

# BOARD MEETING 01/08/25

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08 January 2025 / 7:00 PM Meeting start

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Dostal, Rob Pendergast, Susan Schuller, Willow Pingel, Joe Schulz, Bob Lane, Scott Reilly, Jan Seiler, Brad Baum, Janet Smith, Anthony Martynski, Ann Graham, Larry Graham, Ned Grossnickle, John Munson, Mike Gross, + Guests: Chris Gutchenritter & Chris Radford

## ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

- **Discussion Items** Bird City (Janet)
- **Action Items** Raising amount of Biology and Friday Wievel Scholarship

## NOTES

- **Approval of Minutes** Motion by Susan S., seconded by Ned G.; carried & approved

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Guests Chris R. (North Central Conservancy Trust) & Chris G. (Gathering Waters)**

- **Overview of NCCT & How they protect land + Mumford Preserve easement (Audubon holds this easement)**
  - 1 of 40 Land Trusts in Wisconsin & 1300 in country
  - Serving in 8 counties in Wisconsin
  - Primarily work w/private landowners to manage their conservation easements
    - Hold around 60 easements protecting over 5,000 acres
  - Own property that they open to public as Nature Preserves

- National accreditation achieved in February 2024 for standards of excellence and conservation permanence
- **Overview of Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts**
  - Advisors & information gatherers to land trusts & private owners
  - Aim to help land trusts operate to highest standards, increase awareness & advocate for land protection statewide
  - Advocating for Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program
    - Aided July 2024 supreme court decision to make anonymous objections & legislative obstruction unconstitutional which helps ensure grant funding to the program
- **ALAS Holds Mumford Preserve Easement**
  - 160 acre nature preserve w/Eau Claire River running through it
  - Property donated to NCCT in 2018; ALAS holding this easement has allowed it to become NCCT's first nature preserve
    - Common practice for land trusts to partner with local environmentally focused orgs
    - NCCT cannot own property & hold easement at same time without being opened to political & legal scrutiny/lawsuits
      - Doctrine of Merger: easement is extinguished when an easement holder becomes the fee title owner (definition from Land Trust Alliance)
    - Easement holder has obligation to monitor property once a year to ensure owner of property is not violating the easement
  - Easement of Mumford property limits subdivision & development + certain detrimental activities
- **ALAS obligations as a 501(c)(3) conservation easement holder**
  - Non-profit easement holders must meet IRS requirements/tax code standards
    - Property monitoring once per year by trained volunteer
      - Familiar with easement, values of property, monitoring form, safety practices



## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### NCCT Assistance with Mumford Property

- As a group we are interested in keeping this easement
  - Issues: 990 tax form & insurance; don't want unnecessary liability or tax burden
  - Karen to report back about this

### Statewide National Audubon Collaborative Initiative (Karen D.)

- Statewide funding, \$6,000 to disperse
  - Should we pursue this? If so, what should we do?

### UWSP Window Collisions Project

- How to proceed?
  - Need cost analysis for window treatment
  - In progress; contact Molly M. or Sarah W. to have point person for project

### Volunteer Request from Joe Ancel for Clean Green Action Group

- Clean Green Action Group requesting someone from ALAS to speak about our org
  - Meet 1st Wednesday of month @ Wisconsin Rapids Library @ 4pm
  - Bob Lane

### Leadership of ALAS (Karen D.)

- President, vice president, & treasurer turnover at the end of the year
  - Recruitment committee?

## National Audubon's Year-End Report

- Karen beginning on this; but should be collaborative
  - Due in March
  - Contact Karen for shared file access if you'd like to help

## ALAS Name Change

- Membership decision
  - Committee has not met yet to decide how to proceed
  - 2 chapters in Wisconsin changed names; have not reached out to them yet

## Bird City

- If anyone interested in taking this over, contact Janet

## ACTION ITEMS

### Scholarships Amounts

- Charter agreement suggesting raising funds of Friday Wievel Memorial and Biology Scholarships
- Suggesting raising amounts from \$500 each to \$1,000 each
  - Motion to discuss by Susan S., second by Ned G., carried & approved
- Discussion
  - The decision to raise the amounts to \$500 from \$250 was made a long time ago, and \$500 no longer goes quite as far for students
  - We can afford this
  - We need letter requesting money for Friday Wievel due to confusion around disbursement last year
    - Biology scholarship still being held by department; need to send \$500 over
- Motion to raise scholarship fund amounts from \$500 each to \$1000 each

- Motion by Susan S., seconded by Ned G., all in favor, none opposed and motion approved

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Almanac (Lora H.)

- Newsletter deadline 1/31/25

### Website (Rob P.)

- Updated speaker info & added Platte River trip info to site

### Field Trips (Brad B.)

- See Platte River Trip Update

### Education (Bob L.)

- J. Baird Calicott, David Carlson, & Bob Freckman for Conservation Hall of Fame
  - Induction ceremony April 5th
    - Calicott 2pm, Carlson 4pm, Freckman 6pm
- Request for monies from Plover River Crossing to buy more bird houses
  - Add to February agenda to vote on grant

### Conservation (Rob P.)

- Discord Channel coming soon

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm