

WEMINUCHE AUDUBON SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2024

- I. **Call to Order** - Board President Jean Zirnhelt called to order the regular meeting of the Weminuche Audubon Society (WAS) Board of Directors @ 4:05 p.m.
- II. **In Attendance** - In person: Jean Zirnhelt, Herb Grover, Diana Cirksena, Lisa Tedder, and Keith Bruno. Via Zoom: Brenda Breeding, Loretta Stewart and Becky Herman. Absent: Anne Stevens. Guests: Joan Rohwer and Josh Kurz.
- III. **Approval of Minutes** - The minutes of the December 4, 2023 meeting were accepted.
- IV. **Treasurer's Report** - Jean reviewed the December 2023 Treasurer's Report. Income \$212.48 (membership dues, donations, t-shirt sales). Expenses \$600. (Audubon Rockies conservation programs). Balances \$59,447.47 (savings, CDs, checking, petty cash, membership supplies). Jean is sending a thank you note to Ralph Tucker for his monthly \$15 contribution.
- V. **New Business** -
 - A. **Wetlands Monitoring and Advocacy** - Joan and Lisa summarized the latest data and observations from the Riverwalk wetlands. The monitoring will continue on a monthly basis, running the same chemical tests and adding some new site observations, such as fauna and flora and weather, and adding a conductivity test, which will require the purchase of new equipment. Barry Knot wrote a letter to David Dronet to ask about the new ditches and hot spring water flows, but had not received a response before this meeting. The Board decided to wait for Dronet's response, to contact the Corp of Engineers to find out whether they have any oversight of the wetlands (Josh Kurz offered to make that call), and to get in contact with Town of Pagosa Springs staff (perhaps the mayor, new city manager, Parks and Rec staff) or by attending a Town Council meeting to alert the Town to our concerns of the altered flow of springs water into the wetlands.
 - B. **Audubon Colorado Council Report (ACC)** - Becky reported that the ACC has been discussing the Big Cat Hunting referendum that is being considered in Colorado. She wanted Board members' opinions on the issue to help her determine whether to vote to support the referendum.
 - C. **Fifth Street Riverfront Property, Yamaguchi South property and other properties of interest** - Diane informed the Board that a parcel of land adjacent to the 5th Street bridge is for sale. She initiated a conversation on the possibility of WAS acquiring land or the right to use land for the purpose of developing a nature center. The parcel Diane mentioned is near the Riverwalk wetlands, but there are other parcels there that are not for sale. The Board had previously discussed the land on the river at Yamaguchi Park South, but it is not known whether that land is available. The Board also discussed the Four Mile Ranch

parcel that WAS currently is allowed to use for the Four Mile Ranch environmental education program in the fall. This is a topic that has been discussed in the past. WAS would need to define the purpose, function, and required size of such a nature center and would have to find people who would be interested in contributing funds. Diane was given permission to talk to people she thinks might be interested in the community. Jean volunteered to talk to the Town about the plans for Yamaguchi Park (especially the abandoned water treatment ponds).

VI. Old Business -

- A. Camp Colorado** - Loyette will talk to Joan Ward about funding the scholarship. Josh Kurz will help advertise the scholarship in the high school. Last year's scholarship winner, Payton Jackson, is applying for a Boulder County Audubon Society scholarship to attend the Hog Island Bird Camp in Maine.
- B. Monte Vista Crane Festival Registration** - The Board discussed whether to have a table at this year's festival, March 8 weekend. Herb feels the networking and visibility benefits justify having a table. At the next chapter meeting, Jean will "inventory" our chapter membership for folks who may be interested in helping to staff a table and then make a decision on whether to have a table.
- C. Project Updates** - Mexican Spotted Owl and Pinon Jay monitoring is ongoing. Bev Compton is working on the grant for more funding. Jean mentioned that the grant request should include funding to pay someone to do the data analysis. Herb has submitted to some Board members a rough draft of his report on the Bird Monitoring Project for their feedback. Jean and Keith tallied and submitted the Christmas Bird Count numbers.
- D. Chapter Meeting Programs** - The February speaker will be Holly Metzler, LPEA Board member, to discuss renewable energy. The March speaker is TBD.

VII. Adjournment - The next Board meeting will be February 5, 2024 @ 4:00 p.m. at the Methodist Church and via Zoom. The meeting adjourned at 5:51 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lisa Tedder.