

Notes
Sonoran Audubon Society
Annual Planning Retreat
Saturday, Sept 5, 2009
Hassayampa Preserve

7:00 AM – 8:30 AM BIRDWALK: 39 species

Morning Session

9:00 AM – 12 Noon

Introductions:

Attending: George Wall, Tim Cullison, Eleanor Campbell, Bob McCormick, Donna Smith, John Arnett, Rich Schooler, Carol Schooler, Darnell Kirksey, Chuck Richards, Loretta Richards, Jerry Theis, Andree Tarby, Karen LaFrance (facilitator) and first time attendees: Rosemary Zanter, Haylie Hewitt and Joe Ford.

George memorialized the occasion with a group picture and a picture of himself, as President, with Rosemary, Haylie and Joe.

Celebrations of the work this year—what we did this past year that we really liked:

- “no more Bob McCormick! (LOL!!)
- The Ten Birds, trying to educate, the bookmarks, brochure with photos from winners of photo contest
- Tina’s Columns in newsletter
- Photo context, 121 submissions, 13 photographers
- Family Bird Walks, better numbers at Estrella, 8-10 on each walk
- Bought laptop and projector, helps with membership mtgs
- Intro Slide Programs, John!
- Membership Meetings: average attendance up to about 60!
- Publicity better—Tim!
- Quality of Membership Meeting programs is better
- Tres Rios Nature Festival: 30,000 budget, festival no different, even better that when it had a large budget, 30 SAS volunteers participated
- Good numbers on Field Trips, 6-16 per trip, filling up rapidly
- Becoming an Outdoor Woman, Andree and Tice, 8 on birdwalk
- IBA Monitoring, 5 spots on Salt/Gila and AFNM
- Store is meeting expenses

- Four grants received this year: SAS received two Together Green grants in national competitions (Toyota with National Audubon Society) for a total of \$15,000; one Arizona Bird Conservation Initiative (ABCI) grant of \$2525 from AZ Game and Fish Department for IBA monitoring and UAFWP travel (available in new grants or extensions each year to SAS) and \$600 from National Audubon Society's Chapter Collaborative Grants toward purchase of equipment for education (this grant is available each year to AZ chapters). Karen LaFrance, SAS VP, is SAS' lead grantwriter and grant and contract monitor.

What IS all the fuss about "Together Green"?

Together Green Innovation Grant: \$5000 for Community Planning in Upper Agua Fria Watershed, Yavapai County. This awarded grant is one of only four in the country through the TG Innovation Grant application process. The grant will fund a community outreach worker and facilitator in rural Yavapai County, planning meetings around water issues and the development of special projects by year-end. Karen LaFrance with Rich Schooler.

Together Green Fellowship Grant: \$10,000 (we think) for Karen LaFrance. There are 40 Fellows out of 130 applicants, half of the Fellows are Auduboners and half are not. The project, over 18 months, is to create a training/education venue for Audubon chapter leaders in the Intermountain West. The idea for the project came from Karen's attendance in summer 2008 at NAS' Hog Island Leadership Camp (now suspended due to funding issues) and from the desire of the Arizona Audubon Council (of all the chapters) to have a training event in Arizona (their retreat in October 2008). At least one half of the grant is a stipend for the Fellow plus expenses of the project.

Break Out Sessions: Issues and Who Does What by When:

Horseshoe Ranch:

Is this potential project—the purchase of the last private ranch in-holding in the Agua Fria National Monument into public conservation ownership-- an opportunity for SAS? (The Board received a presentation in August from a Game and Fish

SAS does not have the kind or amount of funds that Game and Fish is seeking for purchase.

SAS may have concerns on bird habitat for the cattle grazing leases which are a part of the project acquisition.

Goals and Ideas:

- Get answers to our concerns about grazing—extent, intensity, monitoring
- Monitor development at ranch and elsewhere, looking for opportunities greater or lesser involvement
- Be open to participate in future outdoor education activities; SAS Field Trip already scheduled for spring 2010; Perhaps one or two trips per year
- Volunteer/Clean ups/Friends of the Agua Fria National Monument
- Commit dollars each year for maintenance/operational costs, if the project materializes; a match for funds raised for this specific purposes, perhaps?
- Horseshoe Ranch could be a resource for birdwalks, an educational site and overnight programs with other organizations.

Checking in on Important Bird Areas:

- Educate SAS members on the survey techniques and how to fill out the surveys: training is scheduled for October 15 at George's house
- One field trip per month to an IBA, referral to Trip Committee (Donna Smith with Bob McCormick; one trip scheduled Arlington November 8)
- More advertising on web site and in newsletters; recommendation: create a full section in newsletter with Photos, Highlights, end of year results, George.
- Develop a Power Point presentation for our IBA's that can be used at general meetings. By December meeting—get info to George by September (Bob McCormick) (George will also host a training for persons interested in learning how to do Powerpoint—stay tuned).

- Getting more people involved for better coverage: January 2010 (Bob McCormick)

Remember to report the ten focus birds to George.

Form an IBA Committee and reduce Bob McCormick's workload and get more participation. Timeframe?

Compilers and counters in the IBA monitoring program should be asked to host or to participate as trip leaders (Donna Smith and Bob McCormick).

Education, looking ahead.....

- Develop Power Point Programs:
 - Basic Birding (Introduction) using Eleanor's outline Nov 2009
 - "More Advanced Birding" March 2010
 - Focus Birds of Conservation Concern February 2010
- Offer Beginning Birding Field Trips, Education Committee and Field Trip Committee, by February 2010
- Develop more extensive Volunteer list, ongoing issue, with a core group of instructors.

Afternoon Session

Putting Conservation into SAS Programs and Initiatives for 2009-2010;

How do we know we are making a difference? What are the "metrics" of success?

We wanted to attract more people and new people to membership meetings; this year our average is up to about 60 per monthly meeting which is about a one-third increase and also above the average for Audubon chapters.

But are numbers the impact measure? They help SAS develop volunteers so numbers are important for membership meetings and also for Education Committee whose goals are outreach.

SAS must revisit its strategic goals to take the 10 Birds of Concern into the development planning arena in the West Valley. Plan? Stay tuned.

Criteria for volunteering for other Audubon chapters/centers/events

Issue has been raised because the chapters are being solicited or will be solicited to provide volunteers for events at other chapters or at the new Audubon Center in downtown Phoenix. In fact, SAS has been asked to provide volunteers to Gifts from Nature in Scottsdale in December (Fri/Sat, 11th and 12th) and to operate the event financially for Audubon Arizona. The group agreed to go ahead and respond favorably to Sam Campana after the membership meeting and a sign up sheet goes around.

The event will earn \$1000 for SAS.

Criteria for participation for the Board to apply:

- Any dollars to the chapter?
- Ease of set up, take down and handicapped accessibility and accommodations
- Short Term
- Plenty of Advance Notice
- Learning Opportunities
- SAS Publicity

Advocacy/liaison with AZ Game & Fish

Need to maintain relationship with Game and Fish staff and Commissioners and to educate on the work that SAS does for Game and Fish monitoring IBAs and bird mortality from Avian Influenza (part of the IBA monitoring grant contracts) and the work in the Agua Fria Watershed for conservation.

In 2007, Bob McCormick made a presentation to Game and Fish. Since then, the Commission has had turnover. Referred to the Board for assignment of a liaison and plan for a presentation and monitoring of Game Department issues.

John Arnett will follow up to make sure SAS brochures are at the least displayed at Game and Fish headquarters.

"Getting more people committed to volunteer tasks for SAS"—we need more "heavy lifters"

Every Year our committees ask this question....

Are there "institutional" improvements SAS can make to advertise and invite volunteer participation constantly throughout the year?

How do we "groom" interested persons?

...welcome everyone "radically" that is to say, very assertively and openly....

Field trip participants: ask them if they would be interested, tell them about IBAs; they are the "repeat birders"!

Key a constant eye out for potential Board members. It was noted that the Board is entirely turned over in past five years from the founding board of directors....

ACTION: Darnell, Haylie and Jerry are an Ad Hoc committee which will report back to the Board on a plan to address this SAS Chapter need.