

Minutes—Annual Meeting
Blue Goose Alliance
March 23—24, 2007
St. Marks, Florida

Following a long travel day, all participants gathered in a conference room of the Wildwood Motel at 5 PM for an ice breaker, snacks, drinks, and plenty of fellowship, followed by an evening meal together in the adjacent restaurant.

FRIDAY 3/2/07

Thanks to the hospitality of St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, which made the Environmental Education Cabin available for our meeting, and snacks and drinks provided by the St. Marks Refuge Association the annual meeting of the Blue Goose Alliance was called to order by President Don Redfearn at 8:30 AM. Board members and Affiliates present included:

*Don Redfearn	Christine Enright
*Evelyn Redfearn	John Oberheu
*Gail Fishman	*Les Beaty
*Joe White	Sharon Beaty
*Chuck Danner	*Bill Grabill
*Phil Morgan	*Ed Crozier
*Bill Reffalt	

* Board Members

A quorum was present.

President Don Redfearn opened the meeting with a welcome to all, a thanks to St. Marks Refuge for its hospitality and making the cabin available for our meeting, and a brief discussion of this group's accomplishments since the last meeting. The President's report covering these accomplishments was passed out to the group.

North Florida Refuge Complex Project Leader James Burnett provided a greeting to the group and then gave us an overview of the trials and tribulations of a modern day Refuge Manager, a presentation that sparked an hour-long discussion by the group.

With preliminaries out of the way, **Evelyn Redfearn made a motion that since Board members read and approved the minutes of the last meeting minutes, (Albuquerque, NM—10/10/06) that we skip the reading of these minutes. Motion was seconded by Phil Morgan and passed by the Board.**

Treasurer Gail Fishman gave a brief Treasurer's report and passed out copies of that report which showed \$8,272.28 in the general fund, \$2,650.00 in the Legal Defense Fund, and \$2,575.00 in the Danny Redfearn fund, all for a total of \$13,479.28.

OLD BUSINESS

Old Business kicked off with a discussion of an Affiliate's suggestion that BGA consider Accrual Accounting for our bookkeeping system, a change that would qualify BGA for Combined Federal Campaign funding. Following this discussion, and given the small BGA bank account, the Board declined to make that bookkeeping change at this time, but agreed that we should continue to explore the Combined Federal Campaign as a potential funding source.

Don Redfearn led a discussion updating the National Bison Range issue. He pointed out that the FWS has agreed to fund the NBR employee's legal expenses if a settlement agreement can be reached. Bill Reffalt reported on his recent visit to the NBR and involvement in talks between the FWS, DOI, and CSKT, and presented an overview of the total situation and current arrangements underway. He cited several instances of CSKT incompetence in performing duties under the previous AFA.

Don Redfearn explained that BGA took on this issue in part because of the implication to other refuges, a presentation that prompted a lively discussion of the entire subject of Tribal efforts to take over selected refuges.

Following a comfort break, Vice President For Communications Chuck Danner brought the group up to date on website progress and passed out printouts of website Membership and BGA Affiliates

Phil Morgan and Ed Crozier discussed what they are doing with Google Alerts (email updates of the latest relevant Google results based on the choice of topics). Both Ed and Phil have signed up with Google to receive any Google Alerts that relate to National Wildlife Refuges. They are now receiving several email notices from Google each day that list everything that has been posted to the internet relating to wildlife refuges and picked up by Google. Many of these are from refuge visitors relating their refuge experiences. Both are now responding to Googlers that since they have enjoyed and appreciate Wildlife Refuges they should support refuges by visiting the BGA website.

The discussion was expanded later to the possibility of BGA purchasing a Google Ad which is a three to four line description of a website that appears on the upper right hand side of the results of a Google search, in our case for National Wildlife Refuge searchers. Phil made a motion that we purchase a BGA Google Ad at a cost of \$30.00 per month. Chuck Danner seconded that motion and the Board passed it.

Following lunch at the Riverside Café in the town of St. Marks, Complex Project Leader James Burnett led a convoy tour of the St. Marks Unit of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. With completion of the tour, the group assembled back in the cabin and watched

an hour long PBS program about the National Wildlife Refuge System entitled “Where The Wild Things Live,” after which we called it quits for the day.

SATURDAY 3/24/07

Don Redfearn opened the final day with a promise to stay on schedule in order to successfully complete all items left on the agenda.

Old Business continued as Les Beaty led a discussion on email posting and how the postings between BGA Members, BGA Affiliates, and the BGA Board of Directors are either accidentally or simply out of confusion getting mixed up and occasionally routed to the wrong group. As a result, sensitive material all too often finds its way to the General Membership and thus to watchers who may not mean us well. He admonished Board members and Affiliates to be more careful in our email submissions and reiterated that generally Board business should remain between Board members.

Phil Morgan led a discussion of literature updates. Les, Phil, and Chuck Danner have been reworking some of our pass-out literature. This includes updating and printing 1000 copies of our BGA brochure and resurrection and made ready for copying as needed “The Blue Goose Alliance Has a Dream.” They developed and printed 250 copies of a booklet entitled “The Case for a National Wildlife Refuge Service.” They also reported a few “Hidden Lands” brochures as still available for copying as needed and can also be printed from the website.

Don Redfearn led a discussion of funds raising, finding and engaging sympathetic partners, and networking with Friends Groups. In recognition of the fact that the success of our mission must have the support of powerful NGO groups and individuals, at some point during the year he and an associate should visit Washington, D.C. to meet with NGO groups and individuals. Ed suggested that our credibility would be considerably improved if that associate be someone other than a retired Refuge employee.

With respect to fundraising, it was suggested Burkett Neely make another effort to meet with Turner Foundation’s Mike Finley to see if BGA would now qualify for a Turner Foundation grant. It was also suggested our improved website could now be instrumental in helping pry funding loose from possible funding sources. Ed Crozier volunteered to scan the general membership ranks to see if we have experienced grant writers out there. Bill Grabill will do the same in the Affiliates ranks.

Les Beaty led a discussion on the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of Affiliates and how getting the cooperation and involvement of Affiliates, aka working group, could greatly enhance our overall effectiveness. Les volunteered to communicate with each and every Affiliate to see if that individual would make a commitment to work on assigned projects. It was suggested that those Affiliates not willing to become involved when asked should be dropped as an Affiliate and added to the general membership ranks, but that suggestion never made it as a motion. Following a discussion on how he should do this, **Joe White made a motion that inasmuch as Les was volunteering to take on this**

task, we allow him to do it his way. Phil Morgan seconded that motion, and it was passed by the Board.

Concerning networking with Friends Groups, Phil Morgan suggested that we ask some Affiliates from the Friends groups to look for activists like themselves within other Friends Groups that would help shift Friends Group energies and focus from just advocates for their refuges to a broader refuge system focus. **Phil made a motion that BGA President Redfearn establish a small task group to develop and present for implementation a plan to effectively recruit additional Affiliates from the ranks of Friends Groups. Evelyn Redfearn seconded the motion which was then passed by the Board.**

NEW BUSINESS.

Ed Crozier discussed internet Blogs and explained his personal website and how it has a pathway to the BGA website. He also explained Google's free blog site and how it can link to our BGA website. This is just another way to get the word out. Ed will monitor this Google Blog and comment back to Googlers. Gail suggested BGA put our website link on Wikipedia.

Don Redfearn briefed the group on some of his contacts with charter members of the Refuge Caucus. Bill Reffalt talked about legislative interests and the now set new legislative makeup. Bill volunteered to try and identify member of Congressional committees and sub committees that might be possible BGA champions.

Following this legislative discussion, it was generally agreed at the current time there are too many presidential candidates to speculate on the makeup of party platforms, but front runners need to be informed on Refuges needs and BGA aspirations. This discussion did not produce an action plan for getting attention to BGA's mission directly to 2008 party platforms, but maybe indirectly by working with influential NGOs. Don Redfearn will carry that message to NGOs later in the year when he visits DC.

Phil Morgan suggested BGA sign on as a Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (Care) supporter (not a member, but a supporter.) **This sparked some lively discussion that concluded with a motion by Bill Reffalt that we submit our organization as a Care supporter. Motion was seconded by Phil Morgan and passed by the Board, with one abstention.**

Following lunch, the use and effectiveness of Affiliates was brought up again and discussed further. It was generally agreed that Affiliates should be drawn into working on issues and that the President should and could assign work to knowledgeable Affiliates. It was agreed that in future nominations of candidates to the Affiliate group that the nominator secure a before the fact commitment from the candidate to be willing to actively participate in BGA actions.

It was pointed out that donations to the BGA account have traditionally come from only a small core of Affiliates and Members and that the entire Affiliates ranks should also be challenged to pitch in to help with BGA expenses. **Joe White made a motion that Gail Fishman should work up figures for expenses of Board members involved in this annual meeting, which is in effect a monetary donation to the BGA account and he would take those figures and develop a letter for the President's signature that would challenge Members and Affiliates to match that figure. Joe would then personally contact each Member and Affiliate with this challenge. Phil Morgan seconded that motion and the Board passed it.**

Ed Crozier suggested that we ask Affiliates to estimate his/her number of hours contributed over the past year, from the Georgetown, Texas meeting to this one, and the data gathered could be used to show substantial in kind work contributions. Bill Grabill would make that request to the Affiliates, collect the data, and prepare a letter for the President's signature challenging other Affiliates to match these work contributions. This suggestion never made it as a motion, but participants agreed to do it anyway.

Don Redfearn initiated a discussion on the appropriate number of Board members, but no decision was made to change the current makeup of Board members. The nominating committee (Les, Ed, and Noreen) has not yet been able to find someone to fill the Vice President's position or a Board member to replace the retiring Evelyn Redfearn

The subject of the Legal Defense Fund sparked a lively discussion as to whether this fund should be exclusively for the NBR employee's legal defense or for a broader definition of legal defense issues. That broader interpretation finally prevailed and it was agreed the Legal Defense Fund will be whatever the Board says it should be. Gail Fishman was directed to send a letter to each LDF donor to inform them of this broader interpretation and projected use of that fund. Those donations will be returned to donors who intended for their donation to be used for NBR employees and who ask for the return of their donation. **Bill Reffalt made a motion that the Treasurer continue to keep a financial spread sheet that kept the Legal Defense Fund separate from other income sources. This motion was seconded by Bill Grabill and passed by the Board.**

Don Redfearn raised and discussed the possibility of BGA becoming involved in the workforce and funding reduction issue and if so, how to use and address these issues. It was decided to take no overt action other than a letter from the President to appropriate congressional committees and subcommittees objecting to these workforce reductions and funding shortfalls. It was also discussed and reiterated that with our involvement with some of these specific issues, we should not relax nor forget our quest for a National Wildlife Refuge Service.

Phil Morgan made a motion that next year's meeting be held in the San Francisco area of California. The motion was seconded by Evelyn Redfearn and passed by the Board.

Ed Crozier of the Nomination Committee nominated Joe White, Les Beaty, Ed Crozier, Phil Morgan, Don Redfearn, Gail Fishman, Bill Grabill, and Burkett Neely for another term on the Board of Directors. Phil Morgan seconded that motion and it was passed by the Board.

Ed Crozier nominated Joe White to serve another term as Secretary, Gail Fishman to serve another term as Treasurer, and Don Redfearn to serve a term as President. Phil Morgan seconded that motion and it was passed by the Board. As no replacement was found to relieve John Doebel of the Vice President duties, John remains the Vice President.

On behalf of the Board Bill Reffalt expressed appreciation to Evelyn for her many years of excellent service on the Board.

President Don Redfearn had a few closing remarks which was followed by a motion to adjourn the meeting. That motion was seconded by Joe White and passed by the Board.

Respectively submitted—4/17/07

Signed Joe D. White

Joe D White, Secretary

Approved by—4/17/07

Signed Don Redfearn

Don Redfearn, President.