



FRIENDS OF TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

May 26, 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: Carly Hirschmann, Larry Klimek, Eva Kristofik.

We have a quorum (7 directors required).

I. Call to Order (6:30pm)

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda:

1. Willem
2. Dawn

Passed, with all in favor.

III. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of April Meeting Minutes

B. Financial Reports

Reports were submitted electronically.

Enabling Programs are covered with unrestricted funds.

Mission Related Programs are funded by either restricted or unrestricted funds.

C. Visitor Services Report

Report was submitted electronically.

D. Photo Society Report

A Zoom presentation is scheduled for June 4.

E. Restoration Report

Report was submitted electronically.

F. Membership Committee Report

No report.

G. Other reports

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the reports:

1. Tom

2. Willem

Passed, with all in favor.

IV. Business

A. Information

5. Intel grant for Chicken Creek bridge work: Bonnie/Willem

Intel, on the advice of Todd Reeves (Bonneville Power Administration), is interested in the Chicken Creek project and is planning on giving us a grant for \$200,000 to allow us to complete the restoration (total restoration cost is \$1,200,000). A grant for \$100,000 from the Soil and Water Conservation District is still outstanding.

Intel needs to deposit the funds for the grant into our account before the end of their fiscal year on June 30. Intel also gave \$250,000 for Wapato Lake. We will recognize their contribution, as well as other contributions. The Intel grant will pay for Clean Water Services (CWS) to continue work on Chicken Creek.

With Intel's contribution, the funding gap for Chicken Creek will be \$100,000. It is expected that CWS has the funds to finish the project.

6. Virtual Bird Fest success/results: Bonnie/ Carly

Virtual bird Fest, as tracked by the traffic to our Facebook page and website, was a big success.

The single tool that extended reach more than anything else was asking our partners to share our content, or to advertise it.

People are especially willing to watch interactive content that includes people they are familiar with. The best formula for success for social media is education combined with entertainment. Most shares were from family members of the people featured in the videos.

Going forward we will feature themed weeks, for example pollinators or birds of prey. Carly will also have specific items for specific days of the week: Fact Friday, Take a Walk Thursday, Expert Tuesday, etc., including Saturdays and Sundays. Carly is planning on having a trivia game once a month. She will add a link that leads to the membership page on every post.

Question: How should we use social media once the Refuge is open again? The plan is to put our programs online in video form, rather than just as a page on the website. Can the existing videos be translated into Spanish as a means to expand our reach? We currently have a Spanish story time which has as much success than the story time in English. Perhaps we could have Spanish subtitles in the English videos. We could invite the audience ask questions in Spanish (Ask the Expert).

7. Final Ash Creek planting of 1P and 2P: Bonnie

See restoration report. The volunteer plantings at the beginning of the restoration work allowed \$1,000 in savings. These funds were used for the purchase and planting of additional plugs which were put in last week as the last phase of the 1P/2P planting. 370,00 plants were planted in total and the contract is now completed. A list of the planted species is available.

8. Nathan's resignation letter/closure: Bonnie

Nathan sent a resignation letter as he no longer wishes to work with herbicides. We somehow should recognize him and thank him for his service.

9. CARES Act funding and management: Willem

On May 11 we closed a loan for \$9,400 with Homestreet bank under the Payroll Protection Program, to be spent on payroll. The loan will be forgiven if we spend it all – which we will according to a spread sheet Willem and Bonnie created. We also booked \$5,000 as unrestricted funds from the One Tree grant. We are low in donations and memberships. Our income is substantially reduced because of no store sales.

B. Discussion/Vote:

1. Wapato Dedication in September/status: Larry

The Wapato Opening is scheduled for Sept. 26. However, according to the Governor's notice, no more than 25 people will be allowed to assemble at that time. We could

have a small event, by invitation only, including dignitaries, and stream live for the public. Larry is in communication with CWS about postponing the opening to next spring. Nevertheless, Larry would like to do something in the fall because the Refuge will open, with or without celebration. If the director of USFWS comes, then we will have to have some celebration. The trails will be a minimum of 6 feet wide – meaning it will be possible to keep the required distancing.

Larry got the funding for the parking lot and the improvements on the road, which will be added on to the contract of the company that builds the bridges. The work should be completed by the end of September.

Larry is working on getting the MOU approved with the city of Gaston for the above work. Yamhill County has agreed to donate the small section of road they own between our two properties.

The two bridges are almost completed. The vehicle bridge still needs a gate and we have to place an obstacle on the pedestrian bridge to prevent driving. However, we do not yet have a restroom by the parking lot at Wapato Lake. We have a concrete restroom (pit toilet) in store which Larry is planning to move to Wapato Lake. The cost for moving the outhouse and installing it is a little over \$9,000. He has the funds but needs to figure out how to get the job through the contracting process.

The funding from the Washington County Visitors Association will allow for 2 miles of ADA trail.

At Tualatin the planting is completed and the plants are doing well. Meanwhile the Chicken Creek project is going forward. It was decided that the North bridge by the outlet will be for pedestrians only to reduce the cost.

In June the pump house project will be started and the dikes will be inspected.

The question was asked whether there will be a Friends group to support Wapato. Larry stated that a Friends group will be promoted at a future community event. Our group could serve as an example of the opportunities. Larry has names of people who were interested from last year's Showdown.

Eventually we will have to recognize the people who contributed and our partners in all projects in a meaningful way, perhaps with a limited opening, with one representative from each entity. We will have to publish when Wapato is open. We might still have a grand opening in November. Larry definitely wants to have it open to the general public before the opening of waterfowl hunting, probably in mid-December.

USFWS is starting to think about the process of opening up the facilities. Larry doesn't think it will happen before another 2 weeks as there are not enough PPEs. Moreover,

the question of how to operate the bathrooms is not resolved. To be allowed to open the restrooms we need the staff and the PPEs to clean them every day. There are increasing issues with parking on Hwy 99, including cars parked in the bike lane. Many people are visiting the Refuge for the first time.

2. O'Brien "Prize submission: Bonnie/Alan

Don O'Brien is a member of the board of the National Wildlife Refuges Association. A number of other board members started an endowment to recognize his devotion to Refuges and Friends groups a few years ago. An RFP was sent to Friends groups, inviting them to apply for \$1,000 for a project of their choice. Applications are due on June 15.

The following suggestions were made: to expand the online Birdfest; to pay for online promotion of Birdfest and the Refuge in general; to translate the videos on our website into Spanish; to develop kits that we could mail to the public.

Carly and Bonnie will take the lead to come up with ideas. If you have suggestions, send them to Bonnie by Friday.

3: Background checks for Friends volunteers: Willem

Board members are liable if there is an issue with a volunteer who has not undergone a background check. Willem estimates that it would cost \$950 to do background checks all our volunteers. The volunteers could either pay for it themselves, or have the organization cover the cost.

Willem made a motion to do background checks on all FOR volunteers.

Questions: Sharon pointed out to the fact that the online background check is not accurate. Moreover, the cost would be substantially higher if we were to require finger prints. She is concerned about the archiving of the obtained information and would want to know what would be the criteria for disqualifying someone from volunteering for us and whether the potential volunteer would have the right to appeal the decision.

Bonnie suggested the creation of an ad hoc committee to create a policy about background checks with the goal to protect board members from liability.

Alan, Willem, Bonnie and Sharon will form a committee. They will contact Portland Audubon about their background check policy. Bonnie will consult with the Attorney General.

There was no second to the motion.

4. Open session for new topics or further discussion: All
- a. Willem learned that every state has its own rules about charitable donations. The State of Washington allows donations up to \$50,000 before the organization has to register as a charitable organization with the State of Washington - unless the organization has employees, in which case it has to register to legally accept any donation from some entity in the State of Washington. According to Washington law, we have to register just for having a DONATE button on our website, unless we state that we cannot accept funds from outside Oregon. Grants and membership fall under the same rule.

We need to consult with a non-profit attorney about our liability. Large non-profits register with all the states, which is expensive and a major administrative hassle.

Alan will work with Bonnie to find more information.

- b. Willem reminded us that our purpose statement and legal documents exclude Wapato from our activities but we are already accepting grants and talking about participating in events. Eva reminded us that our agreement with USFWS does include both Refuges. However, it will require a change in the bylaws which will have to be approved at the annual meeting. We will have to vote at the next board meeting whether to go forward with these changes.

V. Announcements

VI. Adjourn (8:35)

Motion to adjourn:

1. Cheryl
2. Willem

Passed, with all in favor.