

MINUTES

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR

Board Meeting

September 24, 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 September 24, 2010. Jay Bushnell, President, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. A quorum was present.

The following board members were present: Jay Bushnell, President, Sean Dowie, Mark Gluckman, Peg Hall, Russ Hall, Richard Herman, Bob Hudson, Joan Stephens, Marci Wilcox

Also present: Pam Darty, Refuge Liaison'

Introductions – Following introductions of all present, Jay Bushnell reviewed several topics of environmental interest.

April 14, 2010, 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 provided a Treasurer's Report to the board of directors, noting that the Friends Group bank balance was \$6,769.55 on August 31, 2010. The last deposit was on August 13, and several small checks are outstanding. Jay Bushnell reported on the new tent he had purchased on behalf of the Friends Group for use as a display booth at events. It was noted that Jay will be reimbursed for the expense of the tent.

Joan provided the Board with a list of reports filed with the IRS and State of Florida, including the following:

- Florida Sales Tax Report – due quarterly by the first day of the following quarter, e.g., January 1 for the quarter ending December 31. This reports and pays the sales tax on items sold by the Friends of the Refuge.
- Florida State Corporate Tax – Due each May 1st. It is a form with a list of officers of the corporation and their addresses.
- Internal Revenue Service Annual Report – due in the spring of the year and can be filed through the internet.

Membership Report – Joan Stephens, Membership Chairman, reported that the Friends Group currently has 134 paid memberships for 2010. She also reported that Alan and Tywonn Davidson had joined as life members.

Email Listing Contact Update – Marci Wilcox gave an update on the project, and will email a draft to the board within the next couple of weeks.

Refuge Update – Pam Darty, Refuge Liaison, provided a Refuge update including information on construction of observation decks on Loop Road, controlled burns, weather conditions during the summer in the Refuge, hosting of Tourism Summit, and efforts of Refuge staff in support of the Gulf oil spill. She also reported that 20 children had participated in two "Kids Camera Camps."

"Signature" Friends Group Project – Mark Gluckman described extensive initial work he has done on a "Signature" project for the Friends Group, which entails publication of self-guided paddling maps of twelve significant waterways in the Refuge. The maps would identify and describe separate bio-zones along the routes. A committee of Mark, Jay Bushnell, Peg and Russ Hall met to plan the project. A "test paddle" trip was held, but no members showed up. Extensive discussion ensued on the merit of the project, and ways to publicize and energize potential participants in paddling excursions. The Committee will meet again following this board meeting. Mark also discussed the significant challenges of Florida's springs and the Suwannee River due to high levels of nitrogen and other elements, primarily from agricultural runoff.

Florida Friends Alliance Network – Establishing a network of members of Friends Groups was discussed. Jay Bushnell proposed publication of a brochure about the Refuge for distribution to other Friends Groups.

Discussion ensued. Jay will follow-up with John Kasbohm and try to ascertain if there is interest among other Friends Groups.

Calendar of Friends Group events –

Those taking the lead will be responsible for the PR with the contacts presently as follows:

Cedar Key Beacon: editor@cedarkeybeacon.com (Lou Elliott Jones - new editor)

CK News: editor@cedarkeynews.com (Jim Hoy) or also mjubitz@att.net (Molly Jubitz)

Levy County Journal: editor@levyjourn.com (Rick Burnham)

Dixie County Advocate: editor@dcadvocate.net

Chiefland Citizen: editor@chieflandcitizen.com

Williston Pioneer: editor@willistonpioneer.com

Gainesville Sun: sean.mccrory@gvillesun.com (Sean McCrory 352-374-5093)

Crystal River Citrus County Chronicle: cbrennan@chronicleonline.com

Joan Stephens reported she will be conducting nature walks the 1st Monday of October, November and December. Joyce Tarnow will assist with the bird walks.

Marci reported that the Garden Club is sponsoring a speaker on hummingbirds at the Cedar Key Library on October 2.

Suwannee River Cleanup – The Friends of the Refuge has agreed to sponsor a section of the lower Suwannee River for the river cleanup event on December 4th. Discussion ensued. The Refuge will provide three boats, and additional boats may be needed. Richard Herman will organize boats in the town of Suwannee. Jay asked for volunteers to serve on a planning committee for the event. Bob Hudson, Marci Wilcox, and John Kasbohm will serve on the Committee in addition to Jay, with other board members contacted as needed.

Cedar Key Seafood Festival – Marci Wilcox offered to take the lead on organizing the Friends booth.

Speaker Events – Various speaker events were discussed, including:

- Butterfly presentation – Jay will contact Jaret Daniels, head of the Butterfly Rainforest and program at UF.
- Florida's Springs – Jay will contact Carol Lippincott as a potential speaker
- Russ Hall offered to give a presentation on frogs
- Snakes/Birds relationship at Seahorse Key – Pam Darty will talk with Harvey Lillywhite, head of the research program at Seahorse Key

Other events were discussed including photo safaris, camp fire socials, bike rides through the Refuge and a holiday event.

Web Page Recommendations and Opportunity for Social Networking – Peg Hall led an extensive discussion of the Friends Group web page and social networking. A discussion document was reviewed and discussed, as attached, and are made an official part of these minutes. Following discussion it was moved and seconded to appoint Peg Hall as the lead board member for development of electronic media, with assistance from Sean Dowie and others as needed. Motion carried.

2011 Friends of the Refuge Annual Meeting – Discussion ensued around having the 2011 Annual Meeting focus on outlining a long term vision for the Friends Group. Following extensive discussion it was agreed as follows:

- The tentative date for the Annual Meeting will be February 26, 2011
- A keynote speaker will be needed to generate interest in attending. If we can find the right person, the keynote presentation should “set the stage” for developing a vision for the Friends Group.

- Following the keynote speaker, an internal facilitator will separate attendees into small groups and ask them to discuss a series of questions such as “Why they join the Friends Group, What they are looking for from the Friends Group, etc.” The groups will be given a relatively short period of time to discuss the questions, and will report back to the main group at the end of the breakout sessions. The responses will be used by the board of directors to discuss a vision for the Friends Group at future board meetings.
- Following extensive discussion, it was moved and seconded to have the theme of the annual meeting be as described above.

Next IBIS and Gopher – A Gopher will be published in early October publicizing upcoming events. An Ibis will be published in November. Jay asked that, when submitting calendar items, board members should provide the date, day of week, brief description of the event, location and contact person telephone number.

Old Business –

Dues Increase – The dues increase approved at the January board meeting was discussed. Following extensive discussion it was moved and seconded that, bearing in mind that the economic environment has changed for the worse in the past year, the dues increase approved at the January 20, 2010, meeting be suspended. Motion carried.

New Business –

Jay reported that he had received information about a national volunteer award for members of Friends Groups. He will follow-up.

2011 Nominating Committee – A Nominating Committee for 2011 was appointed consisting of Marci Wilcox and Jay Bushnell. Greg Lang was appointed to the Committee as the non-board member, subject to his being willing to serve. Bob Hudson will follow-up with Greg. Jay asked that board members submit names for new potential board members and officers to the Committee. There are four to six openings in 2011 on the board. The President and Treasurer positions will need to be filled.

The next Board meeting will take place on Nov. 1, 2010, at 10:00 a.m. The meeting location will be announced later.

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

Website and Social Media Agenda Item

Submitted by Peg Hall

September 24, 2010

Attached To, and Made An Integral Part of the Minutes of the September 24, 2010, Board Meeting

Thought-Questions for Board Discussion

- Why do people go (or not go) to our website? Consensus at the board meeting: “to look for information”
- What should be there for them? Consensus at the board meeting: “it needs to be interactive, entertaining, up to date, not cluttered or busy, and contain an up to date calendar of events”
- To what degree does the website meet our need as a Board:
 - To get information to people?
 - To build interest in the Refuges and the Friends?
- To what degree might e-mail alerts and/or a Facebook presence help us achieve our goals? Consensus at the board meeting: “there is a big need for electronic connectivity with our members including email and social networking opportunities”

Observation from Peg

- Website would benefit from some updating. For example, most pages are not centered and the print is small and dense.

Decision/Action Questions for the Board

- Do we want to continue to work with Dragonfly Media Arts and Sharon McKittrick or do we want to switch the technical management of our website to Journeyi.com and Bill Kilborn? The board agreed that we need more choices. Peg Hall and Sean Dowie will investigate other sources before making a recommendation to the board.
- Do we want to delegate a Board member to work with the technical manager to update the look of the website and interface with him or her to keep the content updated and to manage the content of the website?
- Do we want to establish a Facebook page and/or email alerts?