

PSO Board of Directors' Teleconference Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2020

The PSO Board of Directors conducted a teleconference meeting with the following members participating: Eli DePaulis, Mike Fialkovich, Vern Gauthier, Deb Grove, Greg Grove, Frank Haas, Margaret Higbee, Roger Higbee, Laura Jackson, Chad Kauffman, Wayne Laubscher, Evan Mann, Holly Merker, Emily Thomas, Linda Wagner, and David Yeany. Also present for the first part of the meeting were Dan Brauning and Cathy Haffner representing the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Evan called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Minutes – Roger

Roger distributed the minutes of the May 26 meeting prior to this meeting.

Gull Point – Chad

Evan began the meeting by asking Chad to present his point of view on the restrictions that have been placed on Gull Point at Presque Isle State Park. Chad said that as outlined in the emails, he feels that the PGC and DCNR are somewhat arbitrarily keeping Gull Point closed.

Dan said that he thinks that PSO's advocating for birders is great. He also said that some of the communications were inaccurate. PGC is not opposed to birders having access to Gull Point, but the trail needs to be upgraded. He thinks that PSO and PGC should work together rather than against each other. Chad noted that the problem is not birders on Gull Point but boaters, fishermen, and sunbathers. He suggested that maybe PSO could help restore the trail by donating money. Cathy said that this year was unique because of the trouble with the trail. Evan asked if PSO could play a role in moving this issue forward. He got no direct answer from the PGC representatives except that some of Sarah's comments were in the right direction. Chad mentioned that some people in the PGC and the DCNR think that birders are not interested in going out to Gull Point.

Holly asked if either Dan or Cathy could write an article for "The Pileated" and Facebook on birds and habitat that need protected. Margaret will contact Dan to see who will write the article. This ended the PGC's participation in the board meeting.

Birding Ethics – David

David questioned the need for PSO to speak about birding ethics. He suggested that we might want to have a panel discussion for the birding community by using Zoom. Mike agreed and said that this would show that we do more than publish a journal and newsletter. Evan asked if Holly, David, and Laura would get together to discuss this and get back to the board. It was suggested that we could use Zoom or Facebook. Vern suggested that we use Zoom first to see how it goes. Emily said that PSO can use her Zoom account which can accommodate up to 500 people and unlimited minutes.

Annual Business Meeting Update – Evan

Evan contacted Jack Solomon, former board member and retired attorney, to review the PSO bylaws and recommend any needed changes.

Vern announced that he will be leaving the board in September but will remain as the chairperson of the Annual Meeting Committee. This will leave a vacancy on the board which cannot be filled until the annual meeting in 2021 when the membership votes on board members. It was suggested that Vern be appointed by the board to fill the vacancy he will be creating until a new member can be elected next year. Roger made a motion which Frank seconded that the board appoint Vern to the vacant position until next year when a replacement can be elected by the membership. The motion passed.

Treasurer's and Membership Reports – Frank

Frank distributed the treasurer's and membership reports prior to the meeting. He noted that membership is down slightly, possibly due to the corona virus but PSO is still in good shape financially. Please see his full reports attached to his email dated July 27, 2020.

Records Committee – Holly

Holly said that Tessa Rhinehart has been elected to replace Ian Gardner as PORC secretary. PORC is still up to date on all of the records and is running smoothly. There are currently 435 species on the Pennsylvania list. Holly also announced that Frank has volunteered to digitize all of PORC's paper reports for easier storage. This amounts to 13 boxes.

Vern suggested that we recognize Holly and Mike for all the work that they have put into PORC.

Conservation Committee – Laura

Laura discussed wildlife corridors in Pennsylvania, including legislation introduced by Mary Jo Daley to further this concept. The Endangered Species Coalition is promoting this and has invited PSO to become a Coalition member. Laura made a motion seconded by Vern that the PSO join the Endangered Species Coalition. The motion passed.

The BLM is trying to conduct grassland projects across the West without public comment. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires public and scientific oversight for federally funded projects. A letter has been sent to BLM Idaho State Office raising concerns over the proposed lack of public comments to which PSO is a signatory. A virtual press conference is to be held on July 29 regarding the comment letter.

The Great American Outdoors Act was passed by the House of Representatives; this act will permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund which will fund many projects and agencies. President Trump is expected to sign it into law.

See Laura's full reports attached to her emails dated July 23 and 27, 2020.

Education Committee – Holly

Holly said that there are no updates for the Education Committee.

PSO Statement on Inclusivity – Evan

Evan presented to the board several statements of inclusivity that other birding organizations have adopted. He asked if the board felt this was something that PSO should consider. After some discussion the board agreed that we should make a similar statement. Evan said that he would try to put something together before the next newsletter.

Evan ended the meeting at 7:22.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger Higbee, Secretary