

**Friends of Refuges Board Meeting
Refuge Headquarters
January 9, 2012**

Board Members Present: Jay Bushnell, Ed DeHaan, Mark Gluckman, Peg Hall, Russ Hall, Bob Hudson, Richard Herman, John McPherson, Jerry Salamon, John Thalacker, Marci Wilcox.

Also Present: Andrew Gude, Refuge Manager, Larry Woodward, Deputy Refuge Manager, Pam Darty, Refuge Ranger, Donna Thalacker, Member, Kirby Alexander, Member, Carmelo Echevarria, Member.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. at Refuge Headquarters by Peg Hall, President.

Minutes of meeting of December 5, 2011 – It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the board of directors meeting of December 5, 2011, with the clarification that Donna Thalacker is a member of the Inventory Committee rather than John Thalacker. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Jerry Salamon provided a Treasurer's Report YTD through December 31, 2011, and, comparing calendar year 2010 to 2011. He reported the end of year cash balance was \$10,529.29.

Discussion ensued about the purpose of the Short-Term Reserve Fund. It was moved and seconded to eliminate the Short-Term Reserve Fund and have two funds, an Operating Fund and a Long-Term Reserve Fund. Extensive discussion ensued. Following discussion it was moved and seconded to table the motion and ask the Budget Committee to review the issue and make recommendations to the Board at the February meeting. Motion Carried.

Peg Hall asked any interested board members to provide input to her or Mark Gluckman, committee chairman. It was also requested that the Committee make a recommendation to the Board for investing the Long-Term Reserve Fund.

Date of next board meeting – Following discussion, it was agreed that the next board meeting will be Tuesday, February 21, at 10:00 a.m. at Refuge Headquarters.

Introductions –

- Larry Woodward, Deputy Refuge Manager, was introduced. Larry reviewed a summary of his experience with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including experience with coastal zones, fire management and other extensive field work.
- Carmelo Echevarria, Member, was introduced as a potential nominee for the board of directors of the Friends Group.

Discussion Items –

1. **Annual Meeting** – It was agreed to hold the Annual Membership Meeting on March 24. Potential programs were discussed, which included Sturgeons on the Suwannee River and an update on plans for the Seahorse Key Marine Lab. It was agreed that a fifteen-minute update on the paddling project should be provided. Peg Hall will talk with Refuge staff about preparing lunch. Potential afternoon events include hay ride, tour of the Vista property, river walk, Dr. Dawn Miller, DVM, raptor presentation, and a river paddle excursion. Peg Hall reported she has appointed a Silent Auction Committee of Marci Wilcox, Donna Bushnell and Michelle Pearson. Following discussion, an Annual Membership Planning Committee was appointed that includes Peg Hall, Jay Bushnell, Marci Wilcox, Andrew Gude, and Larry Woodward.
2. **Membership Renewal** – Peg Hall reported that a membership renewal notice and renewal form will be included in next issue of Ibis.
3. **Nominations** – Peg Hall reported the following nominations:
 - a. Those who have agreed to be on the nominations slate as members of the Board of Directors include:
 - i. Reappointments - Russ Hall, Bob Hudson, and John Thalacker.
 - ii. New Appointments - Kirby Alexander and Carmelo Echevarria.
 - b. John McPherson has agreed to be nominated as Secretary.
4. **Meet the Refuge Manager Event** – a Meet the Refuge Manager event will be held at the Cedar Key Library, co-sponsored by the Library, on January 26, at 5:00 p.m. Purpose of the event is to “re-

introduce” the Refugees to the community. Several suggestions for the name of the event were discussed. Andrew Gude and other key staff members will be introduced and involved.

5. **Communications Strategy** –

- a. Peg Hall discussed the various methods the Friends Group communicates with members, including electronic newsletter, electronic and printed Ibis, Facebook, Friends Group website, kiosks, portable story boards, etc. Following discussion, Peg Hall appointed a Communications Strategy Committee of Peg Hall (Chairwoman), Russ Hall, Jay Bushnell, Donna Thalacker, Marci Wilcox and Michelle Pearson.
- b. Peg Hall provided a review of use of the Friends Group electronic newsletter.
- c. Jay Bushnell discussed update of the Cedar Key kiosk, and distributed a concept document. Potential use of a digital photograph frame was discussed. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to approve the concept that the kiosk will be divided into a permanent portion and a portion that will be updated periodically. Motion carried.

Information Items –

1. **Refuge Update** – Andrew Gude provided an update on Refuge activities and planning. He reported that the Refuge is fully staffed, including a second law enforcement officer, burn season activities, potential hunt expansions, lightening strike of Refuge Headquarters that caused electrical and telephone system damage, a goal of establishing a presence in Dixie County, and partnerships with other agencies. Andrew also reported that there is potential for the Andrews tract of land near Cedar Key to be included in the Lower Suwannee NWR, that could involve a public/private partnership. Pam Darty reported on a future visit by the Levy Association of Retarded Citizens, Florida Master Naturalist Program, and classroom needs. Larry Woodward reported on a need for volunteers to assist with logistics of longleaf pine plantings.
2. **Gopher Tortoise Survey** – Ed DeHaan reported on the recent gopher tortoise survey. He reported that approximately twenty-five volunteers worked over two days to identify and mark about fifty burrows. The purpose is to provide safety to the burrows in staging areas for logging operations.
3. **Upcoming Presentations** –
 - a. Saturday, January 21, 10:30 a.m. – Dr. Marilyn Spalding, Whooping and Sandhill Cranes, Cedar Key Library
 - b. February 11, 10:30 a.m. – Barbara Woodmansee, Butterfly presentation, Cedar Key Library.

Old Business –

- Peg Hall provided a report on Refuge volunteers, including hours, mileage and direct incurred costs for October through December 2011. She will send out a reminder to report January 2012 hours.
- Status of printing of the Paddle Guide was discussed. Pam Darty will get an update and description of any potential delays and provide it to the board.
- Jerry Salamon reported the expenses of the summer programs exceeded the \$200 approved by the board by \$77. It was moved and seconded to approve additional funding of the 2011 summer programs of \$77. Motion carried.
- Jay Bushnell provided a River Cleanup Report that was distributed to the board but not discussed. His report is made a part of these minutes for reference in future River Cleanup Projects.

New Business –

- A grant opportunity for listing of additional sites for the Great Florida Birding Trail was discussed. Peg Hall asked for suggestions for additional sites in the Lower Suwannee Refuge.
- Jerry Salamon reported that an individual had made a donation to the Friends Group through United Way of Orlando. Peg Hall indicated that an attendee at the 2011 Annual Membership Meeting had said they would join as a life member if they could make the donation through the United Way. Jerry is following up with the required information and documentation.

Adjournment – There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Great Suwannee River Cleanup Report
by Jay Bushnell, Richard Herman and Jim Hess

While our contribution for the river cleanup worked very well, the following are things to consider the next time we participate.

- Be careful to coordinate press releases. There was confusion with times. The Friends had the time set from 10:00 AM-1:00 PM with releases sent out with these times. There were also PR releases with 9:00 AM-1:00PM. These releases went out without any consultation with the Friends' coordinator, Jay.
- When folks call in to participate, use the registration form provided to get all the information requested (contact information, numbers of participants, boat type and location to work).
- Not only would contact information provide a means of notifying folks of a cancellation, it may provide contacts for future events. This may also provide a means to thank those who help.
- We really need to do a better job nailing down how many will participate. We over estimated which created some problems.
- Nurture the high schools participation. A Chiefland class helped at Camp Azalea. We need to see if we can get Dixie County High School students involved.
- Need more and longer handled grabbers and nets especially for the Town of Suwannee where they are not able to easily get out of their boats. Up river it does not seem to be as important.
- Continue to refine how to direct boats to work sections of the river.
- Finally, continue to stress the need to check in and then to sign out once they finish.

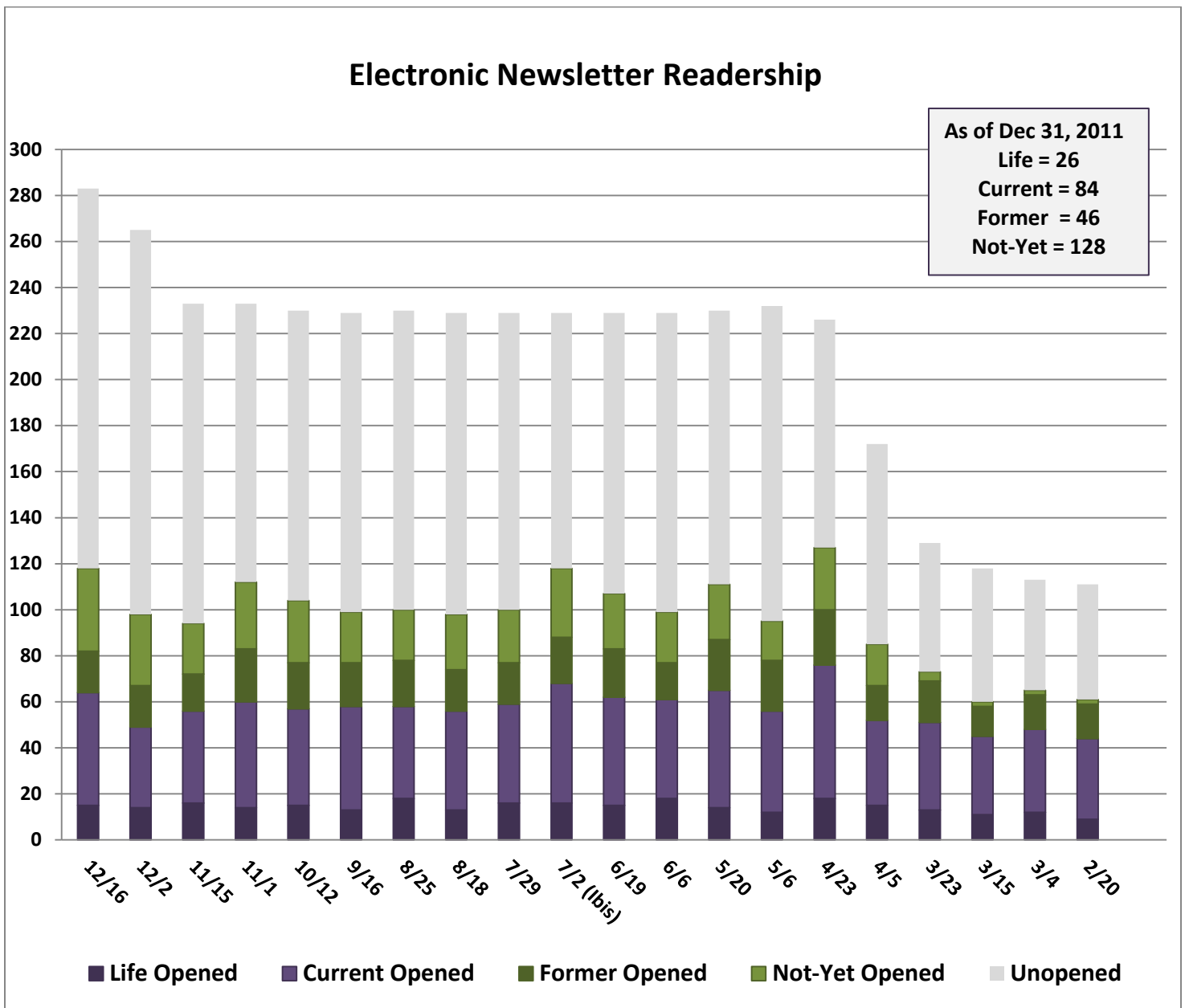
One final thought is that we might consider doing the lower Suwannee in September before archery. We have been doing our portion of the cleanup in December to avoid hunting season on the refuge and then Thanksgiving.

The advantage of starting in Sept. is we might be able enlist local divers while the water temperature is warm. This has been done up river and there was a lot of trash removed. Might even be able to locate Pirate Fowler's treasure! Ha.

Included by Peg Hall:

- We need a wheel barrow for heavy items.
- We need a scale at Camp Azalea.
- We need to warn captains that some people might overestimate their ability to hike the terrain and tell them it is best to just say the area looks too risky for the boat.

**January 2012 Report
E-Communications**



Facebook

Fans as of December 31 = 121

Fans as of November 30 = 119

Fans as of October 31 = 115

Website

Pageviews in December = 1417

Pageviews in November = 1168

Pageviews in October = 1040