

**Minutes of the MOS Board Meeting
December 6, 2008**

President: Wayne Bell
Vice-President: Mark Johnson
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: *not present*

Alternative Energy: Wayne Bell
Atlas: Walter Ellison
Birding Trail: Marcia Watson
Budget: Wayne Bell for Paul Zucker
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Wayne Bell reporting for Kurt Schwarz
Historian: Don Messersmith
Investments: (*vacant*) Wayne Bell
Records Committee: Phil Davis
Sanctuary: Brent Byers
Scholarship: Randy Robertson for Tom Strikwerda
World Series of Birding: Wayne Bell
Youth Programs: George Radcliffe

Allegany/Garrett: *not represented*
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker, Phil Davis,
Baltimore: Brent Byers, Joan Cwi, Roberta Ross
Caroline: Debby Bennett, Dawn Brankee-Tomasso, Danny Poet
Carroll: *not represented*
Cecil: Marcia Watson
Frederick: Kathy Calvert, Helen Horrocks
Harford: Tom Congersky, Randy Robertson
Howard: Karen Darcy, Kate Tufts,
Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin
Montgomery: Joy Bowen, Mike Bowen, Don Messersmith, Steve Pretl
Patuxent: Fred Fallon, Chan Robbins
Talbot: Cathy Cooper George Radcliffe
Tri-County: Elizabeth Pitney
Washington: Shirley Ford, Anna Hutzell

President Wayne Bell called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. at the Caroline County Central Library in Denton. He introduced Danny Poet, Caroline Bird Club President. Danny welcomed Board members to Caroline County and thanked the local members for helping him make arrangements for the meeting. Wayne also thanked the Caroline Bird Club for hosting the meeting.

Minutes of the previous meeting were accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge's Treasurer's Report was included in the Board meeting packet. There were no questions.

President's Remarks: Wayne Bell reported that the Executive Council meeting, November 22, largely dealt with the issues of finances and investments. It was also attended by members of the current Investment Committee and Paul Zucker, Budget Committee Chair, and it also included a half-hour phone conversation with Derek Ehman, MOS investment broker with Ferris, Baker, Watts. Emmalyn Holdridge

brought up the new requirements for our IRS 990 information. We need to make a lot of revisions to meet new standards within a fairly short time frame.

Paul Zucker, Budget Chair, asked Wayne to announce that all committees and officers submit their budget proposals by January 1. A Budget meeting will be held on January 18. Wayne noted we are assuming the budget process will continue as it has in the past. Funding should be available. While our portfolio has lost a fair amount of value, the actual investment income is still there. We are not hurting yet but may have to do some cutting or reconsider priorities during the budget process.

Sometimes in order obtain access to certain properties in the field, Certificates of Insurance are needed. We have received updated certificates from our insurance broker. If one is needed, contact either Wayne or Emmalyn.

Wayne noted the Executive Council will encourage all Board members to sign up for the MOS Listserver. It's not a very busy site but this is our major way of exchanging information and it does keep members informed. Contact Janet Shields for sign-up directions.

CHAPTER REPORTS

- **Montgomery:** Steve Pretl, Vice-President of the Montgomery Bird Club, brought the revised edition of the county's site guide to the Board meeting.
- **Baltimore:** Joan Cwi described the Lights Out Baltimore! program being developed by the Baltimore Bird Club, along with similar programs in other large cities with tall buildings. It's been known for some time that bird collisions with large structures are killers, especially during migration. For ten weeks this fall Baltimore teams monitored a two-mile circuit and recorded bird strikes. They found about 100 injured birds, of which 20% were still alive. They will do so again in the spring. They drafted a brochure explaining this issue and will be contacting the mayor's office and other city officials and business owners asking them to keep their lights out. Wayne Bell noted this is an excellent program supported by MOS.
- Wendy Olsson, a BBC member, has volunteered 80 hours to this project. As a result, Verizon, her employer, will donate \$750 to the nonprofit of her choice. Wendy has chosen MOS, with the understanding that the funds would devolve to the Baltimore Bird Club.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Youth Programs (YMOS):** George Radcliffe has been contacted by two kids, one from Frederick and one from Baltimore County, regarding the YMOS backpack project. He would like to get reports back on how each county is doing with this project.
- George introduced Amanda Spears, a sophomore at Queen Anne's High School and a premier field birder. Amanda has been extremely active with a variety of birding activities including atlasing, Saw-whet Owl banding, and the high school YMOS World Series of Birding team. Amanda, the captain of the WSB high school team, described how they prepare for the WSB and the actual WSB count. The Talbot County Bird Club sponsored Amanda this past summer to the Audubon Hog Island Program in Maine. Amanda talked about her time spent at the program; she found it to be a wonderful experience.
- Wayne Bell understands the Howard Bird Club is having an essay contest to find a student for their YMOS backpack. Wayne would like to receive copies of those essays, not just the winning ones, for the *Yellowthroat*.
- **Sanctuary:** Brent Byers reported on a work day at Irish Grove. There is a new sign on the gate; there was also maintenance done both outside and on the house.
- Wayne Bell said Linda Keenan with the Maryland Native Plant Society contacted him regarding our new Piscataway property. The Society would be willing to do a plant inventory of Piscataway next spring. Wayne will send her contact information to Brent.
- **Alternative Energy:** Wayne Bell announced we now have a committee consisting of Christopher Toscano, Howard Co. and Gayle Bach-Watson, Frederick Co. He is looking for one more

committee member. Their job is to draft a policy or position statement on MOS and alternative energy.

- **Atlas:** Walter Ellison said they are still working on the book, currently on species accounts. They have an extension from Johns Hopkins through the end of June. Most of the bird photos needed are in and being voted on. They don't have a lot of habitat photos. Anyone with good photos of classic bird habitats, please submit them to Bill Ellis, billellis@ellislist.com.
- **Birding Trail:** Marcia Watson reported that chapter presidents, along with other birding organizations in the state, received a call for sites. Mike Bowen is handling the nominations process. A form was developed for people to submit their nominations electronically, and the deadline has been extended to the end of December. They have received 23 nominations in 8 counties. Marcia thanks the counties that produced nominations. Some key sites such as Ocean City are not represented. Please get nominations in by December 31.
- Marcia said they have located a printer in Baltimore County that is very interested in working with them and has given them a very competitive bid. A subgroup of the task force is working on rating nominations as they come in. Once they have a full slate of sites they will be ready to select which will be included on the final trail. The format of the literature has not yet been decided. They plan to have both hard copy and a website with downloads. The next big task is to move forward with grant-finding and writing.
- **Budget:** Wayne Bell reported that Paul Zucker will chair the committee for at least this year. Paul has requested all committees and officers to submit their budget requests by the 1st of the year. The Budget Committee will meet in January to consider the requests.
- **Conference:** Janet Shields said the conference registration brochure should be at the printers and out to members in January. Kathy Calvert has been working industriously on field trips, has determined most of the field trip sites, and is beginning to look for trip leaders. Doug Gill has consented to be keynote speaker at the 2010 Washington College Conference.
- **Conservation:** Wayne Bell, reporting for new Chair Kurt Schwarz, said that Kurt has worked up a procedure for tackling issues as they come up. Almost everything that comes out of the committee is vetted by Wayne and often Executive Council members. This is working out quite well. Kurt recently told Wayne that sending MOS letters on conservation issues work. He has notes going back to 2005 from various environmental groups thanking MOS for their letters of support. Since our September Board meeting Conservation has authored 19 letters. These MOS letters are making a difference.
- **Historian:** Don Messersmith sent John Malcolm a design based on the VA Society of Ornithology 50-year pin. John is working on developing one for MOS. Don now needs a current membership roster to compare to old rosters and determine who might be eligible for a pin. Helen Horrocks will get the membership list to Don.
- **Investments:** Wayne Bell sent out preliminary information on our investments to Board members giving background and explaining the research into MOS investment practices. Presently the Chair of the Investment Committee is vacant. Wayne feels that, with the current world-wide economic situation, MOS needs to have an active committee and a constructive dialog with our broker. This is a very uneasy time to have the Investment Committee leaderless. The two members still on the committee, Bob Balestri and George Gaffney, were included in the Executive Council meeting addressing Investment issues. One other committee member is needed.
- The Investment situation is basically as Marcia Balestri presented it in her last meeting in June. We currently have 7 accounts, maintained internally, that were set up to take care of specific projects. There is also a General Fund Account and a Non-designated Fund. Internally, managing this is not a problem; it is the external part that has Wayne concerned. Seven accounts have translated into 7 separate investment portfolios; that gets complicated. Since these portfolios are not equal in size nor in the actual investments they contain, the earnings and losses have been uneven and do not necessarily reflect the relative values of each portfolio. Wayne feels these accounts tie our hands. We are tied by the income that comes back from the separate accounts, which is worked into the budget process, and that is ok. But, because the size of the income is

different from one account to the next, the returns are not even and the performance of the various funds is not even; it is very difficult to keep track. We have talked with our broker about moving the 7 separate accounts into a single account to end up with a single investment portfolio that would be very diverse and managed fairly conservatively for long-term income. The broker informed us that a single portfolio would be much cleaner and more easily managed. If this proposal is passed, the separate accounts would still be maintained internally. The major internal change is that any income (or losses) from our single portfolio will be distributed among the 7 accounts on a pro rata basis according to the value of each account relative to the total value of all such accounts. This distributes gains or losses more equitably. There will be no change in the annual budget process; the current value of each endowed account in February remains the starting point for the Budget Committee to prepare a budget for the next fiscal year to be submitted for Board approval. In order to keep the Board informed, the Treasurer will present a report on the current value of each account at each scheduled meeting of the MOS Board of Directors. This is in addition to the quarterly reports of the Investment Committee for the Board.

- The second part to work out with our broker is a management scheme that would enable us to take care of that single investment account. One possibility is to pay the broker to do it; this would involve some fees. Wayne does not want to make the decision but let the Investment Committee investigate the possibilities and bring their recommendations to the Executive Council. Wayne would prefer to pay the money to have a professional handle the account with the Investment Committee providing oversight. So the second part of the proposal of how we work out a management deal with the broker remains to be seen. The current Investment Committee is in favor of this.
- Wayne proposed authorizing our broker to move the MOS portfolio into a single investment account and having the Investment Committee deal with the portfolio management issues and report back to the Board. A motion was made to have a single investment portfolio. The motion was approved.
- **Records:** Phil Davis gave a status update since the last records were published in *Yellowthroat*. There is only one potential new state species in review now, a Ross's Gull for D.C. The Committee has done a good job of reducing their backlog. Most things are current and getting into circulation. They are still working on historical backlog. The Rare Birds of Maryland and D.C. is still an informal Records Committee project. As part of this project, one of the big activities is putting together a data base; Phil has just about finished this phase. His other major activity is coordinating all the bird banding lab data.
- **Scholarships:** Randy Robertson reported for Tom Strikwerda that the Hog Island Camp is closed this summer and may be permanently closed because of funding problems. This prompted Tom to ask committee members for alternative suggestions which were as follows: Could continue to offer workshops in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Could fund attendance at smaller workshops in the regional area; research is necessary. Consider offering grants for environmental educational materials. Possibly pay for correspondence courses such as offered by Cornell Labs. Anyone with additional suggestions should forward them to Tom. It was suggested MOS should consider holding its own programs or partner with someone such as Smithsonian to provide programs.
- **World Series of Birding:** Wayne Bell reported MOS has three teams, an adult team, high school team and middle school team. Currently they are having the youth teams become more of a state-wide endeavor and do some fund raising. Wayne is waiting to hear from Bill Hubick concerning whether we will have an adult team.

OLD BUSINESS –

George DuBois's Rain Forest Challenge: Currently Emmalyn Holdridge has received \$630 and the rain forest challenge is for \$1,500. This needs to be met by the end of December.

Travel Program: There are still spaces left on the Texas trip in April. Contact Marcia Balestri, mebalestri@comcast.net, if you are interested. The trip to Mexico was cancelled.

NEW BUSINESS

MAEOE: Wayne announced the annual meeting of the MD Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators (MAEOE) will take place at Ocean City Feb. 27 – March 1. This is probably the most influential science teaching group in the state. Both Wayne and Mark Johnson belong. Wayne will register MOS as a displayer. Mark would like to have a list of MOS field trips from Yellowthroat available at the MOS display. Any chapters with flyers or information can be included; contact Mark Johnson, mark.steven.johnson@comcast.net. There will be field trips, one of which will be lead by Wayne.

IRS 990 Report: Emmalyn Holdridge reports the 990 is the required form a non-profit files for an “income tax” return. IRS has established a whole new set of policies that have to be included in our 990. Some are simple and some will probably require board action. Something will be put together and taken to the Executive Council meeting in January and presented at the March Board meeting. Emy also received a notice from our auditors saying that any non-profit receiving a contribution of \$250 or more must acknowledge that in writing, and they sent a sample letter. She will send that information to each chapter Treasurer because all the bird clubs will have to follow that rule. A cancelled check will no longer be sufficient proof for personal income tax if the contribution was \$250 or more.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Christmas Bird Counts: Andy Martin informed Wayne there is a complete list of Christmas Counts in the *Yellowthroat*. There are 27 of them by Wayne’s count.

Bluebird Society Conference 2009: This will be held in September in Harrisburg, PA. You may go to their website for further information.

President Wayne Bell adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Janet Shields, Secretary

**MOS Board of Directors Meeting
6 December 2008**

ACTION ITEMS

* = New at this meeting; unmarked action items come from previous meetings.

PRESIDENT and EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- .. *Emmalyn Holdridge emyh608@verizon.net to assemble package of procedures needed in conjunction with annual filing of IRS Form 990 for tax exempt organizations. *IRS recently revised policies and procedures required of such organizations. Any new policies will be reviewed by MOS Executive Council and brought before the Board of Directors at its March 2009 meeting.*
- .. *Emmalyn Holdridge emyh608@verizon.net to send to Chapter Presidents sample acceptance letter for donations received in excess of \$250. *Such letters are now required by our auditor.*
- .. *Wayne Bell wbell2@washcoll.edu to inform Sanctuary Committee that an MOS member and board member of the MD Native Plant Society has offered to do a plant survey of the newly acquired Piscataway property. *That person is Linda Keenan (Patuxent Chapter), Linda_s_keenan@yahoo.com.*
- .. *Wayne Bell wbell2@washcoll.edu to seek chair of World Series of Birding committee. *MOS will not field an adult WSOB team in 2009, but will support a middle school and a high school team under the auspices of YMOS. We will continue to seek someone who will chair the WSOB Committee and organize an MOS team for 2010.*
- .. Wayne Bell wbell2@washcoll.edu to appoint an ad hoc committee to draft an alternative energy policy statement for MOS. *This has been accomplished; the committee first met on 24 January 2009 and elected Christopher Toscano (Howard Chapter) as chair.*
- .. All MOS Board of Directors and Committee Chairs are strongly encouraged to sign on to the MOS Listserv. Janet Shields janetbill@prodigy.net will provide the web link and signup information. *The Listserv has become an important means of sharing information; please sign on if you have not done so.*

CHAPTERS

- .. *Chapters send information on education activities to Mark Johnson mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil for possible inclusion in MOS display at the annual conference of the MD Association of Outdoor and Environmental Educators (MAEOE) at Ocean City on 27-28 February 2009. *MAEOE is the most influential MD organization for environmental education. Plans are to have members of YMOS at the display.*
- .. *Chapter Presidents please provide George Radcliffe RadclifG@qacps.k12.md.us information on youth programs. Feedback is especially needed as to the disposition of

the youth back packs that have now been distributed to each chapter. *Backpacks were first distributed following the 13 September 2008 Board of Directors meeting.*

- .. Chapters to submit site nominations for possible inclusion in Chan and Eleanor Robbins Birding Trail. Contact Marcia Watson mww@udel.edu. *The original deadline was extended to 31 December 2008.*

COMMITTEES and INDIVIDUALS

- .. Committee Chairs to submit budget requests to Paul Zucker Paul.Zucker@jhuapl.edu prior to meeting of Budget Committee scheduled for 18 January 2009. *Thanks to all who submitted requests; the FY 2010 budget is being prepared.*
- .. *The 2002-2006 MD/DC Breeding Bird Atlas Project seeks photos of representative bird habitats in Maryland for the 2002-2006 Atlas publication. Send photos to Bill Ellis billellis@ellislist.com.
- .. *The Investment Committee is in need of a chair and additional members. Send nominations to Wayne Bell wbell2@washcoll.edu. *Bob Balestri has now agreed to Chair the Investment Committee; at least one additional member is being sought.*
- .. *A chair is sought for the Statewide Education Programs Committee; please send nominations to Wayne Bell wbell2@washcoll.edu. *In the recent past, this Committee has organized the workshops and associated field trips at MOS Annual Conferences. There may be future opportunities to coordinate program development with the Scholarship Committee.*
- .. *Scholarship Committee (contact: Tom Strikwerda, tstrik@verizon.net) seeks ideas for places/programs for future MOS scholarship recipients. *National Audubon has closed its camps in Maine, possibly permanently, and we have no other established relationship with any other possible location for scholarship awardees at this time.*
- .. Historian Don Messersmith dsmessersmith@comcast.net will get information on current MOS members from Helen Horrocks hlh_37@yahoo.com. *Current membership list will be compared with old rosters to identify persons eligible for a 50-year recognition pin.*
- .. Communications Coordinator and members of Executive Council to meet with Taylor McLean to explore web page re-design.