

Minutes of BGA Annual Meeting
March 1—2, 2010
Cape Canaveral, Florida
Radisson Motel Meeting Room

Monday, March 1, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Les Beaty at 8:30 AM.

Attending: Christine Reffalt*
Bill Reffalt*
Ed Crozier*
Ron Hight
Ron Fowler*
Joe White*
Les Beaty*
Sharon Beaty*
Don Redfearn*
Evelyn Redfearn*
Don Hultman
Phil Morgan*
Burkett Neely*
John Oberheu

*Denotes Board Member

Ron Hight provided a quick overview of the afternoon's tour and logistics of NASA facilities and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Review of Agenda

Moderator Les Beaty led off with an introduction of attendees and a review of the agenda. Phil Morgan made the motion to suspend the reading of the 2009 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Evelyn Redfearn, and passed by voice vote of the BOD.

Old Business

President's Report

President Don Redfearn led a short discussion of past plans, successes and failures. He passed out copies of the President's Report which was not discussed in great detail. A copy of this report will be attached as an addendum to the final signed copy of the minutes. Don expressed appreciation to Don Hultman for his excellent survey of current Refuge Manager's thoughts on the BGA mission.

Ron Fowler asked if the copy of the President's Report could be posted on the BGA website. After a brief discussion of whether this report could be posted for the Affiliates, the entire Membership, or general public. Phil Morgan suggested we table this discussion and decision until New Business. Unfortunately the resolution was overlooked during the closing moments of the meeting and never received an answer.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Les Beaty reported the BGA accounts balance as of 12/31/09 was as follows

General Fund-----	\$9,639.63
Legal Defense Fund-----	\$298.61
Danny Redfearn Fund--	<u>\$2,615.00</u>
	\$12,553.24

Total income for the year was \$7,567.00.
Total expenditures for the year were \$7,885.14.

A complete copy of the Treasurer's report will be attached to the final and signed copy of the minutes as an addendum. Les reported he has been successful with New Mexico and the IRS in converting our fiscal year to conform with a calendar year, a change that should facilitate our fiscal bookkeeping. Ed Crozier asked if Non-Affiliates have made significant contributions to the BGA bank account following our request last year for contributions to the Legal Defense Fund. Treasurer Les Beaty replied we did receive contributions from non-Affiliates, but the amount had not been significant. Something less than 7% of contributions to our Legal Defense Fund in 2009 came from non-Affiliates. Evelyn Redfearn made a motion we accept the Treasurer's Report. Joe White seconded that motion. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Video Projects

Phil Morgan discussed his interaction with Chuck Leavell of The Mother Nature Network in getting three interviews (Skippy Reeves, David Wiseman, Noreen Clough) produced and aired on the Mother Nature Network. All three short videos were then watched by the group, followed by a discussion of the value of these interviews, and whether we can post them on YouTube and the BGA website. Ron Fowler volunteered to investigate the possibility of posting them on our website. Phil volunteered to contact the Mother Nature Network about posting the interviews on YouTube.

Ed Crozier produced a DVD entitled "A Case For A National Wildlife Refuge Service" and posted it on YouTube. Later working with Les Beaty, it was cleaned up and shortened to under five minutes. This improved DVD was viewed by the group. Les discussed additional improvements that could still be made to the DVD. A group discussion followed concerning how to use such a tool and who would do it, but no firm decision were made at that time The possibility of searching the Affiliates ranks for an

individual with the expertise to step up and help with such a project was bantered around, but the issue was tabled until new business.

Ed Crozier presented an overview of using such free internet tools such as Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Google Alerts to initiate and perpetuate grass root movements, and then led an informative group discussion of his subject. The possibility of asking the Mother Nature Network to upload Noreen Clough's interview to YouTube was the only firm initiative to make use of these free internet tools.

Report On National Bison Range Lawsuit

President Don Redfearn reported on the current state of the NBR lawsuit being handled pro bono by the Washington D. C. law firm of Holland and Clark. Final filing by BGA attorneys was accomplished on March 4, 2010. Final filing by the Government should be completed by April 2, 2010, at which time the Court should have all it needs to make a ruling. Our attorneys think this should take six to eight months. They also think oral arguments will not be necessary, although that possibility cannot be outright dismissed.

This presentation led to a lively group discussion concerning our related costs associated with this lawsuit, possible additional cost should oral arguments become necessary, the need for better communication of costs with the Board, concerns for long term costs as this issue evolves and drags on, whether we can afford to pursue it indefinitely, and the need to avoid an open ended financial obligation. It was decided not to try and find an answer to these concerns presently, but for the BOD to revisit the issue if oral arguments become necessary or when the Court makes its ruling (this is further clarified later in the minutes). With the legal defense fund down to less than \$300, the need to undertake another fundraising with the Affiliates and Membership was discussed, but no firm decision was reached.

Field Trip To NASA and Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

The meeting was recessed after lunch for a VIP tour, courtesy of Dorn Whitmore, Supervisory Refuge Ranger of Merritt Island NWR, of sensitive NASA facilities such as the Orbiter Processing Facility where directly under the space shuttle Atlantis, which was being refurbished and repaired following a recent return from space, we were treated to a technical presentation by a NASA spokesperson. From there it was on to the Vehicle Assembly Building where the space shuttle Discovery, in an upright position on a mobile launch platform, was being assembled for a space shot. We also received a close up view of the main engine external fuel tank being moved from a barge into the Vehicle Assembly Building where it was to be mated up with Discovery. Leaving that facility we received a close up bus tour of one of the launch pads. Following the NASA tour, we were bussed onto the Merritt Island NWR for a stop at some Scrub Jay habitat (with Jays) and the Refuge Visitor Center, where the tour ended.

Tuesday, March 2, 2010

Moderator Les Beaty reconvened the meeting at 8:30 and continued with Old Business.

Current Status of Refuge Issues Being Monitored By BGA

Vice President Bill Reffalt led off with a discussion of the current status of Refuge contacts with Congressional offices. Bill passed out copies of a report of Blue Goose Alliance Activities re: National Wildlife Refuge Issues –2009 and briefly touched on some of the projects mentioned. A signed copy of this report will be attached as an addendum at the end of the final signed minutes. Bill singled out several of these issues for discussion including The Baca NWR issue where BGA provided some basic ground support as well as some financial support, how to work with Congressional committees, sub-committees, and chairpersons. Unfortunately, today most committees are more interested in home issues and the reconfiguring of bureaucratic agencies is not high on their list of priorities.

When asked which Senate Committee would handle any legislation we might present, Bill reasoned it would be a toss up between Energy and Natural Resources and Environment and Public Works Committees. The most likely Committees to cautiously approach about a Refuge Service legislation would be Rahall's committee in the House and Barbara Boxer's committee in the Senate. The best way to go forward with a bill for the NWR Service is still uncertain; with a House Bill, A Senate Bill, or both, but with the realization that bureaucratic changes are not a huge issue with Congress at this time as there are no votes in most home districts involved in such issues. What we really need, but don't have, is a champion for our bill in the House and/or Senate. We also need to increase BGA's ability to support any champion who might take on our cause.

Fund Raising

President Don Redfearn led the discussion of this issue, which is far from quick and easy to accomplish. Ed Crozier had attempted about 60 times to get conservation grants, but found there are no grants out there for lobbying. The nation's current financial crisis has also dried up many grant sites. Minnesota Valley and Bosque Del Apache Friends Groups have been successful in getting grants for their Refuges, but these have been focused on physical issues. Political action issues such as ours has not been anywhere near successful. It was noted there are foundations out there that do fund lawsuits to protect the environment, but success with such a foundation would be a stretch for the BGA mission.

Les Beaty questioned the need to even raise funds if we are not doing anything useful with them, a question that energized a lively debate concerning Congressional contacts and activities over the past decade that have required BGA financing. Bill Reffalt expressed the thought we should have a cash reserve of \$20-25 K in order to raise funds

for a legislative push, or otherwise initially support a congressional champion, but our meager bank account is insufficient to even hire a fund raising person to achieve that level.

Ron Fowler raised the point of requesting United Way Campaign funds, a possibility that would require a professional audit of our bookkeeping system and accounting procedures. President Don Redfearn directed Ron Fowler and Les Beaty to pursue the feasibility of such an audit and otherwise qualify for United Way Campaign funds consideration, a task both had already volunteered for.

Don Hultman asked why not a membership fee. Don Redfearn explained initially we didn't want to charge such a fee because we wanted membership numbers and their support more than their money. Also an account of greater than \$25,000 would have required a more sophisticated accounting system than we were capable of providing at the time. There is still no interest in charging membership fees.

This concluded Old Business.

New Business

We were fortunate to have recently retired Refuge Manager Ron Hight, new Affiliate, give us his impression of the decade long BGA mission as seen from one who just retired from the organization most of us left decades ago. Given our singular mission Ron pointed out the BGA mission is a hard sell to Refuge employees and Refuge Friends Groups who have seen significant strides in funding for Law Enforcement, Fire Management, facilities, equipment, staffing, and grade levels. Ron observed BGA needs a broader base of a nebulous Refuge Service to appeal to today's employees and support groups. Ron's comments sparked a lively discussion of refuges today as compared to refuges of yesteryear, the absence of a direct chain of command, outside influences on Refuge Managers, the Service's leadership failure with respect to refuges, and the lack of control experienced by modern day Refuge Managers.

Don Hultman, also a recently retired Refuge Manager, wanted Refuge Manager's thoughts concerning the BGA mission, so he conducted a survey of those he knew and discussed the report that grew out of that survey with the group. He was disappointed with the response rate as it was fairly low, maybe because of fear of retribution. He observed that some of those who opposed our mission made a better case and better argument than those who favored it. One of those effective opposition arguments was that a National Wildlife Refuge Service may be good for refuges, but questioned whether it be good for conservation in general. Breaking out refuges seems to go against the tide of ecosystem management and biodiversity. Refuge Managers surveyed wanted facts and figures, not emotions, and wondered if BGA concerns were organizational or leadership issues, or both. They questioned who is really the audience for the BGA. Some seem to think BGA should forget about the public as an audience and put our energy in the political arena as it is difficult to get the public excited about an organizational issue. It was pointed out that we are proposing a divorce in a very long marriage, a procedure that could get very messy. Our mission looked negative to some. It was also noted that part of

our problem is that we have no one in Washington working the inside game. Refuge Managers surveyed wanted details of what a NWR Service would look like. The cost of such a reorganization also has to be acknowledged. As to assistance, we can expect no help from the NWR Association and Evan Hirsche. Some wanted to know if such a reorganization would lead to much needed line authority. That question evoked a lively discussion within the group which soon evolved into a suggestion by Ed Crozier that we vote on making line authority a sub-mission of BGA, a stepping stone for the support of other NGOs as well as improving BGA visibility. There was some slight resistance to such an action and some uncertainty if such was allowed by the bylaws, but after discussing the issue in more detail it was determined the bylaws would permit it. The group declined to vote on this issue at this time, but Don Hultman volunteered to prepare a draft white paper to explore the pros and cons of developing a strategy for improving line authority as a sub-mission of the BGA. When completed it will be circulated for BOD review, comment, and follow up action if necessary. Hopefully adoption of such an action could lead to an interim strategy to engage other NGOs and develop a coalition for support of organizational improvement of the Refuge System. President Don Redfearn directed Affiliate Don Hultman to proceed with a white paper on the issue.

At this point we broke for lunch.

Affiliate Nominating Procedures

Moderator Les Beaty reconvened the meeting at 1:30 pm, at which time Phil Morgan clarified the procedure for nominating new Affiliates. Over the course of the past year there seemed to be some confusion about this current procedure. As such, Affiliate Members wishing to nominate and sponsor prospective new Affiliate Members make their nomination to the President (or Acting President) along with the person's name, email address, mailing address, home telephone number, and a brief description of their nominee's background. Either the President or, at his direction, the Vice President for Communications shall announce the nomination to the Affiliate membership at large and ask if there are any objections to the nominee. Hearing no objection within five days after the announcement, the Executive Committee (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice President for Communications) will approve the nomination and notify the BGA Affiliates at large. When approved, the new member will be added directly to the BGA Affiliates ranks and sent a welcoming message by the Vice President for Communications. All Affiliates are encouraged to welcome new Affiliate Members when the announcement is made.

Draft Legislation

Vice President Bill Reffalt discussed the difficult issue of developing Legislation to convert the NWR System to the National Wildlife Refuge Service, a many faceted endeavor. Should it contain a broad statement of purpose.? Can we bring Law Enforcement back under the NWR Service, not let it remain within the FWS Law Enforcement Division. Others within the group discussed a desire to include such considerations as how we bring other related functions (research, Law Enforcement,

surveys, contracting, engineering, partners, cooperative wildlife Management, and wildlife functions beyond the refuge boundary into the NWR Service. Bill, however, was inclined to develop simpler legislation that took the Director of FWS out of the equation and have line authority simply flow directly from the Secretary of Interior to the Director of the NWR Service and then address these more specific functions under a broad legislative statement. Time needed to develop such draft legislation should take a couple of months once he begins. Ron Fowler and Don Hultman volunteered to assist Bill with this task.

Upcoming Congressional Elections

Les Beaty began the discussion wondering aloud if there are opportunities here for BGA. Maybe not so much on a national level, but possibly on a local level by bringing the BGA mission to the attention of strong national candidates and otherwise letting them know who we are and what we stand for. Bill Reffalt added that as chaotic as things appear to be in Washington, it is pretty much a given that a shift to the right will mean conservation will lose some traction. The League of Conservation voters could be a good source of conservation favorable candidates. A brief discussion of the issue by the group ensued, but with no discernable consensus of how to make these elections work in our favor. Bill continued by addressing the pros and cons of the current administration and how they affect environmental issues in general and the BGA mission in particular. So far it seems to be a mixed bag as the President is not strong on the environment. Wildlife issues are not even on the horizon.

The Role of Affiliate Members

Ron Fowler led the discussion with the observation that after we go through the process of adding them as Affiliate Members, they seem to fade into the background and eventually disappear without making any positive contribution to the BGA endeavor, with the exception of our distinguished Affiliates attending this meeting (Ron, John, and Don). It seems as if we have this vast array of knowledge out there that we don't seem to be reaching out to for assistance.

Les refreshed the group's memory on an Affiliate Survey he conducted in 2007 with 60 Affiliates. Only 37 Affiliates responded to the survey in any form. When asked if they were willing to dedicate some of their personal time to projects identified by the Alliance leadership, only 31 answered. Of these, 24 said yes and 7 said no. When asked if they were open to consideration of specific assignments from the President, 16 said yes. Most respondents said they were not willing to serve on the BOD.

With these results, Les revisited the rule of thirds that said if you are trying to make a sale, one third of contacted potential customers will be interested in what you have to say and one third of those will purchase your product. As such that one-third rule can be applied to just about any given situation, even our Affiliate membership. When we sign up Affiliates we can expect only about one third of them to be active. He then postulated maybe we are going against a natural law to expect a large active corps of Affiliates. Phil

suggested, tongue in cheek, that given the one third rule maybe the key to a large group of active Affiliates was an even larger cadre of Affiliates since one third of 300 is much larger than one third of 60.

Ron Fowler suggest more contact with the Affiliates, through such efforts as more bulletins even if they are just short updates to keep Affiliates informed and hopefully more interested and energized by BOD activities. He also suggested the President's Report passed out earlier could be reformatted and sent out as a bulletin. Ed Crozier suggested Bill Reffalt's report on the current status of Refuge issues could also make several good bulletins for Affiliates information. Les Beaty empathically reminded the group that all bulletins should certainly be going out to Refuge Managers despite the difficulties involved. Ron gave his assurance that it will be done. Burkett Neely suggested coordination of our annual meeting with other FWS meetings as a way to inform and energize Affiliates/

Les Beaty initiated a discussion on using Skype conferencing as a means to conduct BGA business with only small groups. It was agreed that such an endeavor with large groups often became boring and unmanageable. With Les Beaty taking the lead and setting it up, a discussion of Don Hultman's upcoming white paper on line authority as a BGA submission might be a good place to test the Skype concept.

Ed Crozier pointed out that no one on the internet is going to come across our website with the Blue Goose Alliance name. Ron Fowler volunteered to look at improved ways for a search engine to capture our website and report his findings back to the BOD. Ed also thought that adding Pay Pal, a check off system that would permit instant monetary donations should be considered. Ron and Les volunteered to check into this possibility for our website. Ed also noted our website is dull in terms of graphics and needs improvement. Ron replied we pay \$368 annually to Web Facts to maintain and host our website, but this does not include graphics improvements.

Phil Morgan suggested maybe there is someone within the Affiliates ranks with the expertise to improve our website without a graphics and auditory overkill. Ron volunteered to investigate who and how to improve our website. Don Hultman volunteered to contact Cindy Samples, Upper Mississippi's expert who takes care of their website and ask her to contact Ron Fowler with advice on how to make the BGA website more user friendly. To close out this discussion, Don Redfearn commented on Facebook and Twitter, etc. as seemingly ineffective for our use, but Ed Crozier defended them as being tools of today by moderns.

This concluded New Business.

Following a short break, the meeting reconvened to take up elections.

Election Of Officers

Phil Morgan made a motion that Ron Fowler, who has been finishing out Chuck Danner's term as Vice President—Communications, be confirmed as the new Vice President—Communications. The motion was seconded by Evelyn Redfearn, and by unanimous voice vote Ron Fowler was confirmed as the new Vice President--Communications. Ron Fowler then commented on the great and underappreciated job Chuck Danner had performed as the Vice President--Communications and volunteered to draft a letter of for the President's signature expressing our appreciation for the great job Chuck performed during his tenure as Vice President—Communications.

Phil Morgan nominated Chuck Danner, whose term on the board was expiring, to remain on as a member of the BOD. Joe White seconded that nomination and by unanimous voice vote Chuck was confirmed for another term on the BOD.

Don Redfearn nominated Florence La Riviere and Glen Elison, both whose terms on the BOD were expiring, for continuation as Directors. Phil Morgan seconded the motion and by unanimous voice vote both were reinstated on the BOD for another term.

Phil Morgan nominated Affiliate Don Hultman as a member of the BOD. Ed Crozier seconded that motion and by unanimous voice vote Don became a member of the BOD

Before next years annual meeting site was discussed, Ed Crozier asked to revisit the issue of our National Bison Range lawsuit against the FWS and the concern of several in attendance for where the cost of this lawsuit seems to be heading. It was stressed we appear to have a decision to make if the cost of this lawsuit exceeds our bank account. This touched off another lively discussion pretty much along the same lines discussed earlier during the President's Report concerning our financial ability to pursue this lawsuit to its logical conclusion, particularly if oral arguments becomes part of the mix. Finally it was agreed if oral arguments do become a reality, which is unlikely, we are more or less locked into seeing it through until the Judge makes her ruling, unless we run out of money first. Should that occur before the Judge makes her ruling, the BOD will revisit the issue. If oral arguments are not forthcoming and when the Judge makes his ruling, the BOD will revisit the issue and come to a decision of where we go from there. Just as that lively discussion seemed to be winding down Burkett Neely suggested we develop a report to the Affiliates on the lawsuit, how it started, where it is at, where it is likely to go, and follow up with an appeal for additional financial assistance. This touched off a continuation of the lively discussion. Finally Bill Reffalt volunteered to develop the lawsuit report for Affiliates, but hold off on an appeal for additional donations until such time oral arguments or the Judge's ruling make it necessary.

Next Years Annual Meeting

It was agreed to hold the decision on the time and place for our next annual meeting until we receive some definite word where and when the next Refuge Manager's meeting (Keystone 2) will be held and possibly match our meeting up with that event, hopefully to expand our visibility. The second option was to match our meeting up with the next meeting of the FWS Retirees Association for the same visibility opportunity, if in fact they hold one in 2011. The third option was to hold it somewhere in Arizona.

Adjournment was delayed again when Phil Morgan asked for a decision on a topic tabled earlier: what to do with the Mother Nature interviews and the video developed by Ed Crozier and improved by Les Beaty. Following a discussion of the possibilities, Phil volunteered to make contact with the Mother Nature Network to request they upload the Noreen Clough interview to YouTube and our website. Les will continue to work at improving Ed's video eventually uploading it to YouTube and our website. Phil suggested Wilderness Graphics may be willing to professionally fine tune the video once Les has made his improvement. It was also suggested again we look to the Affiliate ranks for an individual with the expertise to mine email addresses of conservation inclined individuals to receive directions to our website and the video. Ed said he would look into this.

Finally President Don Redfearn expressed his appreciation for this well attended annual meeting by energized and engaged members of the Board and Affiliates, to Les Beaty for moderating the meeting, to Joe White for taking the minutes, to Ron Fowler for his devotion to the website and communications in general, and for the best annual meeting he could remember. With that Evelyn Redfearn made a motion that the 2010 annual meeting be adjourned. Bill Reffalt seconded the motion, and by voice vote one more BGA annual meeting was adjourned and passed into history.

Submitted by Joe D. White, Secretary

Approved by Joe D. White, Secretary-----

Approved by Don Redfearn, President-----

