

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Thursday, June 19, 2014

Present:

Board Members: Russ Hall, Peg Hall, Bob McKinstry, Bob Hudson, Maria Sgambati, Bill Kilborn, John McPherson, Allan Pither, Kit Lane.

Refuge Staff: Andrew Gude.

1. The meeting was convened at 10:05 a.m. by Bob Hudson, Chair.
2. Approval of Minutes. **Motion** by Allan Pither to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2014, Board meeting as submitted. **Second** by Peg Hall. Passed by unanimous vote.
3. Refuge Update. Andrew Gude reported on the following:
 - a. Not a lot of burning is going on due to poor conditions.
 - b. Four Youth Conservation Corps students are working on the refuge, led by Jason and coordinated by Pam.
 - c. Pam has conducted 3 connecting kids with nature programs.
 - d. Andrew continues to work on the Tram Trail which could connect the River Trail with Fowlers Bluff. The work will include building a bridge and would highlight uplands.
 - e. A new assistant, Kimberly Sikes, has been hired at Crystal River and has freed up some of Andrew's time.
 - f. Andrew will be looking into special hunts for disabled persons and Wounded Warriors.
 - g. Andrew conveyed Kenny McCain's thanks to everyone who came to the retirement party. A sidearm was given as a retirement gift.
 - h. The next Seahorse open house will be on July 5.

- i. Verbal approval has been given for a replacement for Kenny McCain, and the position will be advertised.
 - j. Three new bat house have been ordered, with one slated to replace the existing one at Refuge headquarters.
 - k. Additional grants have been obtained for exotics removal so that program can continue in the fall.
4. Volunteer Hours. Allan Pither reported that he had provided the hours to Pam Darty.
5. Friends Science Monitoring Proposal. Russ Hall discussed his ideas for a science initiative which would involving assisting with monitoring water levels for the Minimum Flows and Levels program of the water management district. Some MFLs have been set, but not much is being done to monitor them—Friends members could help with this. For example, observations could be taken to record the impact of low water levels on sensitive habitats. Russ has identified some good areas for observation, including the freshwater pond with overlook, marsh areas which are moving landward, and Barnett Creek with transition zones. Useful data that Friends could collect include: depth, areal extent, salinity, flow, vegetation changes, and wildlife use which would be the most important factor to Friends. The goal would be to monitor and report only if substantial changes take place. Others are collecting data on rainfall, groundwater levels, river flows, weather, tides, ibis nesting, and bird counts. The needed volunteers would include 3 to 4 to develop the program with others called upon later. Although the overall timeline for seeing change may be 30-40 years, a baseline record of 10 years starting now would be useful. Tasks to be done include:
- Identification of testing methods and protocols
 - Training of volunteers
 - Enhancement of quality by bringing in new expertise
 - Data management
 - Expansion of monitoring to other habitats

Comments of Board members included:

- This would be a good citizen science project to get people involved
- UF resources could be very helpful
- Lake Watch might provide a good model
- Should focus on what the Refuge is responsible for, i.e., relate impact of water issues on Refuge issues

Comments by Andrew Gude included:

- Need to check impact of logging roads on flood flows
- Need to identify what changes are needed
- He would like to have the surveys done soon
- All roads have been documented with connections to trails, sizes, etc.

Motion by Maria Sgambati that the Friends Board endorse the science initiative as presented by Russ Hall. **Second** by John McPherson. Passed by a unanimous vote.

6. Friends 2014 Initiatives. A handout had been provided by Greg Lang (attached) and the following updates were provided at the meeting:
 - a. Refuge Expansion: Andrew Gude reported that 200 acres south of Shell Mound Road will be added to the Refuge.
 - b. Big Bend Conservation Project: Andrew Gude reported that the WMD is going to take the lead, with FWC and several NGOs in support. Several groups have raised funds to do initial studies and are applying for a \$50,000 grant. The goal is to be both economically and environmentally beneficial to the counties affected. From the planning documents areas that should be protected by easements will be identified.
 - c. Art Initiative: Maria Sgambati reported that the artist in residence program has put out a call for artists.
 - d. Paddling Project: Distribution of panels continues, for example, to Brasingtons in Gainesville.
 - e. River Trail: Andrew Gude will be looking into ADA options.
7. Old Business:
 - a. Cedar Key Kiosks. The kiosks will need to be removed, and there is some discussion of the possibility of putting the displays on the walls of the new restroom facilities.
 - b. Update on New U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service Policy on Friends Organizations, and Agreement Template. Bob Hudson reported that work is progressing on this, with a big issue being liability: there is a need to identify activities where there may be liability and then to make sure that such activities are sponsored by the Refuge or Friends.

- d. National Wildlife Refuge Association. Bob Hudson reported that the dues had been paid.
 - e. Seahorse Key Marine Lab Open Houses. Maria Sgambati said that it is very good to have the Friends table at the open houses. The next one is July 5, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bob Hudson will talk to Carmelo about getting Friends materials to the island.
8. 2014 Friends Science Camp on Seahorse Key. Bob Hudson will ask Donna and Jay Bushnell if they want to spearhead again.
 9. Springs Field School by Florida Springs Institute. Bob Hudson described this as a 2-3 day springs-related program with a cost of \$350. After discussion, it was decided that the Friends group should not pay to have a member participate due the tenuous connection to Friends activities and goals.
 10. Treasurer Report. Attached and accepted by consensus.
 11. Communication Report. Peg Hall provided a written report, attached, and reported that Bill Kilborn got the Barnett Creek Trail brochure printed. The Turkey Creek Trail brochure is now in the works, and the News Brief will be going out soon.
 12. The Board agreed to not have a meeting in July due to many Board members not being able to attend.
 13. The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

2014 Projects/Initiatives – As of March, 20, 2014 <u>(Note: Updates since May board meeting are shown in red font)</u>	Actions Needed in 2014	2013 Budget Allocation	Friends Champion(s)	LACKNWR Champion(s)
Art: work with local artists to highlight artistic values of the refuges (exhibition? competition?)	Develop an art day at refuges including inducements for artists’ participation? <u>Maria is planning another “Artists in Residence” experience at Seahorse Key Marine Lab to help create an interface between science and art.</u>	\$250	Ann Kamzelski, Ed DeHaan	1. Pam Darty 2. Andrew Gude
Dixie County Enhancements – improve visibility of refuges and participation of locals in refuge activities	Membership drive; activities (e.g. Dixie Mainline cleanup); engage officials re: information kiosk, etc. <u>Debbie reported that the kiosks at both ends of the Dixie Mainline have been turned and the new panels have been installed.</u>	\$250	Debbie Meeks	1. Pam Darty 2. Larry Woodward
Dixie County Refuge Expansion – planning; negotiating easements with large landowners	Work with Andrew to identify, approach, and negotiate with key stakeholders. <u>Larry reported that work is progressing.</u>	\$50	Greg Lang	Andrew Gude
Education Enhancements – improve outreach to schools; bring students to the refuges	Develop a series of educational events at the refuges targeted at children, families, and seniors. • Children’s paddling grant proposal? <u>Maria hosted a Levy County teacher science initiative at SK Marine Lab on May 9. Purpose was to introduce middle and high school biology teachers to the Marine Lab so they will build the lab into their curriculum. Maria is working on a grant proposal for children’s educational programs at the Marine Lab.</u>	\$100	Sherry Beauchamp, Maria Sgambati	Pam Darty
Gateway Signage	Work with community leaders to develop signage highlighting <u>the</u> key asset role of refuges. <u>John reported that work is continuing to finalize an Interagency Agreement between the Nature Coast Conservancy and the LSNWR. The Agreement would bring Section 29 within the Refuge and arrange for</u>	\$250	John McPherson	Andrew Gude

		appropriate signage.			
Paddling Project – Develop new paddling routes; panels		Keep friends informed of needs; develop Cedar Key guides, distribute guides to community outlets. Debbie reported that Jane Connors at the Suwannee Tech Center has received tear sheets for the 7 paddles near Suwannee. She is advertising around Suwannee that they are available.	\$1,500	Russ & Peg Hall	1. Andrew Gude 2. Larry Woodward
Refuge Restoration Projects: invasive species removal, tree planting, etc.		Identify projects; coordinate volunteers; disseminate information. Roger reported that a huge number of Brazilian Pepper bushes have been removed from the Refuge, with many volunteers participating. Roger submitted a grant proposal to FWS. Larry reported that a State of Florida grant is possible. Eradication work will resume this fall. (Note: It was subsequently reported on May 15 that \$8,000 in grant funds had been awarded by FWS.) Larry reported that restoration of long leaf pine and possibly red cedars will be undertaken in large areas using machine planting. Roger reports that he and Richard Baher met with Vic and developed a purchase list for the grant funds.	TBD	Roger McDaniels	?
River Trail Enhancements – Friends may be able to leverage significant funds for ADA compliance		Identify potential sources of outside funding; develop conceptual plan John requested that Refuge staff find a source for determining what would be required for the River Trail to be ADA compliant.	\$100	John Thalacker	? A Refuge staff champion to work with John is needed. Larry will follow up.
Science – Inventories and Surveys of Refuge Biota – conducted in collaboration with scientists ¹		With Refuge staff, marine lab, USGS, and UF staff identify needs; develop storage & retrieval system for inventory data. Russ submitted a Science Initiative proposal that will	\$50	Russ Hall Maria Sgambati	Vic

		<u>be reviewed in detail at the June board meeting of the Friends of Refuges.</u>			
Shell Mound Visitor Enhancements – improve access/interpretation at archaeological site?		Develop information for kiosk.	\$750	Ron Black? Ken Sassaman?	1. Larry Woodward 2. Andrew Gude
Trail Guides Initiative - highlight refuge recreational activities in Levy and Dixie		<p>Conceive, research, design content and flyers</p> <p><u>Bill reported that the Barnett Creek trail guide is at the printer (500 copies). The Turkey Foot Trail brochure, which is near Pond 5, is almost finished. Larry reported that Refuge staff have discovered an old tram road running between Refuge HQ and Fowler’s Bluff that ultimately will be developed into a trail. Bill also reported that a Butterfly Trail, highlighting butterflies throughout the Refuge, is in early stages of development.</u></p> <p><u>Dixie County Trail Initiative: Debbie reported that she and Pam briefly discussed developing a new hiking trail off the Dixie Mainline which is marked in the Refuge's Dixie Mainline Trail Guide as the "Natural Pine Forest". It would not take much trail work to shape it up. They also discussed a kiosk panel that highlights Longleaf pines at the trail head.</u></p>	\$200	Donna Thalacker	1. Pam Darty 2. Andrew Gude
Butterfly Garden at Refuge HQ		Enhance, enlarge and maintain the butterfly garden at Refuge headquarters.	\$200 \$500	Donna Thalacker	Larry Woodward
Advocacy & Networking (Outreach)		<p>Supporting causes, legislation, etc. and build mutually supportive relationships with other groups, agencies, etc. that forward the goals and mission of the Friends.</p> <p><u>Based on Jay’s follow up, the Friends board agreed to participate in the November Sturgeon Conference in Live Oak with a booth/table of information items and merchandise. Jay sent an excellent letter to Congress on behalf of the Friends group asking for support of funding for the Refuges.</u></p>	\$500	Jay Bushnell	?

Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Key NWRs						
2014 Budget						
	Annual	As of 28 Feb	As of 31 Mar	As of 30 Apr	As Of 31 May	
	Budget	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Cash Receipts						
Memberships	3,000.00	2,730.00	2,780.00	2,820.00	2,865.00	
Donations	2,500.00	2,488.00	2,758.00	2,797.00	2,883.00	
Sales	1,500.00	938.00	1,058.00	1,653.00	1,653.00	
Total cash receipts	7,000.00	6,156.00	6,596.00	7,270.00	7,401.00	
Cash Disbursements						
support lower suwannee & cedar key nwrs						
Annual meeting (food, supplies, honorarium)	675.00	545.38	545.38	545.38	545.38	
Communications	1,200.00	366.34	516.34	540.84	569.84	
Great Suwannee River Cleanup	150.00	26.19	26.19	26.19	26.19	
Butterfly garden	200.00		74.00	74.00	74.00	
Festival fees	100.00					
Other (River Walk Signs)	500.00					
Friends of the Cedar Key Library	100.00					
Outreach	500.00					
Kiosk Relocation	500.00					
Refuge Restoration Projects	50.00					
2014 Initiatives						
Art	250.00					
Dixie County Enhancement	250.00			25.68	330.68	
Education	100.00					
Paddling Project	1,500.00					
Sub-total	6,075.00	937.91	1,161.91	1,212.09	1,546.09	

support refuge-initiated activities						
Interagency Cooperators Meeting		500.00				
Refuge summer program (2013)		250.00				
Luncheon for volunteers		150.00				
2014 Initiatives						
Dixie County Refuge expansion		200.00				
Gateway Signage		1,000.00				
Inventories/survey Refuge Biodata		50.00				
Shell Mound Enhancements		750.00				
River Trail Accessibility		100.00				
Refuge Trail Guides		200.00		32.10	32.10	32.10
Vista Property Conservation Planning		1,000.00				
sub-total		4,200.00		32.10	32.10	32.10
support national wildlife system						
NWR Association Membership		150.00				
sub-total		150.00				
administrative & fundraising support						
Purchase of inventory		2,000.00	2,641.25	2,641.25	2,641.25	2,641.25
PO Box, postage, misc				114.00	133.60	87.60
Florida Department of Revenue		100.00	48.61	113.90	113.90	113.90
Florida Department of State		100.00	61.25	61.25	61.25	61.25
sub-total		2,200.00	2,751.11	2,930.40	2,950.00	2,904.00
Total cash disbursements		12,625.00	3,689.02	4,124.41	4,194.19	4,483.00

Friends of the LS and CK Natl Wildlife Refuges									
Transactions 2014									
Date	ck no	payee	x	Membership	Donations	Sales	Ck Amt	MO Total	Balance
12/31/13									\$19,007.70
1/4/14	202	Marci Wilcox (envelopes/labels member mailing)	x				31.40		
1/4/14	203	Florida Department of Revenue (sales tax)	x				48.61		
1/5/14	dep	Panel sales from hardware store (dep in dec)	x			45.00			
1/10/14	204	Margarete Hall (197.7 commun; 26.19 suwan clnup)	x				223.89		
1/10/14	205	Gerald Salamon (FL Dept of State, Div of Corp)	x				61.25		
1/14/14	dep	Three deps (10+450+210)	x	620.00	50.00				
1/22/14	207	Jabebo LLC (inventory)	x				216.00		
1/28/14	dep	memberships	x	410.00					
1/28/14	dep	memberships	x	460.00	15.00				
1/28/14	dep	memberships	x	130.00					
		Jan totals		1,620.00	65.00	45.00	581.15	1,148.85	20,156.55
2/7/14	dep	memberships donations	x	380.00	20.00				
2/15/14	208	Margarete Hall (communications)	x				1.24		
2/15/14	211	Jay Bushnell (communications)	x				86.00		
2/19/14	212	Stacy Aasved (Graphic design .. Communication)	x				50.00		
2/19/14	213	Marci Wilcox (material for annual meeting)	x				39.92		
2/19/14	214	Jay Bushnell (multiple inventory purchases)	x				2,641.25		
2/22/14	dep	Annual meeting membership	x	730.00	600.00				
2/22/14	215	Jack Davis (speaker for meeting)	x				100.00		
2/22/14	216	Ken McCain (food for meeting (Sam's))	x				405.46		
2/27/14	dep	Annual meeting sales donations	x		1,803.00	938.00			
		Feb total		1,110.00	2,423.00	938.00	3,323.87	1,147.13	21,303.68
3/5/14	217	The Print Shop (communications - brochures)					150.00		
3/5/14	218	USPS (Box rental 1 year - 31 Mar 2015)					60.00		
3/6/14	dep	sales				75.00			
3/6/2014	dep	auction			270.00				
3/18/2014	dep	memberships		50.00					
3/20/2014	dep	sales				45.00			
3/20/2014	219	Plants for butterfly garden					74		
3/20/2014	220	Trail guides					32.10		
3/27/2014	222	CK PO Box					54.00		
3/29/2014	223	Florida Department of Revenue (sales tax)					65.29		

		March total			50.00	270.00	120.00	435.39	-4.61	21,299.07
4/3/2014	224	USPS Stamps						19.60		
4/5/2014	225	Jay Bushnell (Print Shop annual mtg)						55.50		
4/10/2014	dep	membership			20.00					
4/8/14	226	Cash for cash box (OFCA)						100.00		
4/15/2014	dep	OFCA sales					535.00			
4/16/2014	dep	donations (Sheila Templin \$25)				39.00				
4/17/2014	dep	membership			20.00					
4/17/2014	227	Debbie Meeks (Dixie Mainline sign proof)						25.68		
4/18/2014	228	Jay Bushnell (communications) Ibis postage						24.50		
4/20/2014	dep	Trail guides					60.00			
		April total			40.00	39.00	595.00	225.28	448.72	21756.08
5/13/2014	229	Peg Hall (communications - Weebly)						29.00		
5/13/2014	230	Mac Signs (Dixie Mainline)						305.00		
5/14/2014	dep	donation (Davidson)				20.00				
5/14/2014	dep	memberships donations (honican)			25.00					
5/14/2014	dep	Chiefland PO Box refund				46.00				
5/20/2014	dep	membership (Connors)			20.00					
5/28/2014	dep	donation (Davidson)				20.00				
		May total			45.00	86.00		334.00	203.00	21553.08

Communications Report June 2014

Brochure Update

- Barnett Creek Loop Trail guide is printed and ready for distribution on the refuge
- Turkey Foot Trail guide – still in the works
- A butterfly treasure map – still in the works

News Brief

- June -- not yet been sent.
- May -- went to 479, opened by 198. Subject line: *Orchids, Suwannee Kiosk, Seahorse Key Dates, Kids Environmental Day, Hunter Gathering, Board Meeting, Advocacy/Info Links.*
- April -- went to 474, opened by 233, 79 clicked through to read the full *Ibis*.

Facebook

Kit is now managing the Facebook page.

- 5 new fans = 219
- 10 posts since May 1 by Peg, Debbie, Kit, Roger, and Bob
 - 172 saw the Ibis
 - 130 saw Debbie's Mainline Kiosk post
 - 113 saw Roger's Invasives Grant post
 - 88 saw Kit's Board Meeting and Suwannee Tour post
 - Other posts had between 29 and 43 views

Friends Websites

- www.friendsofrefuges.org
Pageviews in the last month = 5583
2 posts by Debbie about the installation of the kiosks on the Mainline
Pageviews in the previous month = 2709
- www.paddleLSCkrefuges.org

Pageviews in the last month = 910

Unique Visitors in the last month = 864

Pageviews in April = 868

Unique Visitors in April = 811

Other Activities

- PayPal – no action yet
- Distribution of the Friends and Adventures brochures – Gainesville, Cedar Key, Suwannee, Trenton, Chiefland – none yet. How do we want to account for them in inventory?
- Website enhancement – new post re kayaking on the refuge thanks to Greg, minutes posted, events cleaned up, News Brief and Ibis posted.
- **The Chinese connection** – Bill and Peg