

Western Field Ornithologists' Board of Directors

Teleconference Meeting

Monday November 7, 2011, 12:00-1:30 pm

Minutes prepared by Liga Auzins, *Rec. Sec'y.*

Board Members present: W. David Shuford, *Pres.*, Edward R. Pandolfino, *Vice Pres.*, Robbie Fischer, *Treas.*, *Membership Sec'y.*, Liga Auzins, *Rec. Sec'y.*, Kenneth Able, Jon L. Dunn, Kimball L. Garrett, Robert E. Gill, Kurt Leuschner, Frances Oliver, David Quady, Brian Sullivan, Debbie Van Dooremolen.

Board Members Absent: Carol Beardmore, Dan Gibson.

Guests: Philip Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds*, Catherine Waters, *Past Pres.*

SYNOPSIS

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ACTION ITEM SUMMARY

Action Item 1: Petaluma Conference by Ed
Action Item 2: Website Enhancement by Brian
Action Item 3: Acknowledge e-mails by All
Action Item 4: Service Award Nominees by All
Action Item 5: Digital version of RBC by Cat and Phil
Action Item 6: *Inyo County Birds* by Ken
Action Item 7: Announcement of Swarth Award in *WB* by Phil
Action Item 8: *WB* Editor (Photo and Review) candidates by Jay and Cat
Action Item 9: Closing Date for Swarth Award nominations by DaveQ
Action Item 10: Cuba Trip 2013 by Kurt
Action Item 11: Guidelines for field trip leaders by Kurt
Action Item 12: Hosting outreach event by Cat
Action Item 13: Outreach travel to *WOS* by Jon and Jay
Action Item 14: Guidelines for Outreach by Jon and Cat
Action Item 15: Research cloud storage by Cat

MINUTES

12:00 pm Meeting called to order, roll call, welcome.

Acceptance of minutes from August 2011 Sierra Vista Board of Directors Meeting.

Motion (by DaveS seconded by Ed) to approve minutes. All approve.

12:05 pm **ANNUAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE (Ed)**

Petaluma September 26-30, 2012

Update: Petaluma Conference is Sept 26th-30 at Sheraton

- Russ Bradley is scheduled talk about the work PRBO is doing on the Farallones.
- Most workshops are committed, i.e., a raptor workshop by Homer Hansen with an associated Sunday field trip to Hawk Hill; Alvaro Jaramillo is doing a shorebird classroom with an associated morning field trip; Peter Pyle has agreed to do a molt workshop; Keith Hansen will do a possible field sketching workshop; Richard Vaca will talk about tracking; we are still considering several candidates for a pelagic workshop.
- Frances is in charge of field trips. Ken and Kurt are taking care of the details on the workshops.
- Debbie Shearwater is doing at least two pelagic trips on Thurs and Sun, possibly a third small trip just for photographers, and maybe a post-conference trip on Monday as well.
- Art show in conjunction with reception Thursday evening with 2-3 local bird artists, i.e., Keith Hansen

Use of e-mail lists (Ed)

Proposal: I would like to get approval from the Board about our policy for an e-mail list. I would not advocate sharing that list with any other organization. However, we have been approached recently by two different organizations, the Point Reyes Birding and Natural History Festival and Southwest Wings, with the idea that we might simply send an announcement through our newsletter or e-mail about their conference or birding festival. My recommendation is that we ought to allow it on a case-by-case basis to the extent that we feel there is a value to WFO members and the organization puts on a meeting that is of high caliber; to be decided by the President, Vice President and Chair of the Conference Committee. Also recommend that we not just send out information on another organization's conference but that we do so because we were already planning to make this announcement. In other words, it could go into a newsletter or e-mail with other items that we were going to announce to our members. An additional condition would be that we would not send out an announcement that was in direct competition with one of our events.

Discussion: This proposal is to respond to specific requests and not put together an encyclopedic listing.

- Kimball: The criteria should include specifically that it doesn't compete with our events, and that the organization involved is one that promotes high quality events both on birding, natural history and status and distribution of western birds and is willing to reciprocate.
- Ed: Conferences are also a great way to get new members and to educate people that do not know about the organization. That is one of the potential values of an organization reciprocating with benefits to us. There are a whole lot of people who have an interest in natural history but don't realize there is an organization like WFO. The opportunity is to have someone, i.e., the Point Reyes Festival, who do a broad array of workshops and have some pretty broad-based talks about ornithological research in the area,

send an announcement to their past attendees. This gives WFO access to people who would not otherwise hear of us.

- It would be a one-time-only type of thing. It would be a case of where we saw a benefit in doing it and we made the request or an organization came to us with the request and then we determined if it fit the criteria. So those would be the only two situations where I would see this arising.
- I do not think we will be overwhelmed with requests but I think we need to be prepared that we might wind up saying no to an organization and there would be disappointment. I don't have a problem with that as long as we have basic criteria for 'why'.
- DaveS: If we were proactive about this then we do not have to worry about offending other people if they come to us and if we are doing it for specific conferences and trying to broaden our audience that way.
- Ken: I would suggest that wherever we publish these notifications that maybe there should be a disclaimer to the effect that we are not endorsing these events but that we are simply passing along the information for those who might be interested.
- Ed: I wasn't thinking of using the website for this. I was thinking in terms of a paragraph in the newsletter or it would go out in an e-mail announcement that we were otherwise sending to members.

Motion (by Ed, seconded by DaveQ) as follows: To accept the proposal as stated in the memo and as outlined in the aforementioned proposal and to include specifically that it doesn't compete with our events and the organization involved is one that promotes high quality events on birding and natural history and status and distribution of western birds and is willing to reciprocate.

Motioned passed unanimously.

2013 Conference is tabled until the February/March Board Meeting.

12:29 pm WEBSITE ENHANCEMENT (Brian)

Report: I have some recommendations for streamlining the website and maybe somehow abstracting a little bit more of what WFO does on the home page. We should highlight the three main things that WFO does. The website looks very busy. *Western Birds* is highlighted as are the other two components, our annual conference, and publications that WFO puts out. I would like to table the discussion regarding the re-evaluation of the mission statement for now. Who really maintains the website, who designed it, etc?

- In January of 2011 the Board voted to put the website under the Outreach Committee (Jon Dunn, Jay Withgott, Brian Sullivan, Dave Shuford and Ed Pandolfino).
- The website was originally designed by Tim Avery from Colorado
- Brian: I do not want to diminish the scientific quality of the organization, but we have to figure out how to make it more appealing to the birding community. There is a definite need for it out there. This brings us back to the idea previously raised of how many people does WFO want as members. We do not necessarily want to fill the void that the ABA is creating but we might want to fill some of that niche.
- There is a prominent button on the homepage to the CBRC. I wonder how that link came to be and why not just say Western Regional Committees or something similar that links to all the web pages.
- Kimball: I agree, I think the links to other Records Committees in our geographical area need to be more prominent and maybe the way to do that is to have a link to Records Committees and then you would get CBRC first because it is a standing committee of WFO. WFO exists because of the journal and the CBRC. It was originally called California Field Ornithologists and therefore today it reflects that close link. We have never taken the step to have other Records Committees be a committee of WFO, but we haven't closed ourselves off to it either.

DaveS: I think there is much to talk about in Committee and that can be reported back to the Board.

12:43 pm FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP (Robbie)

Update: The most recent information including the Q3 Financial Statement was sent out in October. To sum up: membership numbers look the same as last year, reflecting that the memberships lost have been taken up by new memberships gained, from things like the conference, etc. At that time we had 1033 domestic members and 25 foreign. We had a total of almost \$28,000 in the San Miguel Publication fund (SMPF). At the last meeting we discussed adding the occasional color signature to *WB*, and for issue 3 there were 2 color signatures according to our printer. The price for one of them came to \$623. We talked about \$1200 per year being charged to SMPF, so that is half of it. I know originally we thought it would be half that cost.

- Phil: For issue 4 we will have exactly the same number (2) of color forms because we have an Arizona Committee Report.
- For those two issues we will have used the \$1200 we had agreed to.
- I have 9 copies of *Rare Birds of California (RBC)* and will hold onto the last two but if anyone would like me to hold onto more let me know. Cat has 7 copies that she sends to educational institutions for exchange. DaveS has about 10 more copies in reserve. Dropping the price really sent sales forward.

Note: Brian suggests acknowledging e-mails sent out by a member of the Board even though no comment is made regarding the e-mail. All agree.

12:54 pm EXTERNAL AUDIT/FINANCIAL REVIEW (Cat)

Update: We have to make a final choice of two people identified for this job and the associated charges, and then we will let the Board know what part of the approved sum we will be using. It was suggested that we do something informal. It will still be a report. We will let you know in an e-mail on the outcome.

1:00 pm AWARDS COMMITTEE (DaveQ)

Service Award

Update: I will send out a note to Board members and other appropriate members soliciting recommendations for recipients of the Service Award to honor long and distinguished and meritorious service to the organization. Next March might be the due date when the Awards Committee would start reviewing those nominations. I have some potential nominees, Peter LaTourrette, who just signed off as Photo Editor of *WB* for 18 years, and Bob Evans, who has always been around at the conferences and has been on several recent field expeditions that WFO has sponsored. My hope is to present awards to one or two people. If there is more than one recipient, I will stretch to see if one is from outside of California.

1:02 pm PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (Cat)

Digital version of *Rare Birds of California (RBC)*

Proposal: The Publications Committee and the people who are putting *RBC* through the process of getting it online want to ask the Board for approval for a sum somewhere between \$2,000-3,000 for electronic publication of *RBC*. The exact figure is undetermined as we are still waiting to get an uncorrupted file of photography. It could conceivably lower the cost and speed up the time of publication online. Evidently a file can be corrupted if it has been duplicated a number of times. We do not know if the file that WFVZ has is corrupted. The WFVZ, rightfully, does not want to release the original file. We

can repair the other photography but it would take time. Tim Britton has done some great design work on the book so far. You will be able to search by bird, or county, date, etc.

- Jon: Have the *errata* been fixed by the editors?
- Cat: It is up to us if we want to leave it or whether we want to make a change within the text and then tell people that we altered it, because the idea of the book is to be the first edition. This will be discussed further by the Publications Committee. Right now we are looking at the format and the framing.
- Brian: How will annual updates to the book come into the online system?
- Cat: It will be with a provided link with something that says "For records beginning in...please click here."
- Ken: All the updates are on the website now so all we need is a link.
- Cat: We can go through the CBRC link and a link specifically to those records or we can copy over those records every year and add them as an addendum to the records that are already there. This is another discussion for the Publications Committee. Also the Committee needs to decide if we need to put the book in expanded memory on our website or put it on a website of its own, but one that is only linkable through our website. In other words, the CBRC can put a link to it on their website and WFO can put a link to it on their website, but it will be stored on a third website. Tim Britton will advise us on this.
- Brian: Has there been discussion with the CBRC as to their desire for a digital process for reviewing records on line and how does this dovetail into that? I like the idea of moving the content of the book online, but it is also a natural tie-in with the digitization the CBRC review process and if you tie those two together seamlessly, there would be no need for handwork on updates to this online version of the *RBC*. \$3,000 is a lot money digitizing something that already exists if we could spend that to better this antiquated system.
- Jon: As long as Guy McCaskie is Secretary and that is not going to happen. It has been attempted. The *errata* issue is a central part of this electronic publishing.
- Cat: Brian you are welcome to participate in the Publications Committee meeting. The Board approved two years ago to publish *RBC* electronically. I don't think we should go backwards on not publishing it, but what you have brought up is something that the committee should discuss.

Motion (by Kimball, seconded by DaveQ) to approve an upper limit of \$3,000 to complete the electronic publication of *RBC*.

Motioned passed unanimously.

1:22 pm Publication of *Inyo County Birds* by the Heindels (Ken)

Update: This project is nearing completion and we have been told that we will see some species accounts by December 2011. It is still in the preliminary stage. At this time I have no idea regarding the parameters of the book, i.e., length, photos, graphics, etc. It will be a hard copy.

- We need to see the actual book before WFO can make any decisions regarding publication.

1:25 pm *Western Birds* (Phil)

Update: We are moving along with issue 42(4) with five papers including the Arizona Bird Committee Report. We are going to include an announcement of the Swarth Award in this issue.

- Phil: Alan Contreras has decided to step down as Book Review Editor in one year and recommended Lauren Harter. Cat and Jay Withgott will do research on this. Peter LaTourette, the Photo Editor wants to step down.
- Jon: I suggest Larry Sansone, who worked on the *RBC*, is a great photographer, and is very responsible.

Note: Board decides to go past scheduled time of 1:30 pm

1:30 pm FIELD TRIPS AND EXPEDITIONS COMMITTEE (Kurt)

Update: The Cuba Trip will be in late March or early April 2013 and coordinated with Gary Markowsky and Jon's schedule.

- We are working getting confirmation for northern Sierra Trip (Shasta and Lassen) for 2013 and Lena will be participating and helping to arrange it.
- Kurt is working on guidelines for field trip leaders and then will send an e-mail to Board.

1:34 pm OUTREACH COMMITTEE (Cat)

Note: Last January the Board decided to put the website under the Outreach Committee. With Brian's interest in it we will start looking at that.

- Cat, Robert, and Larry Allen are going to host for WFO, a small outreach event to do some morning birding at Doheny State Beach and a breakfast for anyone in Southern California.

Report: Jon: I have spoken with representatives of AOS, FOS, and OOS (Alabama, Florida, and Oklahoma Ornithological Societies), who are very interested in partnering, including reduced rates for exchange of membership. We could partner with an organization but unless you assign someone to be a liaison, things tend to fall apart. I think our newsletter would be a good place to keep our members updated on these organizations. I will be meeting with Jay and the WOS Board in early December. I want to get a concrete list of things we are able to offer them. I do not want to have the Board have second thoughts on any thing I might offer. I would like to get a list approved by the Board in one capacity or other before Jay and I meet with WOS.

- Ed: I had sent some things out on Oct 9th to the Outreach Committee in response to your request as to what we could and could not offer.
- Jon: There is the matter of whether we actually partner on a conference as full partners or if they are junior partners. My job would be to find out what their sentiments are.
- DaveS: Jon and Cat can get together and work out the guidelines. There is a lot of support but we need to identify some people and make that happen.

1:45 pm ARCHIVAL STORAGE (Cat)

Report: There is a basic weakness of storing archives traditionally, but through technology we have cloud storage. It is one of the best options we have for not losing archival material.

Proposal: To open a cloud account for archival storage primarily for the Treasurer and Secretary. Some of these accounts are free and some inexpensive.

- We need to determine what kind of burden this puts on the people that would be involved with it.
- We need someone knowledgeable to evaluate the alternates that are available.
- We need to see if they are truly secure and they can't be hacked.
- The company that hosts our website offers cloud storage, but we need to check it out first.
- We need to have a plan for the organization on the cloud. Cloud storage could keep our records intact, including perhaps something like a book.
- We should never approach a book without considering publishing it both electronically and on paper.

Recommendation: Table to Finance Committee and report back to Board,

Note: Next meeting will be doodle polled for some time between February 27 to March 9, 2012 and will be scheduled for 2 hours.

DaveS (seconded by Debbie) moved to adjourn. All: Agreed. Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Liga Auzins

Rec. Sec'y.