

Minutes - Special Meeting  
Blue Goose Alliance  
October 10, 2006  
MCM Elegante Hotel  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

This special meeting of the Blue Goose Alliance was called to order by President Don Redfearn at 9:05 am. Affiliates in attendance were:

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|--------------|-------------------|
| John Doebel  | Glenn Elison      |
| Jim Hubert   | Bill Reffalt      |
| Jim Tisdale  | Phil Morgan       |
| Al Trout     | Harold Benson     |
| Les Beaty    | Don Redfearn      |
| Sharon Beaty | Christine Enright |
| Ed Loth      |                   |

Guests in attendance were:

|                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| Marv Plenert   | Larry Hood |
| Dick Pospahala |            |

Since a quorum of Board members was not present, Alliance business could not be accomplished by voting. Hence, it was determined that this special meeting would be for information and discussion purposes only.

President Redfearn opened the meeting with some general remarks. He thanked John Doebel for acting as President during the transition period since the last annual meeting. He mentioned the new House Wildlife Refuge Caucus with its 114 members as presenting a potential opportunity for the Alliance.

The proposed meeting agenda was reviewed and a discussion of CARE was added to the list of discussion items.

## OLD BUSINESS

### Refuge Issues Update

Before getting into a discussion of specific issues, a brief discussion was held regarding the rationale for the Alliance devoting organizational resources to "single refuge issues." John Doebel reiterated a general agreement of the Alliance several years ago to become involved in single refuge issues when those issues are sufficiently broad in scope to pose a threat to the integrity of the Refuge System as a whole and collaterally when such involvement would serve to bolster the Alliance's standing and recognition among organizations and agencies interested in the Refuge System.

#### 1. National Bison Range

Bill Reffalt briefed the group on the current status of the National Bison Range issue. This is a very complicated issue with extensive legal ramifications, and Bill is doing an admirable job of keeping up with the details.

The Alliance has written several letters to appropriate individuals expressing opposition to the Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) negotiated last year between the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe (CSKT) of northwestern Montana for joint management of the National Bison Range and several nearby waterfowl refuges and waterfowl production areas. On

September 18, 2006, James Steele, Jr., Chairman of the CSKT Council wrote to the Alliance presenting a lengthy point by point rebuttal of the Alliance's previous objections. This letter, which was signed by someone other than Mr. Steele, was copied to a wide list of parties in Congress, Interior Department, and conservation organizations. At the special meeting, the members agreed that President Redfearn should prepare and mail a response to this letter rebutting Mr. Steele's arguments and copying the same distribution list.

The members also agreed that President Redfearn would send a letter to the Interior Department's Inspector General describing the Alliance's objections to the National Bison Range AFA.

In addition, President Redfearn announced his intention to begin making trips to Washington, D.C. for the purpose of meeting with various organizations and interests to discuss a wide range of matters including the individual refuge issues in which the Alliance has an interest.

There was some discussion of plans to contact the leadership of the House Wildlife Refuge Caucus to determine the interest of the Caucus in the National Bison Range issue.

## 2. Little Pend Oreille

John Doebel and Bill Reffalt briefed the group on the controversy at Little Pend Oreille regarding the elimination of grazing on the refuge as called for by the refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) which was completed with full public input in April 2000. Since comprehensive conservation plans are required in the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 and are used on refuges throughout the Refuge System, the Alliance has been active in urging the Interior Department and the Fish and Wildlife Service to stand behind the conclusions of Little Pend Oreille's Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

## 3. Izembek

Bill Reffalt briefed the group on the issue of proposed road construction through the Izembek NWR, including a wilderness area, which would connect two communities, King Cove and Cold Bay. This proposal arose in the late 1990s when legislation was introduced in Congress to authorize this road. Congress did not authorize the construction at that time, but efforts to obtain such authorization have recently been renewed.

The members agreed that Bill should draft a letter for President Redfearn's signature stating the Alliance's objections to this proposed road project.

## Website Development

Phil Morgan gave a brief report on the status of development of the new website. He discussed the need to keep the content of the website current and stressed the benefit of involving other affiliates in maintaining content currency. The yeoman efforts of Les Beaty and Chuck Danner in developing and overseeing the web site were recognized and applauded. The desirability of having those NGOs we link to link back to us was discussed. President Redfearn stated he would make that request in letters he intends to write to a number of NGOs. The need to keep the web site fresh and useful to the visitor was also discussed. We will need to find ways to do this without the entire burden falling upon the VP for Communications. Perhaps we should explore hiring college student help for some of the needs here. Phil recommended this as a topic for further discussion at the next annual meeting.

There was a discussion of problems with obtaining and maintaining current email addresses for refuge managers. This might be a candidate 'job' for a hired helper. Again, it was proposed that this be discussed further at the next annual meeting.

## Regional Representatives

John Doebel led a brief discussion of the use of regional representatives to further the Alliance's mission. Use of such representatives has not been notably successful thus far. It was suggested that perhaps more effort should be placed in clarifying the responsibilities of these representatives, recruiting affiliates to serve as representatives, and providing representatives with guidance regarding how to carry out their responsibilities. It was further suggested that this topic be an agenda item for discussion and decision at the next annual meeting.

**The group adjourned for lunch at 11:41 am and reconvened at 1:21 pm.**

#### Relations with other NGOs

President Redfearn continued the discussion of his plan for meeting in Washington, D.C. with various NGOs. He discussed his proposal to write to NGOs to set up such meeting.

#### Relations with 'Friends'

The group engaged in a general discussion of Refuge Friends groups and how the Alliance might improve contact with these groups. It was suggested that this was another area where an Affiliate needed to step forward to assume a leadership role as a 'Friends Coordinator' for the Alliance. It was decided that a committee should be formed to prepare a strategy for developing relations with Friends groups. President Redfearn will appoint such a committee.

#### Grants/Donations

This topic was discussed and the general consensus was that the chances of the Alliance securing meaningful grants or donations from conventional sources were remote. It was agreed that efforts to contact the Turner Foundation would be renewed. Bill Reffalt agreed to follow up with Burkett Neely regarding this contact.

### NEW BUSINESS

#### Wildlife Caucus Opportunity

President Redfearn repeated that he intended to include visits to Caucus staff members in his previously discussed visits to Washington, D.C.

#### Visit with Geoff Haskett

Geoff Haskett, Acting Deputy Assistant Director for NWRS, dropped by the meeting at this point. He stayed for about an hour and basically reacted to questions from the group.

#### 2007 Annual Meeting

President Redfearn indicated that the terms of a number of Board members were due to expire soon; hence the next annual meeting was important for elections to fill these vacancies.

No decision was made regarding when or where this meeting would be held. Co-locating the meeting with the next FWS Retirees Reunion in Shepherdstown, WV in April was discussed. A location in the Southeast was also discussed. It was decided that the Board would be offered two locations (one being Shepherdstown) on which to vote for the next meeting site.

### Appointment of Nominating Committee

It was agreed that a new nominating committee should be named. President Redfearn agreed to name such a new committee in consultation with the Executive Committee.

### Press Releases - protocol

There was a general discussion of how press releases are used by other organizations and the resource demands for using such releases effectively. No decisions were reached although it was the general tone of the discussions that the Alliance was not prepared (with staff, finances, time, etc.) to launch an effective program for the distribution of press releases.

### CARE Membership

The members briefly discussed renewing efforts to seek membership in the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE). Phil Morgan pointed out that there was a special membership category that did not require a financial contribution to CARE. John Doebel agreed to contact Bob Fields concerning prospects of Alliance membership in CARE.

### Recruitment Efforts

Discussion of this topic centered on the need to update the BGA Brochure. Several portions of the brochure are out of date. It was agreed to update the brochure. Differing approaches to maintaining the brochure and printing copies on an 'as needed' basis will be explored.

Jim Hubert inquired about the availability of other printed materials used for BGA recruitment. It was pointed out that these items were available in .pdf format on the Alliance's website so that any affiliate could print them in the quantity needed for a specific purpose. Some of these items need minor editing to update them. That will be accomplished in the near future.

President Redfearn adjourned the meeting at 4:46 pm.

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