

**Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
July 19, 2022 Board Meeting**

Members Present: Debbie Meeks, Linda Kimball, Boyd Kimball, Dan Kline, Jay Bushnell, Denise Feiber, Peg Hall, John McPherson, Ed DeHaan, Joe Hand, Guinnessa Mahar, Debbie Jordan

Representing the Refuge: Manager Andrew Gude

The Meeting was called to order at 10:07am by President Debbie Meeks after an internet outage delayed the start. Minutes of the previous meeting and agenda were approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's report- Linda Kimball

There is \$2548 in checking with some outstanding checks. We are still over budget on member services because of transaction fees. Treasurer's report was accepted by voice vote.

Refuge Report- Andrew Gude

Birddog Boats will help with a handicap event in the fall. Working to identify trails suitable for tracked wheelchairs.

Andrew is seeking a wish list of items to buy with leftover end of year money, especially signage. May get an interpretive sign noting that the Trail of Tears passed through the land that is now the refuge. Guinnessa noted that the signage at Atsena Otie is out of date. Timing for ideas is as soon as possible.

Andrew discussed hydrologic restoration to restore sheet flow of water through refuge lands into the Gulf. Of particular interest are the Mainline, Nature Drive, and low water bridges. Approximately \$6 million dollars may be spent.

The refuge is finally getting rain and out of serious fire danger. YCC workers are finishing up for the summer.

The Andrews property was briefly discussed. The Water Management District is interested in the 40 acre property but not the house. Andrew does not want the refuge to own or manage the house. He will talk to NCBS about the house.

The Seahorse Key open house went well with over 100 visitors. There will also be an open house in the fall during the Seafood Festival.

Vista- John McPherson

Belinda is willing to work on the Vista grant as an unpaid volunteer, which would help offset Friend's matching funds obligation. Could we get some architectural services from federal employees?

The contract for the grant is not yet signed because we don't yet have it in hand.

Franklin Percival examined the Vista miscellaneous items and felt they were of little value. They will be stored for now.

Marjorie Rawlings house tour- John, Brenda, Peg and Debbie toured the state park and to learn how they lead tours and manage that historic property and reported on it.

A field trip to St. Marks was suggested, John M, Peg, Ginessa, Jay, Debbie J and Debbie M are interested in going. September 24 is the preferred date with September 17 as a backup.

Mobile Welcome Center- Debbie Meeks

A fully appointed trailer would cost around \$32,000. It might be possible to adapt a used trailer for around \$19,000. Andrew might be able to fund bits of pieces if Friends buys a trailer. Upper limit on such expenses would be a few thousand. Debbie Meeks, Ginessa, Bill, Paul, and Denise agreed to serve on a committee to further investigate the idea.

Merchandising- Boyd Kimball

New shirts are in stock, have already sold a few of the new hoodies. Women's green Lower Suwannee trees design are also available. Still don't have the new butterfly books.

Debbie Meeks has not heard back from the Florida Native Plant Society regarding November 19 as a date for a nature walk. and a butterfly walk during National Wildlife Refuge week.

Barbara agreed to reschedule her butterfly walk to October 10 to correspond with Walk for the Wild/ National Wildlife Refuge week.

Barbara has been doing twice weekly butterfly surveys with her new grant.

Advocacy- Jay Bushnell

Jay discussed the concept of regenerative farming and a farm in Georgia that practices it. We received a thank you note from the National Wildlife Refuge Association for our contribution. Peg gave an online communications report.

Open Discussion

The QR code poster is ready for printing by the refuge. Ginessa asked if it's possible to see how many clicks to our website come from QR codes.

It was agreed that we would meet in August even though we have traditionally not held a board meeting then. The meeting will be remote only since the refuge internet continues to cause issues.