

MINUTES
Friends and Volunteers of Refuges
Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR
Board Meeting
December 1, 2008

The Board of Directors of the Friends and Volunteers of Refuges, Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges, met at the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters on December 1, 2008. Jay Bushnell, President, called the meeting to order at 10:55 a.m. A quorum of the Board of Directors was present.

The following board members were present:

Loye Bernard

Jay Bushnell, President

Jim Hess

Bob Hudson

Doug Maple

Joan Stephens

John Thalacker

Others present included:

Pam Darty, Refuge Ranger

Ed DeHaan, Member

Rod Hunt, Member

John Kasbohm, Refuge Manager

Tom Liebert, Member

Kay McCallister, Member

Marcy Wilcox, Member

Refuge Update

John Kasbohm, Refuge Manager, updated the board reporting that the Refuge is fully staffed currently, that controlled burns will begin soon depending on rain, several new informative kiosks have been installed throughout the Refuge, a study of the Salt Marsh Vole will begin in January, and a botanical rare plant inventory will be conducted. He also reported that the Refuge is acquiring two pieces of property, which include 800 acres being donated by the Nature Conservancy, and another parcel being purchased from the Suwannee River Water Management District. John also reported that Shannon has accepted a new position as Refuge Manager in the State of Washington and will be leaving after the first of the year. The Board expressed its congratulations to Shannon on his promotion and wished him well in his new position.

September 10 Board of Director Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting on September 10, 2008. Motion carried.

Recommendations for Bylaws Revisions:

Jay Bushnell reviewed several proposed changes to the Bylaws and discussed the rationale behind each change. Following extensive discussion, it was moved and seconded to present the revised Bylaws to the general membership for approval at their next meeting. Motion Carried.

Notification to Members of the proposed changes will be conducted through the next issue of the Gopher, and the full bylaws will be posted on our website for review.

Nominating Committee

Jay Bushnell reported that the Nominating Committee consists of Joan Stephens, Director and Chair, Loye Bernard, Director, and Donna Bushnell, Member. It was noted that the Nominating Committee will recommend a process for staggering board member terms as called for in the revised Bylaws, subject to approval of the revised Bylaws by the General Membership.

Joan Stephens reported that the following individuals have agreed to be presented to the general membership for approval in the positions shown below:

- Jay Bushnell, President
- Joan Stephens, Treasurer
- Bob Hudson, Secretary
- Sean Dowie, Doug Maple, John Thalacker, and Ed Haan have agreed to serve as directors

Joan Stephens reported that a Vice President candidate is needed.

2009 Annual Meeting

Discussion ensued about the Annual Meeting, including location, program, activities and food. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to hold the 2009 Annual Meeting in the town of Suwannee. Motion carried.

Jay Bushnell appointed an Annual Meeting Sub-committee consisting of John Kasbohm, Kay McCallister and himself to plan the event and bring the plan to the Board of Directors at their next meeting. A tentative date of March 7, 2009, was set for the Annual Meeting.

Action Planning for 2009

- Planning of Friends Group events – A wide range of events for 2009 was discussed, including a photo safari, kayak trips, hikes and bicycling trips in the Refuge, and other types of events. There was general agreement that one event per month should be our goal, in addition to the Nature Walks conducted during the cooler months. Following extensive discussion, Jay Bushnell appointed an Event Planning Sub-committee consisting of John Thalacker, Tom Liebert, Rod Hunt and himself. The Sub-committee will prepare a plan for 2009 events for review by the Board at its next meeting. It was agreed that we should include some weekend events so that working individuals and children can participate.
- Projects for the Refuge – Jay Bushnell reported that Jim Hess has agreed to be the lead person for projects that support the Refuge. These may include such projects as canoe trail cleanup and tree trimming, clean up days, etc.
- Advocacy and Public Relations – Following discussion, it was agreed that the Ibis and Gopher publications will serve as the primary informative and public relations tools for members. Pam Darty will continue to provide press releases and notices for the general public.
- Membership – The need to increase membership was discussed. Jay Bushnell challenged each person present to recruit two new members. Old Business
- Ibis – It was noted that the next issue of IBIS would be published in February. The next issue of the Gopher will be published in January and will include notification of the proposed Bylaw changes and slate of Board appointments and officers.
- Website – Joan Stephens indicated that our website manager is seeking new photos of Friends Group activities for our website. Anyone with appropriate photos should email them to Jay Bushnell.

New Business

- Friends of Aransas and Matagorda Island NWR – It was reported that Hurricane Ike caused extensive damage to the Refuges in these areas, and a donation to their Friends group to assist in rebuilding efforts was proposed. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to donate \$500 to the Friends of Aransas and Matagorda Island NWR. Motion carried.
- Support for Annual Agency Network Luncheon – John Kasbohm reported that he is hosting the second annual Agency Network luncheon on December 16 at the Refuge. The purpose of the luncheon is to promote assistance and relationships between various

agencies that support the Refuges from time to time. He noted that the Friends Group had provided the food for the 2007 luncheon, which was very successful. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to provide support to the Agency Network Luncheon equivalent to the support provided in 2007. Motion carried.

- Delegates to the Friends Conference in Washington, D.C. – It was reported that a national Friends of National Wildlife Refuges conference will take place in Washington, D.C. in February 2009. John Kasbohm reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service would provide \$500 for transportation expenses, will provide hotel rooms, and some meals for each delegate to the conference. There is no registration fee. He also discussed the importance of advocacy efforts conducted at the conference. Jay Bushnell reported that Joan Stephens had indicated an interest in attending the event. Other board members were polled for their interest in participating. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to send up to two delegates to the Friends Conference, with funding for reasonable and customary travel expenses that exceed the amount funded by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Motion carried.
- Holiday Luncheon for Refuge Staff – A holiday luncheon for Refuge staff was proposed. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded for the Board of Directors to conduct a covered dish luncheon for Refuge staff in recognition of their service and hard work for the Refuge. Motion carried. It was agreed that the holiday luncheon will be on January 15, 2009, at the Refuge headquarters beginning at noon. Each board member is asked to bring a dish. Approximately 24 people will be in attendance. A board meeting will be conducted following the luncheon from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Diversity of Visitors – Pam Darty reported on national initiatives to get more diverse visitors to National Wildlife Refuges, including children and senior citizens that would otherwise not be exposed to the NWR. She asked for future consideration by the Board to provide funding for transportation expenses for such groups. She also discussed the Cameras and Kids Program. Pam will do further research and prepare specific proposals for the Board to consider.
- Tables and Chairs for the Refuge – John Kasbohm requested the Friends Group provide funding for six folding tables and fifty chairs to be used in support of the Refuge. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to provided funding to the Refuge to purchase six folding tables and fifty chairs at a cost not to exceed \$1,000. Motion carried.
- It was again noted that the next meeting of the Board of Directors would take place at Refuge headquarters on January 15, 2009, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. following the Holiday Luncheon for Refuge staff.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 p.m.