

**Minutes**  
**Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges**  
**June 21, 2017 Meeting Agenda**  
**Refuge Headquarters**

**Present:**

**Board Members at headquarters:** Bill Dummitt, Peg Hall, Russ Hall, John McPherson, Debbie Meeks, Maria Sgambati, Mackenzie Russell, Dan Kline

**Board Members attending by phone:** Debbie Jordan

**Refuge Staff:** Complex Manager, Dan Frisk and Refuge Deputy Manager, Larry Woodward

**Guest:** Belinda Nettles

1. The meeting was convened at 10 a.m. by Russ.
2. **Agenda** adoption was moved, seconded, passed. One correction was made in regards to the Suwannee Fireworks Festival occurring on July 1<sup>st</sup>, not July 4<sup>th</sup>.
3. **May meeting minutes** were moved, seconded, passed.
4. **Treasurer's Report** was reviewed and moved, seconded, passed.
5. **Vista** grant application/progress report:  
Guest Belinda Nettles presented a draft proposal to plan the use of the Vista property. Due to the complicated nature of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant application and the amount of time necessary to wait between applying and receiving acceptance, it was decided during multiple small group meetings between John, Russ, Maria, Peg, and Belinda that the Friends group will not apply for the NFWF grant for the planning project. The small group recommended we hear the final proposal for the project put together by Ms. Nettles and decide to move ahead with funding this initial planning phase. *See attached Vista Planning Project Proposal* for details regarding cost breakdown, timeline, and other details. USFWS Rick Kanaski indicated through discussions with Ms. Nettles that the initial cultural resource assessment (including necessary short and long-term maintenance) could be completed in late summer 2017. This assessment needs to be completed before the charrette with Friends members, FWS employees, and the Vista property family can occur. The charrette would give input on the final products created out of Ms. Nettles' proposal; limited products would be created and ready for the charrette. The first charrette is key, as all parties involved need to come out of it with a strong idea of how property will be used and what will need to be done to make that happen. Ms. Nettles' proposal lists registering the property with the National Register of Historic Places, but there was hesitancy within the USFWS employees and Friends members, as registering may hinder property maintenance, ADA compliancy, air conditioning, etc. Mr. Frisk stated that the property must be listed on the national registry. Ms. Nettles will prepare the information required for listing, but her contract does not require her to list the property. It was discussed that registering the site can be done in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of

the project. Mr. Frisk mentioned that Refuge will need to redo their Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) with the addition of the visitor contact center on the Vista property.

The Friends will move forward with an application to this current cycle of NFWF funding to ask for money necessary to complete an expensive but required archeological study of the Vista property. This grant will be written by Peg, Russ, and Maria and submitted by the July 11<sup>th</sup> deadline.

***A motion was made, seconded and passed that the Friends will pay Ms. Nettles the requested amount of \$5,000 to begin the proposed Vista planning project.***

**6. Volunteer Visitor contact committee:**

A Volunteer Visitor Contact Program Committee was formed during the May meeting to lead the planning and implementation of the volunteer program. The committee will meet this summer to organize the new program. This committee includes:

- John McPherson
- Russ Hall
- Debbie Meeks
- Bill Dummitt
- Libby Cagle

Russ suggested that this committee meet with Andrew and Larry as soon as possible to ensure that both the Friends group and Refuge staff are on the same page moving forward with the visitor contact volunteer program. Training will need to be given to the volunteers at the start of this program. Currently, the volunteer sign-up is live on the Friends' website, but the program has not been advertised yet, so no one has signed up yet. The volunteers' information will be saved in Neon securely.

**7. Peer-to-Peer Training:**

*See attached document for take-away points from the Peer-to-Peer training workshop two weeks ago.* This training was attended by Debbie Meeks and Mackenzie Russell. A lot of good information was shared from the training and the Friends recommended prioritizing two of the conference take-aways: creating a fresh, visual end of year annual report alongside an end of the year appeal as well as having another member event during the year (Annual meeting in Spring and another smaller event in the Fall).

**8. Clyde Butcher**

The renowned nature photographer will still visit Cedar Key in mid August, despite recovering from recent stroke. His schedule will be refined to accommodate his required needs. Currently, the Friends are sponsors of his visit, but have not put any money forward. If Mr. Butcher/his manager allows, the Friends will do a press release to send out to various newspapers/websites/etc. If anyone has ideas for photography sites, send to Maria.

## **9. Refuge report- Larry**

- The Refuge is partnering with a UCF professor and their graduate student on a student project examining sediment cores taken from inland ponds on refuge land. The project is a Paleoclimate study and the cores will be examined for past climate, storm frequency, and other information.
- Vic finished his flight line count bird survey this week. He still has shorebird surveys to complete for this season.
- YCC started last week. The Refuge is hosting 3 YCC participants.
- An intern funded by NCBS will be working with the Refuge to develop self-guided paddling around Cedar Key. The Friends would like to work closely with him to connect their previous work on paddling trails. Another push was made to ensure that the intern is utilizing and sharing the kayak trail information provided by the Friends.
- The refuge has a summer Pathways intern, Jarvis Green, whose main focus will be on visitor services while he is here. He will assist in developing the Shell Mound walking tour/site, once the new interpretive panels are developed by UF. His desk is Pam's old office space.
- Cornell representatives came to work on the Met, bird tracking and meteorological, tower on the Refuge. They have been picking up tagged birds in this area. The Smithsonian Institute funds this project.
- The nesting platforms on Atsena Otie were heavily damaged in a storm last month. Terns were observed on the platforms, but no nesting was observed. FWS employees have since removed the sheeting/gravel and taken down the electrical equipment (iPod, camera, speakers). Larry plans to utilize same platform set-up next year and try again.
- Refuge staff is leading a boat clean up to pick up boats beached on shore during storms. They participated in cleaning up a boat off Shired Island recently.

## **10. Communications committee reports:**

The brand-new Cedar Key info panel is up! And it looks good! The Friends will need to decide on location and sizes of the new panels to put up around the refuge before the next order and before Debbie M. leaves in the first week of July. If sizes and locations are not decided by then, the panel installation projects will need to wait until September. The draft of the Nature Loop Drive brochure has been sent to all board members. Please send comments to Debbie M. before she leaves for the summer, so these can be ordered. The communications committee is currently discussing options for creating the videos requested by Sue Colson at the CK Chamber of Commerce. There will be several short videos highlighting various areas of the Refuge and will be posted online, played at the Welcome Center in CK, and posted in other areas (TBD). The idea of using an art/video intern was described.

## **11. Advocacy:**

There was a positive response to the Suwannee River Water Management meeting last month with many people who had never visited the area or the Refuge before then. Advocating positive use of CK & LS NWRs to groups such as this with political power in the area is a necessary and productive use of Friends' time. They are good people to have in our midst and it was suggested to invite them to further events at the Refuge (guided nature walk, boat tour, etc.).

**12. New business:**

Suwannee t-shirt sales at Suwannee Market- Having t-shirts for sale at the Suwannee Market would increase visibility for the Refuge on the Dixie side, which is lacking. Having t-shirts available would get the word out. John shared that sales tax on the t-shirts sales would need to be paid, so the Market would get a clean \$5.00 payment per shirt and the Friends would need to pay sales tax on the \$15.00 profit. Debbie M. will lead this endeavor.

***A motion was made, seconded and passed that the Friends will sell t-shirts at the Suwannee Market on a trial basis.***

Suwannee Festival Booth- Debbie Meeks and Debbie Jordan will be hosting a booth at the Suwannee Fireworks Festival on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Federal Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services Registration- John will register the Friends group to solicit.

October 18<sup>th</sup> Board meeting in Suwannee- Idea was discussed that having the Suwannee board meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> will be problematic as the CK Seafood Festival is that following Saturday and Sunday. The board suggested that no change be made and the board meeting and clean-up in Suwannee will continue to be held on October 18, 2017.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12 Noon.

## Communications/Membership Team Report June 2017

### 1. MEETINGS

Communications/Membership Team met before the June meeting.

### 2. MEMBERSHIP

We are considering a recommendation to the board that we hold a Fall general membership meeting

### 3. COMMUNICATIONS

#### • Brochures and Panels

- Debbie had the Cedar Key kiosk panel made and installed it.
- The same content will be adapted to create panels for other areas of the refuge. We are considering Shell Mound, the River Trail parking area, and several on the Dixie County side
- Bill, with help from volunteers Anne L and Alan Davidson, developed content for a brochure for the Nature Drive. Debbie has it in first draft.

#### • News Briefs

- **June News Brief** was sent on Sunday June 18 and we do not yet have data to report.
- **May News Brief** was sent to 533 subscribers.
  - It was opened 409 times by 213 addresses (40%).
  - It was linked on our Facebook page, homepage and newsletters page of our website.
  - 73 reader-addresses clicked through to stories 150 times.
  - Most clicked stories were:
    - Shorebird nesting platform
    - Mackenzie's bio on the board member page
    - Alan D's volunteering story
    - Clyde Butcher visit story
    - Dixie Mainline brochure

#### • Facebook Page We have 458 fans, 2 new this month

- 10 Posts since the last report by Maria, Debbie, Libby, and Peg
- 850 Number of people to whom our posts were "served" by Facebook in the past 28 days. It was 700 last month.
- 200 Number of people who reacted to a post in the last month

#### • Friends Website

- 2 posts since the last report, both by Debbie
- About 2,600 visitors in the past month. About 2,000 the previous month.
- About 12,000 pageviews in the past month, 9,600 last month.

Team members - Peg, Debbie, Kit, Maria, Mackenzie