



## **FRIENDS OF TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX**

March 22, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Bonnie Anderson, Dawn Carovano, Cheryl Hart, Tom Hartz, Michelle Miller, Phyllis Millan, Sharon Miller, Louie Olivares, Keith Palevsky, Tom Stibolt, Willem Stoeller, Irene Vlach.

Excused: Alan Christensen.

Absent: Keith Mays.

Staff: Larry Klimek, Eva Kristofik, Curt Mykut, John Schweitzer, Kim Strassburg, Sarah Williams Brown.

Guest: George Burnett.

### **I. Quorum**

We have a quorum (8 directors required).

### **II. Call to Order (6:30pm)**

### **III. Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction**

### **IV. Approval of Agenda**

Willem pointed out that item VIII (c) is not a report on a new POS system, but a presentation based on which we have to make a decision.

### **V. Approval of last meeting's minutes**

Motion to approve the minutes:

1. Keith
2. Phyllis

Passed.

### **VI. Committee Reports Consent Agenda**

#### **A. Financial Reports**

Reports were submitted electronically

B. Finance Committee

Willem pointed out there is no need for a separate finance committee report because there is nothing to report in addition to the financial reports.

Homestreet is still working on retiring our first PPP loan.

C. Restoration Report

Report was submitted electronically.

D. Photo Society Report

Report was submitted electronically.

It was suggested that future reports include dates and times of events.

E. Governance Report

Report was submitted electronically.

F. IT Report

Report was submitted electronically.

G. Membership Committee Report

Draft Charter and Goals were submitted electronically.

H. Store/Visitor Services report

Report was submitted electronically as well as Point of Sale System Upgrade Proposal.

I. Advocacy Report

FOR signed on to the NWRA Arctic Refuge Protection Act Support Letter

([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/164qhVzJTkJhaEH\\_I2S6Aieie-v89RDVL\\_KO8ReHBEMs/viewform?fbclid=IwAR2uT4Ag0LmNCpwOPOQCmiMztk\\_IpLNie45d8hOyOF58KUe-4hymOrjEX-s&edit\\_requested=true](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/164qhVzJTkJhaEH_I2S6Aieie-v89RDVL_KO8ReHBEMs/viewform?fbclid=IwAR2uT4Ag0LmNCpwOPOQCmiMztk_IpLNie45d8hOyOF58KUe-4hymOrjEX-s&edit_requested=true) )

J. Tualatin River Bird Festival Report

Report was submitted electronically. The virtual Bird Festival schedule will be posted on our website no later than April 13.

K. Community Asset Funds

Report was submitted electronically.

L. Any additions/supplements to reports.

Michelle will reach out to Natalie about the status of the volunteer program interviews.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the Reports:

1. Irene
2. Bonnie

Passed.

## **VII. Programs: Guest Speakers: Kim Strassburg, Urban Refuge Coordinator**

### **a. PVURP discussion of submitted questions**

The Urban Program (UP) team:

- Kim Strassburg, Urban Refuge Coordinator
- Sarah Williams Brown, Urban Engagement Specialist. Sarah will be stationed at Ridgefield but will still be involved with Tualatin
- Pat Stark, Urban Communications Specialist
- Sarah Gray, Program Assistant
- Shannon Mardis, Youth Employment Program Lead (Student Conservation Associations Intern)

This team is engaged in an effort across the landscape, some overlapping National Refuges, others representing the Refuge System, to engage people with nature and the outdoors in ways that are equitable. The team is connecting neighborhoods through culturally specific neighborhood organizations and coalitions with the greater conservation and non-conservation community. Kim offered to give a summary of the recent developments and direction from the Service-wide Urban Wildlife Conservation Program. Instead, the Board wanted to hone in on how the Friends can support the UP, what role they can play with the Urban Program. We also were interested in finding out what resources the UP can offer to the Friends, financial, guidance, etc.

Kim stressed that the Urban program encompasses all three local Refuges. Kim's team is just one part of the larger Portland-Vancouver Urban Refuge Program. The allocation and management of resources is dealt with by a leadership team. Kim indicated that it would be inappropriate to prescribe what the Friends should do, as it would be out of synch with TRNWR. She would be happy to advise, provide ideas and connections as well as coach, in concert with the Refuge.

The Board asked for examples of the coaching, advise and connection that the UP is providing or could provide. Kim offered the upcoming DEI training as an example, where the UP enters into a contract for all entities in the Portland Metro area (3 Friends boards, including their employees, 2 Refuge staff from both Refuge complexes). The UP already helped to diversify the Bird Festival, making it more equitable. Currently the UP is managing a contract with Valadrian (Mauricio) Creative who is currently working with the Bird Festival committee on how to engage the community in programming and designing a virtual program that is relevant to a diverse community, in essence serving as the community connector, helping to navigate the community relationships. Currently the UP team is working on the Environmental Education Partnership Project with the Refuge staff, working in an ongoing relationship with select schools to develop more equitable programs. The work with Greenway School is part of that program and the Friends are involved with that. This effort is in its beginning stages.

Kim mentioned that given the cultural reckoning that is taking place in the country, the pandemic and the political spectrum of the country, we are all in a very dynamic environment, therefore there's not a specific formula on how to work with the community. Trust has to be built within systematically excluded communities before we can have a conversation of who brings what to the table. Getting to know and being present in the community is the first step

(much like Bonnie is doing with Greenway Elementary). The conservation movement has excluded a lot of ethnically and culturally diverse communities for a long time. We have a lot of work to do to level the playing field. The USFWS wants to be the community asset to these systematically excluded communities, without expecting something in return. It means, both for the Service and for the Friends, to start with relationship and trust building.

Kim was asked about her vision of how the Friends can help with the UP and she suggested the following steps:

- The Friends should be in lock-step with the Refuge's goals withing the greater urban program.
- Spend time with Todd and Natalie to see where they are at and how the Friends can add value to their work.
- A subgroup of the Friends could be formed to start digging into the specifics.
- Bring these questions to the DEI training and Derron will help us do experiential learning.
- As the community around Wapato Lake is very diverse, there might be an opportunity to work together in that context. We could build partnerships with schools and engage diverse youth representing the community.
- If we jump to the above prescriptions, we will miss the intention.

The Friends wondered how we can start working on the ground, rather than just talking about it. Kim stressed the importance of clearly understanding what the community's needs and barriers are before offering solutions. She offered an example of a 2017 "self-assessment" for urban Refuges which indicated we spent time and resources removing barriers and very little time learning what the barriers are for communities. Unfortunately, these steps are backwards and we may spend time and resources trying to address the wrong problem.

The Friends encouraged Kim to revisit the questions we submitted to her. We are interested in using her connections and expand from there. Kim encouraged us to get guidance from Todd and the VS team. She cannot prescribe what the Friends should do for the Refuge. She can join the conversation but needs to have a better understanding of what our desires are. Kim again suggested a small team to get involved – but it must include the Refuge staff.

The Board asked about timing for the DEI training. It's likely to kick off in May. A randomly selected group of people will be contacted by Derron Coles to do a pre-training assessment to help us design the curriculum and learning.

b. Follow up

## **VIII. Reports**

a. President: Friends Partnership Agreement Update – Signature due March 24, 2021

Michelle sent the signed Agreement to Larry last week. Chelsea will forward it to the Regional office to be signed within the next two days.

b. Project Leader – Larry Klimek

A lot is going on behind the scenes, both by USFWS, and by the Friends, laying the groundwork for when the Refuge will again be fully open. Don't hesitate to call him or Eva if you have questions.

c. Store Report on new POS system Clover - Sharon

See emailed proposal. The Store Committee has been discussing a new Point of Sales system for 5 years. It is very difficult to make the transition from one system to another while the store is open because of having to move the inventory to a new system and the need to retrain the volunteers. The store closure forced by the pandemic provides an opportunity to do it now. Regretfully, the upgrade was not in the budget. The Store Committee is requesting \$2,100 to purchase the hardware for Clover, a tablet-based system. The current system is very expensive because of the high credit card charges, even when there are no sales. Clover will cost \$70/month for the software and 2.55% on the transactions. All credit cards will be charged the same rate. The new system will save us money in the long run, but it is a large expense for the new hardware.

The current monthly software cost averages about \$60 per month, i.e. the new system would cost about an additional \$10/month. However, with Clover, we will not have fixed fees, only 10 cents per transaction + 2.55% of the transaction. Last year we lost about \$600 because the amount of the fixed fees exceeded the amount of the sales.

We have the option to return the hardware for 60 days at full refund minus cost of shipping. Phone customer support would be available 24/7. A Clover employee working out of Wilsonville will spend a day installing the system and training us. The Finance Committee doesn't recommend purchasing the warranty. The system will also work if there is no wifi.

Motion to approve the expenditure of \$2,100 for the Clover POS:

1. Tom S.
2. Tom H.

Passed.

d. Membership Committee Update and Charter vote – Phyllis

It was pointed out that some sections in the charter are identical to clauses in the by-laws. Rather than being replicated, these clauses merely should be referenced.

The Membership Committee will plan and coordinate activities for members. It will have to work closely with the Communications Committee. Bonnie is currently researching alternate platforms for a more dynamic newsletter.

It was recommended to add, under #4 (strategy), to engage the Facebook friends to become members, through FB posts targeted to recruiting members.

Phyllis will make amendments to the charter and submit it at the next meeting for approval.

Michelle will send her comments and recommendations to Phyllis. All are welcome to send comments to Phyllis.

e. Committee breakdown of Fundraising, Outreach, other.

Will be reviewed at the next meeting.

#### **IX. Old Business**

a. Action Items from previous meetings:

- Conflict of interest forms: sign and return to Bonnie ASAP.
- Status of the Friends Agreement: on track.
- Are we applying for a 3rd PPP loan/grant? At this point there is no option for a third loan.
- Research on what our members want and what we want from them. Potential coordination with VS on volunteer recruitment. In progress.
- Status of Photo Society: will be dealt with at the end of the pandemic
- Wapato Lake visit: Irene will work with Larry to find dates in April and/or May

b. Any other old business

#### **X. New Business**

a. FLAP (Federal Land Access Program) Grant – Meeting with Michael Skipper, Refuge and City of Sherwood: Michelle, Larry, Eva

The City of Sherwood is working on options for a pedestrian accessway to the Refuge. A decision will be made in June or July. The City is seeking the support of the Friends and of the Refuge for their preferred option. Michelle recommends the option of accessing the Refuge on 99W near the bus stop, which would be a year-round access by our main entrance. Michelle suggested we have a conversation with Keith Mays to understand the politics of the issue, and to share with him our preference. Since the purpose of the grant is to connect the trail to the Refuge, USFWS support for the preferred option is required.

b. Update from Tom Stibolt on King City Planning

Tom will give his update at the next board meeting.

c. Any other New Business

#### **XI. Announcements**

Cheryl: Caroline Brower will give her quarterly legislative update on Wed. May 24, 11am. Let Cheryl know if you didn't get the notice.

#### **XII. Adjourn (8:30pm)**

Motion to adjourn:

1. Tom S.

2. Keith

Passed.