

MINUTES

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR

Board Meeting

January 10, 2011

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 10, 2011. Jay Bushnell, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

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

Also present: Ron Black, Board Member Nominee; John Kasbohm, Refuge Manager; John McPherson, Board Member Nominee; Michelle Pearson, Board Member Nominee; Jerry Salamon, Board Member Nominee

Introductions – Jay Bushnell asked each attendee to introduce themselves and describe why they chose this area to live.

November 1, 2010, Board of Director Meeting Minutes – Following review, it was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting on September 24, 2010. Motion carried.

Treasurers Report – Joan Stephens provided a Treasurer's Report to the board of directors, noting that the Friends Group bank balance was \$6,531.82 as of December 31, 2010.

Membership Report – Joan Stephens reported that membership renewals are in process and we have received one new membership application.

Financial Review Committee: Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to appoint the following Financial Review Committee to work with the Treasurer in accordance with the Bylaws: Jay Bushnell, Jerry Salamon and Joan Stephens. Motion Carried.

Nominating Committee Report:

Marci Wilcox and Jay Bushnell provided a report of the Nominating Committee, which Committee included Marci Wilcox, Jay Bushnell and Greg Lang (member). The Committee recommended the following nominations be made to the Membership at the Annual Meeting:

- New Board Members – Ron Black, Michelle Pearson, Jerry Salamon and John McPherson
- Reappointment of Existing Board Members for another three year term – Ed DeHaan, Richard Herman, Marci Wilcox
- Officers:
 - President – Peg Hall
 - Treasurer – Jerry Salamon

Following discussion, it was moved and seconded to recommend approval of the above slate of nominees to the membership at the Annual Meeting. Motion Carried.

Annual Meeting –

Following discussion it was moved and seconded to change the date of the Annual Meeting to March 5, 2011. Motion Carried.

Jay Bushnell reported that he had talked with Kenny McCain, who has agreed to again prepare ribs, chicken and swamp cabbage for the lunch meal. Board members were asked to bring additional dishes and desserts. Mr. McCain will be reimbursed for his expenses by the Friends Group.

Mark Gluckman and Russ Hall discussed their paddling trail project and keynote presentation they will make at the Annual Meeting. Mark reported that a blog by Russ is very informative and a compendium of knowledge about the Refuge. The blog site is randomferments.blogspot.com.

As agreed at the last board meeting, there will be short breakout sessions at the Annual Meeting to discuss future directions of the Friends Group. It was agreed to ask Donna Bushnell to facilitate the breakout sessions.

Various open house events for the Annual Meeting were discussed, including hay ride, nature walk, photography safari, and dedication of new boardwalk and scenic vista sites. Bob Hudson reported that he had talked with Doug Maples of Tidewater Tours, who will get back with him regarding potential boat tours on the Suwannee River for attendees. Jay Bushnell appointed a Sub-Committee of Peg Hall, and Marci Wilcox to work with John Kasbohm on open house events for the meeting.

Refuge Update – John Kasbohm, Refuge Manager, reported that the Smith/Alexander family has donated a 15 acre contiguous river front parcel to the Refuge, known as the Vista property. The donor agreement provides for continuing lifetime use and maintenance by the donors. John also provided a Refuge update including information on construction of observation decks on Loop Road, staffing of wildlife biologist position, tree planting in Dixie County portion of the Refuge, solar panel operation, and a Board Resolution from the Suwannee River Water Management District thanking the Refuge for its role in the Great Suwannee River Cleanup.

Following discussion, it was moved and seconded that in recognition of the Smith family's generous donation of property to the Refuge, that the donors be made Honorary Life Members of the Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge. Motion Carried.

Electronic Communications – Peg Hall led an extensive discussion of the Friends Group web page and social networking, including the electronic newsletter she has started, blogsite versus website discussion, Friends Group Facebook Page, and a number of other related topics. 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 continue the electronic newsletter that was begun several months ago by Peg Hall. Motion carried.
- it was moved and seconded to continue to maintain the Friends Group Facebook page
- it was moved and seconded to close the current Friends Group website and move it to the blog format, but to maintain our current domain name; and, to continue to evaluate website format versus blog format. The website or blog should be easy to access and easy to maintain. Motion Carried.
- it was moved and seconded for the Friends Group to register its domain name itself rather than depending on outside assistance, and, to initially use GoDaddy.com rather than the current server. Motion carried.

Jay Bushnell appointed an Electronic Communications Sub-Committee whose role will be to continue to evaluate, coordinate and improve Friends Group electronic media and communications. The Sub-Committee will consist of Peg Hall, Michelle Pearson, John Kasbohm, and Pam Darty.

Calendar for January and February 2011

John Kasbohm reported that the Event Sub-Committee, chaired by John Thalacker, had met several weeks ago in Cedar Key. Following discussion, it was agreed that Marci Wilcox will follow-up with John to obtain a description of future events.

Next IBIS

Jay Bushnell reported that he will be publishing an Ibis and the deadline for submissions to him is January 17th. He asked board members to provide him with articles, photos and announcements for the Ibis. Jay stated that the Ibis will include the proper notification of membership about the Annual Meeting and Slate of Nominees as called for in the Bylaws.

Old Business –

Suwannee River Cleanup – Mark Gluckman reported that there were thirty separate cleanups along the River, with the one sponsored by the Friends Group being the last one. He indicated that, in total, there were 576 volunteers involved in the cleanup and 29,150 pounds of trash was removed from the River.

Camp Fire Event – Jay reported there were approximately twenty people attending this fun event.

Next Board Meeting - The next Board meeting will take place on Monday, March 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Refuge Headquarters.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Attachment: Electronic Communications Discussion Document

Electronic Communication Agenda Item
January 10, 2011
Prepared by Peg Hall

Electronic Newsletter

Background information

We have 135 memberships and 106 good email addresses. We have sent 5 newsletters since the last Board meeting. On average 54% of recipients opened them, often more than once, and as many as 17% clicked through to the web-blog. Industry averages are 17% open and 3% click through. It takes me about an hour to prepare each newsletter now that I have a template prepared. The first two took about 4-6 hours each.

Decision/Action Questions

- Do we want to continue the electronic newsletter?
- Which other Board members might work on it with me? I'll be out of internet connectivity most of May and June and August.

Friends Facebook Page

Background information

44 people have signed on as Fans/Likers of our page. The majority of the Fans are NOT Friends members, thus it may be a way to reach new potential members. About 10 people who participated in the Suwannee River Clean Up became Fans. Most of the posts have been put up by me or Russ. Bob, Michelle, and Sean also have posted. Jay and Richard have sent me things to post. A few non-members have posted.

Decision/Action Questions

- Do we want to continue the page?
- How can we make it easier for Board members and others to post?

Website/Blog

Background information

- The few comments received from newsletter readers and others have been positive.
- The static pages, accessed by tabs at the top of the homepage, need to be reviewed and revised. Perhaps we should eliminate some of them altogether.
- The domain name registration (\$18/year) and hosting (\$131/year) remain in Sharon McKittrick's hands at this time.
- If we use GoDaddy, it would cost \$7.50 (one time) to transfer our domain name from Sharon's registration. The annual registration cost with GoDaddy would be \$10.

- If we use GoDaddy and sign up for 3 years of hosting, the annual cost for the “economy” package would be \$36/year. For the “deluxe” package, it would be \$60/year.

Decision/Action Questions

- Do we want to close the traditional (old) site and transfer its URL to the current prototype blog-based site?
- Is there a Board member who would be interested in exploring traditional websites that we might shift to in the future if one met our needs better than this blog-based site?
- Which Board members would be willing to work on reviewing and revising content for the “tabs” pages, or recommending they be eliminated?
- Do we want to register the domain name ourselves through GoDaddy instead of having Sharon do it?
- Do we want to establish our own GoDaddy account and use their hosting service?
- Would any board member recommend a different company instead of GoDaddy? I use GoDaddy and have had no trouble with their service.