

BRAW BOARD MEETING
September 9, 2017
Mauston Park Oasis Restaurant
Mauston, Wisconsin

Officers/Directors Present: Steve Sample, Daniel Schroeder, Claire Romanak, Fred Craig, Mike Helgren, David Lucey, Steve Fallon

Officers/Directors Absent: Pat Ready, Brad Zinda

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Vice President Steve Sample at 9:07 A.M. at the Mauston Park Oasis Restaurant, Mauston, Wisconsin.
2. **Roll Call.** Roll call was taken and we had a quorum.
3. **Changes to Agenda.** None
4. **Minutes.** The minutes of the Board meeting held on June 3, 2017 were approved on a motion made by Mike Helgren and seconded by David Lucey.
5. **Communications to the President.** Steve Sample reported that Pat Ready had received a letter from the UW Extension thanking him for teaching a seminar at the Wisconsin 4-H & Youth Conference. They learned about Bluebirds and made nest boxes to take home. It was a positive experience for them and one that we hope will continue. Steve Sample also presented a letter from the Lafayette County Bluebird Society to Pat Ready thanking the BRAW Board for the sponsorship of a booth at the Bluebird Nest Nature Center in Darlington, WI for one year. This was approved at the June 3rd board meeting.
6. **Reports.**
 - a. **Treasurer's Report.** Dan Schroeder presented the Treasurer's report for the past 8 months. He had highlighted some items on the income statement that are over budget both in revenue and operating expenses. In general, we have plenty of reserves and are in good shape. We have exceeded our projected income in Life Memberships, Donations for Nest Box Trails and Nest Box Item sales. The nest box sales in particular seem to be a good revenue item and we need to find a way to increase participation in building them. Mike Helgren commented that the cost of cedar has been increasing resulting in less profit to us. We may need to consider increasing the pricing at some point. Fred Craig stated that we may want to consider building some pine boxes for trails. Dan Schroeder stated that we should explore the possibility of building boxes, people want to be involved, it is a good revenue stream and suggested that we perhaps give some recognition for building boxes for BRAW. On the Operating Expense side, we are over budget on printing costs because of the new Wisconsin Bluebird format. There was a discussion on whether we keep the format but reduce the cost by printing fewer pages or printing fewer copies, perhaps offering members an electronic delivery. Steve Sample would like to see us get our publication out to libraries as a PR mechanism. He also stated that our publication reaches far beyond WI, and that they are invited to the NABS convention next spring. Dan Schroeder then spoke of our Balance Sheet and that he is moving excess funds into laddered treasury bonds. This will give us guaranteed income with more flexibility, versus having funds tied up in larger CD's.

- b. **Editor's Report.** Steve Sample reported that our new format for the newsletter has been well received by all. Fred Craig opined that we might consider donating a one year subscription to some libraries. Steve Sample wondered if we could ask our County Coordinators to donate their copy of the Wisconsin Bluebird to a local library after reading. David Lucey suggested that we ask members to commit to donating their copies to a local library. Steve Sample said we could ask JP to email that to members and could place an article in the newsletter. Dan Schroeder suggested that nature centers would be another good recipient. There was a discussion about this, that it would be good to reuse the newsletters, save on printing costs and that it is on the website if it was needed for reference. It would also educate about BRAW, possibly increase membership and be simple for members to do. Steve Sample will contact Carol McDaniel before the November 11th board meeting to see if it's possible to involve the county coordinators in this. It was agreed that we should try this approach before attempting an electronic delivery system.
- c. **BRAW Webmaster.** Jean-Pierre Lafouge reported that he will be working on the website more with the colder weather.
- d. **Public Relations Report.** Steve Sample reported that he has sent BRAW articles to every publication in the state and has had nothing printed. He questioned the SCORE volunteers on this and they felt that unless the article has some local connection, they probably will not print. Steve Fallon suggested contacting some large local trails to see if we can get them into the local paper. SCORE volunteers have also suggested setting up a legacy program and getting it into the newsletters. We should also have a package for schools including handouts, posters and promoting school trails. Pat Ready and Steve Sample will put something together for the next meeting.
- e. **Nest Box Design.** Fred Craig reports that the NABS design still works and that he has done some tweaking with the convertible box and screen on bottom. Fred feels that the screen under the bottom of the nest is helpful in keeping the nest dry. Steve Sample suggested that Fred gets an article promoting this into the newsletter again. Fred stressed that the nest boxes need to remain unvented until July and August. He recommends that a T post and waxed pvc be used in areas where a baffle may be unsightly. There was a discussion on the Noel guard for predators, Dave Lucey stated that it works well for raccoon and cat predation but he has a problem with other birds like House Sparrows and Wrens. Fred Craig recommends moving boxes that have such problems to better habitat and that this is a common problem. Claire Romanak reported that she still uses hand warmers to keep vulnerable nestlings warm during periods of cold, wet weather and that the screening under the nest is perfect for sliding it underneath.
- f. **School & Youth Outreach.** There was no report sent.
- g. **Data Summary.** Steve Fallon reported that he has gotten 40-50 reports by mail, about 1200 boxes, 2600 fledged, about half were bluebirds. He has created a graphic map of last years data showing numbers by county. Steve Sample commented that we need to get this on our website, this is good information and is something brand new in excel. Steve Fallon will get this into the newsletter when the new numbers are all in, we will be able to see changes over time.
7. **Old Business.**

- a. **BRAW Convention.** Pat Ready is working on finding a school to host the next convention.
- b. **Membership.** Covered under other topics.
- c. **Garden Expo.** Mike Helgren reported that he is willing to do the Expo again if he can get the people from last year to help. He has had a problem finding willing volunteers in the past and does not know where to find help. The paperwork for the booth is not done and will need to be done soon if we are going to have a presence there. Steve Sample reports that Bluebird talks have already been agreed to and that we need the PR, even if we have to go with less volunteers at the booth. Dan Schroeder stated that he will take care of paying for the booth, he just needs to know what is planned and Mike Helgren will send him the registration materials. We will need a double booth and a minimum of 50 nest boxes. Fred Craig stated that he already has 30 boxes and that he will have no problem providing 50-60 boxes. Dan Schroeder pointed out that we also sold 61 House Sparrow traps and 35 hole guards at the last expo, along with some Noel Guards. He felt that we could also introduce something new, such as the nest platforms. Mike Helgren plans to keep the shifts the same, set up at 1:30 PM on Friday, expo opens at 3 PM; Saturday two shifts, either 9 AM to 1 PM or 1 PM to 6 PM; Sunday all day. There was a discussion on attempting to sell the mounting posts as people were requesting them. In the past we had tried spliced posts which did not work well. It was agreed that it is difficult to provide the longer posts in that crowded venue. We decided that inserting printed material into each box with information on mounting, placement and monitoring is best. Fred Craig volunteered to include the printed material inside the boxes he is providing. There will also be a display at the booth demonstrating the recommended mounting systems.

8. New Business.

- a. **BRAW Archives.** Steve Sample has copied and digitized 10 years of BRAW records onto a flash drive. He is questioning the necessity of keeping all of the records that we currently store as there is a lot of material. He recommends recycling the material he has copied and sorting and streamlining the rest. David Lucey stated the bluebird data may be valuable but Steve Sample said that it was of little value as much of it is only the final numbers. Steve Sample will inquire what exactly we are required to keep for our 501(c)3 status. Mike Helgren stated that our by laws require to permanently keep the treasurers reports. Dan Schroeder will check by laws, we can always change them if necessary. Steve Sample reported that the records go back to the organization of BRAW in 1986. Claire Romanak will sort through the old material and bring anything questionable to the board for disposition.
- b. **BRAW Awards.** Steve Sample led the discussion on the awards to be given at the 2018 State convention. The awards are Lifetime Achievement/Board Emeritus, Bluebirder of the Year, Educator of the Year and Merit. Steve Sample nominated Memua Khan from Ripon College for the Educator Award. Mike Helgren made a suggestion that Kent Hall be contacted as he has a number of teachers that he works with in the Stevens Point area and Steve Sample will ask Pat Ready to follow up on that. Fred Craig suggested Leif Marking for an award and the board agreed either a Board Emeritus or Educator would fit with his many contributions to

BRAW. Leif has already received a Lifetime Achievement, shared with Fred Craig, back in 2010. Steve Sample nominated Barbie Allen from Dane County, who reports on eight trails for Bluebirder of the Year. Steve Fallon will look at the data forms for other monitors that may also qualify for Bluebirder of the Year or Merit Awards. Fred Craig stated that the Merit Award should go to someone that puts extra effort into monitoring, perhaps forms a group or oversees multiple trails. It was felt that if we give the Board Emeritus award to Leif Marking we would probably forgo the Lifetime Achievement award.

- c. **Meeting Location.** The next Board meeting will be November 11th at the Mauston Park Oasis Restaurant, Mauston, WI from 9 AM to 12 PM.

A motion to adjourn was made by Steve Sample and seconded by Mike Helgren, the motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Claire A. Romanak
Secretary