

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Wednesday, October 30, 2013

Board Members Present: Jay Bushnell, John McPherson, Maria Sgambati, Bob Hudson, Peg Hall, Russ Hall, Greg Lang, Jennifer Seavey, Jerry Salamon, Roger McDaniel. By phone: Jane Connors.

Staff: Andrew Gude.

1. The meeting was convened at 10:04 a.m. by Jay Bushnell, Chair. Jay asked each to talk about a good experience in the Refuge over the last 30 days. A variety of experiences were reported.

2. Minutes from the September 25, 2013 meeting.

Motion to accept: Bob Hudson. **Second:** Russ Hall. Correction “shed” not “new shed.” Passed by unanimous vote.

3. Treasurer’s report. (Attached)

Motion to accept: Bob Hudson. **Second:** Peg Hall. Passed by unanimous vote.

4. Nominating Committee.-Jay, Bob, and Peg (Paul Dietrich is the non board member)

A. Peg Hall, Russ Hall, Carmelo Echeverria, Richard Herman, John McPherson, Jerry Salamon, John Thalacker, Maria Sgambati, terms are up. Jay Bushnell reported that the committee has been meeting and is checking with the above to see if they want to continue on the Board. Jerry said he would like to go off. Others will get back to Jay.

B. Jane Connors said she would try to find representation from the Town of Suwannee. Jay Bushnell discussed the need for president-elect.

5. Refuge update-Andrew

A. Paving project is moving ahead. Will be finished this weekend.

B. St. Marks, Lower Suwannee, Crystal River, are now a “complex” for budgetary purposes. Lower Suwannee has \$30,000 discretionary funds for this year, but don’t get to keep salaries of positions that are not filled. Lower Suwannee will not be too badly impacted by cuts. No organization chart for the “complex” has been shown yet.

- C. Staff evaluations have been completed and things are going very well with staff morale, etc.
- D. Big Bend conservation project is progressing, but have to be politically careful. Most interested parties are supportive of the focus on sustainable natural resource economies. It is community driven and that will help get it approved. May need Friends help. Conservation Fund is very much involved.
- E. Hunting season is in full swing. Had some trouble with gates getting destroyed during the government closure.
- F. Cooperators' luncheon coming up on December 5. Andrew wants to make sure all the Board members are invited.
- G. Andrew wants to build support for the Refuge by bringing people in and showing them a good time. Asked the Board for suggestions as to who to invite for experiences.
- H. Andrew met with Lynetta Griner with Usher Timber. She is going to be important supportive local person.
- I. Andrew is going to China for 3 weeks to look at wetlands management. Part of an annual exchange with China. He will be working on bringing a Chinese delegation to Florida, and would like to have the Friends group involved.

Motion by Bob Hudson to provide Friends gifts to Andrew for trip.
Second by Greg Lang. Passed by a unanimous vote.

6. Initiative reports

- A. Written report submitted by Bob Hudson. (Attached)
- B. Survey of North Key (Bioblitz). Russ Hall and Jennifer Seavey met and discussed what role the Friends could play. Main role will be facilitator in providing 3 types of helpers: Boat owners, fill holes in naturalist expertise, and logistics: cooking, cleaning, etc. Dates: Feb 1 and 2, 2014. Goal is to increase information about what's on the islands. Most work to be done by UF scientists, rather than a general public bioblitz. Goal is to do a different island each winter.
- C. Brazilian Pepper (BP) removal. Roger McDaniel reported that BP training will take place at Refuge headquarters on November 12 for training, and then to the Lukens tract for BP removal. All supplies are available. Andrew reported on how much Refuge staff go beyond their job descriptions to support and improve the Refuge.

Motion to have Friends send letter in support of Kenny McCain's nomination as Refuge Employee of the year: Bob Hudson. **Second** by Jerry Salamon. Passed by a unanimous vote.

- D. Seahorse Key Educational Field Trip. Jay Bushnell reported that organizing committee met and discussed the trip on November 13 and 14. The overnight is full, and all is ready to go.
 - E. Artist Initiative. Jay Bushnell wanted to know if Vista could be used as a venue for artists. Andrew will work on it. There was discussion of how the various parts of the Refuge can be used as artist venues.
 - F. 2014 Planning. Russ reported that the budget committee met and worked on a draft budget. Need Andrew's input, and then will prepare a budget to send out.
 - G. Dixie County Enhancements. Jane Connors reported that work is being done on kiosk regarding cost and location. She would like a pad of tear-off panels for Suwannee paddle trips.
- 7. Communications report. Peg Hall submitted written report (attached) and discussed issues relating to electronic communications.
 - 8. Inventory Report. Carmelo reported (through Jay) that he hasn't completed the inventory, and asked that Jay take the lead for the time-being. Jay agreed to take the lead.
 - 9. Budget Committee. Bob Hudson reported that the committee has met and the budget is being prepared.
 - 10. Membership form evaluation/update. Jay asked board to meet in 3s to determine who is the tallest, and with person to the left will be the recorder. A series of questions was provided to each group with the goal being to figure out how to use the membership form to improve outreach to members. Discussion about how the membership form could be improved. Basic consensus is that we need to figure out how we're going to use the information on the form and then tailor the form to collect relevant information. Jay's summary:
 - A. Lump categories together.
 - B. Get rid of irrelevant categories.
 - C. Think about how the information will be used.
 - D. Find out if people want to lead or learn within the various categories.

11. Old business

- A. Suwannee River Cleanup. Scheduled for December 7. Jay Bushnell questioned whether there is a need for a big event this year because he's not seeing much trash. Russ Hall suggested that it's a good outreach that goes beyond just picking up trash. The suggestion was made to possibly focus on the islands, rather than the river. Jay will do more looking at whether a cleanup is needed. We'll put in the News Brief and then modify if necessary.
- B. Florida Master Naturalist. Jay Bushnell would like to have the classes come and use the Refuge classroom. Refuge would need to sponsor. Jay will do more work on this.

12. New Business

Annual meeting date. Has been in March last few years. Jay Bushnell suggested that move it to February. May get better participation; but Peg Hall noted how cold it had been at some of the February meetings. Set for February 22. Donna Bushnell will take care of the silent auction.

13. Next Board meeting: November 22, 10 a.m. at the Community Center in Town of Suwannee. All Friends members will be invited and provided with lunch. There will be a paddling event afterwards. Discussion about how lunch will be provided—Jane will check with Salt Creek restaurant about having lunch. It was pointed out that we have \$250 in the budget for Dixie County outreach and it was agreed that this could be used to provide lunch. Dixie County administrator and county commission should be invited to lunch. Board will go early (9 a.m.) to explore kiosk sites. Members to be invited to lunch, and to the Board meeting if they are interested.

14. Adjourn: 12:25 p.m.

Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys NWRs			
Treasurer's Report			
For the Period January 1 thru October 27, 2013			
Cash Receipts			year to date
Memberships			3677.86
Donations (includes \$20 deposit for Seahorse event)			2,851.00
Sales (includes \$75 in paddling panels)			968.00
Total cash receipts			7,496.86
Cash Disbursements			
support lower suwannee & cedar key nwr			
Annual meeting			677.98
Communications			902.26
Butterfly garden plants			32.00
Festival fees			25.00
River walk signs			51.73
Friends of the Cedar Key Library			100.00
Paddling Project			367.82
sub-total			2,156.79
support refuge-initiated activities			
Barnett Trail Guides			18.00
Luncheon for volunteers			141.88
Interagency Cooperators Meeting			263.84
sub-total			423.72
support National Wildlife Refuge System			
NWR Association Membership			150.00
sub-total			150.00
administrative & fundraising support			
Purchase inventory			142.66
Florida Department of Revenue			71.83
Florida Department of State			61.25
sub-total			275.74
Total cash disbursements			3,006.25
Excess of receipts over disbursements			4,490.61
Cash Balance 12/31/2012			14,731.09
Cash Balance 10/27/2013			19,221.70
The cash balance consists of two components			
Operating fund		8,487.41	
Long term reserve		10,734.29	
Total		19,221.70	
Note: Long term reserve at 12/31/2012		8,734.29	
Budget committee recommended transfer		2,000.00	
Long term reserve at 10/27/2013		10,734.29	

Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Key NWRs			
Actual Versus Budget			
Through October 27, 2013			
Cash Receipts		Actual-10/27	Budgetted
Memberships		3,677.86	2,500.00
Donations		2,851.00	2,500.00
Sales		968.00	1,000.00
Total cash receipts		7,496.86	6,000.00
Cash Disbursements		Actual-10/27	Budgetted
support lower suwannee & cedar key nwrs			
Annual meeting (food, supplies, honorarium)		677.98	500.00
Communications		902.26	800.00
Great Suwannee River Cleanup			150.00
Butterfly garden		32.00	50.00
Festival fees		25.00	100.00
Other (River Walk Signs)		51.73	300.00
Friends of the Cedar Key Library		100.00	
2013 Initiatives			
Art			250.00
Dixie County Friends			250.00
Education			100.00
Paddling Project		367.82	1,500.00
FL Big Bend Science Symposium			500.00
Sub-total		2,156.79	4,500.00
support refuge-initiated activities			
Interagency Cooperators Meeting		263.84	500.00
Refuge summer program (2013)			250.00
Luncheon for volunteers		141.88	
2013 Initiatives			
Dixie County Refuge expansion			50.00
Nature Coast Conservancy			250.00
Inventories/survey Refuge Biodata			50.00
Shell Mound Enhancements			750.00
River Trail Accesibility			100.00
Refuge Restoration Projects			
Refuge Trail Guides (Barnett guides)		18.00	200.00
Vista Property Conservation Planning			1,000.00
sub-total		423.72	
support national wildlife system			
NWR Association Membership		150.00	150.00
sub-total		150.00	150.00
administrative & fundraising support			
Purchase of inventory		142.66	
Florida Department of Revenue		71.83	100.00
Florida Department of State		61.25	100.00
sub-total		275.74	200.00
Total cash disbursements		3,006.25	

Communications Report October 2013 by Peg Hall

New Friends Brochure

News Brief

October 14

The Ibis, Seahorse Key Workshop & Open House, Seafood Festival Help Needed, BioBlitz, Visitors, Hidden Coast Paddling Festival, Board Mtg, Advocacy

- **This News Brief went to 410 people (153 of whom are current members)**
- **44% opened the email (including 91 of the current members)**
- **This is the same % as last had opened the last one at the time of the Board meeting. 3% more opened it after that.**

Facebook

21 new fan since last report = 173

6 new posts since the last report

- **43 people saw the 2 posts about the Hidden Coast Paddling Festival**
- **15 people saw a Seahorse Key Marine Lab post I shared on our site**
- **18 people saw an Alachua Audubon post I shared on our site about birding in the Lower Suwannee NWR**
- **124 people saw the News Brief post**
- **130 people saw the post about the Seafood Festival Booth**

Friends Website

- **Pageviews in September = 1,841**
- **Pageviews in August = 1,541**

Paddling Website

- **Pageviews in October = 1,077**
- **Pageviews in August = 284 (still the old site design)**

Friends of the Refuges – 2013 Initiatives Update – October 29, 2013

Initiative & Champions(Friends/Refuge)	Status
Art - Ann Kamzelski, Ed, Mark/Pam, Andrew	<p>The purpose is to showcase the diversity and beauty of the Refuges. 18 individuals have been invited to prepare artistic representations of the Refuges in any media, which will be exhibited at the CK Arts Center next March. Jay Bushnell has taken 8-10 people into the Refuge behind the gates.</p>
Dixie County Enhancements- Jane, Linda Headley, Leroy Harmon /Pam, Larry	<p>Linda Headley reports the Master Gardeners will have tables at farmers markets in Old Town and Cross City this fall where they will distribute info about the Refuge. A series of monthly events is being planned for Suwannee in the fall.</p> <p>Jane reported that a site for a kiosk in Suwannee has been identified, and that the State has indicated it will maintain the area around the kiosk. The town of Suwannee has committed to paying for the materials. Jane stated that she is looking at alternative sources for kiosks.</p> <p>Andrew Gude reports that activities by Refuge staff to enhance Dixie County area of the Refuge have included trail development, cleanups, road improvements, and planning of Dixie County activities.</p> <p>10/29/13 Update from Jane:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like to make a fuller report at the November meeting in Suwannee, when I would like the Board to physically go to and look at the proposed site for a new kiosk. • I have more interest in the paddling panels that we have at the Tech Center in Suwannee. • I definitely want to continue this initiative into next year. • The following comes from Friends member Linda Headley who is helping with the initiative: The Dixie Chicks Master Gardeners are starting up our Fall edition of Saturdays at Old Town Hardware, handing out gardening/plant information and answering questions. I will also have a small table with the Refuge Information on the days that I am there.
Dixie County Refuge Expansion- Greg, Jane, Carol West/Andrew	<p>Andrew Gude reports that a plan has been prepared and submitted to create a Big Bend Conservation Area, for sustainable economic purposes. The plan is being considered at higher HQ and included expansion of the Refuge. While not a Friends group initiative, it is consistent with, and supportive of, this Friends initiative. Andrew reports he is working with various Federal agencies and universities, and has applied for a \$1 million grant for planning work. Andrew reports that staff is working with willing landowners and other partners to explore ways in which to engage conservation easements that benefit FWS trust species and ecosystem components.</p>
Education Enhancements- Donna B./Pam, Kenny (CK)	<p>The educational experience at CK Light Station is scheduled for Nov 13/14. An announcement/invitation was made to all members of the Friends of Refuges. Ten overnights and six daily participants have scheduled. Dr. Jennifer Seavey has planned on site lectures and educational activities. At the August 23 board meeting the Friends group board approved the following principles for selecting participants:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizers of the event will participate, namely Jennifer Seavey and Donna Bushnell • The president of the Friends group, or his designee, will participate to represent the Friends group • The remaining slots will be offered to all members of the Friends group, and each applicant shall have an equal chance to participate. The Education Committee is authorized to determine the methodology for selecting participants if there are more applicants than slots, so long as every member has an equal chance of being selected to participate. <p>For additional educational activities, Donna Bushnell is working with Ranger Pam Darty to correlate lesson plans with State Science Standards then meet with school Principals to discuss what the Refuges have to offer students.</p> <p>Additionally, Donna plans to set up educational experiences involving families in Spring 2014.</p>
Nature Coast Conservancy Cedar Key Marshes- Jerry, John M./Andrew	Dialogue is underway regarding a management agreement between the Nature Coast Conservancy and the Refuges.
Paddling Project- Mark, Jane/Andrew, Larry	<p>Jennifer Seavey reports that Seahorse Key Marine Lightstation is available for field trips for the paddling festival. Andrew reports the Refuge is supporting the Nature Coast Paddling Festival in Cedar Key through planning, logistics, and staff.</p> <p>At the August 23 board meeting, it was agreed to authorize the Paddling Committee to prepare and distribute “tear off” sheets of paddling trails and one plasticized sheet to interested agencies, such as paddling clubs, chambers of commerce, etc. Peg has updated the paddling website, with downloadable .pdf files of paddling trails. She has obtained bids for printing tear off pads of paddling trails, and a printer has been selected.</p>
Refuge Restoration- Roger/Daniel, Kenny	<p>A grant for invasive species eradication has been funded in the amount of \$9,850. All funds have been expended on equipment and supplies, which are in storage at the Refuge. Next step is to train volunteers and begin eradication efforts on the Lukens tract.</p> <p>BP training will be on Nov 12 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Refuge Center. Following training, the group will go to the tract and begin treating plants.</p>
River Trail Enhancements- John T./Kenny	Laminated sheets about the trail are available at the Refuge office. A volunteer will make a sign for the trail head in the fall. The goal is to improve the River Trail so it is ADA compliant including rebuilding existing board walks.
Science-Florida’s Big Bend Science Symposia- Russ/Andrew	Andrew reported there is a possibility of a fall meeting focusing on the watershed.
Science-Refuge Biota- Russ, Jennifer/Larry, Daniel, Vic	<p>Jennifer reports: Working on funding for a citizen science program in partnership with the Refuge. Planning to offer FL Master Nat Programs at SKML- not qualifying programs but extra field trips. A BioBlitz of the SKML and</p>

North Key in the winter is being planned, which will need volunteers.

Jennifer reported the following on Sep 17: "I am working on an invitation for Friends members so please stay tuned for that. I will have Bioblitz data on the SKML website soon- but I DO have species list for Seahorse from the past up there now- to give an idea what can be found and where data will be stored for the general public and refuge use. <http://skml.clas.ufl.edu/natural-human-history/species-list/>. We will have a new spot on the website for each island. As far as I know, this will be the first official survey of North Key. Note: this was confirmed by Pam Darty.

Jennifer provided further detail on Sep 24:

What: SKML BioBlitz 2014 is a weekend event in which teams of volunteer scientists and community members work together to find and identify as many species of plants, animals, and other organisms as possible. We will have photographers available to document species and the event.

Goals Include:

- Discover, count, map, and learn about the living creatures on North Key.
- Provide scientists and the public an opportunity to do fieldwork together.
- Add to the NWR official species list.
- Highlight the importance of protecting the biodiversity of these extraordinary places and beyond.

Where:

North Key: One of the largest islands with in the Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge. This island is designated as a Wilderness Area and thus, access to the island's interior is closed. We have been granted access to conduct this bioblitz. Biological information on North Key is sorely lacking and all information gathered will be shared with the National Wildlife Refuge for their management purposes. For more information on this special place, see: <http://www.fws.gov/cedarkeys/>

When:

Feb 1 & 2. Arrive sat at 6am or Sat at noon (optional friday night arrival)

Leave Sunday at noon or 5pm

Accommodations: Seahorse Key Marine Laboratory on Seahorse Key

Meals: TBD

Transportation to SKML and North Key provided by SKML

	<p><u>Summary: October BioBlitz Meeting: Attending: Jennifer Seavey, Jay Bushnell, Peg Hall, Russ Hall</u></p> <p>1. Jennifer explained that her primary goals for the North Key BioInventory are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Support the Cedar Key National Wildlife Refuge with scientifically rigorous species inventory data for inclusion in their upcoming Comprehensive Conservation Plan b) Build support for the Seahorse Key Marine Lab (SKML) by encouraging working scientists to use its facilities and to build the knowledge base available to investigators. <p>She welcomes limited and targeted opportunities for Friends members to participate in this activity. Participation might include boat owners, meal providers, and some experienced naturalists to assist in rounding out species searches and/or research groups. Jennifer will identify gaps in expertise that might possibly be filled by Friends members. By some yet undetermined process, the Friends will attempt to identify possible matches (this might include putting out a call for volunteers that list very specific task/skills needed).</p> <p>2. We discussed other options for Friend's Science programs, among them a BioBlitz type event on Atsena Otie Key, surveys for mole skinks on various islands, and working together to develop a variety of Citizen Science programs (such as long-term hydrologic/vegetation change data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. seek grant support from Friends' funding sources for projects (Brazilian Pepper Surveys post Refuge eradication actions, other invasive species surveys), and b. serve as cooperators on SKML scientists' grant proposals when this will improve chances of funding, and also to enable recipients to efficiently meet the public outreach requirements of grants from NSF and other agencies.
<p>Shell Mound Visitor Enhancements-Ron Black, Ken Sassaman/Larry, Pam, Andrew</p>	<p>The goal is to improve access/interpretation at this prime NWR archaeological site. Secure approval and clear village site of vegetation; develop information for kiosk working with Dr. Sassaman.</p>
<p>Trail Guides Initiative-Donna T./Pam, Andrew</p>	
<p>Vista Property Conservation Planning-Kirby/Andrew</p>	