

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR  
September 16, 2020 Monthly Board Meeting Minutes  
Prepared by: Debbie Meeks

Present: none

By phone: John McPherson, Matt Chatowsky, Ed Dehaan, Denise Feiber, Peg Hall, Joe Hand, Debbie Jordan, Boyd Kimball, Linda Kimball, Dan Kline, Ginessa Mahar, Debbie Meeks, Travis Thomas, Barbara Woodmansee

Guests by phone: Andrew Gude

10am- call to order

- 1- The agenda was adopted by consensus.
- 2- The June minutes were accepted with a correction that Boyd Kimball will be added to the attendee list.
- 3- The treasurer's report was approved.
- 4- Project Reports and Discussions
  - a. Visitor Contact
    - i. John M. reported from Bill's emailed report- the program is still shut down.
  - b. Interpretive Media and Membership
    - i. No interpretive media projects.
    - ii. We have two new members households, one at \$100 level.
  - c. Online Communications
    - i. Peg reported that the News Brief click rate remains very high, wildlife stories being favorites
    - ii. The website received an overhaul including a new theme, homepage and pared down menus. Peg, Debbie M, Denise and Matt worked on it with feedback from a focus group of current and former board members.
  - d. Inventory and Sales
    - i. Since the Seafood Festival has been cancelled, Bill will probably wait to restock until the next event.
  - e. Kite Project
    - i. Suwannee made it to Brazil a little earlier than expected.
    - ii. The Seafood Festival was going to be a fundraising event. Other fundraising ideas were suggested including a campaign targeting life members or offering tickets for learning opportunities. Barbara offered a butterfly walk as a learning event.
  - f. Pepper Busting
    - i. Ed reported that he will be back in Cedar Key in late November to start Busting.
    - ii. Andrew announced that Vic decided not to retire so he will continue to work with the group.
  - g. Trails
    - i. Barbara's multi-biozone trail is postponed until cooler weather.
  - h. Advocacy
    - i. John M. is getting email updates from the No Roads to Ruin coalition. He will digest them and send a summary.
    - ii. Peg reported that Jay is running for a Levy County Water and Soil Commission board position.
  - i. Vista

- i. The discussion about Bender's final report was postponed to instead allow the board time to discuss the FWS partnership agreement.
- ii. The Vista report is stored in the Friends Dropbox account at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/tiurswtxlzxa0qg/Final%20Vista%20HSR.pdf?dl=0>

5- Refuge report

- a. Roads are saturated from frequent rain so mowing has slowed down. As work progresses, pollinator strips are being left un-mowed.
- b. Sterling is back from the western fires. Vic is also back but might go again. George is at Loxahatchee, Jason is at St. Marks. A new marine mammal stranding coordinator, Suzanna Mickey, has been hired.
- c. Andrew is writing the coon hunt regulations and updating the hunt plan.

6- FWS Partnership Agreement

- a. Andrew gave a short history from the FWS perspective explaining why they are insisting on it.
- b. There was in-depth discussion about how to interpret some of the wording in the document, potential problems that could arise and options for Friends if a conflict with FWS should occur. The primary focus of the discussion was on donations made to Friends, both restricted to a specific project and unrestricted such as dues. No one disagreed that the board must retain control over Friends funds and allocation decisions.
- c. The MOU examples Andrew sent were briefly discussed since they do not appear to be significantly less restrictive than the Partnership Agreement.
- d. A motion to sign the FWS Partnership Agreement was passed by a vote of 10-4.

7- Open Discussion

Adjourned at 11:45 am.