

Western Field Ornithologists
Board of Directors, Special Meeting
Videoconference
Thursday, February 25, 2021 1-4pm PST
(continued coronavirus pandemic)

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

Board Members present: Jonathan L. Dunn, *President*; Kurt M. Leuschner, *Past President*; John H. Harris, *Vice President.*; Suzanne M. Carota, *Treasurer/Membership Sec'y.*; Liga L. Auzins Wurster, *Recording Secretary*; Wendy L. Beers, Kimball L. Garrett, Susan S. Gilliland, Homer M. Hansen, Karen A. Havlena, Andrew Mauro, Kristie Nelson, Edward R. Pandolfino, Diane E. Rose, Christopher W. Swarth.

Guests: Jennifer Hajj, *consultant*, Philip Unitt, *Editor, Western Birds (WB)*; Robin Leong, *consultant*, Stephan C. Rottenborn, *Past Chair of Conservation/Science Policy Committee*, Thomas O. Blackman, *past Board President*.

MINUTES

Meeting called to order, welcome and roll.

FOCUS: Jon: The purpose of this special meeting is to create a Steering Committee that can plan our first ever Virtual Conference in lieu of our annual meeting due to restrictions caused by the *coronavirus*. We have notified our membership of this. I would like to introduce Jen Hajj, who is our consultant for this event. Please welcome Jen. What I would like to have done at this meeting is to get volunteers to join the Steering Committee and then plan the next step forward which would be to pick someone to run the Conference and decide on the things we would like to do now. First we have some minor business to attend to, but we will not go through the regular forms that we normally do, unless someone has something special.

Other Business: Suzanne:

1. We received the \$3,000 check from Sierra Foothills Audubon, designated for the Scholarship Fund for this year.
2. Alex Contreras requested the list of our membership for the states of CA, OR and WA. The consensus of the Board allows for this.
3. Listing our Patrons in the Newsletter. The consensus of the Board is: 'No.'

New Business: VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

Preliminary Discussion (Overview Outline):

1. Details of Conference
 - a. Dates: August 25 – 29, 2021, 5 days
 - i. Possibly spread out Bird-A-Thon, but keep conference dates as above
 - b. Main Issue: Talks: Possible speakers and Science Sessions
 1. Pavel Tomkovich – Russian shorebirds
 2. Robert Gill - Shorebirds

3. Phil Round – *Phylloscopus* warblers
 4. Can do 3 talks/per hr. for a total of 15 -20 plenary talks
 5. Record some talks for later access for registrants only
- c. Updated Broad Conference Timeline
- i. Start Wed. evening
 - ii. Thurs. Full day field trips and Board Mtg change to no activities
 - iii. Thurs. PM: Since no reception, have welcome talk.
 - iv. Fri. AM: Field trips and workshops
 - v. Fri. PM: Plenary talks and Talks (replacement for Banquet)
 - vi. Fri. PM: Ed Harper's Photo Quiz
 - vii. Sat. AM: Workshops
 - viii. Sat. PM: Plenary talks
 - ix. Sat. PM: Nathan Pieplow's Sound Quiz
 - x. Sun. AM: Field trips
 - xi. Where to put Board Meeting
- d. Jen's suggestions (from San Diego Birding Festival)
- i. Simplification is *most important* when doing a virtual conference. Don't make it so complicated that people can't navigate it.
 1. Create the schedule
 2. Publicize the schedule
 3. Make sure everyone is informed of the schedule
 4. Tell registrants how they will be informed of what is going to happen so they can be prepared, and they know what to look for.
 - ii. Problems of technology
 1. Not everyone has same technology at home.
 2. Zoom does not work well for everyone
 3. People with older computers who have not updated their operating systems will have trouble.
 4. Recent version of Zoom not loaded on computer
 - iii. People very interested in contact right now
 1. People attended every single event
 2. People sent notes thanking for giving them something to learn
- e. Youth Programs
- i. Youth Photo Contest
 - ii. Bird-A-Thon involvement
 - iii. How to factor in youth activities
- f. Silent Auction
- i. Using online program garners more money than if conference runs it.
 - ii. For the silent auction you could use *Charity Auctions Today*. They take 5% of whatever the total is at the end, plus a credit card processing fee which you can't get away from. It's so easy to run.
 - iii. The hardest part about it is getting the inventory into the system. You would need have somebody who takes it as their pet project.
 1. Take the pictures, upload them, get the descriptions in, and decide what and what doesn't need to be in the auction.

2. Someone has to get items onto the platform and when the auction is done, getting the items to the people.
- iv. It will be a part of the registration process.
- g. Meeting Parameters and Zoom
 - i. Set up meetings as webinars for more security. Also more secure if you are not pictured.
 - ii. If your turn off your picture you have more bandwidth.
 - iii. Zoom has a monthly rate. If you get the 500 attendee rate you can handle up to 400 attendees.
 - iv. Pre-recorded programs within Zoom are problematic and NOT recommended. If you add it as a bonus, you can go to youtube link and watch it at our invitation.
 - v. Typically you have ½ hr. between talks to reset but if you are want to do 3 talks (20 min. ea.) in an hour, you do those in the round where you have each speaker be a panelist, so they have an hour to do 3 programs of 20 min. ea. You have to let attendees know who is in the round.
 - vi. Typically the plenary speaker is familiar with the screen share, they have done programs before so they can run it from their resident computer. If they send their program to you ahead of time, the size of the file is very, very, large.
 - vii. Kimball offers a session along the themes of Western North America to the world, i.e., SE Asia, Eastern Asia
 - viii. There was a help desk, which turned out to be a bit chaotic.
 - ix. You can ask a question by clicking on the raised hand on your screen.
 - x. There is a function called break-outs.
 1. This lets you break-out into smaller groups from the larger meeting.
 2. You need a supervisor for each break-out room who could guide things, i.e. staying on schedule.
 3. The program will give you a 10 min. warning near the end of the meeting.
 4. There is a limit to the number of people who can attend.
- h. Photo Contest
 - i. Part of conference and display on website
 - ii. Ed sends out notice we accept one image taken by a member in WFO territory.
 - iii. E-mail entry to WFO Photo
 - iv. I would replace name on photo with a number and list it on our website where Tim agreed to create a special gallery.
 - v. After a period of time during which people can vote on a photo, it gets compiled to come up with a winner.
 - vi. 4 Points to consider for the photo:
 1. Does the image tell a story?
 2. Level of photographic skill
 3. Artistry

- 4. Uniqueness
- vii. Prize: original acrylic picture done twice
 - 1. For winner
 - 2. For Silent Auction 2022
- viii. 50% split between artists and WFO.
- ix. Phil agreed to feature winning photo on inside cover of *WB*
- x. Tom will announce winner at Conference.
- i. Bird-A-Thon
 - i. Mention during welcoming presentation at beginning of virtual meeting
 - 1. What we are doing this year and why we are doing it
 - 2. Promo for Bird-A-Thon
 - 3. Start up weekend after virtual conference and run 4 weeks
 - 4. *De facto* field trips
 - 5. Expert groups and general groups for outreach
 - 6. Fundraising groups
 - 7. In conjunction with local field trips
 - 8. Youth involvement
 - 9. ½ hr. session during (perhaps before a major talk) programs to
 - a. Cheerlead
 - b. Explain how to sign up
 - c. How to create a group and get involved
 - 10. Publicity – Newsletter, website, brochure
 - a. Explain what a Bird-A-Thon is
 - b. How to do Bird-A-Thon
 - c. Mention Bird-A-Thon in introductory talk (Jon)
 - j. Reporting bird sightings to website
 - i. People can bird in AM and report best birds to a website for all to see
 - ii. Assign individual to gather this information and have it ready to post
 - iii. While out birding, birder can send in photos to small gallery on website
 - k. Merchandise
 - i. Go through 3rd party, *Bonfire*
 - ii. People order through Bonfire directly
 - iii. They charge \$25/T-shirt to the ordering party, including shipping, take their cut, and send WFO \$4./T-Shirt
 - iv. Can use our own illustrator, ask John Schmitt and/or Bryce Robinson
 - v. Can order mugs, etc.
 - vi. Hats go through other entity (embroidery)
 - vii. Festival sold out of shirts
 - l. Post conference trip
 - i. If so, where do we fit it in?
 - m. Steering Committee
 - i. Comes up with business plan
 - 1. Budget
 - 2. Honoraria
 - ii. Recommend someone to own the Conference

n. REGISTRATION

- i. One fee for everyone is definitely the best way to go. Sign the participant up for one thing and then it automatically enrolls them in all activities. Nickel and diming is not the way to go.
 - ii. You can offer everything *a la carte* but when people signed up they assumed that they were signed up for everything. People were waiting for links to show up because they thought they were signed up for something, when indeed they had not signed up for anything. You want to make it absolutely clear to people that by clicking 'this button' you are enrolled in everything. Board agrees.
 - iii. When the attendee signed up, they would get an initial thing that says you are signed up. About a week before the Conference Jen sends out the original e-mails on the talks that the attendee signed up for. That was the only problem, there was a ton of e-mails going out. Then Jen would give them an e-mail a half hour before the start of the program. People were using that e-mail to get into the program. First we need to get details if we are going to tell people details.
 - iv. You can intergrade it into C-vent and into the Conference registration if you want to simply gather information.
- o. Other things to sign up for at registration:
- i. Enter the Photo Contest when you register. The button can say 'I would like to send a photo' and then they would tell you 'This is how you do it.'
 - ii. The silent auction is part of registration. Traditionally WFO has divided the money between the Publications Fund and the Student Programs as they both ran the in-person silent auction in the past.
 - iii. Virtual field trips should be offered at the same time as when you are opening the schedule of programs so you can be efficient in in having people know what is going on. People will not want to modify their registration after they have registered.

2. Jen's Proposal

- a. Not forwarded to Board as of 2/25/21

3. What is the next step?

NOTE: Jen: **What I do is really dependent upon what you want. If you, as a Steering Committee, have a solid idea what that is, then I can run with it.**

MOTION: Kimball moves to end the Board Meeting, seconded by Diane, and passed unanimously.

STEERING COMMITTEE

1. Ed Pandolfino
2. John Harris
3. Homer Hansen (youth programs)
4. Steve Rottenborn (plenary sessions)
5. Kimball Garrett (assist Steve and others)
6. Jon Dunn (administrator)
7. Jen Hajj (consultant)
8. Suzanne Carota (business)
9. Susan Gilliland (youth involvement)