

MINUTES

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR

Board Meeting

January 20, 2010

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges, met at the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters on January 20, 2010. Jay Bushnell, President, called the meeting to order at 9:40 a.m. A quorum was present.

The following board members were present:

Jay Bushnell, President

Pam Darty

Ed DeHaan

Mark Gluckman

Richard Herman

Bob Hudson

John Kasbohm

John Thalacker

Joan Stephens

Marci Wilcox

Others present included:

Donna Thalacker

Peg Hall

Russ Hall

Introductions – Following introductions of all present, Jay Bushnell reviewed several topics of environmental interest, including a number of publications and articles on environmental issues.

November 18, 2009, Board of Director Meeting Minutes – Following review, it was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting on November 18, 2009. Motion carried.

Treasurers Report – Joan Stephens, Treasurer, provided a Treasurers Report to the board of directors, noting that the Friends Group bank balance is currently \$5424.28. Joan distributed a list of four outstanding checks in the total amount of \$335.14.

Membership Report – Joan Stephens, Membership Chairman, reported that the Friends Group currently has sixty-six paid members for 2010, which includes twenty-one life members. She will include a dues reminder in the upcoming Gopher and Ibis publications.

Refuge Update – John Kasbohm, Refuge Manager, provided a Refuge update including information on construction of observation decks on Loop Road, stimulus project for solar energy, planting of 50,000 longleaf pine seedlings and wiregrass, and a UF study on the effects of climate change and the Salt Marsh Vole. He noted that Seventy acres of Longleaf Pine and Wiregrass will be planted as a Friends Group volunteer project on February 2nd, He also reported that the Refuge will have a second law enforcement officer by the end of 2010. Pam Darty reported Senior Day at the Refuge for the Chiefland Senior Center, and reminded the group of the upcoming programs in the Cedar Key Library.

Planning of Friends Group events – Joan Stephens reported she will be conducting nature walks the 1st Monday of each month. Other events were discussed including a recurring date for photo safaris and bike rides through the Refuge.

Friends of the Refuge Annual Meeting on March 6 – The Annual Meeting on March 6 at Refuge HQ was discussed at length. The Annual Meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. with introductions and the business meeting. The speaker, Dave Tegeder, will begin his program titled Ditch of Dreams, the Cross Florida Barge Canal, at 11:00 a.m., followed by lunch at 12:00 noon. Following lunch, a number of events will be scheduled.

1. Business Meeting –

- a. In order to fulfill bylaws requirements regarding notification of membership, Jay Bushnell will include the proposed bylaw change and proposed slate of nominees for board positions and officers in the a Gopher publication by the end of January.
 - b. Joan Stephens will handle the vote on elections
 - c. Bob Hudson will handle the vote on bylaw change
2. Events
- a. Marci will work with Doug Maple regarding boat rides on the Suwannee River. Discussion ensued regarding funding for the Annual Meeting events. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded not to charge a fee for events at the Annual Meeting. Following further discussion, recognizing that it may be costly to Doug Maple to take a weekend work day to provide boat rides for the Friends Group, it was moved and seconded to offer an honorarium of up to \$200 to Doug Maple for providing boat rides during the Annual Meeting. Motion Carried. It was agreed that, if Doug Maple does not provide the boat rides, John Kasbohm and Marci Wilcox are authorized to form a committee to obtain a group of smaller boats for rides.
 - b. Other events being planned for the Annual meeting include a photography event, hayride through the Refuge, fire equipment display, and possibly a historic walk discussing the old timber industry in the area.
 - c. Jay Bushnell asked for someone to organize the Friends Group booth and Marci Wilcox volunteered to handle it.
3. Lunch – it was noted that Kenny McCain has agreed to prepare lunch for the participants.
4. Speaker – Bob Hudson will put Pam Darty in touch with the speaker to arrange support for his talk.

Calendar – John and Donna Thalacker reviewed the extensive list of Friends Group events being planned in February and March. John will provide Jay with the current list and Jay will send it out to the board of directors. He will also publish the list of events in the next issue of IBIS. There was discussion of putting the list of events on the Friends Group website.

-Marci Wilcox will set a date with Lovett Williams to provide a talk on shorebirds.

-Speaker Cynthia Barnett – after discussing the requested honorarium, it was agreed that the Friends Group will not provide more than the \$100 honorarium for this talk as already committed.

Hill Rally for Refuges – It was moved and seconded to publish an article in Ibis advising members about the Hill Rally for Refuges on March 8 – 10, which members may attend at their expense. Jay Bushnell will send a letter of support to our elected representatives encouraging them to support the LSNWR and all National Wildlife Refuges. Members will also be encouraged to write letters to the elected representatives.

2010 Regional Friends Group Conference, April 9-10 – The conference was discussed. Jay Bushnell will follow up on who will attend and represent the LSNWR Friends Group.

Next Ibis Publication – John Thalacker will write an article about the Riverwalk Project and provide it to Jay.

Old Business –

1. Update on Clamerica Ticket Issue – Since Sean Dowie was not present, the issue was tabled.
2. Florida Master Naturalist Program –the item is tabled until staff is available to teach the program
3. Florida Friends Alliance Network – Establishing a network of members of Friends Groups was discussed. Jay Bushnell will follow-up.
4. Email Networking and Membership Form – Marci Wilcox reported that she and Donna Thalacker are working on creating a master list of members emails, to be used for notification and information.

The list will be further sub-divided into categories of interest by members. They will provide a report to the board in the next two weeks.

5. Dues Evaluation – John and Donna Thalacker and Marci Wilcox reviewed recommendations from the Dues Committee designed to simplify the dues structure, to be effective in 2011, which included the following:

- a. change the name of memberships to Individual and Family from Gopher and Ibis
- b. recognizing that the Friends Group has never had a dues increase, and provides an extensive array of benefits to members, increase dues to \$15 for individuals and \$30 for families
- c. Offer one level of lifetime membership, for a \$500 contribution. All current Life Members would be grandfathered.
- d. provide recognition to Life Members at the Annual Meeting
- e. Offer the option of a three-year membership, at \$45 for individuals and \$90 for families.

Extensive discussion ensued. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to approve the recommendation from the Dues Committee as stated above. Motion failed.

Following further discussion, it was moved and seconded to: increase dues, effective in 2011, to \$15 for individuals and \$30 for families, and to include the three year payment option at no discount. Motion carried. The Dues Committee will revisit the Life Membership category and examine how it is handled in other similar organizations.

6. Friends of Florida Refuges Conference – Peg and Russ Hall, Joan Stephens and Jay reported on their attendance at the Friends of Florida Refuges Conference on January 7-8, 2010, at the Loxahatchee NWR.

Other Business -

1. Photo Club - Jay Bushnell reported there is interesting a photo club among the Friends Group membership. Jay will follow up.
2. Great Suwannee Cleanup – Mark Gluckman reported that an event titled the Great Suwannee Cleanup is in preliminary planning stages for September – November 2010. The event will focus on breaking the Suwannee River into sections all along the river and conducting cleanup events. There was general agreement that participation by the Friends Group to cleanup the river in our area would be appropriate. Mark will get more information as the event develops.
3. Riverwalk Project – Recognizing that most visitors to the Refuge visit the Riverwalk, John Thalacker discussed a potential project for the Friends Group to provide signage for trees along the Riverwalk at the Refuge, and, to clean up the area around the Riverwalk. The idea was received favorably by the board. John will look into the details of the project further.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.