

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Zoom Meeting – Wednesday March 20, 2024

Board Members virtually present: Kevin Banaszak, George Ermert, Jim Freck, Shawn Gibbons, B.J. Grassmann, Makayla Jacobs, Connie Markham, Russ Olson, Kim Shady, and Bruce Urben

Also virtually present: Kelcy Boettcher, Bruce Ross and Anna Rzchowski

Unable to Attend: Mike Depies, David Elwing, Joe Gonyo, Todd Schaller, Patrick Smith

Agenda:

- **6:33 PM – Meeting Convened by President Urben**
- **6:32 PM – February Board of Directors (BoD) Minutes (President Urben)**

B.J. Grassman motioned (Shawn Gibbons seconded) that February’s Board Minutes be accepted. The Board unanimously approved February’s Board meeting minutes.
- **6:35 PM – Financials (Director of Administration [DA] Boettcher & Executive Director [ED] Ross)**

February financials are posted on the Board’s secure website as per SOP. We are running on budget to date and have not received financials from our Cabin Fever Bash or Valley chapter events yet.
- **6:40 PM – Executive Director’s Report (ED Ross)**

NRCS Update. Our PLE biologists have begun work on our NRCS agreement and have begun the WRE evaluations. CRP with upland inspections will begin in Grant County soon, with just under 200 sites to visit, with NRCS indicating that approximately eight can be done in a day.

Class A Raffle Update. Staff have been meeting on Class A raffle planning and have put together a calendar plan for 2024 raffles. Online sales have flagged a bit and we’re looking into some advertising in publications like *Wisconsin Outdoor News*. George reiterated that an electronic link would be able to better manage the ROR.

EXPO Update. It has been incredibly busy with EXPO, sponsors have been solicited and we’ve been trying to upsell them and put WWA in front of them to get organizational sponsorships. Our commitment is up from last year, Banded is coming in as a presenting sponsor and wants to discuss an overall title sponsor as a 2-year commitment of \$10k.

40th Anniversary Partnership Program. There are two documents posted on the board site in regards to various opportunities for those sponsors that may wish to donate in-kind product or cash. Bruce has spoken with, or has plans to talk to, Vortex, Banded, Yeti, Kwik Trip, SportDOG, onX and Kuiu.

Conservation Organization of the Year. WWA will be awarded this by Wisconsin Wildlife Federation in mid-April. Ryan and Jessica Peterson will also be awarded WWF’s Educators of the Year at the event; the Peterson’s authored the wood duck box curriculum.

Abrams Property EQUIP Property Contract. \$30k contract to do restoration - \$2500 for forestry management and \$29k for prairie restoration and some scrapes in the southern part of the property.

NAWCA Grant. Peter wrote a successful \$100k grant for the Pines project. This is also where WWA is filming our habitat video. Peter is hopeful the work will begin in late summer/early fall.
- **7:00 PM – PLE Program – one year in (Anna Rzchowski)**

Anna put together a one-year review on the public lands program; it will be posted on the board secure page. There are quite a few projects in the planning and scoping phases in the southern part of the state and Navarino, which Mark Pfof presented to the board previously, has moved into contracting. There’s a bit more than \$200,000 in funding this year for the program. The 125-

**Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Zoom Meeting – Wednesday March 20, 2024**

acre Peter Helland project in Columbia County should be moving into permitting soon. Anna spoke about the ongoing progress on a site in the northern portion of the state where Mark is working with a landowner, as well as Allen Creek Streambank Protection Area in Rock County and White River Fishery Area in Waushara County. Peter, Mark and Anna are headed up to the Aldo Leopold Foundation tomorrow to train on the new survey equipment, which will help significantly with efficiency in the site surveying process.

- **7:15 PM Strategic Visions/KPI's, Planning (ED Ross)**

WWA Strategy Development document was sent out to the board and posted on the board secure page. This document is an updated version since the last meeting and includes feedback and input that has been provided to date. As a reminder, WWA did an organizational evaluation and out of that we concluded that we needed a clarifying vision and a strategy. BBB has reiterated the importance of this for the organization as well. Bruce is now asking the board for guidance or approval to move forward with this vision but to also recognize this is a working vision.

We have the vision, we've begun to outline some KPIs/metrics and the next step is to define the programs that help move the KPIs and then hopefully, since these vision components are aligned with our missions, and therefore our committees, the committees will have a chance to develop a strategy to describe what's being done and how to measure the maximization of our impact as the Midwest's premier state-based waterfowl organization.

Bruce gave an overview of the goals and metrics in the document.

George commented that a quantifiable measure of advocacy is difficult if not impossible to have.

Russ and Shawn noted that this will be an integral tool for our committees to determine what they're interested in working on and where there are available resources to accomplish their vision.

George stated that in his opinion, as a board, sustainability should be the number one item that should be focused upon. Russ noted that growing the endowment fund could be the sustaining piece, sustaining members could also drive the organization, and that fortunately, or unfortunately, a portion of our revenue will always come from local events. Bruce Ross took over the Development Committee this year and he feels it is the ED responsibility to focus on sustainability. Documents such as this one help him to work through the process and he agrees that a development plan needs to come from this.

Bruce Urben asked that the next step be for the committees to determine responsibility and initiatives for their mission goals and asked for that information to be pulled together in time for the April 17th board meeting and then, by the May board meeting, be closer to a draft that could be voted upon.

- **8:03 PM – Calendar Planning (Mike Depies)**

The Calendar Committee put out a document on planned changes to the 2025 Conservation Calendar. Shawn and Connie have come up with a great selection of photos for the calendar. The calendar committee has been focused on how to make the calendar more profitable, including a price increase to \$30, with more appealing prizes to help make sales.

- **8:07 PM – Committee Reports (President Urben)**

As we are over time, Bruce Urben proposed that the minutes from those committees be disseminated in lieu of updates this evening.

**Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Zoom Meeting – Wednesday March 20, 2024**

- **8:08 PM – President’s Recap/Action Items (President Urban)**

President Urban’s recap of the Board’s agenda, action items, and decisions included:

- 1) Directors/committees were tasked to determine responsibility and initiatives for their mission goals in the draft Strategic Vision and KPIs, providing written feedback to ED Ross before the April 17 board meeting.
- 2) Directors and committee members who have not completed their 2024 Conflict of Interest and Code of Ethics paperwork were asked to tend to the matter ASAP.

- **8:10 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting at 6:30 PM on April 17th.