

Minutes of Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges, October 19, 2021

Board members present, either at Cedar Key Library or by Zoom: Peg Hall, Debbie Meeks, Jay Bushnell, Boyd Kimball, Linda Kimball, Ginessa Mahar, John McPherson, Matt Chatowski, Paul Ramey

Representing the Refuge: Refuge Manager Andrew Gude

Refuge Report-Andrew:

The refuge is getting a new fire radio tower.

Holding off mowing on Levy side to preserve wildflowers.

Vic Doig is back from fire assignment out west.

Sterling has been assigned on fire duty in a law enforcement capacity and will return soon also.

A plan is needed for how medical emergency evacuations from Seahorse Key might proceed during one of the events where the public is invited. Refuge staff isn't trained for such an evacuation.

Larry Woodward received an award from the Nature Coast Biological Station.

Rick and Robin Gallup are replacing Dolores and Tom Hans as Levy camper volunteers.

Archery season has ended, muzzle loader season starts soon.

Restoration of low water crossings will be done by refuge personnel. The hydrology project continues to make progress.

Flamingo sightings were reported at Corrigan's reef and at St. Marks.

Ron Black has retired from his post at Shell Mound- Mike Caulking will be picking up some of his duties as a volunteer.

Henceforth, volunteers that work with refuge equipment will get background checks.

One of the major tasks for refuge personnel is maintaining the 200 miles of roads and trails.

Budget- Linda Kimball:

Examining our practices and comparing to Generally Accepted Principles. Our format is similar and easily adapted to the GAAP format. The committee recommended that our existing budget lines be realigned into the three GAAP-related categories of Program-related, Administration, or Fundraising.

Policy and procedures:

In September the board decided to capture policies in the bylaws rather than as separate documents.

Peg Hall and John McPherson reviewed minutes back to 2008 to capture past policy decisions. This information is in Dropbox. Members may be asked to review before the November meeting.

We will produce a photo memory book for the three retirees this year. Boyd Kimball has drafted the book using Shutterfly and photos from our Dropbox collection. Peg Hall participated. The board approved finalization of the draft.

Seafood Festival:

Sales at our booth were \$457, comparable to pre-Covid events.

Advocacy- Jay Bushnell:

There is a bipartisan bill proposing money to protect threatened species called the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

There is a Florida Wildlife Corridor act proposed. Jay believes this is a gimmick since the money comes from Florida Forever and federal one time funds.

Protect and Improve Levy County opposes unrestricted development- it is a bipartisan initiative resulting from the observation that opposition to the toll road crossed partisan lines. Although the toll road is currently dormant, it could re-emerge at any time.

Membership:

There was a short review of membership. Events to encourage life membership, such as river cruises, were discussed. Many life members have not participated in years- what kind of event might energize them?

Before adjournment, the board expressed hope that the November meeting could be held in person at Refuge headquarters.