

Sacramento Audubon Society
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Date: January 26, 2016
Approved Date: February 23, 2016
Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room
601 Munroe St., Sacramento CA 95825

Call to Order: Meeting called to order: 7:02 p.m.

Role Call: Board Members Present: Larry Hickey, Subhash Chand, Marcia Ferkovich, Keith Wagner, Diana Hickson, Bill Bianco, Jane Taylor, Thomas Cadle, Karen Cadle. **Board Members Absent:** Sally Walters, Linda Pittman.

Approval of Minutes: November 2015 Draft Board Meeting Minutes approved by consensus.

Public Comment/Guest Presentation: Sean Wirth, Co-chair of Habitat 2020 attended the Board meeting to present the following update on Habitat 2020 / SAS Conservation matters and to request grant funding from SAS for the Sandhill Crane Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

- **MATHER FIELD DEVELOPMENT:** the proposed Mather field development project has been substantially modified in ways responsive to Habitat 2020 and SAS' concerns. Critical biological resources have been avoided, and mitigation requirements for resources that will be impacted are satisfactory. Carol Witham (CNPS member and vernal pool biological consultant) has been hired as the consultant to ensure conservation is inadequate. Allowing development of already degraded areas in the plan area is going to pay for restoring remaining viable pools. Developers are being cooperative in modifying the project to address conservation concerns.
- **NATOMAS DEVELOPMENT:** Meanwhile in Natomas, the County of Sacramento is allowing consideration of development of 5,000 acres in Natomas. The County's consideration of the project is unreasonable, as the area's location in the floodplain makes it unsuitable for development, but the owners/developers are pushing it forward and the Board of Supervisors appears willing to allow politics as usual to override common sense.
- **GALT CASINO:** The local native American tribe in the Galt area has expressed an interest in investigating building a casino. The proposed site would involve the building on sensitive habitat in the Cosumnes River floodplain.
- **South Sacramento County Habitat Conservation Plan (SSHCP):** The SSHCP is now completed and is being reviewed by the US Fish & Wildlife Service for Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 9 compliance. Habitat 2020

views the proposed plan as problematical, as it frontloads the destruction of a substantial amount of the remaining high quality vernal pool habitat that is left in the County, and it is uncertain how or whether the remaining pools will be sufficient to actually protect the species purportedly protected by the SSHCP.

- **SANDHILL CRANE TAC / HABITAT 2020 REQUEST FOR SAS FUNDING:** Habitat is being lost in Sacramento County at the fastest rate in history due primarily to agricultural conversion to incompatible crops, such as vineyards. The Sandhill Crane TAC is intended to establish a regional vision/approach to studying/addressing Sandhill Crane conservation. Right now, practically all Sandhill Crane habitat is in an active floodplain. When it does flood, every 7 to 10 years, the Cranes are left with no foraging habitat. Right now the HCP is only a 50 year permit. Over the longer term, however, the areas proposed for conservation in the HCP will be inundated in the long term by climate change. The Sandhill Crane TAC will be addressing these and other issues in the hope of forging a viable plan/strategy to ensure that Sandhill Cranes will persist in the Sacramento Region. Habitat 2020 is requesting \$3,000 from SAS as seed money to support the TAC's formation, and to use the funds as leverage to find other funding partners. Over the long term, the Sandhill Crane TAC will need about \$60,000 to develop its plans for long term Sandhill Crane preservation in the Sacramento Region.

President's Report (Larry):

- Larry incorporated Sean's report as his President's report for this Board meeting.
- Larry noted that the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) and others have requested that SAS sign on to their position expressing concern that the State is not adequately protecting delta resources in its water planning. Larry was unsure whether SAS should sign on to support a sporting group's position. Keith explained that CSPA has broad environmental support, and generally has been a champion of biological conservation and the environment of the delta. Larry is going to check with Audubon CA and other chapters to see what their positions might be on the issues.
- A letter on behalf of SAS weighing in on homeless issues in the American River Parkway was published in the Sacramento Bee.

Treasurer (Marcia):

- Marcia circulated the latest financials by e-mail prior to the Board meeting. If anybody has questions, they should contact her.

Corresponding Secretary (Diana)

- Diana circulated mail that had recently arrived at the P.O. Box for board review.

Membership (Larry for Mara):

- Larry reported that Mara is now officially on board and has taken over membership duties from Lea Landry. Larry said Lea has been very helpful in making the transition as smooth as possible. Larry noted that due to the poor quality/organization of data/information about membership that SAS receives from National Audubon, Mara will face challenges, but he is sure that things will all work out as she becomes more familiar/comfortable with the process.

Programs (Subhash for Sally):

- Sally did not attend the Board meeting. Subhash noted that all upcoming programs for the remainder of the 2015-2016 season are posted at the SAS website.

Outreach (Bill):

- Bill passed around a handout listing all upcoming outreach events, including those still needing volunteer coverage, for Board review. Board members who can help out should contact Bill.
- Bill also reported on a meeting he attended with Audubon CA regarding diversity in environmental organizations. The report that Audubon CA provided was not surprising: gender diversity has greatly improved among most environmental organizations over the past several years, but racial diversity for most organizations (not just Audubon) is still poor. Audubon CA will be hosting workshops to help chapters increase age, race and gender diversity.

Education (Larry):

- No change in status: SAS has no education chair. Formal education programming and planning is on hold until a new chair is appointed. Informally, SAS' many education programs and activities still continue as part of SAS' general membership meeting programs and presentations, outreach and field trip programs, as well as SAS support of other organizations that advance SAS' mission such as ECOS, Habitat 2020, Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Friends of the Swainson's Hawk.
- SAS continues its efforts to find a new education chair. If any Board members have thoughts/leads, they should let Larry know.

Conservation (Larry)

- Sean Wirth's presentation at the beginning of the board meeting covered all conservation issues Larry would have otherwise reported on. See report on Sean's presentation, above.

Communications (Subhash):

- Subhash circulated an e-mail with status of updates to the SAS website prior to the Board meeting. There is no further news to report regarding communications. If anybody has questions, contact Subhash.

Old Business:

- **MOTION: (Wagner/Taylor) to grant \$3,000 to Green Incubator (Habitat 2020's fiscal agent) to support formation/operations of the Sandhill Crane TAC.** Motion PASSED unanimously.
- **Chapter Building** (Larry). Audubon CA has been given a big grant from Hewlitt Foundation for chapter building on two issues: diversity and climate change. There will be a presentation on February 6, in Downtown Sacramento. Any board members who can attend should send a message to Larry so he can provide Audubon CA with a headcount.
- **Electronic Membership Report** (Subhash): In January, 8 new members have enrolled through the SAS website's new electronic membership form. One small difficulty, is that some of them haven't realized that it's a two step process, requiring them to separately (1) sign up, and then (2) pay. Some people aren't doing both. If this remains a significant issue, we may need to upgrade the electronic membership system so that signing up and paying are integrated into a single transaction.
- **Big Day of Giving** (Subhash): Subhash passed around a handout and gave a report on Big Day of Giving 2016. Subhash asked if the Board would form a Fundraising Committee of three or so board members. Interested board members can respond after the meeting to Subhash. Karen expressed an interest in possibly helping out, depending on what needs to be done. Larry suggested perhaps Anne Burris may be willing to lend a hand with social media.

New business:

- **Bobelaine** (Larry). A committee of present and past SAS Board members has been formed to consider options for Bobelaine's future. The committee visited Bobelaine with SAS' past volunteer manager of the property, Robert Thomas. The committee documented the work Robert does, and is now engaging in exploring options for transition planning. SAS is considering all available options, including continuing with volunteer management, finding a paid contractor to manage the property, or possibly deciding to pass the land back to National or on to the state.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.