

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, May 19, 2021

Board Members in virtual attendance: Ian Bartelmez, Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Dennis Fleischer, Jim Freck, Joe Gonyo, Todd Schaller, Pat Smith, and Bruce Urban. Excused: Russ Olson.

Also virtually present: Kelcy Boettcher and Bruce Ross

Agenda:

- **6:36 PM – Meeting Convened**

- **6:37 PM – Financials & e-Commerce Assistance**

Bruce Ross reported that we are ahead of budget. The positive trend is based upon Green Bay's strong showing and early close-out, several unforecasted Class As and other Class As that performed at 100% (or close to it) sales. Another contributor was the USFWS end-of-grant close-out transactions that WWA manages. Further, the 2021 PPP will realize \$25,000 later this year.

Bruce Ross introduced an initiative to identify and on-board a part-time temporary administrative assistant. This position will provide "as needed" back-up to the Director of Administration's position, primarily to ensure e-commerce coverage when Kelcy is out (vacation, etc). BoD members agreed with the need. Rob Monette's daughter already expressed interest in the position. Bruce Ross will prepare a job description and compensation plan for presentation/approval during June's Board meeting.

Lastly, Bruce Ross reminded the Board that we previously voted in favor of a Staff Bonus to occur in June. He will present the execution plan during June's Board meeting.

- **6:51 – Development Committee: Survey Progress**

Dave Elwing provided an update on the Demographic Survey proposed by the Development Committee. Based upon the feedback provided from last month's proposal, the survey plan was modified to incorporate a wider breadth of topics deemed beneficial to gathering a more in-depth understanding of WWA members' interests, demographics, desired activities, etc. A series of 10-15 question surveys were proposed for release every 60-days via email, followed by a mirrored survey on Facebook 30 days later. The Board expressed concerns that a series of surveys would be too onerous to members and possibly be viewed as an annoyance. Consequently, the survey will be kept at a one-time outreach consisting of no more than (15) focused questions. Dave Elwing and Kevin Banaszak will revise the survey and present it to the Board prior to release.

- **7:02 PM Increasing Chapter Engagement**

The Board revisited Andy Ducato's recommendation requiring Chapter participation on each state-level committee. The Board agreed that Chapter participation is highly desired, but mandating participation would have a negative effect on our all-volunteer membership. Bruce As each committee operates on different, generally more fluid schedules, and set calendars do not exist, publishing committee schedules is not feasible. Todd Schaller emphasized the need to follow-up with any members (committee or individuals) who express interest in assisting, as a means to grow committee participation. Committee-level volunteer participation is planned as a topic for the Development Committee's planned monthly Zoom sessions. An announcement for these sessions (the first being "Meet WWA's President and Executive Director") will be included

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in future newsletters. In support of getting greater outside the Board participation, Ian Bartelmez inquired whether funds were available for committee use. Bruce Ross confirmed that they are.

- **7:24 PM – Committee Updates**

Education Committee (Bruce Urban presented): The Education Committee will meet Monday (May 24th); they plan to welcome several recently identified interested parties. Todd Schaller's first in a series of (4) sandhill crane educational articles appeared in this month's newsletter. It is the most-read article and has been requested for wider distribution through Wisconsin Outdoor News. Bruce reported that (2) Learn-to-Hunts are planned for this fall (Mequon/Ripon and Green Bay). He announced that because the venue remains closed 2021's decoy carving competition is postponed until 29 & 30 Jul 2022, but that the 2021 duck & goose calling competition will be conducted during the Waterfowl Expo, as planned, on August 28th.

Habitat Committee (Jim Freck presented): The committee is receiving an increased number of project requests and is developing a Project Analysis Input Form to assist evaluation. Four of the six most recently received nominations look promising. The increased in submissions is credited to greater public awareness achieved through newsletter coverage and several B.J. Grassmann articles that have appeared in external publications like the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance. The wild rice program has seen a resurgence and wood duck box sales went well. Resulting from the wood duck box discussion was a general agreement that we need to better track wood duck box distribution and emplace in the future.

Policy/Advocacy Committee (Bruce Urban presented): While no active proposal exists to conduct a sandhill crane season, shaping the argument and building an alliance remains a priority. Increasing the duck stamp price remains an active focus; George Ermert reported that at best, its success is a 50/50 proposition with many Republican legislators opposing the increase. The Knowles-Nelson initiative is expected to be renewed, but the associated dollar value and length of renewal are in question as it too has some staunch opponents.

Communications/Membership Committee (George Ermert presented): Facebook readership remains strong, but new-join requested dropped off – most likely because readers are getting outside with the better weather and the lessening effects of the pandemic. The sandhill crane article saw high FB viewings. The membership drive will start in June instead of May as originally projected.

Development Committee (Dave Elwing presented): In addition to the survey, the Development committee is progressing on an Annual Plan (roughly 75% complete) that focusses on planned and sustained/recurring giving strategies, chapter outreach through Zoom, emails, and face-to-face contact, chapter growth, and retaining funds at the chapter level. Russ Olson is exploring the viability of having a company manage our planned giving initiative as it is beyond the scope of WWA's staff. A draft newsletter announcement introducing monthly Zoom calls is being finalized. The first session will introduce the recurring concept and advertised as a chance to "Meet WWA's President and Executive Director." Follow-on sessions will share successful techniques, discuss ideas, identify areas where chapters can collaborate, increase membership (general and chapter committee). All sessions will be capped at 60 minutes. The primary focus is improving chapters across the state through peer-level communications. Resurrecting a chapter in Wausau remains a committee focus. Following the BoD meeting, Dave Elwing spoke with the Wausau-based member, Abe Shinnars, who expressed interest; we are tentatively looking at a "Pint Night" in July or August to re-introduce WWA to Wausau and to recruit chapter committee

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members. Lastly, the committee is working to refine a policy for chapters to retain funds for mission-focused activities.

- **7:57 PM– Green Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR)**

Bruce Urben reported that he, Russ Olson, and Bruce Ross were approached by a representative from UW Green Bay who is working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on research through the NERR grant program to apply for designation of the Bay of Green Bay as the largest freshwater estuary in the world. Doing so brings significant benefits for the Bay. WWA is invited to be a partner in this grant program with non-monetary support. In general, the Board sees this as a good thing which gives WWA broader recognition. George Ermert pointed out that we need to ensure that WWA's staff is not further burdened by this venture. Dave Elwing suggested that UWGB prepare fliers for passive marketing at the EXPO.

- **8:07 PM– EXPO Update**

Bruce Ross informed the Board that the EXPO is on the cusp of breaking into the black. Only (30) inside booths remain available. Paying attendees and additional booth sales will put the event into the black. Todd Schaller is coordinating support from all EXPO partners (DU, Delta, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Green Bay Duck Hunters, and WWA) to fill volunteer requirements. The Board's focus is primarily recruiting and marketing; George Ermert will take lead for BoD and staff effort in those areas and to man both of our booths. Board and staff members are to contact George to confirm their availability and provide booth suggestions.

- **8:20 PM – President's Recap/Action Items**

Bruce Urben did a recap of tonight's agenda and action items. Action items include:

- 1) Bruce Ross will present a Staff Bonus plan during June's BoD meeting.
- 2) Dave Elwing and Kevin Banaszak will finalize the WWA Membership Survey and distribute it to all BoD members prior to release.
- 3) Committees are encouraged to complete annual plans to focus efforts on achievable goals and to actively pursue interested parties to increase non-BoD involvement.
- 4) George Ermert will coordinate WWA Board and Staff member tasks during the EXPO. BoD and Staff members need to confirm their availability with George (recommend this be done NLT May 27).
- 5) Bruce Ross will prepare a job description and compensation plan for the part-time Administrative Assistant's position and present it for approval during June's Board meeting.

- **9:00 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

The next board meeting will be Wednesday June 9th from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM via Zoom.