# Audubon Colorado Council

#  Conference Call Meeting

***Saturday, Mar 25, 2017***

***Start time: 9:00 am***

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Welcome from the President, Becky Herman

Additions/Changes to the agenda: Daly and Peg were moved to the start of the agenda. Peg’s report is in the usual position in the Committee Reports.

Chapter Roll Call/Chapter Reports (Reps to send out reports via CO-GENERAL.)

* Aiken (Linda Hodges)
* Arkansas Valley (Peg Ryan)
* Black Canyon (Jane McGarry)
* Boulder County (Philip McNichols)
* Evergreen (JoAnne Hackos)
* Ft. Collins (Bill Miller)
* Grand Valley Not Present
* Greater Denver (Polly Reetz, and alternate Bob Stocker)
* Roaring Fork Not Present
* Weminuche (John Porco)

Audubon Rockies’ (AR) Dir. of Policy and Outreach, Daly Edmunds, and AR’s Lobbyist, Jen Boulton, were present for part of the meeting.

Audubon Rockies Comments, Daly Edmunds:

Daly explained that AR is developing an advocacy training webinar for chapter leaders and ACC leaders to help us effectively combat the wave of anti-environmental proposed policy and law changes that could impact people, birds and other wildlife. An organizer from National Audubon is on temporary loan to AR to help develop this webinar. ACC Reps agreed Saturday noon was a good time for the webinar. Daly said an email requesting information on when people would be most able to attend would be sent to help AR schedule the webinar for maximum attendance, and asked us to reply to this in a timely way.

The webinar will be a PowerPoint presentation online and will also require a telephone connection for the audio. You are encouraged to spread the word to your chapter’s leaders.

Secretary’s Report, Nancy Stocker: The President declared that the minutes were accepted as sent out last on CO-GENERAL

Treasurer’s Report: Not available. The Treasurer will be asked to send a report on CO-GENERAL.

**Vice President’s Report,** Peg Rooney: auduboncoloradocouncil.com is our website address. Be sure to like our Facebook page if you haven’t already.

Committee Reports

Chapter Relations Committee, Bill Miller:

CO-GENERAL directions have been sent once since our last meeting, and will be sent again because we have new representatives.

Conservation Committee, Peg Rooney:

* Peg requested ACC sign on to an American Bird Conservancy petition asking Congress to provide support for birds despite the President’s budget-slashing proposals. A motion that ACC sign the petition was made, seconded and unanimously passed.
* Peg asked if ACC would like to join a coalition whose goal is to change the funding model for Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and to change the composition of the CPW Commission. The coalition includes: Boulder Bear Coalition, WILD Foundation, Humane Society of the United States, Cougar Fund, Endangered Species Coalition, WildEarth Guardians, Sierra Club, Rocky Mountain Chapter, the Mountain Lion Foundation, and Arkansas Valley Audubon Society. Individual Audubon chapters are welcome to sign on to this coalition, regardless of the ACC decision.
* Polly said it would take lots of time and effort, and could backfire. She suggested the newly formed Wildlife Non-consumptive User’s Roundtable (Full Name: Wildlife and Habitat Roundtable, A Forum for CPW and Colorado’s Non-consumptive Users) (WNR), which has just started, as an alternative. Topics for discussion within WNR include funding. She said animal welfare organizations have a problem. Funding can’t be voluntary. It will be a multiyear effort. And there is a bill in Congress that would distribute some oil & gas money for wildlife.
* Jen stated she is willing to take on CPW issues, but for the next 2 years it would be a wasted effort to legislatively try to change the CPW Commission. When Parks and Wildlife merged, it was an enormous fight to hold onto the one primarily nongame member of the Commission. Sportsmen even had a hard fight keeping their seats. It is more sensible to wait until there are changes in the composition of committees through which such a bill would pass.
* Peg stated the coalition had no clear plan yet. The coalition is not conciliatory. Members say, “Enough is enough.” Polly mentioned that WNR is having some problems: they had not been given advanced notice about the mountain lion/bear research proposal, nor did anyone notify WNR or Audubon about the proposed checkoff bill (See below for details.). She suggested a statewide initiative might work. Peg’s chapter signed onto the coalition. Polly encouraged all chapters not currently involved to join WNR, as there is a phone connection for those who cannot attend physically. WNR is a place for discussion of issues, but does not take positions, although member groups will take positions. Polly mentioned more WNR details and said she’d send out information, including the charter. Further discussion of the coalition Peg offered will be held at a later meeting, when more details are available.
* Jen said she will be sharing conservation issues as they arise. Anyone wishing to get on the list to receive information on Colorado legislative bills should send a request to Jen at JenBoulton1@aol.com

Water Task Force, Ken Neubecker:

* Not much is happening, except what Jen and Daly describe regarding water issues at the Legislature.
* The City of Aspen is asking for a couple of dams that would impact Wilderness Areas.
* Trout Unlimited is working with American Rivers to restore habitat on the Colorado River near Kremmling. Another part of this restoration is the Windy Gap bypass, which will help reestablish river habitat near Granby and remove a significant source of whirling disease (a trout parasite) from the upper Colorado River.
* The West Slope Basin Roundtables, with the Colorado River Water Conservation District and the Southwest Conservation District, are beginning phase 2 of a water shortage risk analysis in the Colorado River Basin.  This effort was initially met with some resistance by Front Range water users who see it as a veiled attempt to quantify water availability and prevent future trans-mountain diversions. It isn’t. The risks associated with a shortage in the entire Colorado River basin due to climate change and overuse are very real and could have serious consequences for all Coloradans.

Public Policy Committee, Ron Harden:

* Audubon Rockies is sending out an alert about HB1219. This bill reauthorizes the option for farmers to fallow a limited portion of their land and lease the saved water to municipalities for 3 years in a 10 year period. This is much better for birds than losing agricultural land to “buy and dry,” where the farmer sells the land for residential or other uses. Please respond to this alert. Our chapters and individuals need to support this bill.
* Ron asked Jen Boulton to review the Non-game Checkoff bill, which has been redesigned to give a relatively small portion of donations to registered wildlife rehabbers. Jen reported she has been working with the sponsor to include the word Nongame in the title, so past contributors recognize the checkoff. It will become the Colorado Nongame Conservation and Wildlife Restoration Fund. She has also gotten him to clarify that there will be at least one nongame wildlife organization representative on the board overseeing the rehabber grants from the fund, and that funds are to be used for native wildlife rehabilitation only
* Ron reminded reps to ask Jen if they don’t receive Jen’s legislative report but would like to.
* There was a brief discussion about an expected new water bill that could impact the Poudre River through Fort Collins, which FCAS was concerned about. It was decided to wait until the bill drops, so we can get a better idea of what the risks might be.

Old Business

* There was some confusion because Bill Miller had written a proposal to make more Bylaw changes, but then withdrew it..
* By-laws update: In January we approved a change to the Bylaws to have consistency in how our committees are officially named and how we refer to them. The Conservation and Science Committee is now the Conservation Committee; The Chapters Committee is now the Chapter Relations Committee; The Water Task Force Committee is now the Water Task Force. The Public Policy Committee name is unchanged.
* Face-to-face meeting update: JoAnn Hackos, Evergreen Chapter, confirmed they will host our meeting on Saturday, June 24th. The plan is to gather around 7:30 or 8 am. We will spend time both at the Evergreen Audubon Nature Center and their new Education Center, with the scheduling intended to minimize parking problems. JoAnn will send out details of the meeting, maps and directions, and a list of possible places for people to stay the evening before and/or after the meeting. A morning snack and lunch will be supplied.

New Business

* WNR group: See Polly’s comments under the Conservation Committee discussion.
* Audubon Rockies requests/update: See above.
* Becky noted that Ron Harden had verified that the ACC is correctly registered with the IRS as a nonprofit. This registration is different from 501(c)3 status. For a nonprofit with less than $50,000 income in a year, a very simplified E990, “post card” form with the IRS. Becky’s chapter, which received a $50,000 grant, likely needs to file the more complicated 990 tax form.
* All chapters should be encouraging members to contribute to the nongame checkoff on their tax returns. One can contribute even if you don’t get a refund. This is the only money that is exclusively for CPW to use for funding nongame, threatened and endangered species projects.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously.