

**Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge
February 15, 2022 Board Meeting**

Members present: President Peg Hall, Linda Kimball, Boyd Kimball, Ginessa Mahar, Debbie Meeks, Denise Feiber, Barbara Woodmansee, Joe Hand, Dan Kline, Matt Chatowski, Debbie Jordan, Ed DeHaan, Bill Dummitt. John Stark represented the refuge staff.

The agenda and treasurer's report were accepted by voice vote; the minutes of the previous meeting needed a correction regarding the bank balance.

Refuge Report- John Stark

Covid has affected much of the staff, including John's whole family.

Burning will begin as early as Feb 16 around the refuge office. It will be a teaching module for fire fighting students.

Four open houses at Seahorse Key have been scheduled for 2022.

Pepper Busters are being reevaluated due to Vic's retirement. There are some practical issues which will require a solution to continue. Vic was licensed to procure chemicals, hence someone else would have to be licensed. Chemicals were purchased with FWS money. Classes must be completed to be licensed. Most volunteers are seasonal.

Question from Ed DeHaan- How is biological control working? Not sure an answer is available.

Comment by Peg Hall- Pepper busting has been part of Friends and staff collaboration since 2003.

New Officers: Peg (representing the nominating committee) moved to temporarily install the slate of officers presented at the January meeting, pending formal election at the annual meeting. The motion was seconded by Ed DeHaan. The motion passed by voice vote. The recommended slate of officers is:

President Debbie Meeks
President-elect Ginessa Mahar
Past President Peg Hall
Treasurer Linda Kimball
Secretary Bill Dummitt

The slate of officers will be presented for formal election at the annual meeting.

Fishbone Creek Project: University of California professor Sam Sweet had condemned the work on Fishbone Creek on social media and demanded Andrew Gude's firing. Most of this was on his own social media- there was much less discussion on ours. Friends replied to Mr. Sweet's comments on our website by supporting the Refuge Manager and his decisions regarding the road work.

Following discussion at this meeting, there was consensus that we wanted to also express concern about the impact of the road work on the public's support for the Refuges. A following motion was made by Barbara Woodmansee, seconded by Joe Hand, and passed by voice vote. Motion: *The Board of Directors will express its concern to the Refuge Manager about damage to the habitat and aesthetics of Refuge roads when necessary upgrades occur.*

Zoom Equipment: Virtual meetings have been held to date using Peg's equipment. Debbie doesn't own any. Equipment will cost about \$700 for laptop, microphone, camera, and speakers. Linda reported that

\$1400 is budgeted for administrative costs. The group agreed by consensus to spend the money. Some additional administrative money may be required in the budget later.

Annual Meeting: Per John Stark, approval at the DC level would be required to have a meeting with more than 50 people. We would expect 75-100 using our usual format. There was a discussion of ways to set up to allow social distancing. Matt can provide sound system. Still need porta-potties. Peg: We will need all hands on deck for the annual meeting.

The new **Butterfly Book** will use a single butterfly on the front cover and a collage on the rear cover. May want electronic version eventually but will start with print. Barbara W may do a butterfly walk the week of the annual meeting.

The group approved reprinting Barnett Creek brochures.

\$200 was appropriated for shelving for the shed to better organize Friends brochures, etc.

Debbie Jordan is building a new house and will need to hand off Merchandising.

There was a brief discussion of how to handle membership types in the future. No action was taken.

Jay Bushnell reported that a meeting about opposing toll roads will take place in Chiefland later this week. Jay has an opinion piece in the Gainesville Sun this week also.

The meeting adjourned before noon.