

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Thursday, March 20, 2014

Present:

Board Members: Peg Hall, Roger McDaniels, Greg Lang, Bill Kilborn, Bob Hudson, Maria Sgambati Jay Bushnell, Allan Pither, Richard Herman, Sherry Beauchamp, Carmelo Echeverria, Bob McKinstry, John Thalacker, Debbie Meeks, Marci Wilcox (by phone).

Refuge Staff: Vic Doig

Guests: Mandy Davis, Kit Lane, Russ Hall, Carol McKinstry,

1. The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. by Bob Hudson, Chair.
2. Introduction: Each person introduced themselves with a short bio.
3. Approval of Minutes:
 - a. Minutes from February 7, 2014, Regular Board Meeting. **Motion** by Richard Herman to approved with the following corrections: The report on the Dixie Mainline was given by Debbie Meeks rather than Sherry Beauchamp. **Second:** John Thalacker. Passed by unanimous vote.
 - b. Minutes from February 22, 2014, Annual Meeting. **Motion** by Greg Lang to approve as submitted. **Second:** Richard Herman. Passed by unanimous vote.
4. Refuge Update: Vic Doig reported the following:
 - Annual meeting was a great success.
 - The annual turkey hunt is ongoing, but without a lot of law enforcement presence. A special youth turkey hunt was held.
 - The swallowtail kites are back, with one being radio tagged.
 - Although it's been a wet winter, no roads are closed and the river is not expected to flood.
 - A lot of burning has taken place to take advantage of the wet weather; mostly in Dixie County, but some in Levy.
 - Many refuge staff members are down in Kissimmee Prairie with a habitat restoration project.
 - A lot more long-leaf pine planting has been accomplished.
 - A light station open house was held last month, and a schedule for next year will soon be published.

- The usual Refuge maintenance is going on.
 - The Big Bend conservation project is going nicely, with good cooperation among governmental entities. There have been productive meetings with partners, with more planned.
 - The effort to find a replacement for Kenny McCain continues. Andrew Gude is spending a lot of time at Crystal River, and Larry Woodward may end up with day-to-day Refuge management responsibilities.
 - Caber Property: Andrew Gude is aware of a portion of the property being listed for sale and is working with FWS to explore the possibilities of purchase since it is within the acquisition boundary.
5. Schedule of Board Meetings: Bob Hudson asked whether the proposed meeting day of the third Thursday of each month, with no meetings in August and December was acceptable. There was no objection by the Board.
6. Future Visioning Session: Bob Hudson discussed the need for Friends to have a clearer vision and suggested a Visioning session at a future board meeting, and to use an outside facilitator for the discussion. He reported that he had talked to Skip Everitt, PhD, owner of Skip Everitt & Associates, to be a facilitator to help Friends develop a Vision statement. There was agreement by the Board that this was a good idea and that Bob should bring back possible dates and times.
7. Review and Discussion of 2014 Initiatives (report attached): The following updates were provided:
- Membership: Marci Wilcox reported that there was one new life member, and that the total number of members now stands at 254, which is the highest number of members ever. John Thalacker noted that it was very helpful to have Marci as membership chair at the entry table during the annual meeting.
 - Trail Guide Initiative: Donna Thalacker reported that the Barnett trail work is completed, and that she is now working on a "Pond 5" trail. She is also looking at a couple of others of greater length, and suggested the need to consider bridging in wet areas.
 - Paddling Project: Peg and Russ Hall reported that they are looking for opportunities to create new kayak trails in Cedar Key, and that Mark Gluckman would like to work with Okefenokee Friends for trip down entire Suwannee. Jay Bushnell suggested the need to establish some paddling trails up river rather than just coastal.
 - Science Initiative: Russ Hall reported that he continues to look for ways that Friends can help with science projects relating to the Refuge, especially the water availability issue: monitoring impact on wildlife of water quality and quantity issues. Russ and Maria Sgambati will be working on this.
 - Art Initiative: An exhibit is now going on at the Cedar Key Arts Center, but probably not going to happen next year.

- Invasive Species: Roger McDaniels gave an update on work being done, and Vic Doig noted what a great job Roger is doing. Roger reported the need for additional volunteers for the project, and there was discussion about the need to distribute the brochure.
- Dixie County: Debbie Meeks reported that paddling guides had been handed out around Suwannee, and that the Dixie Mainline panel had been sent to the Refuge for approval. The Board reviewed the draft panel and there was consensus that it was very well done.
- River Trail: John Thalacker reported that a couple of signs need to be replaced, that he needs a new contact with Refuge, and that there has been added another layer of rock and seating out at the River.
- Vista Project: There was discussion about how this is really just a project of the Refuge, not really a Friends project.

Also: Jay would like to be a champion for an Advocacy and Networking Initiative. There was support for this among the group, and Jay will work with others and come up with a game plan involving work with other organizations such as Nature Coast Conservancy.

Motion by Richard Herman to approve 2014 initiatives with the following changes: remove Vista as a Project, add Networking with Jay as champion, add Butterfly Garden with Donna Thalacker as champion and a \$400 budget, and remove “village” from Shell Mound initiative. **Second:** Peg Hall. Passed by unanimous vote.

8. 2014 Annual Meeting Report and Discussion:

- Silent Auction: Jay Bushnell reported that he had sent out a report on the results and that he felt it was very successful.
- Merchandise Sales: Carmelo Echeverria reported all new T-shirts were liked, but that the sales were not exceptional. He reported that the extra large size of the eagle T-shirt did sell out, but that he doesn't think we should re-order now since we have other shirts in the extra large size. Board members thanked Carmelo for the excellent work he's doing on inventory. All agreed to keep the low prices set for some items that need to be moved.
- Lessons Learned:
 - Was good to have fewer items for the silent auction, and that we made the same amount of money. May actually want even fewer items next year.
 - Will need to consider how the food will work next year, and to avoid running out of food like we did this year.
 - Bushwhacking went well with the Refuge staff and gopher tortoise camera.
 - There could be better money management to avoid losses and confusion.
 - Need more ones and fives for change.
 - Need a lady in the sales booth to talk to other women about sizing, what matches, etc.

- Funneling is important; store and registration were in a good place this year.
9. Cedar Key Arts Festival: Carmelo Echeverria is working on sales, and Maria Sgambati is working on the volunteer schedule.
 10. Post Office Box Location: There was discussion about whether to leave the PO Box in Chiefland or move to Cedar Key. **Motion** by Roger McDaniels to open new box in Cedar Key and keep the box in Chiefland for a transition period. **Second:** Greg Lang. Passed by unanimous vote.
 11. Treasurer's Report: Libby Cagle presented reports (attached) which were approved by the Board without objection.
 12. Communications: Peg Hall presented reports (attached) and discussed the highlights. She reported getting a lot of positive feedback, and that Facebook is getting friends and postings. The 500 brochures made for annual meeting all gone and she will work on re-ordering. She will also work on Tom Liebert's request that he would like to distribute Friends brochures at his kayak business.
 13. Upcoming Events: John Thalacker reported that there is a need for topics for next year's talks, and that Molly Jubitz has done a lot work on getting topics and speakers. They will be meeting in December to work on speakers for next year. Board members were asked to provide any ideas for speakers.
 14. USGS Request: Bob Hudson reported that USGS has asked that Friends participate in support of the Gulf Sturgeon Research & Conservation Conference. Due to the lack of clarity as to what the USGS is requesting, it was agreed that Bob will get more information and report at the next meeting.
 15. Old Business--Designation and/or Investment of funds for future Visitor's Center and/or long term projects: After a discussion led by Jay Bushnell, the consensus was that Friends should do a better job of budgeting the money we have on current initiatives rather than setting aside large amounts for long-term projects.

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

2014 Projects/Initiatives – As of March, 18, 2014	Actions Needed in 2014	2013 Budget Allocation	Friends Champion(s)	LSCKNWR 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?	\$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	\$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	\$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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's paddling grant proposal? 	\$100	Sherry Beauchamp, Maria Sgambati	Pam Darty
Gateway Signage	Work with community leaders to develop signage highlighting key asset role of refuges	\$250	John McPherson	Andrew Gude
Paddling Project – Develop new paddling routes; panels	Keep friends informed of needs; develop Cedar Key guides, distribute guides to community outlets	\$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.	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	\$100	John Thalacker	?
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	\$50	Russ Hall	?
Shell Mound Visitor Enhancements – improve access/interpretation at archaeological site?	Secure approval and clear village 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	Conceive, research, design content and flyers	\$200	Donna Thalacker	1. Pam Darty 2. Andrew Gude
Vista Property Conservation Planning – collect data for conservation of historic structures and property	Work with the family to learn of their wishes; identify conservation priorities	\$1,000	?	Andrew

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)					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)					100.00		
2/22/14	216	Ken McCain (food for meeting (Sam's))					405.46		
2/27/14	dep	Annual meeting sales donations			1,803.00	938.00			
		Feb total		2,980.00	1,983.00	938.00	3,323.87	2,577.13	22,733.68
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		

Communications Report March 2014

News Brief

Since the February 6 Communications Report, we have sent 4 News Briefs.

- About 45% open the News Briefs.
- About 50% of the 440 people on the distribution list in are Friends members.
- About 50% of those who open each News Brief are members.

February 8

Subject: Annual Meeting Details, And More

February 20

Subject: Annual Meeting Saturday Feb 22, And More

February 28

Subject: Behind the Gates Art Reception, Annual Meeting Photos, March Presentations and Field Trips

March 18

Subject: Call for Volunteers, Membership Report, Exhibit, Nature Walks, Upcoming Events, Information-Advocacy Links, More

Facebook

- 6 new fans since the February 6 report = 214
- 17 new posts by Peg, Bob, Roger, Maria, Debbie, and David Roquemore, since the last report. Those with the most views were:
 - 163 viewed Winter Fishing on the Refuge (Bob)
 - 97 viewed Ken McCain gets Award (Peg)
 - 93 viewed Nature Walk at Cedar Key Scrub (Donna, via Peg)
 - 68 viewed Brazilian Pepper Eradication notice (Roger)
 - 65 viewed Photos of the Annual Meeting (Peg)
 - 53 viewed Paddling Guides in the Town of Suwannee (Debbie)

Friends Websites

www.friendsofrefuges.org website

- Pageviews in February = 3929
 - 45 viewed March 11 Nature Walk
 - 15 viewed Paddling Guides in Suwannee
 - 15 viewed Details of Annual Meeting Plan
- Pageviews in January = 4241
 - 89 viewed Cedar Key Library Talks post
 - 51 viewed Jan 28 Nature Walk post
 - 43 viewed Paddling with Manatees post
 - 39 January Nature walks post

www.paddleLSCkrefuges.org website

- Pageviews in February = 1197 Unique Visitors in February = 1152
- Pageviews in January = 1683 Unique Visitors in January = 1528