

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

#8 - December 22, 2000

Alliance Formally Organizing as a Non-Profit

A majority of the informal group known as the Blue Goose Alliance met in Tijeras, New Mexico, on December 8 and 9, 2000, and took an important step to prepare the Alliance for the work ahead. The group voted unanimously to formally incorporate in New Mexico and apply for Federal 501(c)(3) non-profit status. As such, the Alliance will be able to seek tax-deductible contributions from charitable funding sources.

Prior to this time the Blue Goose Alliance was a loosely knit group of people, informally organized about a year ago to work collectively to support the establishment of a separate National Wildlife Refuge Service. It is currently composed of members of refuge Friends Groups and people who were associated with the National Wildlife Refuge System as career employees, most of whom are now retired.

The decision to incorporate did not come without considerable discussion. Alternative proposals such as seeking to become an action arm of an existing organization, such as the National Wildlife Refuge Association or the National Audubon Society, were discussed. Several members expressed the concern that establishing and maintaining a formal organization would divert time and resources away from the Alliance's goals. Others wondered how much of a difference our Alliance could make when there were already numerous, well-established, national conservation organizations working on refuge reform. In the end, the members concluded that independent incorporation was the best course of action to retain the Alliance's flexibility and effectiveness.

An interim Board of Directors was appointed for a period not to exceed six months for the purpose of filing Articles of Incorporation, applying for 501(c)(3) classification with the Internal Revenue Service, and drafting an initial set of Bylaws. The interim Board consists of Bill Reffalt, Christine Enright, Don Redfearn, Evelyn Redfearn, Jim Hubert, Larry Smith, Larry Dunkeson, and Les Beaty, all of whom live in the Albuquerque, New Mexico, area. Bill Reffalt was selected by the Board to serve as interim Chair.

The Alliance's mission statement was brought up for review and discussion. While the group agreed that the intent and focus of the original mission statement was still valid, modification of the wording was proposed. The final revision, approved by the membership, is as follows:

*To promote the establishment of the National Wildlife Refuge System as a separate agency
within the United States Department of the Interior.*

A consensus of opinion among the members was that actions to establish a separate National Wildlife Refuge Service must include efforts to strengthen the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Alliance members feel strongly that many important programs will remain in the Fish and Wildlife Service and that the effectiveness of those programs should be enhanced.

A temporary nominating committee consisting of Ed Crozier (Chair), George Hoffmann, and Phil Morgan was appointed to nominate members for an initial slate of officers.

After private deliberations, the committee nominated and the members unanimously approved the following officers to serve for a period of one-year:

President - Noreen Clough
Vice-President - John Martin
Secretary - Evelyn Redfearn
Treasurer - Dorothy Hoffmann

Considerable time was devoted to creating a committee system within the Alliance to facilitate its future activities. The committee structure adopted by the members is:

Executive Committee - Comprised of the Officers and Committee Chairs, and chaired by the Alliance President.

Finance and Development Committee - Chair: George Hoffmann

Strategic Planning Committee - Chair: John Doebel

Legislative/Administration Subcommittee - Chair: Bill Reffalt
Education and Outreach Subcommittee - Chair: Molly Krival
Analysis Subcommittee - Chair: John Martin

Communications and Web Support Committee - Chair: Les Beaty

Preliminary membership lists for each of these committees and subcommittees were developed.

At the conclusion of the meeting, President Clough stated that she was very encouraged by all the dedication and enthusiasm expressed in those two days in Tijeras. She hoped that those unable to attend also catch this "spirit" through continued use of e-mail since the Alliance does not plan to meet except annually. She encouraged members to continue to spread the word and continue their efforts and commitment to accomplishing the Alliance's mission by serving actively on one of the Committees or Subcommittees, and by maintaining or increasing communications efforts. Members present in Tijeras were selected to attempt to close the loop with each FWS Regional Office, to improve communications, and keep a factual dialogue open with the regional offices. The President will begin efforts to communicate with Capitol Hill, conservation organizations, state fish and wildlife agencies, and the FWS Washington Office. It is essential that the mission of the Alliance is clearly and proudly understood and articulated, and that it be viewed as a prominent, proactive, and positive feature in reform for the National Wildlife Refuge System.