

**Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors in Person Meeting – Wednesday August 21, 2024**

Board Members virtually present: Mike Depies, Dave Elwing, George Ermert, Jim Freck, Shawn Gibbons, Joe Gonyo, B.J. Grassmann, Makayla Jacobs, Connie Markham, Todd Schaller, and Bruce Urben

Also virtually present: Kelcy Boettcher and Bruce Ross

Unable to Attend: Russ Olson, Kim Shady, and Pat Smith

Agenda:

- **6:33 PM – Meeting Convened by President Urben**
- **6:34 PM – June Board of Directors (BoD) Minutes (Secretary Elwing)**

The June board meeting minutes were reviewed and approved without any questions or concerns raised.
- **6:45 PM – Financials (Director of Administration [DA] Kelcy Boettcher and Executive Director [ED] Ross)**

The financial update highlighted declining revenue from events and shoots, as well as fragile chapters, particularly West Allis. Online raffles are also not selling as quickly as in previous years, posing a risk to unrestricted funds. The board briefly discussed strategies to strengthen existing chapters and grow new ones to improve the organization's financial stability; more in-depth discussion will be conducted during future Board meetings.
- **6:59 PM – USFWS Grant for Wetland Restoration (ED Ross)**

The board discussed a new \$880,000 grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to fund the Little Yellow River wetland restoration project in the Necedah area. This would involve plugging drainage ditches to restore over 1,400 acres of wetlands. WWE would serve as the project manager, overseeing contractors and reporting requirements.
- **7:14 PM – Public Lands Ecologist (PLE) Monthly Update (ED Ross)**

The board reviewed the status of the public lands ecologist program, which is currently funded through the DNR. There is uncertainty around continued funding for a third year, as the DNR faces budget challenges. In discussions with the DNR ED Ross emphasized the strong return on investment the PLE program provides through additional funding sources and the value it brings to the DNR. ED Ross anticipates receiving at least six month's funding based upon feedback received to date.
- **7:24 PM – Sandhill Crane Legislative Study Group (ED Ross)**

The board received an update on the Sandhill Crane Legislative Study Group, which has begun meeting to discuss various aspects of sandhill crane management, including hunting. The group is taking a balanced approach to gather information before potentially making recommendations. ED Ross and VP Schaller (WWA's representative on the SHC legislative study group) believe the group will recommend that Wisconsin conducts a future SHC season.
- **7:37 PM – EXPO (ED Ross)**

The board discussed plans for the upcoming Waterfowl Hunters Expo, including potentially expanding to a two-day event with a Friday evening component and a separate WWA fundraising event. There was also discussion around increasing WWA's ownership and leadership.

**Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors in Person Meeting – Wednesday August 21, 2024**

- **7:45 PM – Conservation Calendar Update (Director Depies)**

The board received an update on calendar sales, with over 100 sold online so far and physical copies being distributed to various locations and organizations. The board members were encouraged to actively sell calendars in their networks to help reach the 4,500 sales goal. Despite concerns about increasing the price to \$30, initial sales indicate little to no hesitation when buyers are asked to buy the 2025 calendar.

- **7:50 PM – New Website Development (Director Gibbons)**

The board was presented with an early draft of the new WWA website, which is currently in development. The new site will feature a more user-friendly navigation, fresh content, and better integration with the organization's activities and initiatives, including the ability to track website engagement.

- **8:05 PM –President’s Recap/Action Items (President Urben)**

The meeting concluded with a recap of key action items, including discussing online raffle strategies in September, further exploring the Waterfall Hunters Expo ownership model in October, and board members actively selling calendars to reach the sales goal.

- **8:10 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

Next BoD meeting will be a virtual meeting at 6:30 PM on September 18th.