

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges

March Board Meeting Minutes

3/19/2024

Recorded by Pete Tirrell

Present:

Debbie Meeks, Boyd Kimball, Linda Kimball, John Thalacker, Dan Kline, Jeri Treat, Ron Kamzelski, Scott Wright, Robin Gallup, Peter Tirrell

Representing the Refuge: Andrew Gude

Guests: Jay Bushnell

Start 10:02 am led by Ron K.

Approval Items

- Accept or modify the agenda

Vote to accept agenda: Motion to accept by Scott W, 2nd by Debbie M. All in favor

- Approve Minutes from previous Board Meeting
 - [Link to February board minutes](#)

Vote to accept minutes: motion to accept by Debbie M, 2nd by Scott W. All in favor

- Approve the Annual Meeting minutes
 - [Link to the Annual Meeting minutes](#)

Vote to accept annual meeting minutes: motion to accept by Debbie M, 2nd by Scott W. All in favor

- Treasurer's Report
 - [Link to review financials](#)
 - Signature approval

Finishing up 2023 annual report. Checking account: \$4787, Money market: \$54427.

Vote to accept Treasurer's report: motion to accept by Jerri Treat, 2nd by Scott Wright. All in favor.

Vote to remove John McPherson and Peg Hall from signature approval for bank: motion to accept by Boyd Kimball, 2nd by Scott Wright. All in favor.

Vote to affirm Linda Kimball and add Denise Feiber and Ron Kamzelski to signature approval for bank checking account ending in 4675, and money market account ending in 1888: motion to accept by Scott Wright, 2nd by Dan Kline. All in favor.

Refuge Update

- Andrew

Seahorse key open house 03/20

George Pelt working on getting prefab building 30K washroom, laundry, shower for volunteer Daniel forest restoration falls under BILL (Bipartisan infrastructure law), getting a lot of recognition

Outreach to congressional reps. No-one from Friends has sent outreach to congressional representatives so Andrew agreed to do it. This is follow-up work on the Kat Cammack meeting.

YCC students through ACE contractor budget for three people

Duke skipper butterfly, species of concern

Cedar Key mole skink possible endangered species

Increase Manatee critical habitat

New UF researcher feral hog damage on ecosystem scale

Turkey hunt underway, many gates closed to prevent vehicles from disturbing hunters

Sue Colson wants to meet about arranging Junior Ranger program for Cedar Key summer youth program at refuge

Resident volunteer job description

Washroom building strictly for volunteers not visitors

May need to add surveillance cameras at Vista for open garage

Still need a public restroom option for Vista

John T discussed a possible Vista path to a kayak/canoe launch area not far from Vista gate, if gate is moved about 50 yards towards Vista, the launch would always be accessible, about 75 yard walk to water. Debbie and John will do some preliminary clearing.

John Stark entered the meeting to update us on the Shell mound dock. The engineers may have found extra funds to put toward a wheelchair rail on dock. Andrew and John left meeting to take quick look at the kayak trail option

Verbage for Trail of Tears and Seahorse Key panels submitted to Reid Carswell, Denise's former co-worker, but has not heard back

Trailer insurance Debbie M. insurance is required because although we could self-insure for comp and collision to the trailer which is only worth about \$4,000, the trailer could damage another vehicle which could be costly. Must transfer title to refuge and the refuge would handle insurance. All the tow drivers must take an 8 hour safety course and have an agreement for towing. Refuge vehicles may be used for towing or personal vehicles may be used but driver's personal insurance must be used for coverage.

Vote: Motion to transfer title of Refuge Rover trailer to refuge by Debbie, second by Ron. All in favor.

Discussion Items

- Annual Meeting
 - Review

All went well

- Chair purchase- accept email chain as board vote?

Vote by email chain for chair purchase satisfied quorum.

- Microsoft 365 subscription on new laptop for \$99/yr- **VOTE** to continue it?

Denise paid \$99 for 365 when setting up computer. Revisit payment in future.

- Cedar Key Arts Festival- volunteer coordinator needed
Volunteers still needed. Ron will bring trailer and setup and take down. Merchandise inventory to John M. Jeri will arrive first to setup. Debbie will send checklist to Ron
- Earth Day festival participation?
Fanning Springs invite for 4/20, Debbie will check for volunteers via email
- April 27 Nature Walk on the Refuge with Florida Museum of Natural History Grad Students
Ginessa organizing, take up when she is available
 - Potential partnership with FLMNH student org to bring more walks to the refuge and generate student interest, citizen science, etc.
 - If we would like to partner for this date, we may need to assist with transportation from Gainesville to help those students who may not have a ride
- Trailer comp and collision insurance
 - The trailer is covered for liability under the policy of whatever vehicle is towing it and it remains covered even if the trailer comes unhitched from the vehicle according to Debbie's insurance broker, Bird Insurance Group.
 - Comp and Collision under Friends insurance since we do not have a vehicle: Liability \$2,409. Liability plus collision which includes theft \$2,509.
 - Comp and Collision under Debbie's insurance- \$114.86/yr. All claims then have to go through her, potentially raising her overall insurance rate.
 - If we transfer the trailer to the Refuge, who would then self-insure it for comp and collision:
 - Anyone who tows it must sign a volunteer agreement specifically for towing the trailer AND must pass the safe driver course even if you tow it with a personal vehicle.
 - If you tow it with a personal vehicle then the Refuge's liability insurance does not cover it.

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Debbie will coordinate title transfer of trailer. Ron will take course and sign volunteer agreement form.

- Vista Pollinator Garden Update (Barbara submitted)
Scott W update from Barbara. Delay until Fall larger plants, less watering. Claudia Larson is making layout plan, Barbara is accumulating plants and seeds, Claudia will grow as many plants as possible based on plant list for garden.
- Bookshop.org affiliate membership (Denise)
Denise is creating curating list of books.
- Review of Mission Statement
Delay until next meeting for Peg's input
 - [Link to review proposed edits](#)

Subcommittee Reports

- Advocacy (Jay, Peg, Scott, Ron)
No update, team will meet soon to discuss options. Open invitation for additional visits.
- Merchandise (Boyd and others)
Scott should we have children sizes? Ron will approach Boyd. Jeri: reminder we need people with Square app for art festival.
- Vista (Robin, Debbie, Pete, John)
**Robin is curating materials in main house and garage. Need help scraping kitchen floor. Floor will be painted to match house. Window glazing and painting next, will need help. RFP for historic grant, open until March 22nd.
John M will apply for another grant, Chuck is looking for additional grants.**
- Trail Work (John Thalacker)
**Vista river overlook instead of repairing the damaged River Walk boardwalk, possibly a River Walk extension could be added over to Vista. Kayak launch through woods
Man made cut to river will require cleanup.**

Reports

- Outreach and Jr. Ranger (Debbie)- [Report link](#)
Debbie will coordinate with Andrew about possible Suwannee program, Jane Connors and Cedar Key summer programs, Sue Colson

- Communications (Peg)- [Report Link](#)
- Membership (Debbie)- [Report link](#)
Member Karen Barber may assist with membership is already helping with communications
- Refuge Support (Scott)
Barbara via Scott: Spring butterflies have started to appear. Friends butterfly walk April 13th.
Scott: Pepper busters wrapping up season, storm spread seed so next year will be very active. Handheld dauber used to paint cut stumps, less product and easier to carry. Sawzall and specialized blades instead of chainsaws used for cutting.

Open Discussion

- [Wish List Spreadsheet Link](#)
 To be added to with specific item name, specs, and cost (i.e. direct shopping link)
Contact Debbie to add items
- [Actionables Spreadsheet Link](#)
 - Update status of tasks
Debbie led update of action items. See details in sheet.
Member volunteer program to get members involved
Scott: More opportunities to get to know members and interests. Possible quarterly luncheons.
Trailer locations in Cedar Key not ideal. Jeri suggests maybe using just a table at Welcome Center. Scott will follow up with post office/clinic grassy strip for parking.
John T Re-open other part of River trail going over swamp on eastern side, needs minor repairs
Volunteer coordinator by Fall, Andrew wants someone for a year.
Cut back on brochures, maps in B&W instead of color, 10 things to do.
Tear off sheets for Cedar Keys? Storage shed
- Update from Andrew
Andrew: Vista cannot take limited staff resources from core management efforts.
John T need to temper enthusiasm about Vista
Andrew: Kayak launch area on water may require developing a pier
Andrew; law enforcement: Sterling has been offered management position at Lake Woodruff. Law enforcement leadership informed Andrew that refuge can wait 3 years to fill position via normal process or use station funds and supplement base salary to

get someone much sooner. Significant amount of discretionary funds will go to a salary for position that doesn't work for the refuge exclusively. Will require leadership support to move forward, do not want to set a precedent.

- Change in authorized signers for bank accounts
Linda will provide past document to Pete for updates

Adjourn 11:56 am

Votes: 10 members present

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