

Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges Board Meeting  
June 21, 2022

Members Present: Barbara Woodmansee, Debbie Meeks, Boyd Kimball, Linda Kimball, Peg Hall, Paul Ramey, John Thalacker, Dan Kline, Debbie Jordan, John McPherson, William Dummitt

Guests: Belinda Nettles

Representing the Refuge: Refuge Manager Andrew Gude

The meeting was called to order by President Debbie Meeks at 10 am EDT.

Linda Kimball gave a Treasurer's report. \$37244 is in Money Market, larger than normal because of the boat sale. App. \$2000 is in checking. A bill for T-shirts will be coming due soon. Member services is over budget. There was a short discussion regarding whether we should ask how our library donation is spent.

A \$100 donation for Vista was received from Ken Sulak.  
\$500 was received from the Offerles.

Refuge Report- Andrew

A QR code poster with QR codes for each Friends brochure was completed by Debbie Meeks. The Refuge will produce large plastic signs with the codes on them and post in strategic locations.

Ron Black has suggested asking Ken Sassaman to train a few volunteers to present interpretive programs at Shell Mound and schedule walks during the season.

Engineering design is complete for hydrologic restoration. UF, National Wildlife Federation, and Ducks Unlimited were involved. The refuge is also looking for state funding. Dixie has had major flooding issues. The watershed goes all the way to Cross City. The Dixie Mainline is first priority.

John Thalacker asked if the project will negatively impact oysters. Andrew explained that the plan is to restore natural balance by adding more ways for water to flow to the Gulf.

Daniel is working with the Tiger Cat to chip away at the understory to allow more planting of longleaf pine.

The refuge is very dry right now, wildfire danger is high.

Barbara Woodmansee has received a grant for gas expenses to do butterfly surveys on the refuge and is looking for help.

3 or 4 dead poached gators were found on the Mainline. No parts were taken, just a wanton waste of wildlife.

The Fishbone Creek project is slowly but surely nearing completion.

Boyd introduced Andrew to Thomas Griffin, who works with Birddog Boats, who produce boats for handicap access, and may be useful in some of the refuges' special programs. Peg mentioned that they were written up in the Trail Association newsletter.

Samantha Gibbs gave a short presentation on the Andrews property on the way into CK. The Florida Nature Coast Conservancy may have an interest in acquiring that property. It is listed with Nature Coast realty. It has direct water access. Cedar Key Scrub property is to the north.

#### Vista

Belinda Nettles discussed the special category grant that was recently funded. A contract is needed by fall. It is a 2 year grant, completion must be by June 30, 2024. The Cook House will be the first priority-roof and window replacement. The boat will be second priority, but we are not required to fund the boat if they Cook House absorbs all the money. John McPherson moved to accept the grant and sign the contract. Debbie Meeks seconded. The motion passed unanimously. We will be required to provide \$15000 in cash or in-kind contributions. Most of this will be funded from the \$11,500 boat sale. The money must be encumbered with an architect by Sept. 30. Belinda will send out requests for proposals.

John Mcpherson will attempt to find a single buyer for the remaining items at the Vista site that need disposal. John and the refuge team will determine what items should be kept there. Franklin Percival will be asked for his opinion since he is knowledgeable about antiques.

#### Mobile Welcome Trailer

Debbie Meeks is working on a quote for a trailer. It could have an ADA accessible bathroom attached that could be used with the refuge dump station. Will probably need to apply for a grant to make this a reality.

#### Merchandising

Boyd reported that \$1700 in new T-shirts are on the way with our Trees design. The women's long sleeve was shorted by the supplier – had to reorder with a V neck design. Some lightweight hoodies were included in the order.

#### Swallowtail kite Project

A second Swallowtail Kite has been tagged by Gina Kent's team at ARCI. The team requested a donation and suggested anything over \$1000. Bill Dummitt moved to commit \$1500, seconded by Peg Hall. The motion passed unanimously after a lengthy discussion.

Debbie Meeks has been in touch with Mark Elliot from the Florida Native Plant society regarding a possible November field trip on the refuge. Discussed whether and how to respond to their request.

Barbara Woodmansee offered to lead a butterfly work before the September board meeting.

Holding a river cleanup was discussed. The benefits and drawbacks of holding our own at Fowlers Bluff or partnering with the Suwannee Chamber were discussed. It was decided to partner with Suwannee which is typically in March.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

Submitted by William Dummitt