

Minutes of the 2004 Fall Meeting
Tennessee Ornithological Society
Directors
Cookeville, Tennessee
October 09, 2004

The fall meeting of the Tennessee Ornithological Society was held on 08-10 October, 2004 in Cookeville, Tennessee. Field trips were offered to the following locations: Cane Creek Park, including an extension to Ensor Sink Natural Area, City Lake Natural Area, Heritage Marsh, Burgess Falls State Natural Area and Walnut Park.

The meeting of the TOS Directors was called to order by TOS President Virginia Reynolds. Donna Ward, Recording Secretary, reported a quorum present. Carolyn bullock made the motion that the Minutes of the Spring 2004 meeting be approved a read with some minor corrections. The vote of the Directors was unanimous to accept the motion. Melinda Welton suggested that the Minutes be sent to the Directors prior to the state meetings so that if these are changes, the corrections can be sent to the secretary immediately. She discussed the possibility of the Minutes being sent to the Directors by e-mail. President Reynolds suggested that the Minutes be posted on the web. ‘

REPORTS OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE:

President-Elect – No Report

Vice-Presidents

East Tennessee – No Report

Middle Tennessee- No Report

West Tennessee – No Report

Directors-at-Large

East Tennessee – No Report

Middle Tennessee – No Report

West Tennessee – Louise Ward, the Director-at-Large from West Tennessee, was present, but had no report

Secretary's Report: Donna Ward, Recording Secretary, requested that the Directors state their names when addressing the chair.

Treasurer's Report : President Reynolds introduced MacMcWhirter, the new TOS treasurer. Mr. McWhirter is the Comptroller of Rhodes College of Memphis, and has an extensive background that includes working with non-profit agencies. He is the husband of Susan McWhirter, one of our past state presidents. Treasurer McWhirter handed the Directors the financial report for 06 October, 2004. A copy of the report is attached. He stated that he has a new certificate of sales tax exemption from the state of Tennessee available for all of the chapters. He noted that the financial report includes the balance sheet on one side and the "Profit and Loss" statement on the other. He stated that the main liability outstanding is the "Pledge Payable," which was approved by the executive committee, to the "Friends of Radnor Lake for \$2,000.00. He listed a figure of \$216,935.79 for Total Liabilities and Equity. He noted the highlights of the Statement of Revenues and Expenditures. Treasurer McWhirter announced that the organization currently includes 783 total memberships.

He included the following matters to be discussed by the Finance Committee before the spring meeting:

1. Development of annual budget, starting in CY 2005.
2. Use of endowment spending formula method to allow conservative integration of endowment with budget.
3. Search and identification of all historical endowment gift restrictions.
4. Budgeting for conservation and research projects-knowing what funds are available.
5. Evaluate investments under following criteria:
 - Fees of stock funds vs. indexing
 - Risk assessment and capital preservation

Perform bond yield assessment to meet financial goals of TOS.

Treasurer McWhirter explained that the cost of sending “The Warbler and “The Migrant” is \$16.00 per household, and includes 90 percent of the TOS budget. Charlie Muise of the Knoxville chapter discussed the benefits of receiving publications electronically. He said that the practice saves postage and is environmentally friendly. President Reynolds suggested that members state whether or not they want to receive a hard copy or an electronic copy of “The Warbler.”

President Reynolds stated the importance of the Finance Committee making some recommendations at the spring meeting regarding an increase in TOS dues. Treasurer McWhirter noted that he considers David Trently and Chris Sloan, previous treasurers, to have done a good job.

Curator/Web Page: Chuck Nicholson was unable to attend the Directors meeting, but sent the following report: Over the last month, we have averaged 160 visitors and 270 pageviews per day. Although somewhere between a quarter and a half of these visits are from the search engines like Google as they update their databases, the site statistics still indicate and heavy and increasing site usage. We get 2 or 3 inquiries coming in through the website per week. Some of these have been of interesting bird observations, like the recent albino hummingbird near Nashville. He has the usual plea for chapters to send him updates to their information on the website. A redesign of the bird-finding web pages is underway. When this redesign is completed, users will be able to call up site descriptions by clicking on maps or picking the sites from lists. We are also exploring the possibility of being able to pick sites based on the birds they are best known for.

To fully develop these bird-finding pages, he needs help in writing detailed site descriptions. He has added a few new site descriptions in recent weeks, and is working on more. He also

has had a few people promise him that they will submit descriptions of their favorite sites. There are still many important sites across the state that need to be written up, and he asks for help in doing this. If interested, he asks that members contact him.

Migrant Editor: President Reynolds stated that she received an e-mail from Chris Welsh, stating that the March 2004 issue of “The Migrant” is ready for the printer and should be in the mail by the end of October. She said that Chris will have the June 2004 issue ready for distribution by December. He also sent information that he will continue to use colored photographs in subsequent publications. Chris encourages birders to consider writing up significant or interesting sightings or observations for publications.

“Tennessee Warbler” Editor – Theresa Graham asked President Reynolds to announce that October is the deadline for sending articles to be placed in “The Warbler.”

COMMITTEE REPORTS: President Reynolds listed the following persons on the Nominating Committee:

Richard Connors, Chairman – Middle Tennessee
Theresa Graham – West Tennessee
Rick Knight – East Tennessee

President Reynolds then listed all other committees and the members included on each committee.

Distinguished Service Award Committee:

Jim Ferguson, Chairman
Ruth Luckado
Chuck Nicholson

Conservation Policy Committee:

Melinda Welton, Chairman – Middle Tennessee

David Vogt – East Tennessee

Dick Preston – West Tennessee

Susan McWhirter – West Tennessee

Bob Hatcher – Middle Tennessee

Charlie Muise – East Tennessee

Rare Bird Committee:

Mike Todd, West Tennessee

Dean Edwards – East Tennessee

Chris Sloan – Middle Tennessee

Rob Peeples – West Tennessee

Dean Ealinardo – East Tennessee

Conservation Research and Funding Committee:

Charlie Muise, Chairman – East Tennessee

Dev Joslin – East Tennessee

Linda Zempel – West Tennessee

Chuck Nicholson – East Tennessee

David Pitts – West Tennessee

Joel Keebler – East Tennessee

Finance Committee:

George Payne, Chairman – West Tennessee

Danny Gaddy – East Tennessee

Ron Hoff – East Tennessee

David Trently – East Tennessee

Finance Committee Report: President Reynolds recalled that the Directors voted to have an audit of the organization's finances. It was determined that an audit would cost four or five thousand dollars. President Reynolds asked Carolyn Bullock to line up the organization's expenditures in a format

necessary to be presented to the finance committee so they can approve an internal audit. Treasurer McWhirter said that by doing an internal audit, the organization would be in compliance with the charter.

Bird Records Committee: No Report

Conservation Policy Committee: Melinda Welton discussed the Bird Conservation Alliance. She talked about a description that she is considering putting on the web page that describes the Conservation Policy Committee to make sure that everyone is in agreement about what the committee's functions are.

Melinda welcomed Charlie Muisse to the committee. The Mission Statement and previous policy decision made by the committee that she sent out for CPC review on October 7th was accepted by the Board and will be posted on the tnbirds website. A decision was made to have all appointments on the CBC expire at the Fall TOS meeting each year with automatic re-appointment for all active members who would still like to serve. Members who find that they do not have time to serve can gracefully rotate off. The President will make new appointments.

The Board also agreed on a policy that will allow the CPC to respond more quickly to issues. Recently there have been several instances then the CPC was asked to make a recommendation to the Executive Board on a policy issue or to sign-on to a Bird Conservation Alliance letter but been given a short window of time to respond. In future situations like that, the Chair of the CPC will forward the issue to the committee members with a recommended action. Unless the Chair hears from three committee members to the contrary within 24 hours, the recommendation will be sent to the President for approval. A 24 hour turn around would be the exception but a default recommendation with a time to respond will be the most

efficient way to get things approved by the committee in the future.

The Board of Directors voted to establish a new Conservation Policy Committee at the 2002 TOS Fall Meeting. This committee will study environmental issues of importance to Tennessee birdlife, and develop policy recommendations. These recommendations must be approved by the Board of Directors (or, in an emergency, by the Executive Committee) in order to become official TOS policy. The committee will have six members, including the chairperson, with renewable annual terms. TOS members are encouraged to bring conservation issues to the attention of the Committee and are invited to participate in developing policy recommendations with The Committee:

Previous TOS Conservation Policy Positions:

1. Cerulean Warbler habitat preservation through the regulation of mountaintop-type surface mining in the Cumberland Mountains.
2. Excluding non-native bird species from the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
3. Maintaining TVA lake levels to promote shorebird habitat and other wildlife values.
4. Endorsed American Bird Conservancy Cats Indoor! Policy
5. Adopting a policy position for Wind Energy Policy

Conservation Research and Funding Committee: Charlie Muisse stated that in the last two months, we have received five applications for grant money. Six people have given the committee verbal promises. He stressed the importance of people applying for grant money. Currently, November 1 is the deadline for filling out forms for grants. He stated that all students or professors who work with conservation and research projects

would need to fill out a form and send in the application to one or more of the committee members.

He announced that next year, he would like to plan the deadline to be two weeks before the fall meeting. He would like to announce the recipient at that time. He said that many of the projects are multi-year projects. Van Harris asked Charlie to list the following guidelines for grants:

1. A project that directly affects birds that have something to do with Tennessee.
2. Very demonstrably conservation or research oriented.
3. Species that are in decline are a much higher priority.
4. Non-game species are a higher priority than game species.
5. The amount of money is \$2,000 for one grant and \$500.00 for the other.

Charlie said that if the committee does not receive a really good grant, they simply would not fund that year. Treasurer McWhirter expressed that Conservation and Research Money would need to be budgeted next year for realistic amounts. It was decided that at the spring meeting, the Directors decide how much money should be the maximum amount to be spent on Conservation and Research funding.

Melinda Welton said that she would like to see a silent auction fund raiser in connection with the spring meeting. She said that silent auctions bring in several hundred dollars.

Collateral Materials: Carolyn Bullock stated that she has patches and decals for sale. She asked where the copies of the book called “An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Tennessee” by John Robinson are. President Reynolds stated that when the copies of the books are found, they will be listed “for sale” on the website. An amount for the book, including postage and handling, will be listed.

TN-BIRDS – No Report

OLD BUSINESS

Important Bird Areas: President Reynolds announced that Mike Bierly will be taking over the Important Bird Areas Committee in order to find important bird areas in our state. She asked the Directors to look over the nomination forms for Important Bird Areas. They are also available on line. President Reynolds said the forms are simple and include two or three pages.

Falcon Cam Project: President Reynolds noted that the Falcon Cam Project that we voted on at the spring meeting has been stopped. The railroad has denied access.

Winter Meeting: Dan Mooney announced that the winter meeting will be held 28 and 29 January at the Best Western Motel in Dayton, Tennessee. The Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Bristol chapters will co-sponsor the meeting. It will include a roundtable discussion with the TWRA.

Annual Meeting: Dick Preston announced that the annual meeting will be in Memphis 29 April – 01 May at the Holiday Inn near the intersection of I-40/240. Paul Baicich will be the speaker.

NEW BUSINESS: President Reynolds presented Dev Joslin with a gift as token of appreciation for his work with the Cumberland Alliance. The mission of the Alliance is to conserve and protect the lands and waters of the Cumberland Plateau, the areas unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources, and to educate the public about the need for conservation of the plateau's wildlife and natural resources. Dev stated that the main concentration of Golden-winged and Cerulean Warblers nest on the Cumberland Plateau. He noted that the Alliance has recently put together an application to the federal government for the Cumberland Plateau to be a Natural Heritage similar to a national park. The goal is to

protect the natural resources of the area. He noted that the Alliance has put together a feasibility study to apply to get support from state senators.

President Reynolds introduced Clarence Coffey from the TWRA. Mr. Coffey asked our organization to endorse the practice of establishing a savanna in the Catoosa Wildlife Management Area. They have 1500 acres presently and they plan to expand it. They are calling it the Oak-Savanna Restoration Project and presently are supported by several organizations, such as the Tennessee Conservation League and the Nature Conservancy. He said that he would to receive support from the TOS.

Carolyn Bullock made the motion that the organization support the Oak-Savanna Restoration Project. Dick Preston seconded the motion. The vote of the Directors was unanimous to support the Oak-Savanna Restoration Project at Catoosa Wildlife Management Area.

The motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was accepted.

Donna Ward,
Recording Secretary