

Minutes of the AOS Board Spring Meeting, April 16, 2016

Dauphin Island, AL

1. Attendance:

Bianca Allen, Harry Dean, Larry Gardella, Andrew Haffenden, Stan Hamilton, Lisa Gardner, Greg Jackson, Annabel Markle, Anne Miller (presiding), Sue Moske, Elberta Reid, Carrie Threadgill, Ken Ward (recording), Rufina Ward

-Call to order, 2:10 pm

2. Winter 2016 Board Meeting minutes - **unanimously approved by the Board.**

3. Officer reports

Treasurer – Elberta Reid was welcomed as the new treasurer. A detailed statement of the AOS bank account was circulated to board members for the quarter 12/31/15-3/31/16, with beginning balance of \$10,462.16 and ending balance of \$12,185.85. This report initiates a change to quarterly reports. Board needs to think what should be done with the CD and life membership funds that normally go to it.
Report approved by Board.

President - AOS eBird Project – The AOS Board has committed to a long-term project to increase our members' reports to eBird, especially from Alabama Birding Trail sites around the state. This will include making recommendations on sites most needing attention from birders, and also promoting participation in eBird via such venues as the Yellowhammer, AlBirds, the AOS website and FB page, etc. John Trent, with the ADCNR has offered to assist us, and will write an article for the next issue of the Yellowhammer on his weekly eBird reports from the Yoholo Micco Trail, a birding trail site in Eufaula. There will be a variety of methods used to encourage e-birding, such as recognizing productive e-birders, as well as birders committing to make seasonal e-bird reports from particular AL birding trail sites. At a future time, we may award special T-shirts, caps, or buttons to regular participants.

New website – We are moving forward with development of a new website. The use of WordPress would make possible editing/revision/additions of new content, etc., to the website by multiple administrators using Word. Currently, only the Webmaster can make changes, and the website is badly out of date. Ken Ward reviewed the website for problems and found a number of issues, including broken links, outdated information, needs for reorganization, etc. There is a need for a comprehensive redesign to make the website more attractive and intuitively easier to negotiate and use. Kathy Hicks, our webmaster, offered to coordinate the update/redesign of our website for \$500. In addition to updating existing material on the website, a comprehensive state-wide calendar of birding field trips and related events will be added. This will drive traffic to our website on a regular basis, and should help to increase AOS membership. The website will also be linked to the AOS Facebook page(FB), and other relevant FB sites.

The new website project will be tackled in two separate stages. Stage 1, from May to June 30, will be carried out by AOS board members. We will work on developing a site plan for the new website, and then will update, rewrite, or if necessary, create new material to be used on each page of the new website. In July and August, Kathy Hicks will use the site plan and material we have produced to create the new website. It should be ready by September 1, in time to be used for registration for the Fall Meeting.

Point of Business – A Motion was made to approve a payment of \$500 to Kathy Hicks for her work to create the new website, and also to approve a reserve fund of \$500 for expenses related to the creation of new website; unanimously approved by Board

Vice-President

Harry Dean, chair of the Photo Contest Committee tasked with designing and managing the contest, made a brief presentation on the photo contest planned for the Fall 2016 meeting. (Harry also made a short ppt presentation to members at the Friday night potluck before the Board meeting). There was a discussion of recommendations, including judges, deadlines, photo categories, awards, etc. Greg Jackson suggested adding a category in digi-scoping. The Board was supportive of the plan presented, which will be finalized over the next few weeks, including identifying the judges.

Point of Business – A motion was made to approve a cash prize of (no more than?) \$50 for best of show, with free memberships for other awards, with final decisions pending by the Photo Contest Committee within these parameters. approved

4. Committee Reports

Conservation (Greg Harber, not present) – no report

Education – (Shirley Farrell, not present) – AOS will again become a partner and sponsor for Alabama Green Ribbon Schools. Don Self is making birdhouse to give to the schools. A.H. Watwood of Talladega County Schools and University of Montevallo were the two winning schools in Alabama this year. They will be honored at the State Board of Ed meeting on May 12 and then receive the birdhouses and other prizes at the picnic lunch at EAT South in Montgomery.

The Montgomery Public Schools Arboretum and Nature Center has requested funding to sponsor birdseed for their new 3rd grade nature-oriented curriculum so they can maintain birdfeeders at the center. The Education Committee would like to contribute \$200 from funds already raised by and for the Education Committee. Shirley Farrell has committed to visiting the Nature Center and offering advice on placing and managing the feeders and providing information on basics of bird recognition. Anne Miller and Bianca Allen pointed out that our limited AOS funds are best used in situations such as this, where an AOS member is directly participating in the project to be funded.

Point of Business – Motion made to approve the above request for \$200 of AOS Education Committee funds to purchase bird-feeding supplies for Montgomery Public Schools Arboretum and Nature Center – unanimously approved

In the event that Birmingham Audubon decides to stop managing the Flying WILD curriculum, AOS Education Committee would like to provide books and workshops for Flying WILD.

Membership Services– (Bianca Allen) – The committee is gathering information on members who are overdue to determine who is deceased, incapacitated, etc. Board was in agreement.***Membership Recruitment*** (Larry Gardella) – On behalf of AOS, Chairman Gardella has been actively participating in various social media, such as AlBirds and Birding Alabama (FB), providing information and identification of birds for other participants, and generally keeping an AOS presence on FB.

Public Relations Committee (Lisa Gardner) – There is a need to raise collective awareness of AOS; to this end the AOS Facebook page has been used more intensively to advertise AOS in recent months. More photos are being posted on the FB page as well as information on trips, meeting tidbits, other promotions via nature-oriented columns (e.g., Ken Hare) are being shared there, etc. The PR Committee has also been involved in getting out information about AOS meetings to reach a wider audience.

Social Media (Carrie Threadgill) – Social media has been the main instrument in raising awareness of AOS (see PR, above); she reported 100 new likes on the FB page (a 30% increase). Carrie requested photos from AOS meeting be emailed to her during and after the meeting, to be placed on the FB page and to make some official photographs for the meeting (member group shots, etc.) which can be disseminated for PR via the FB page and other FB groups through sharing. She also encouraged submitting videos. Publicizing meeting activities in a timely fashion is a good way to get out the word on AOS.

Meetings Committee (Rufina Ward) – After serving as AOS treasurer (10/2013-2/2016), Rufina agreed to be committee chair of the Meetings Committee. Rufina thanked Anne Miller (past committee chair) for assisting in preparing for the spring meeting.

Online (Kathy Hicks, not present) No report; however, see earlier comments during President's report regarding development of new website and approval of funding to support the effort

Yellowhammer (Bob Reed, not present) – no report

Censusing/Checklists (Greg Jackson) – Checklists have been updated but it may be best to wait until anticipated updated taxonomical information from AOS is available (in July) for inclusion.

Bird Records (Greg Jackson) – No report

5. Old/New Business

Fort Morgan Management Plan (Greg Jackson) – Greg reported that the Ft. Morgan Management Plan has been approved. The plan is a partnership between AOS and the Fort Morgan Historical Commission, and focuses on management of natural history resources associated with Fort Morgan. AOS role in implementation could include some funding and labor to help with management. Examples include providing signage to explain to public what some areas are used/managed for, and why (possible resources to support signage from birding trails; Anne to check on this), continued monitoring of vegetative regeneration in burned areas, funding and labor support for plantings, etc. There was unanimous agreement that AOS should place a commemorative bench for Bob Sargent in the Fort Morgan stable area. Greg solicited additional thoughts and ideas toward how AOS can do its share to support this effort.

Separate times for Board meetings? There was an informal discussion concerning possibly conducting the Board meetings separate from regular AOS meetings, given their length and the time taken away from other meeting activities. There seemed to be a good deal of support for this, but no consensus. Probably should be discussed further.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.