

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Board Members present: Mike Depies, George Ermert, Joe Gonyo, Connie Markham, Kim Shady, Todd Schaller, and Bruce Urben

Staff Members present: Brad Heidel, Kelcy Boettcher

Guests present: Shawn Gibbons/Swift-Waters

Unable to Attend: Dave Elwing, Scott Hamele, Lou Schueller, Pat Smith

Agenda:

- **6:35 PM – Meeting Convened by President Urben**
- **6:36 PM – Approve April Board Meeting Minutes (President Urben)**

President Urben introduced April's minutes, asked for questions/amendments, and, after receiving none, Director Schaller moved to accept the April BoD minutes as written. Director Depies seconded the motion. April's Board minutes were unanimously approved as written.
- **6:37 PM – April Financials (Executive Director [ED] Heidel and Director of Administration [DA] Boettcher)**

President Urben opened the discussion, and AD Boettcher noted that she had no additional comments beyond what was provided in the financial notes. Director Shady noted that events year-to-date are running ahead of budget. Ed Heidel noted that RD Rosenkranz is assisting chapters with expense management and that attendance has been high, likely due to increased organizational awareness, but he cautioned that the economy could affect the organization moving forward. He also noted that staff at the DNR notified us of a phishing attempt on WWA's website, which may be tied to a significant decrease in our online raffle sales. Our web tech is working on securing the site, and we have purchased a malware subscription. The site is now "clean," with other issues being addressed simultaneously.
- **6:45 PM – President's Topics (President Urben)**

President Urben again asked the board if they had any recommendations for CPAs with nonprofit experience. As we are approaching the \$1M threshold for federal funds, we anticipate being required to complete a full audit by 2027. If we want to move beyond a compilation, we will need to find a new accounting firm, as we are using our current firm's grant software, which creates a conflict of interest. The board previously discussed that we would likely want to move from a compilation to a review of our books for this year's financial reports, which will be a step towards preparing for a full audit.
- **6:55 PM – ED Topics (ED Heidel)**

RD Brock Rosenkranz and his partner welcomed their baby girl, Bailey, late last week. Brock will be on PTO until late May
Tom Seibert will be taking a temporary medical leave of absence from the organization for the near future.
USFWS Shared Employee: ED Heidel is meeting with USFWS' Caitlin Nagorka tomorrow, then meeting on Friday with their district supervisor to discuss projects we may be available to help with in the NW territory. We are waiting to find out whether USFWS has funding to support the position.
Wisconsin Outdoor Consortium: DNR pulled together a consortium last week at Horicon Marsh, attended by 20+ groups, and hopes to hold these meetings four times per year to get groups working together and with DNR. This meeting was spent on DNR budget shortfalls.
EXPO membership: Delta Waterfowl offered a free 6-month trial membership to anyone who wanted one at their EXPO, and ED Heidel is wondering whether the board would be interested in WWA offering this to our EXPO attendees. He envisions attendees scanning a QR code that

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takes them to a free membership sign-up form, and that they would receive only the newsletter, other WWA marketing emails, and perhaps an electronic welcome letter from President Urben. At the 6-month mark, they would receive an electronic renewal. The board unanimously agreed that capturing this information from attendees would be a good idea.

Membership Drive Director Markham, Shawn Gibbons, Director Ermert, and RD Rosenkranz worked to create a very successful spring membership drive that ran from April 15 – May 15. The organization paid \$650 for advertising and mailed renewal notices, which generated 98 memberships and \$6,805 in revenue, including 2 new life memberships and 22 new memberships, with the remaining 76 renewing or extending their memberships.

- **7:20 PM – Habitat Update (ED Heidel/Director Depies)**

USFS Meeting: Project Director Peter Ziegler met with USFS staff who are seeking projects to fund. An overview of the meeting is on the secure board page.

Large NAWCA grant: PD Ziegler submitted a \$1.3M NAWCA grant application last week to fund the restoration, protection, and enhancement of over 1,200 acres. The application has been posted on the secure board page.

Wood Duck Box production should resume this summer with McNaughton, with 500 houses arriving this fall.

Little Yellow River: as the board has been informed, there was road damage in the area due to the wet spring. WWA staff is working with USFWS personnel and Kingston Township to help repair the roadways using grant funds.

- **7:25 PM – Event Update (ED Heidel)**

Director Depies informed the board that the calendar is in the final stages and will be sent to the printer by mid-June, with delivery expected by mid-August. Director Markham gave the board an overview of the calendar.

- **7:30 PM – Policy Updates (Director Ermert)**

Sandhill Crane (SHC) Hunt. Joel Kleefisch met with Director Ermert and ED Heidel to discuss next steps, including identifying a group of Democratic lawmakers he'd like to approach this summer to gauge their temperature on a SHC hunt. It was also discussed that WWA could use what we are doing at LYR to highlight the good work that pro-hunting conservation orgs like WWA are doing and invite lawmakers to a field day trip to view the site sometime this summer. Director Schaller suggested a shoot at a nearby facility on the same day and will investigate the possibility.

- **7:35 PM – Education Update (VP Schaller)**

R3 VP Schaller reported that since the Waterfowlers Academy's Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate (R3) grant is ending, and we are going to self-fund the academy, he will be putting together a document to develop a standardized payment system for consistency in LTH reimbursements. Ed Heidel reminded the board that we budgeted \$5k for the program, and we have also raised over \$9,600 from the Wardens Association, Delta Waterfowl, and the 50/50 raffles at our events, which are being held in the education fund for the program. Last year's event operations costs were approximately \$3k.

Hunter Safety Donation Director Elwing and VP Schaller participated in a meeting with Lt Renee Thok (Head of WDNR's Safety Education Programs), Ashley Van Egert & Spencer Jost, also with the Safety Education Program. The meeting's purpose was to thank WWA for our fiscal support in the past (\$1,000 donated three years ago to support Instructor Appreciation Nights) and to seek WWA's support either fiscally (\$1,000 donation) or physically (informational speakers or information tables) at the 2026 Instructor Appreciation Banquets. Director Ermert asked what

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recognition WWA would receive, and past practice has been little social media, but it would be announced at the events. ED Heidel noted that many of these instructors also assist with WWA's LTH programs. Director Ermert motioned to approve that WWA donate \$ 1,000 from WWA's education budget to the Wisconsin DNR for their hunter safety instructor recognition events. President Urben seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- **7:50 PM – EXPO Update (ED Heidel)**

A conversation about WWA booths and staffing was held at Monday's Executive Committee meeting. WWA will have two booth locations – the first will be set up with Director Elwing and held inside the hall with a double booth selling memberships, merchandise, and calendars. At the front entrance, there will be SHC decoys and signage featuring a QR code that directs attendees to learn more about SHC's efforts and donation options. There will also be a SHC sticker available for sale. The other booth will be more of a fundraising booth with Class A raffles, location to be determined. VP Schaller gave an overview of where board members have previously assisted at the EXPO, and noted that we can always use additional help with the teardown on Saturday. We're a little over three months out from the EXPO, and much of ED Heidel's time will be focused on the event over the next two months

- **7:55 PM – Recap and Action Items (President Urben)**

- The Board unanimously approved April's Board minutes.
- The Board asked ED Heidel to provide his EXPO membership proposal to the board by the June meeting.
- The Board motioned to grant \$1000 to the WDNR for their Hunter's Safety Recognition banquets.

- **8:14 PM – Meeting Adjourned**

The next BoD meeting will be held via Teams on June 17 from 6:30 – 8:00 pm.