

**MVAS Minutes**  
**Monday, March 15, 2021, 5:30 p.m. on Zoom**  
**Start: 5:45 p.m.      End: 6:57 p.m.**

**Attending:** Elaine Stachera Simon, Diane Moore, Cheryl Fallstead, Sid Webb, Annie Mitchell, CJ Goin. Tracy Patrick joined at 6:07 p.m. and Trish Cutler joined at 6:10 p.m.

1. Approval of February 2021 board minutes: Motion by Diane Moore and seconded by Annie Mitchell to approve. Approved 6/0.
2. Acceptance of Treasurer's end-of-February balance report: Motion to approve as presented by Sid Webb, seconded by CJ Goin. Diane noted that she is going to make a line item in the budget for T-shirts. Accepted 6/0.

3. Updates:

**T-shirts (Annie):** Annie reported that 60 shirts have been ordered. Everyone but two board members has paid for shirts and several, even some in town, have paid to have them mailed. Should we order extra shirts for those who join later, didn't order, or got the wrong size? Cheryl moved that we order 12 extra shirts to relate to the sizes ordered by members. Seconded by Sid. Approved 6/0. Cheryl noted they make nice speaker gifts and Elaine noted that Rob Wu would be a good recipient. Annie said that the mayor could receive one when the proclamation is done.

**Lease agreements update (Gill or Sid):** Sid noted that nothing has been signed to his knowledge.

**Bird blind (Sid, Elaine):** Sid reminded the board that draft proposal for the bird blind at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park was shown at the last meeting. Sid had a good conversation with Alex, the ranger at MVBSP. He and his district manager are excited about the project and want it to go forward, however, it is one of four projects under consideration and there are only two rangers at the park. He has paperwork ready to send to Santa Fe, and if approved we can go forward. At that point, we would provide funds for the project from the grant. Sid has begun to estimate costs: Steel bars are at least \$200 and the wood would be about the same, so he estimates that it would be at least \$800. Signage would add to the expense and we would control that. If a roof is added, there would be more bureaucracy and more time, so Sid said that could be later as a different project. We don't have funds from Audubon Southwest yet, but if we feel the progress is adequate, he will notify Alex we want to move forward, then we can request the funds. Another of their projects is clearing the canal of cattails, etc., so we could do another project for signage

there. Sid moved that we move forward with the proposal from the last meeting with slight adjustments for ADA requirements. Seconded by Diane. Approved 8/0.

**Holloman (Mark):** Not present to report.

**Scholarship Committee (Elaine):** As of today, there are no applicants for the Bischoff Scholarship. It has been circulated at NMSU, emailed to our members, and posted on Facebook on several related pages. If there are no applicants, the funds could roll over to the next year. Annie noted that last year applications came in close to the deadline and asked if specific instructors have been contacted. Elaine said she believed that's what is being done. The last recipient, who is doing a brief presentation in April, hasn't received all her funds yet, but she needs to send her most recent transcript. Elaine will remind her.

4. **Proclamation – Native Plants Week:** The proclamation has been prepared in collaboration with the Native Plants Society. ~~Gill has been active in moving it forward through city council. Tess of the NPS has been a good partner in working on the project.~~ We approached Tessa Abeyta Stuve to work with Gill to place it on agenda (suggested change to minutes because at this point, I don't think proc was finished and moving forward yet) to build this relationship and get her involved in environmental issues.
5. **Insurance:** CJ said that after he gets his second COVID vaccine, he is willing to start doing bird walks again. He will check on "hold harmless" documents with state parks and about their liability provisions. The walks there are officially state park walks, not MVAS. He and Rob have discussed having a bird walk at White Sands, and he will discuss the form with him as well. Sid noted that he believes national Audubon has shut down all bird walks and that we should ensure they approve moving forward before doing ours. Elaine said she thinks they'll refer to local DOH rulings rather than give "approval." Trish asked who someone who wanted to sue would go after – the organization or individual board members. Elaine referred to a document that indicated that as long as board members acted in good faith, they couldn't be sued. Elaine responded to a question from CJ saying that we are investigating officers and directors' insurance and liability insurance. Trish noted that at WSMR, they're told hold harmless agreements don't stop people from suing, so having insurance would be beneficial. Annie noted that the estimate was \$398/year and Elaine said that we have adequate funds to pay for it. Elaine suggested we pay for a lawyer who has experience in nonprofit law to investigate. Sid moved that Elaine contact a lawyer with that experience to further investigate the matter. Seconded by Trish. Approved 8/0.
6. New business: none.

7. Committee updates:

**Education:** on hold.

**Butterflies and Moths:** CJ believes we'll start seeing some by the end of March and more into April.

**Publications:** Next newsletter will be published May 1. Sid asked for more articles, in particular from anyone who wants to write a conservation article. He'll have articles about the US IBWC and the bird blind. Mark may have an ongoing series.

**IBWC Citizens' Forum:** Sid reported that the water effluence project related to the water treatment plant has been reconsidered and expanded and is open for citizen responses. Sid offered to provide public comments as a member and on behalf of MVAS. He noted that not everyone is in favor of the project as proposed. EBID suggested piping water to a source for MVBSP, but he thinks there won't be support for that. Comments are due by March 22. Another project under discussion would be to convert the canal at MVBSP near the visitor center into a riparian habitat. Sid will send out the comments via email for us to vote by email to see if we will be signatories as a group and/or named individuals to the comments.

**Conservation:** Trish offered to do an article about the Migratory Bird Treaty for the newsletter. It went into effect March 8, but they are going to process a new proposed rule. They are still not enforcing incidental take, but it needs to be changed. "Certainty" to businesses could be provided by a permit system, but things are still in limbo.

**Programs:**

March 17 = C.J. Goin/Wayne Treers Bird ID

April 21 = scholarship winners and Mark Pendleton Bird ID

May 19 = Susan Tweit (Cheryl)

Next board meeting: Monday, April 12, 5:30 p.m.

Adjourn: Moved by Cheryl, seconded by Sid. Approved 8/0.