



Call to Order

The Saint Paul Bird Alliance Board of Directors meeting was held on Monday, February 3, 2025. President Greg Burnes called the meeting to order at 4:55 pm. Those attending were Vice-President Kiki Sonnen, VP of Communications Martha Douglas, Treasurer Neil Carlson, Monica Bryand, Fran Kennedy, Debbie Brown, and Craig Cox.

Current Business

Approve January 2025 Minutes

Debbie moved to approve the Minutes without revisions, and Martha seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Treasurers Report

Neil provided the following update on our current assets as of 01.25.2025:

- US Bank Checking: \$16572.90
- US Bank Savings: \$ 6,001.54
- US Bank Certificate: \$16,813.28
- TruStone Certificate: \$33,950.88

Neil noted that we have not yet paid the Harriet Island event expenses.

State Audubon Policy Document

Greg asked the Board if we were ready to approve the policy document outlining the issues Audubon would be working on this year (See Appendix 1 for a summary.)

Kiki moved approval of the document; Craig seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Event Updates

Outdoor/Indoors—Together

The event was terrific despite the extreme cold, which meant everyone stayed indoors. Kiki suggested that next year we reach out more to the general public. Asking people directly to volunteer was quite successful. It would be useful to

assemble a list of people who participate in our activities so that we can recruit them to volunteer.

Warbler Weekend Update

Registration for this year will be online only and will open on April 1st. Participating in the Friday night event will cost an additional \$5. Greg is exploring options to replace the current sound system, which is no longer working. The evaluation form includes several comments to make the event more welcoming to first-timers and beginning birders.

Committee-Program Updates

Communications

Martha reported that the Communication Committee agreed that the Cardinal should be discontinued in its current form. We need to discuss this transition in more detail. Fran volunteered to help us use social media more effectively to reach a larger audience.

Program Updates/Future

Greg reported that we hold nine meetings annually from September to May, with the January/February meeting on Zoom. Attendance has averaged 25-30 people in person and 40-60 online.

Greg proposed to the Board that we reinvent the way we are organizing our programs:

- Initiate four **quarterly in-person meetings** (September, December, March, and June). We would invest more time and money to make these in-person meetings more attractive and effective educational events. The quarterly events would feature higher-visibility speakers and could include presentations from grantees, treats, drawings, and other activities. We could site the June meeting at a location where we could host events before the meeting (picnic, bird trip, demonstrations, etc.) Speaker fees for the quarterly events should be increased from \$150 to \$350-\$500.
- The remaining meetings, which take place between the quarterly events, would be Zoom meetings focused on research topics and more niche presentations. The speaker fee would be \$150-200.

Greg noted that we could explore other programs beyond the quarterly and monthly meetings.

Greg also reported that we need much more volunteer support for this work. We need a committee chair, additional committee members, volunteers to handle the quarterly

meeting logistics, more direction from the BoD regarding themes and topics, and more help suggesting speaker ideas.

The Board enthusiastically endorsed Greg's proposal to reinvent how we are doing programs.

Conservation Committee

Debbie reported that in 2024, the committee continued the kestrel box program, launched a partnership for the chimney swift program, revived the Como "Audubon" Woods project, and added two wood duck boxes at Pig's Eye.

One committee member recommended producing a document listing all our partners for reference. Debbie will ask Amanda if she could take the lead in assembling such a document.

Goals for the coming year include:

- Hold conservation events at "Audubon" Woods (which will be renamed) and engage volunteers over the long term.
- Make reusable signs for conservation committee events
- Continue to work with UBC at Pig's Eye Park

Greg also asked the BoD and Conservation Committee to consider if and how we might want to get involved in a significant new opportunity by adding 5,000 acres of new public land in Washington County. The Minnesota DNR is seeking input on what they should do with the land. Stillwater Bird City wants to do bird and other natural resource surveys. Monica volunteered to work with this with UBC, and the Conservation Committee will add this project to their work plan over the long term.

Grant Program

Craig directed the attention of the Directors to three grant proposals that were circulated before the meeting:

- St. Croix Montessori School--\$860 to purchase a classroom set of 30 binoculars and bird books to be used by elementary classrooms for bird hikes on the school property in the spring and fall. In addition, funds from the grant will be used to purchase equipment to build The Bluebird Nest Box Trail.

Martha moved to approve the grant proposal; Monica seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

- Urban Bird Collective (UBC)--\$1,000 to sponsor 15, mostly BIPOC folks, to participate in Warbler Weekend. UBC leaders will lead 5-6 walks throughout the weekend.

Debbie moved to approve the grant proposal, which Neil seconded. The motion was approved unanimously, with Monica Bryand abstaining.

- Wakan Tipi Awanyankapi—\$3,000 to support their ongoing partnership with the UBC. The BoD expressed a strong interest in working with Wakan Tipi but didn't think the current grant proposal was the best way forward. Monica and Craig agreed to contact Wakan Tipi staff to discuss an alternative grant proposal.

Craig also recommended to the BoD that we transition to a single annual grant period, with applications due September 15 and decisions made at the December BoD meeting. This will provide more time for evaluating and interacting with potential grantees, better align with our budget process, and give more certainty to potential grantees whose projects tend to begin in the spring.

The BoD endorsed the transition.

BoD Composition for 25/26

Greg stressed that we all need to be thinking of potential candidates and reach out to them to explore their interest in serving. Kiki, Monica, and Craig volunteered to serve on the nominations committee.

Open Issues

Field Guide Hats

Neil moved that we purchase new field guide hats displaying the new chapter name. Monica seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Joint Meeting w/LLBA BoD in March

The BoD agreed to invite LLBA to come at 4:00 pm before the March BoD meeting.

Adjourn – Next BoD Meeting March 3 (Monday) - 5 PM – Wilder

Craig moved to adjourn the meeting; Neil seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Appendix 1

AUDUBON UMR MINNESOTA POLICY INITIATIVES 2025

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Rob Schultz LOBBYIST: Kimberly Scott

POLICY DIRECTOR: Lindsay J. Brice CONSERVATION DIRECTOR: Dale Gentry, Ph.D.

Policy Priorities

- Protect and restore habitat for birds.
- Advocate for state-level policies that positively impact birds and defend against those that negatively impact birds.
- Advance state public funding to protect, conserve, restore, and enhance habitat for birds

Strategies

- Advocate for public funding and science-based policy solutions to reverse the decline in bird populations and biodiversity.
- Engage Audubon’s expansive wingspan of 25,000+ members statewide
- Build and support bipartisan relationships

Audubon UMR Minnesota will take the lead on the following issues.

- Advocate for ENRTF appropriations and recommendations of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). Support the integrity of the process and intent of the funds. Defend against proposed raids.
- Advocate for Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations and recommendations of the Lessard-Sams
- Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). Support the integrity of the process and intent of the funds
- while defending against proposed raids.
- Support the manufacture, sale, and use of non-toxic fishing tackle
- Powering Up Pollinators - license plate to support Minnesota’s Habitat Friendly Solar Program
- Support