

**Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
October 18, 2022 Board Meeting**

Members Present: Debbie Meeks, Bill Dummitt, Peg Hall, GiNESSA Mahar, John McPherson, Dan Kline, Paul Ramey, Denise Feiber, Linda Kimball, Boyd Kimball

Treasurer's report (Linda Kimball) \$2320.11 in checking not including recent festival sales. The Seafood festival sales take us to over \$4000 in sales for the year. The financial report was accepted by voice vote.

Vista (John McPherson) An issue has arisen regarding architectural services for the cook house window and roof replacement. Our grant is for \$75000 and the state only allows for 10% for architecture and engineering, or \$7500. We have bids from Bender for \$36000 and LOCI for \$20,500. John is searching for a way to proceed.

No refuge representatives were available. The following written report was provided by refuge manager Andrew Gude:

Daniel is mulching and herbiciding. If you drive around the HQ and the north end of the Nature Drive you will be impressed with the understory which is close to our "desired conditions".

Jason fixed the Shell Mound Road. The Nature Drive grading is next.
Salt Creek Road is open but we still need to do work.
Otter Sink is being cleared of debris and will be opened soon.

Archery season ended last weekend and muzzleloader starts this weekend.

John and Dan are at a Feral Hog Workshop today.

Cynthia Barnett is at Seahorse with a class this weekend and Andrew will try and meet them Sunday to talk about loss of islands and sea level rise.

Daniel received funding for forestry replanting from the recently passed bill that funds wildfire fuels reduction.

Rick and Robin (camper volunteers) arrive next week.

We're getting a new storage shed where the Friends keep their stuff. Refuge staff will move the Friends items out of the old shed and into the new.

Debbie Meeks suggested sending food to the staff as thanks for doing this.

Visitor Contact Trailer (Bill Dummitt)- internet listings suggest a price of \$10k to \$20k for a 12 to 16 foot concession trailer without inside amenities. Everyone agreed we need a trailer with a side window and a rear window. Bill will try to get a quote for such a trailer.

The draft Junior Ranger workbook was shown and discussed. Reaction was positive.

Peg Hall reported on the Seahorse Key open house that she attended. Attendance was good.

Barbara Woodmansee's butterfly walk had about 14 people, it was a beautiful day and 23 species of butterflies were sighted.

Festival Report (Boyd Kimball) – the festival was very successful, bringing in over \$1319.45. This is considerably more than our norm. 47 men's Trees t-shirts were sold. There was a long discussion of types of performance fabric available and their relative pros and cons. All agreed the double booth was very helpful. Debbie Meeks reported that the survey she created asking people who already use the refuge what improvements they would like to see was a good way to engage people and we should consider making it a permanent part of our booth. Some good ideas resulted such as dark sky events at Shell Mound.

Andrew Gude is addressing the Native Plant society on Nov 16 at the Universalist church in Gainesville. There was a discussion of a walk on the refuge with the Native Plant Society. After discussion of several options a walk from Gate 14 to Fletcher's Landing was favored. The walk will be at 10am on November 19.

The board's trip to Wakulla Lodge January 12-14 was discussed, as well as the jungle cruise.

A discussion of cell service on the refuge and visitor complaints reached no good conclusions, other than to complain to our service providers. Debbie reported that Congressman Neal Dunn's office responded to her complaint about poor broadband service on the refuge. The refuge has to respond. Debbie asked Jay Bushnell to write about his poor service hoping some action will result. John M. said CFEC hinted they will offer broadband to their customers, no one knows when that might happen.

Addition of Jeri Treat to the board immediately was discussed. A Motion by John McPherson, seconded by Ginessa Mahar, passed by voice vote unanimously.

A discussion of selling the Swoop and Soar book on the online store concluded that the margin was too small. It sells for \$16.95 on Amazon.

The group recommended that we should offer some things at a discount for Christmas. Boyd will make recommendations.

There was a discussion about whether the online store is worth the additional \$156 we pay Weebly for the capability. Sales are less than \$800 so far this year but the Christmas sale should make it worthwhile.

It was decided to make a wishlist on the website to attract possible year-end giving. Debbie's draft page was discussed.

Peg Hall gave an online communications report- the full report is on Dropbox. The importance of our Facebook account was emphasized. Ginessa Mahar offered to post to Facebook if we send her content.

A winter Solstice event on Dec 21 was discussed, but no firm plans were made.

The meeting was adjourned before 12pm.