

THE IBIS



October 2013 Jay Bushnell editor

The IBIS is the quarterly publication of The Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges

OUR MISSION

is to provide active advocacy and physical support for the successful stewardship of the Refuges.

Advocating

Educating

Volunteering

Funding

Fellowship

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I work on this issue, I am sad to say that we still have a dysfunctional Congress. I am reminded of a spoiled child who is throwing a tantrum because he/she did not get his/her way. When legislators are willing to put our system of democracy in dire jeopardy because they did not get their way, we become politically bankrupt. For you and me, we can only hope that sanity will prevail. Wait, that is not true. We can all be much more vocal. Let our congressional representatives know how important it is to do what they are being paid to do.

I am happy to report that your board continues to work hard to live up to our responsibility as advocates for our refuges and to be good stewards of the environment. You will read about the progress being made with our initiatives. Especially exciting is the opportunity to be involved with scientific

research at Seahorse Key with Dr. Jennifer Seavey for a rare overnight adventure.

We are already looking ahead to next year. A nominating committee has been selected. A budget committee has also been appointed. Once the weather cools down, we will be scheduling nature walks, bike rides and paddles. We will also work cooperatively with other local organizations to invite speakers. We are hoping to expand our exposure to the Dixie County side of the Lower Suwannee. Your president Jay Bushnell

PS. We would welcome help at the Seafood Festival. Call me 493-1807. We are having a clearance sale on everything.

INITIATIVE PROGRESS REPORTS

by Bob Hudson

As you read through these brief description, keep in mind that you are encouraged to take an active part. Don't hesitate to let us know of your interests.

Art in the Refuges: The purpose is to showcase the diversity and beauty of the Refuges. Eighteen artist have been invited to prepare artistic representations of the Refuges in any media, which will be exhibited at the CK Arts Center next March. Jay Bushnell and



Ted Palfy have been taking some of the artist behind the gates for photo ops. On one recent trip we identified some more invasive



congrass described in the April IBIS.

Dixie County Enhancement: Linda Headley reports the Master Gardeners will have tables at farmers markets in Old Town and Cross City this fall where they will distribute info about the Refuge. A series of monthly events is being planned for Suwannee in the fall.

Jane Connors reports that a site for a kiosk in Suwannee has been identified, and that the State has indicated it will maintain the area around the kiosk. The town of Suwannee has committed to paying for the materials. Jane stated that she is looking at alternative sources for kiosk funding.

Andrew Gude reports that activities by Refuge staff to enhance Dixie County areas of the Refuge have included trail development, cleanups, road improvements, and planning of Dixie County activities. His crew also continued the enhancement of the River Trail with makers identifying trees/bushes.

Dixie County Refuge Expansion Andrew Gude reports that a plan has been prepared and submitted to create a Big Bend Conservation Area, for sustainable economic purposes. The plan is being considered at higher HQ and includes expansion of the Refuge. While not a Friends group initiative, it is consistent with, and supportive of, this Friends initiative. Andrew reports he is working with various Federal agencies and universities, and has applied for a \$1 million grant for planning work. Andrew reports that

staff is working with willing landowners and other partners to explore ways in which to engage conservation easements that benefit FWS trust species and ecosystem components.

Education Enhancement: A November sleepover for 10 people at CK Lighthouse Marine Lab has been planned for Nov 13-14, and an announcement/invitation has been made to members of the Friends of Refuges. Ten day trippers will be included, in addition to the 10 overnighters. On site lectures, educational activities and logistics are in final

planning stages. At the August 23 board meeting the Friends group board approved the following



principles for selecting participants:

- The organizers of the event will participate, namely Jennifer Seavey and Donna Bushnell
- The president of the Friends group, or his designee, will participate to represent the Friends group

The remaining slots will be offered to all members of the Friends group, and each applicant shall have an equal chance to participate. The Education Committee will have a drawing to select participants if there are more applicants than slots. Every member has an equal chance of being selected to participate. There are still slots available, so be sure to send your application **NOW**.

Donna Bushnell is working with Ranger Pam Darty to correlate lesson plans with State Science Standards then meet with school principals to discuss what the Refuges have to offer students.

Science inventory/survey of refuge biota:

Russ Hall and Jennifer Seavey are developing a programs titled 'Citizen Scientist.' Working with a scientist and/or naturalist, lay folks will be given opportunities to participate in field studies. These studies may monitor habitat changes, identify migratory patterns,

or survey species types in the refuges. Skilled photographers or illustrators will be a valuable part of the research being done.



Ted Palfy clearing road

Refuge Restoration Projects:

In November, there will be a training session for eradication of the Brazilian Pepper on the Luken Track of the refuge. This is a part of the successful grant by Roger McDaniels describe in the last issue. The date has not be set. At press time, the decision could not been determined because the govt. was not open for business. So stay tuned. Maybe we will eventually be up and running again.

Communications report:

Peg Hall continues to fine tune our web pages. She has just redone the paddle page and does it look great. Be sure to check it out.

HIDDEN COAST PADDLE FESTIVAL

Congratulations to all who made this years Hidden Coast Paddle Festival in Cedar Key a major success despite the government shut down and the threat of hurricane Karen.



EDITORIAL

By Jay Bushnell

It would seem that we have a major cultural disconnect. On the one hand there is a major outcry that our educational system is failing to keep up with the world in science and math. Yet there seem to be many who distrust scientist when the findings of scientist do not meet their preconceived beliefs. Case in point would be about climate change. Yes, one can find a ‘scientist’ that does not support the idea that humans are causing climate change. It may not be fair to say they have a vested interest but unfortunately many do.

Yet 97% of the scientific community using sound unbiased research have clearly demonstrated that humans are playing havoc with the environment. They are sounding alarm bells about the catastrophic damage we are doing to ourselves.

For me, it has always been curious that anyone would even want to take a chance that we are not having a negative affect to the delicate habitat we so much rely on for our survival. If we do nothing and it turns out we are causing these detrimental changes, the survival of humanity may very well be at stake. But if humans take action to cut back on our carbon foot print or our population growth rate or our consumption economies, what do we loose? We would have a healthy, sustainable earth for the next generation.

REFUGE UPDATE

Government is on “holiday” but I am sure Andrew and the refuge staff are not enjoying the problems the government shut down has created.

Cedar Key Friends kiosk updated

Check out Ann Kamzelski’s photos taken in the refuges.



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