

**Minutes**  
**Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife**  
**October 18th, 2017**  
**Town of Suwannee Community Center**

**Present:**

Board Members: Bill Dummitt, Peg Hall, Russ Hall, John McPherson, Debbie Meeks, Maria Sgambati

Other Friends Members and Visitors: Rebecca Gallegher, Bob Lewis, Belinda Nettles, Owen Prince, Anne Rogers, Andy Rogers

Refuge staff: Daniel Barrand, Vic Doig, Dan Frisk, Dalton Pelt, Larry Woodward

**Call to Order**

Russ called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Treasurer's Report**

John reported that there was only one financial transaction in September and that he would provide a new Treasurer's Report at the November Board meeting.

**The Minutes** of the September Board meeting were approved with no changes.

**Vista Project**

John provided an overview of the Vista Project, providing the history of how the property came to the refuge and of Friends plans to prepare for its eventual availability for active use. Belinda reported that she is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Regional Office to provide a resource assessment of the structures on site. There is a hurricane-caused delay in this process. John suggested that at the November meeting he would recommend whether we move ahead with other planning before that assessment is done.

**Volunteer Contact Project**

Bill described his email contact with all members about the project. He reported that already about 25 people have volunteered to participate in greeting visitors at the front desk of the headquarters building. Volunteers are willing to work a few days a month each. Bill will set a meeting with volunteers to move the project to the next step.

**St. Vincent Friends Group**

Russ reported that he will be in touch with our contacts at this Friends group and invite them to our November meeting since they had to cancel their planned visit in September because of the hurricane. At Dan's suggestion, Russ will also invite Tom Baird, the acting president of the St Mark's Friends group.

**Refuge Updates**

Larry reported that

- About 60 miles of trails and roads have so far been cleared of hurricane-caused damage

- Lower Suwannee staff is leading a habitat improvement project at St. Mark's Refuge related to tree thinning
- 2 of the 6 staff members are helping at other refuges where hurricane damage was even more extensive than at Lower Suwannee
- The annual Cooperators Luncheon is scheduled for December 1. The refuge, with financial support from the Friends, hosts this event to celebrate the cooperative arrangements it has with many private individuals and groups, as well as state agencies during the year
- Archery hunt season is over and muzzle loader season starts Saturday
- The staff is frustrated by its inability to get hunters to report their take, as required by regulation. When it appears that the take is low, the refuge is forced to have a shorter season in subsequent years.
- Heavy equipment is being borrowed from another refuge to clear secondary trails of hurricane damage and overgrowth

### **Cedar Key Seafood Festival**

Russ asked that any members or Board members who could, please help at the Friends booth

### **Committees**

Russ reported that he would follow up by email with Board members to seek volunteers and nominations for the committees that are needed over the next few months.

- Nominating
- Priorities
- Financial Review
- Memberhip

There being no additional items to be handled at this meeting, the Board adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

*Submitted by Peg Hall*