

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR
October 21, 2020 Monthly Board Meeting Minutes
Prepared by: Debbie Meeks

Present: none

By phone: John McPherson, Matt Chatowsky, Ed Dehaan, Bill Dummitt, Denise Feiber, Peg Hall, Joe Hand, Boyd Kimball, Linda Kimball, Dan Kline, Ginessa Mahar, Debbie Meeks, John Thalacker

Guests by phone: Andrew Gude, Larry Woodward

10am- call to order

- 1- The agenda was adopted by consensus.
- 2- The September 16, 2020 minutes were accepted.
- 3- The treasurer's report was approved. Linda discussed writing checks to the libraries before the end of the year.
- 4- Refuge report
 - a. After the first of the year, Sterling will not be under Andrew's supervision but will remain stationed at the refuge.
 - b. There have been no open houses.
 - c. The Fishbone creek fishing/viewing platform was closed to ensure public safety. If funding cannot be found to repair and replace it then it will be torn down.
 - d. Andrew and Larry are meeting with a contractor to rebuild the Shell Mound pier.
- 5- FWS Partnership Agreement and OIG Report
 - a. Peg gave a summary of the Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) report on the audit of the National Wildlife Refuge Friends program that was received shortly after the board voted to sign the FWS Partnership Agreement. The agreement has not been signed.
 - b. Peg and Debbie sent a response to the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the Coalition of Refuge Friends on behalf of the Friends. Jay sent a response as an individual.
 - c. There was an in-depth discussion.
 - d. A motion was passed unanimously to reconsider the September 16 decision to sign the FWS Partnership Agreement.
 - e. A further motion to NOT sign the FWS Partnership Agreement at this time passed by a vote of 8-5.
- 6- Project Reports and Discussions
 - a. Visitor Contact
 - i. Bill reported that the program is still shut down.
 - b. Interpretive Media and Membership
 - i. Debbie M. reported that Neon plans a price increase in May so she, Peg, Linda and Matt will evaluate other software packages.
 - c. Online Communications
 - i. Peg reported that the first News Brief since July will go out soon.
 - ii. The website is getting reduced hits possibly because links from the NewsBrief prompt visitation.
 - d. Inventory and Sales
 - i. Bill reported that there have not been any sales and there are no venues in the future.
 - e. Kite Project
 - i. No report
 - f. Pepper Busting

- i. Ed reported that Busting will start in December.
- g. Trails
 - i. John Thalacker will identify vegetation to highlight on the River Trail and the Tram Trail. He mentioned Barbara's Tram Trail report.
- h. Advocacy
 - i. Jay summarized that all the options for the toll roads are still on the table as has been reported but that 93 organizations oppose the construction based on sound environmental, needs assessments and financial feasibility reasons.
- i. Vista
 - i. John reported that we were ranked too low to have any chance for the grant we applied for to begin stabilizing the property.
 - ii. John asked for a hard copy of the Bender report and received a notebook but will ask for a nicer format. He will send the report to the family.
 - iii. The project is on hold until we see if and how the Friends relationship with FWS changes.

7- Open Discussion

- a. none

Adjourned at 11:29 am.