that board members promote the Virtual Bird Fest on our personal FB pages. The content and the schedule of events should be available tomorrow.

Alan: The Oregonian is doing a good job listing this kind of events. The Virtual Bird Fest can also be a resource for educators. Bonnie mentioned that the content will stay on our website after the event is officially over. Natalie will contact the schools.

C. Presentation on Board Liability: Willem

Action items:

- Post Articles of Incorporation to our website
- Set up a process for removing board members
- Do background checks of volunteers, board members and seasonal employees
- Update green binders to include Articles of Incorporation and copy of D&O Insurance
- Purchase additional insurance for Bonnie
- Research time frame for keeping minutes
- Make available to the public 3 years of 990s and our 503 (c) (3) letter.

D. Restoration information update / status of efforts to date: Natalie

Natalie currently works from home. The 1P/2P plantings were completed before the shut down. 100,000 plants of various species were put in within one week and they are doing well. Sarah and Curt are spraying weeds periodically. Natalie and Curt put back in plugs that had come out and managed to do some brush cutting before no longer

having access to the Refuge. CWS crews are spraying at the Dennis and Olson units, as well as on Chicken Creek.

Curt was at Wapato and things look good.

E. Open session to discuss other issues not on agenda

Jenna: she is working with Tom to keep the naturalists engaged through online calls to be starting next month. At first they will call the core team to have them involved, especially the new ones who had just one day of training. She is also helping with Virtual Bird Fest promotion. She is learning about online conferences.

V. Unfinished Business

#### VI. Announcements

Willem sent to board members the link for the outreach presentation. Please give him feedback.

We cannot sell books online because Sharon doesn't have access to the Refuge.

VII. Adjourn (8:00)

Motion to adjourn:

1. Cheryl
2. Louie

Passed, with all in favor.