

Arizona Falconers Association Meeting Minutes  
July 12, 2008

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm.

Directors Present:

President Tim Riordan  
Vice President Charlie Kaiser  
Treasurer Ron Palmer  
Secretary Jamaica Smith  
Pam Hesse  
Forrest Miller  
Nathan Charlton  
Matt Murray

This constitutes a quorum of AFA Directors.

President Tim Riordan opened with comments. He mentioned that NAFA has announced that some of the state agencies have already received the federal regs, and that we need to be on top of that issue when the AZGFD receives them. He also mentioned that being president of the AFA has opened his eyes to the AZGF, and he has a whole new attitude regarding the agency.

At that time several recent problems with bureaucratic rule-making with the AZGFD were outlined by various members and directors. New member and general falconer John Griggs explained that he has been told by his falconry coordinator that, having trapped two kestrels (one of which was released, the other died) early this year, he has reached his limit of birds for the year and cannot obtain a new bird, not even by purchasing one, until 2009. Secretary Jamaica Smith shared examples of such inappropriate rule-making as well.

Tim Riordan discussed AFA founder Harry McElroy's repeated calls for the AFA to join such organizations as the Wild Raptor Take Conservancy (WRTC), Sportsmen's Alliance, Ducks Unlimited, etc.

Vice President Charlie Kaiser explained what he had learned about the WRTC, and whether or not it was truly at odds with NAFA. He felt that a little shakeup within the NAFA establishment was not necessarily a bad thing (much applause and hear-hear's from those in attendance) and that joining the WRTC did not and should not imply opposition to NAFA.

There was some further discussion among directors and members, then the directors voted unanimously to join WRTC and to maintain NAFA membership.

Charlie went on to describe his research into the other clubs we were considering joining as an affiliate member: Sportsmen's Alliance, Arizona Wildlife Council, Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited, and the Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). The only concern voiced was regarding the motivations and goals of the RRF, and it was agreed again that a club could not have a say in the activities or choices of organizations like the RRF without membership status. Further, membership did not have to be

maintained should the RRF adopt a position the falconry community could not support.

Gary Lollman expressed strong support for the club joining these organizations, and in fact donated \$100.00 cash on the spot toward the dues for membership. *Thank you, Gary!*

The directors voted unanimously to join all the clubs mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Michelle Scripture asked about joining the Arizona Trappers Association. Forrest Miller expressed strong opposition to such a move. After some discussion, it was agreed that such a decision would have to wait until further research was done into the organization.

Gary Lollman suggested Audubon affiliation. Some members expressed doubt, while others shared examples of the local Arizona clubs positive attitude towards falconry. This will also be researched and decided upon at a future time.

On the subject of donations to the organizations we had just voted to join, several members shared some fundraising ideas, including holding raffles at every club event, raffling one large item at the DHC but selling tickets all year long, including on our website, and others. It was agreed that for now, joining the organizations would be enough. Gary Lollman observed that it would be a good idea to donate to a specific project, such as when a particular Arizona project sponsored by one or more of the organizations comes to our attention. The directors voted unanimously to table the subject of donations for now.

Tim Riordan introduced Nathan Charlton and explained why he wanted him to be the Conservation Committee Chair (Nathan has some neat ideas for the committee). Nathan then explained his vision.

In a nutshell, he would like the club to gain non-profit status, thereby allowing people to make tax-deductible contributions. These contributions would be used to purchase and maintain a state grazing lease specifically to manage it for wildlife, especially raptors. Nathan said the purchase of the lease would start at \$30,000.00 for a small tract, and that yearly lease fees would depend on the size of the tract as well. While there was strong support for the idea of being involved in such a project, most people at the meeting agreed that the AFA was in no position to manage non-profit status, and that raising such large sums would be difficult at best. Charlie Kaiser shared two examples from his years with the California Hawking Club. First, shortly after they became non-profit, they were subjected to a random audit, which took up 6 months of the secretary's life. Second, he said that even given the size of the CA club, and the number of wealthy falconers in its membership, they had trouble raising money for a similar project. Jamaica Smith suggested that using an organization like Quail Unlimited as the co-sponsor of such a project, thereby allowing people to make tax-deductible donations, might be more amenable to her and others. Gary Lollman suggested that something like that may already be in the works, and that the AFA could "get its feet wet" by getting involved in it. He also suggested that getting people to volunteer at outdoor improvement events sponsored by these organizations, like

trash cleanups, removing barbed wire, etc, would also be a good way to get our foot in the door.

Nathan Charlton was unanimously voted the Conservation Committee Chair.

Charlie Kaiser passed out the revised copy of the new, unratified bylaws. He had made some housekeeping changes to the document, but otherwise it was much the same as the final version a past administration had agreed to 4 years earlier, but without completing the ratification process. Discussion ensued as to how the ratification should take place. The directors unanimously approved the newest version to be presented to the voting members for ratification.

After much discussion, it was agreed that the fall meet would be held in the southern part of the state somewhere, and that it would be up to the secretary to finalize a location and dates. Nathan Charlton voiced the opinion that fancy meets didn't interest him and he just wants to hawk. Jamaica Smith pointed out that members in the past had shared his opinion, but many also disliked meets that involved too much "roughing it," so that was why the club holds one fancy meet (the DHC) which allows for a guest speaker, banquet, and large raffle, and two meets geared primarily toward hawking with camping or motels as options for members.

Possible locations for the Desert Hawking Classic were discussed including Kingman and Prescott. Prescott has an iffy game situation, while Kingman has an iffy facility situation.

There was final discussion regarding the new regs coming out and how to deal with AZGF bureaucratic issues. It was agreed that our #1 priority is getting the new state regs done right, hopefully by adopting the federal regs word for word. At that time we will address the problems with bureaucratic rule-making. In the meantime, the secretary was tasked with making a list of examples people have of inappropriate rule-making and how they handled it.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.