

Minutes of Annual Meeting  
February 17-18, 2009  
Visitor Center Conference Room  
Bosque del Apache NWR, New Mexico

**Tuesday, February 17, 2009**

The meeting called to order by President Don Redfearn at 8:39 am.

Attending: Christine Reffalt  
Bill Reffalt\*  
Phil Norton  
Don Redfearn\*  
Evelyn Redfearn  
Sharon Beaty  
Les Beaty\*  
Phil Morgan\*

\*Board Member

Manager's Welcome - Tom Melanson

Don expressed the appreciation of the BGA to Tom Melanson, Refuge Manager of the Bosque del Apache NWR, for providing a site for our meeting.

Tom welcomed the group and provided some brief introductory remarks. He said that there were still birds on the refuge, but it was getting close to the time for them to begin moving north. He reviewed the status of regional funding including recent supplemental funding for restoration following Hurricane Ike and possible funding from the recent Stimulus package.

Tom also briefly described two significant construction project in store for Bosque. One is a permanent bunkhouse to replace two trailers presently used for volunteers, temporaries, and firefighters. These plans are in the concept stage. There are no shovel-ready plans set to go now. The other project is a water line to connect refuge headquarters to the municipal water system at San Antonio, NM. This water line is presently under construction.

A couple of problems were discussed. One was the recent IRS ruling that refuges could not pay a stipend to volunteers. The other was the Homeland Security requirements for visitors entering areas of the refuge not normally open to the public (like refuge offices). Both are being examined and working resolutions sought by the FWS.

Review of Agenda - Evelyn Redfearn

Evelyn Redfearn reviewed the agenda for meeting. Since a quorum of Board members was not in attendance, it was decided to hold the annual elections immediately following the old business on the agenda (rather than at the conclusion of the meeting). Those elections should yield a new Board a quorum of which is present at the meeting. This new Board would then be able to act of any new business which might be brought up.

The minutes of the previous meeting have already been approved, so the reading of those minutes was

dispensed.

Treasurer's Report - Les Beaty

Les reported that the account balances as of 2/13/09 were:

General Fund:	7,746.38
Legal Defense Fund	2,377.29
Danny Redfearn Fund	<u>2,575.00</u>
	12,698.67

**OLD BUSINESS**

President's Report - Don Redfearn

Don Redfearn reported on his trip with Bill Reffalt and Eileen McLaughlin to Washington, D.C. during the week of April 14, 2008, to discuss the Annual Funding Agreement at the National Bison Range with representatives of various Congressional, Governmental, and Non-Governmental Organizations. Included were meetings with both Assistant Secretary Lyle Laverty and FWS Director Dale Hall.

Don also reported on the trip by he and Evelyn Redfearn and Bill and Christine Reffalt to the ceremony marking the Centennial of the establishment of the National Bison Range.

Other activities Don covered included

- retaining Holland and Hart to represent the BGA in the NBR matter,
- the development of a strategy paper by Glenn Elison,
- the creation of a video on the Alliance's mission by Ed Crozier, and
- the submission of his "Department of Conservation Lands" paper to the Obama Transition Team.

Refuge Issues - Bill Reffalt

Bill reported on his efforts during the past year on a variety of active issues, as follows:

- Proposed oil and gas development on Baca NWR, CO
- Legislated land exchange on Izembek NWR, AK
- Efforts to reinstate grazing on Little Pend Oreille NWR, WA
- AFA on National Bison Range, MT
- Seeking core funding for NWRS
- Proposed control of horses and burros on Sheldon NWR, NV
- Proposed land exchange on Yukon Flats NWR, AK

In addition, he reported on a number of issues in a "monitoring" category, as follows:

- Designations of utility and energy corridors through western refuge lands
- Global climate change
- Mechanized installation of pipeline/watering tanks on Kofa NWR, AZ
- Proposed gas pipeline on Sheldon NWR, NV
- AFA on Yukon Flats NWR, AK

Bill's complete written report is available from him on request.

#### Status of H&H Lawsuit - Don Redfearn

As background, Don reviewed the current lawsuit by PEER. In December of 2008, PEER (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility) and several plaintiffs (including Nat Reed) filed a lawsuit in the District Court in the District of Columbia against the Department of Interior and the Fish and Wildlife Service. Attorneys from the Department of Justice are representing the USDI and FWS. This lawsuit alleges violations by the Interior Department and/or the Fish and Wildlife Service of National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and Intergovernmental Personnel Act.

Holland and Hart, LLP filed a "Notice of Violation" of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act on January 5, 2009. This Notice was addressed to Asst. Secretary Laverty and FWS Director Hall, with a 60 day period to respond by canceling the AFA or face a formal complaint on behalf of BGA. A further complaint addressing violations of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and possibly other acts will be filed in the very near future.

#### John Doebel's Contacts - Evelyn Redfearn

At the last meeting, John Doebel said that he would try to contact Congressman Norm Dicks (D-WA). John reported via a written report that he had made several attempts to contact Dicks, or a staffer of Dicks, without success. Congressman Dicks is the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies. Reffalt described the challenges faced by Chairman Dicks and why matters related to the Refuge System might not figure highly on his agenda.

Reffalt reported that in recent discussions with Greg Knadle, he was told that support for additional funding for the Refuge System was not likely going forward. Knadle is a staffer on the Dicks' Appropriations Subcommittee and handles all of the refuge budgets for the subcommittee. He was also previously a staffer in the Refuge System's Washington Office and had early experience as an intern on national wildlife refuges. However, even with that background, he did not appear enthusiastic about supporting the needs for the Refuge System. This represents the types of roadblocks which we need to overcome.

#### Strategy Development Options Task Force Report - Phil Morgan

At the last meeting, John Doebel and Glenn Elison presented the idea that we needed to prepare a new strategy that would lead us to the achievement of our goal. Elison volunteered to lead a team, which became a team of one, to draft some strategy development options, which he did. His report concluded with the following recommendation:

“The BGA should develop a clear statement of work and request for proposal that produces the types of data and information needed to support the mission of establishing a National Wildlife Refuge Service. The BGA should initiate this process by securing a grant to engage a contractor that will begin fulfilling the statement of work and assist with fund raising to complete the project. Based on the data and information assembled, presuming it supports the mission of an independent NWR Service, the BGA should develop a multi-prong strategy of public education, policy advocacy and legislative action.”

Redfearn then asked Morgan to develop a request for proposals as called for in the above

recommendation. This draft request has gone through one revision internally and has not received overwhelming positive reviews by the Affiliates. Redfearn has submitted the latest draft to Dr. Clarke, co-author of “Staking Out The Terrain,” for her review and comment. She promised Don that she would review the draft, but as yet has not provided Don with her comments.

In support of the strategy proposal, Reffalt had put together a paper titled, “Status and Deficiencies of America’s National Wildlife Refuges, Major Reports 1968 - 2008, And Key Findings.” Bill agreed to send this latest paper to the Board.

Redfearn decided to expand the discussion of the request for proposals when we got into the discussion of strategic actions tomorrow under New Business.

The major problem with the request for proposals is that it might cost the Alliance considerably more money than the Alliance has or is prepared to raise at this time.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Election of Officers - Phil Morgan

Phil explained that following the actions he is proposing, the BGA would have a Board of 13 members, seven of whom are in attendance which gives us a quorum. Here is the proposal for getting to that point.

Two Board members whose terms are up have chosen not to stand for re-election to the Board. Those are Bill Grabill and Gail Fishman. One Board member, Eileen McLaughlin, advised she is not able to continue in an active capacity with the board. President Redfearn considered this a resignation and accepted it as such.

There are an additional four Board members whose term is up and each has agreed to serve another term on the Board. These are Les Beaty, Ed Crozier, Joe White, and Phil Morgan. Phil nominated these four people to serve another term on the BGA. The attendees voted for the nominations in the affirmative.

Two current affiliates, Christine Reffalt and Evelyn Redfearn, have agreed to be nominated to the Board. In addition, a third dedicated attendee, Sharon Beaty, who has been a defacto affiliate has also agreed to be nominated to the Board. Phil nominated those three people to the Board. The President called for a vote and the attendees voted in the affirmative.

Phil nominated Don Redfearn to serve another term as President and Bill Reffalt to serve as Vice President. Evelyn moved that the nominations be accepted with unanimous consent, and Les seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Don nominated Phil Norton as a new affiliate member. The executive committee voted in the affirmative.

### Proposed Revision of Financial Procedures - Les Beaty

Les reviewed a draft of proposed changes in the financial procedures adopted in 2001. Most of the changes are intended to simply clarify existing procedures. Some are more substantial.

The major changes made by the new procedures include:

- Specifies two internal reports by the Treasurer, ie., an annual report to the Affiliates and a financial spreadsheet.
- Changes the fiscal year to January 1 - December 31 (from October 1 - September 30).
- Requires an annual audit within three months following the end of the fiscal year by a Board member designated by the President (when annual revenues are less than \$100,000).
- Describes the three major outside reports required of the Alliance to be filed by the Treasurer, ie., IRS Annual Filing Requirement, New Mexico Nonprofit Corporate Report, and Registry of Charitable Organizations.

There was considerable discussion of these procedures. All affiliates are encouraged to read them carefully because they establish, or reaffirm, how we handle reimbursements for expenses and contributions.

The change in our fiscal year requires a modification to our Bylaws and notification of IRS and the State of New Mexico.

The attendees suggested several modifications to the revised procedures. A motion was made and seconded that “The revised procedures, as amended, be adopted effective when the bylaws are changed reflecting the new fiscal year.” The motion passed on a voice vote.

The attendees agreed that the revised procedures would be distributed to the Affiliates together with a motion to revise our Bylaws to change the fiscal year. The Treasurer will handle this distribution and motion process as soon as possible. A majority of Affiliates must vote affirmatively on changes to our Bylaws. Hence, all Affiliates are urged to vote on this motion when it is posted electronically. Assuming the motion passed, the Treasurer will take care of the notification process.

#### D&O Insurance - Ed Crozier

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, Ed emailed the Board this message:

“Could you add a brief discussion about the Board's liability insurance to the Annual Meeting agenda? I would like to know what its status is and whether it provides director protection from counter-lawsuits now that the BGA is suing others.”

Although Ed was unable to attend the meeting, the topic was discussed anyway. Les provided a copy of the insurance policy at the meeting. Phil Morgan volunteered to review that copy tonight and report at tomorrow's meeting the results of his review.

#### Field Trip to Sevilleta

The meeting recessed about 3:00 pm for a field trip to the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. At the refuge, the attendees received a briefing by Refuge Manager Mike Parker and a tour of the recently completed \$6.5 million research and education building constructed by the Fish and Wildlife Service for the University of New Mexico.

**Wednesday, February 18, 2009**

President Redfearn reconvened the meeting at 8:35 am.

D&O Insurance - Ed Crozier (Continued)

Phil reported that he was unable to determine from his review of the policy if we are adequately protected per Ed's question. No other attendee could render such a judgement either. The attendees agreed that Les Beaty would scan the cover letter for the insurance policy and email it to Ed with a suggestion that he should write down his questions and concerns and discuss them with Alison Quinn of B.R Alexander & Co., Inc., the author of that letter. We recommended that Ed conduct his inquiry in his usual tactful and diplomatic manner, and that Ed then report his findings to the Board.

Mission and Purpose - Ed Crozier

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, Ed sent an email to the Affiliates which stated in part:

"I don't know how many of you clicked on the latest NWRA Friends Newsletter. If you have not done so, you should do it.

"It made me think that maybe the BGA mission is out of date and that we should talk about revising it. It also made me rethink the Bison Range issue and the task the BGA has taken on there. It might be that taking on issues like the Bison Range AFA, that nobody else wants to touch, is the best thing we can do. And maybe advertise that is what our primary mission is. We wouldn't give up on the separate agency idea, but wouldn't make it the primary or the No. 1 mission and would only move to accomplish that when a good opportunity arises -- in other words -- just what we are doing now.

"Somehow that would make me feel better as I would not be frustrated that we are not making much head way on the existing primary mission.

"Just a thought!"

This topic generated a lengthy discussion about the relationship of the Alliance's primary mission to other individual refuge issues. The consensus of the group was that although the Alliance becomes involved in other issues pertaining to the Refuge System, our primary mission is, and ought to remain, working for the creating of a National Wildlife Refuge Service, a separate government bureau or service.

YouTube - Ed Crozier

Phil Morgan summarized the status of this topic as being an outgrowth of a proposal made at last year's meeting to develop a DVD regarding the Alliance's mission. For a variety of reasons, Crozier felt that perhaps YouTube would be a preferred vehicle for making a video available to interested parties.

Ed emailed that we shouldn't be spending any money on this project until we decide who the audience of this video should be.

Bill said that this type of thing must be part of a larger campaign. A video is just a component of that campaign. This type of tool has multiple possibilities, including fund raising. Bill didn't think a video

would be very effective in Congress because those offices are inundated by this type of presentation. Don stated that the point being made in a video needed to be tailored to the intended audience. Otherwise, it will not be effective.

It was suggested that perhaps our issue was too complex to be presented in a seven minute video.

The group discussed the need to have someone (or a small group) who could devote considerable time to a video project. Someone suggested Lisa Mayo who maintains the Refuge Watch website. Don has talked with her on the phone, but he thinks she may not have much spare time for this type of work. Even if she cannot work with us directly because of time constraints, she might be able to offer suggestions regarding how we might use the Internet to promote or further our campaign. It was agreed that the President, or a designee, would follow up with Lisa. Don said that in his conversation with her, she expressed agreement with our mission. Someone mentioned that Lisa is a member of the Friends of Blackwater group.

The group acknowledged that we needed a campaign plan which would describe strategies for advancing our mission. The group further agreed that one, or more, videos as Ed proposed could be an important element of that campaign, or strategic, plan.

With regard to our overall effort, the group acknowledged and agreed that we had made progress over the past year or two. Bill remarked that the Alliance is now being asked by coalitions of organizations to sign on to documents being submitted to members of Congress who deal with refuge issues. Other NGOs recognize the Blue Goose Alliance as having expertise, they call upon us, and they want us to be a part of their effort. Bill will provide Chuck the documents we have co-signed and request they be posted as news items on our web site. That would show not only what we have been doing but also that we are partnering with other groups on issues of interest to us.

#### Global Climate Change - Bill Reffalt

Bill described the potential impact on Arctic areas from global warming including thawing of permafrost, thermokarsting, and runoff. In the Canadian/U.S. northern plains, warming would create drying conditions which would adversely affect habitats, eg., waterfowl nesting habitat. Along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts, global warming could produce a sea level rise up to 3 feet. This impact on sea level would not be expected until 2070 - 2100.

#### Actions/Strategy - Don Redfearn

Don mentioned:

- Glenn's strategy paper and Phil's paper.
- July 2006 - Reffalt did a strategy paper. raising money, achieving and maintaining credibility, high quality outreach programs, taking on sustaining issues, recruiting members and supporters, initiating actions, keeping goal in focus, produce high quality outreach materials, etc., etc.
- The previous 30-40 papers, the recent MSI report.
- We know that the FWS is a chronically dysfunctional organization and the Refuge System is suffering because of that.

Knowing all of that, here we sit wondering what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. How do we get people to understand the problem and to obtain the needed legislation. How do we market mission.

One professional in the area of marketing told Don that, “You guys are bureaucrats, and you are thinking like bureaucrats. You’ve got to be emotional. Visuals are okay. But, you need to get talking heads like refuge people to say what the refuge system means to them. Then, do things to get attention. Demonstrate, like in front of Salazar’s office. Use a Karl Rove tactic - all politics are local. You are going to have to have grass roots support.”

We need to figure out how to market our idea which is identifying audiences and also the audience capability and receptivity. We can put stuff out there but if people can’t relate to it, it’s not going to do any good.

With considerable discussion, the group developed an outline of a campaign plan. The plan is attached as Appendix A.

These are the audiences that should be contacted and made aware and should have an interest in the National Wildlife Refuge System and its future. Our job is to figure out what type of information we should provide these audiences to convince them that we need a different organizational structure for the NWRS. The information should be tailored to each group.

We need to sell the Service idea, not just the Refuge System. The Refuge System provides many benefits now. So, what Added Value would a Service provide? We need to describe the “Vision” of the Refuge Service. How will creating a new bureau solve the refuge system problems we’ve been talking about? This is where the video tool might be used effectively.

Phil noted that we lack the expertise to put something together which is compelling and convincing for the audiences we’ve described as needing to be targeted. That type of expertise is available. But, that expertise costs money, and we don’t have the money. So, maybe we need to leave this meeting with some kind of a plan that would help us get the money we need.

Evelyn observed that one problem we must face is our tendency to develop these wonderful plans and then put them in a file where they never see the light of day. An example of this is our meeting minutes. If we don’t refer to them often, we forget how many things we were going to do but just never got done because nobody followed up on the meeting minutes.

#### Fund Raising - Don Redfearn

Don stated that we’ve got to find the avenues which will give us the funds, the techniques, and the talent to put the package together and go somewhere. It isn’t going to be easy. But, it hasn’t been easy getting this far.

The group discussed applying for grants. Right now, in this economic climate, is a very bad time to be seeking grants. There is still money out there, but it is very difficult to find. Phil reminded the group that we have a grant writer in Marie Springer as a Affiliate. We will be asking her for her advice and recommendations.

Bill noted that one other possibility as a source of funding might be NGOs. They have internally a limited capability to make small grants.

Bill also pointed out that most grants are not for operational funding. Most are for specific projects where a tangible product or result is generated.

#### Republicans for Environmental Protection (REP) - Phil Morgan

Phil reported on his continuing efforts to energize REP in support of our mission.

#### Mother Nature Network - Phil Morgan

Phil reported on some very early contacts he has made with Chuck Leavell. Leavell is the Director of Environmental Affairs on the Mother Nature Network "MNN Team." This network contains some very talented people from varied walks of life and might be of considerable help to us if we can interest them in our mission.

Phil urged us to checkout the [www.MNN.com](http://www.MNN.com) website. If you come up with ideas, let Phil know.

#### Festival of the Cranes

Don suggested that Bill and Les set up an exhibit or booth at the Festival of the Cranes event at Bosque next fall. Don thought the Friends group would welcome our participation.

#### Next Annual Meeting

After some discussion, it was decided that Phil would investigate the possibility of holding our next annual meeting at Merritt Island NWR in March 2010.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:38 pm.

Following adjournment, the group drove out on the refuge (Bosque) to watch and photograph the 10,000 or so Snow Geese (along with Ross' Geese and Blue Geese), and an assortment of ducks, feeding in a refuge impoundment. This is a spectacular attraction for visitors. These geese are so accustomed to visitor traffic that they feed right up to the water's edge, and some even come up on the shoreline, not 15 feet from the line of parked cars and visitors walking along the road taking pictures.

Submitted by: Les Beaty, Treasurer

Approved by: Les Beaty, Acting Secretary. Electronically signed 3/5/09

Approved by Don Redfearn, President. Electronically signed 3/5/09

Elements of a Campaign Plan  
Goal: Legislative Establishment of a National Wildlife Refuge Service  
February 19, 2009

I. BGA must develop and explain the fundamental Question:

WHY DO WE NEED A NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SERVICE?

Include among considerations: NWRS dedication exclusively to the needs and opportunities of the wildlife refuges and the System

II. Campaign Elements:

- a. Raise Funds (Many ways to do this)
- b. Achieve, Elevate, Maintain Credibility
- c. Identify/Recruit Supporters
- d. Initiate actions to obtain needed legislation.

Identify Alternatives to Above if we disagree!

III. Get BGA-generated Information to Target Audiences (first assess knowledge level as well as interest level). Our Target Audiences are:

- a. BGA Partners
- b. Environmental Organizations (NGOs)
- c. Education Groups and Representatives
- d. Recreation Groups (Hunters, Fishermen, Birdwatchers, etc.)
- e. Political (Local, County, State, and Federal)
- f. Business (Chambers of Commerce, Bed and Breakfasts, Photo Shops, etc.)
- g. Potential Funding sources
- h. Media (Print, TV, Radio, Internet Blogs, etc.)
- I. Refuge Employees and Administrators