

Texas Ornithological Society
Board Meeting, Conference Call
July 27, 2021

Present - Christine Turnbull, Randy Pinkston, DD Currie, Frances Cerbins, Susan Foster, Kendra Kocab, Shelia Hargis, Gailon Brehm, Laura Willson, John Berner, Byron Stone

Meeting started at 6:08 PM.

Minutes Approval

Gailon Brehm motioned to approve the minutes with one spelling correction on a name, John Berner seconded. Minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report

John Berner said that compared to last year, donations are up and collections from Sabine Woods are more than double what they were. He will ask Judy Kestner to create a QR code at Sabine Woods for non-members to pay the fee. Shelia Hargis asked that the \$5,000 Great Texas Birding Classic money be designated as a grant in John's report (currently listed as a contribution) because it comes with restrictions. The current net income is in the positive and improved from last year. To save some money, John canceled the part of our insurance that covered an office because we do not have an office.

Financial Report

Gailon Brehm went over the asset snapshot he sent out before the meeting. The committee, with the aid of our financial advisor, made a few tweaks. The accounts are all doing well. Our overall assets have increased ~40% since mid-2019 when these accounts were restructured.

Membership Committee

Laura Wilson is committee chair. They are working on ideas to increase membership, especially attracting college students. Shelia Hargis said we have lost 71 members so far this year. Hopefully, membership stabilizes or increases as COVID conditions continue to improve.

Archives

Randy Pinkston discussed options for organizing and digitizing the TOS archives at Texas A&M. Most board members liked the idea of paying a student to do this.. DD Currie suggested we pay \$15/hr with a pre-determined cap. A few of us will meet at A&M to survey the archives. They will invite the student to join them to get introduced to the members and the project. Shelia Hargis suggested storing documents on the website in a protected area. Randy Pinkston will ask Eric Carpenter how the TBRC digitized their documents.

Sanctuaries

Hooks Woods - Shelia Hargis said we spent about half of the \$5000 grant from Great Texas Birding Classic on the bleachers. The committee has some ideas for how to use the rest of the money. They will present these to GTBC for approval. We may need to replace or fix the

collections box in the future, but John Berner said that it is not an immediate concern. The planned work day to remove bamboo this month had to be postponed. It will continue to be a work in progress.

Sabine Woods - John Berner noticed a 16-acre parcel of land for sale about 150 yards from the sanctuary. It has a few trees near the road, but the rest is grass. It was intended to be an RV park, and the price is quite high. John spoke with John Whittle, who didn't think it was critical land to acquire. Byron Stone said the fact that it doesn't adjoin our property makes it more difficult to manage. He thinks the family trust land that is immediately adjacent to our property is more important and suggested approaching them about acquiring all or part of that property.

Magic Ridge - Byron Stone is trying to reschedule the late August court date concerning the lot that was cleared by a neighbor. Shelia Hargis said the house at Magic Ridge has not been moved. We need to look for someone else to do this. Then we will put an RV pad in its place. Byron discussed potential property acquisitions at Magic Ridge. The board already approved making an offer on the "oak tree lot", a high value property that could be developed. The committee will pursue this. John Berner expressed concern about the long term strategy of purchasing small inholdings at Magic Ridge for high prices. Shelia Hargis suggested we determine our long term goals to help decide which properties to purchase. Randy Pinkston said we need to decide if usage by members or habitat protection for birds is our top priority. Separately, there is a proposed lot swap. The Magic Ridge committee recommends trading some TOS lots with a lower wildlife value for lots deemed more important to protect. Shelia Hargis motioned to pursue the Magic Ridge Committee's recommendation on the lot swaps. Randy Pinkston seconded the motion. The motion passed with one vote against; DD Currie opposed the motion until we have an overall land acquisition strategy.

Winter Meeting

Christine Turnbull asked if we should try for an in-person winter meeting. Frances Cerbins and Randy Pinkston expressed concerns about the COVID situation. Shelia Hargis said we could wait until October to decide, but we can still look for a location and host organization. Byron Stone said having a host organization is one of the most important factors. Amarillo, Dallas, and San Angelo were named as possible locations. John Berner will reach out to Jay Packer for suggestions. DD Currie will look into host organizations in San Angelo. Christine said the Meeting Planning Committee needs more members.

Raptor Weekend

Byron Stone said Bill Clark would like to do another raptor class. He offered to do field trips at Hazel Bazemore on Saturday and/or Sunday for people wearing masks. The rest of the workshop could be virtual with a separate registration for the field trip(s), which would be limited to 15 people. We need to budget hotel and travel costs for Bill, a Zoom coordinator for the workshop, and help setting up registration on Neon.

Meeting ended at 8:40 PM