

**Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Thursday, February 19, 2015**

Present:

Board Members: Ed DeHaan, John Thalacker, Bob Hudson, John McPherson, Bill Kilborn, Greg Lang, Libby Cagle, Roger McDaniels, Peg Hall, Carmelo Echevarria, Debbie Meeks, Ed DeHaan, Sherry Beauchamp.

Refuge Staff: Andrew Gude.

Guests: Bill Dummitt; Kit Lane.

1. The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. by Bob Hudson, President.
2. Approval of Minutes. **Motion** by Peg Hall to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2015, as submitted. **Second** by John Thalacker. Passed by unanimous vote.
3. Refuge Update. Andrew Gude reported the following:
 - A. The controlled burning and tree planting program has been ongoing over the winter months.
 - B. After Pam Darty's retirement, he may not be able to re-fill that position.
 - C. A great deal of his time, as complex manager, is being spent on the Crystal River manatee issues.
 - D. He has continued to work on the Big Bend Conservation Area.
 - E. He suggested that with the staffing issues confronting the Refuge, it might be helpful to have volunteer help from the Friends, such as by manning the front desk.
 - F. Larry Woodward is taking training for use of the state radio system.
 - G. Vic Doig will be doing the spring bird count.
4. Initiatives Update. A written initiatives update is attached. Also:
 - A. Roger McDaniels reported that he will be traveling for 5 weeks, and would like to have someone fill in on the pepper eradication by pulling the trailer to the work

site. Ed DeHaan said he may be able to help. It was agreed that there should probably be more publicity about the pepper eradication work.

- B. John Thalacker reported that he is very happy with the work that the Refuge has done on the River Trail and urged Board members to check it out. A couple of benches will be built before the annual meeting.
 - C. John Thalacker reported that he had talked to Charlie Miller about the Vista houseboat. The inside is not too bad, but one corner has completely deteriorated away. This area was covered with a tarp to stop the leaking. There is quite a lot of dry rot that needs to be repaired. It was agreed that the next step would be for Andrew Gude to contact the Cedar Key boat builders about what needs to be done. The Vista family will be coming to the annual meeting so we can talk to them about the property at that time.
 - D. Debbie Meeks reported that there had been a meeting on the Dixie Trail, and that since most of the proposed trail is under water, the idea is to build a shorter trail to a big freshwater pond close to the parking area, with an overlook at the pond. She will be getting the cost for the overlook, and looking into the possibility of another trail--Beaver Dam Road--which is always dry and is ready to go--mostly for biking.
- 5. Board Meeting Schedule. It was agreed to continue to have Friends Board meetings on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 10 a.m.
 - 6. Friends Booth at Cedar Key Old Florida Celebration of the Arts. Greg Lang will call Allen Pither about whether he will be in charge. Carmelo Echevarria will do the sales. Set up will be on Friday, March 27, with the booth open on the 28th and 29th.
 - 7. 2015 Annual Meeting. It was agreed that the schedule as proposed was fine, with the addition of a slide showing financials for the past year. Maria Sgambati agreed to introduce the speaker, Dr. Coleman Sheehy. Bob Hudson stated that the setup will be on Friday starting at 9 a.m., and that the silent auction will be in the Refuge Headquarters with bigger items on the porch. Everyone agreed that Carmelo should lower the prices to encourage sale of the inventory. Carmelo asked about putting FWS Duck Stamp Prints on sale. It was agreed that they should be put on foam core and priced at \$50-\$60.
 - 8. Reports and Updates:
 - A. Treasurer's Report. Libby Cagle provided a written report which is attached. She requested that funds from different sources at the annual meeting be kept separate. John McPherson agreed to do the research on whether sales tax needed to be collected on the silent auction sales.

- B. Communications and Publications Committee Report. Peg Hall provided a written report which is attached, and she went over the report at the meeting.
- C. Invasive Species Eradication Committee. Roger McDaniels reported that the group had finished with the Andrews tract, and is now working on the Lukens tract. (With regard to the Lukens Tract, Andrew Gude reported that the Refuge is having trouble with the owners of the out-parcel and that is he thinking about turning the property back over to the water management district.)
- D. Membership. Marci Wilcox reported by email that the membership records are up to date.
- E. Education. Maria Sgambati reported that there will be a one-week coastal summer camp for students, and asked whether the Board would be willing to sponsor one student at a cost of \$750. The Board asked her to bring back a proposal at the next meeting.
- F. Cedar Key Pavilion. Bob Hudson reported that the Cedar Key Building Official got involved, but that everything has been worked out and Virgil Sandlin has given the go-ahead.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

2014 Projects/Initiatives – As of Oct. 16, 2014 (Note: Updates per January 15, 2015, board meeting are shown in red font)	Actions Needed in 2014	2013 Budget Allocation	Friends Champion(s)	LSCKNWR Champion(s)
Art: work with local artists to highlight artistic values of the refuges (exhibition? competition?)	Develop an art day at refuges including inducements for artists’ participation? Maria is planning another “Artists in Residence” experience at Seahorse Key Marine Lab to help create an interface between science and art. An announcement about the artist will be made October.	\$250	Ann Kamzelski, Ed DeHaan	1. Pam Darty 2. Andrew Gude
Dixie County Enhancements – improve visibility of refuges and participation of locals in refuge activities	Membership drive; activities (e.g. Dixie Mainline cleanup); , etc. The kiosks at both ends of the Dixie Mainline have been turned and the new panels have been installed.	\$250	Debbie Meeks	1. Pam Darty 2. Larry Woodward
Dixie County Refuge Expansion – planning; negotiating easements with large landowners	Work with Andrew to identify, approach, and negotiate with key stakeholders. Andrew reported that the lead agency is SRWMD Larry reported that work is progressing.	\$50	Greg Lang	Andrew Gude
Education Enhancements – improve outreach to schools; bring students to the refuges	Develop a series of educational events at the refuges targeted at children, families, and seniors. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Children’s paddling grant proposal? Maria hosted a Levy County teacher science initiative at SK Marine Lab on May 9. Purpose was to introduce middle and high school biology teachers to the Marine Lab so they will build the lab into their curriculum. Maria is working on a grant proposal for children’s educational programs at the Marine Lab. Discussion w/Larry of possible Friends support of a 4H clubs partnership that is being developed. Maria reported on grant funding from Federal EPA to State of Florida, which could “jump start” education in Levy County for the Marine Science Program at Seahorse Key Marine Lab.	\$100	Sherry Beauchamp, Maria Sgambati	Pam Darty
Gateway Signage	Work with community leaders to develop signage highlighting the key asset role of refuges.	\$250	John McPherson	Andrew Gude

	<p>John reported that work an Interagency Agreement between the Nature Coast Conservancy and the LSNWR has been approved by the NCC. The Agreement would bring Section 29 within the Refuge and arrange for appropriate signage.</p>			
<p>Paddling Project – Develop new paddling routes; panels</p>	<p>Keep friends informed of needs; develop Cedar Key guides, distribute guides to community outlets.</p> <p>Debbie reported that Jane Connors at the Suwannee Tech Center has received tear sheets for the 7 paddles near Suwannee. She is advertising around Suwannee that they are available. John reported that he will talk to Millie about developing paddling maps for Cedar Key paddles.</p>	\$1,500	Russ & Peg Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Andrew Gude 2. Larry Woodward
<p>Refuge Restoration Projects: invasive species removal, tree planting, etc.</p>	<p>Identify projects; coordinate volunteers; disseminate information.</p> <p>Roger reported that a huge number of Brazilian Pepper bushes have been removed from the Refuge, with many volunteers participating. Roger submitted a grant proposal to FWS. Larry reported that a State of Florida grant is possible. Eradication work will resume this fall. (Note: It was subsequently reported on May 15 that \$8,000 in grant funds had been awarded by FWS.)</p> <p>Larry reported that restoration of long leaf pine and possibly red cedars will be undertaken in large areas using machine planting. Roger reported that the tools and trailer purchased with grant funds is working out well and additional volunteers are being sought for pepper busting.</p> <p>Refuge staff are applying for permission to take invasive species removal to State lands adjacent to the Refuge due to their spread into the Refuge. Roger reported that the invasive species volunteers will be working on the Andrews tract through April or May, which is very dense.</p>	TBD	Roger McDaniels	?

<p>River Trail Enhancements – Friends may be able to leverage significant funds for ADA compliance.</p>	<p>Identify potential sources of outside funding; develop conceptual plan Andrew reported that a former tram road is under construction as a trail that will run from the River Trail to Fowler’s Bluff, and will loop back to the River Trail. Refuge will be acquiring a skid steer loader soon that is expected to assist with trail construction and maintenance.</p> <p>John reported that he is working with Refuge staff to cut out Cypress knees and roots invading the trail.</p>	<p>\$100</p>	<p>John Thalacker</p>	<p>?</p> <p>A Refuge staff champion to work with John is needed. Larry will follow up.</p>
<p>Science – Inventories and Surveys of Refuge Biota – conducted in collaboration with scientists¹</p>	<p>With Refuge staff, marine lab, USGS, and UF staff identify needs; develop storage & retrieval system for inventory data. Russ submitted a Science Initiative proposal that will be reviewed in detail at the June board meeting of the Friends of Refuges. Maria reported that the FWS is considering designating the Cedar Key area as a critical wildlife habitat area and a new group may be forming called the Big Bend Conservation Area Partnership. Larry reported that he would like to see a Science Symposium held in Cedar Key. Maria and Russ Hall are working together to move forward on the Science initiative to inventory flora and fauna on Seahorse Key.</p>	<p>\$50</p>	<p>Russ Hall Maria Sgambati</p>	<p>Vic</p>
<p>Shell Mound Visitor Enhancements – improve access/interpretation at archaeological site?</p>	<p>Develop information for kiosk.</p>	<p>\$750</p>	<p>Ron Black? Ken Sassaman?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Larry Woodward 2. Andrew Gude
<p>Trail Guides Initiative - highlight refuge recreational activities in Levy and Dixie</p>	<p>Conceive, research, design content and flyers Bill reported that the Barnett Creek trail guide is at the printer (500 copies). The Turkey Foot Trail brochure, which is near Pond 5, is almost finished. Larry reported that Refuge staff have discovered an old tram road running between Refuge HQ and Fowler’s Bluff that ultimately will be developed into a trail. Bill also reported that a Butterfly Trail, highlighting butterflies throughout the Refuge, is in early stages of development. Dixie County Trail Initiative: Debbie reported that she and Pam briefly discussed</p>	<p>\$200</p>	<p>Donna Thalacker</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pam Darty 2. Andrew Gude

	<p>developing a new hiking trail off the Dixie Mainline which is marked in the Refuge's Dixie Mainline Trail Guide as the "Natural Pine Forest". It would not take much trail work to shape it up. They also discussed a kiosk panel that highlights Longleaf pines at the trail head.</p> <p>It was reported that Barbara Woodmansee is developing a Butterfly Trail.</p>			
Butterfly Garden at Refuge HQ	<p>Enhance, enlarge and maintain the butterfly garden at Refuge headquarters.</p> <p>Larry reported that the garden is being enjoyed by visitors and suggested adding a water feature.</p>	<p>\$200 \$500</p>	Donna Thalacker	Larry Woodward
Advocacy & Networking (Outreach)	<p>Supporting causes, legislation, etc. and build mutually supportive relationships with other groups, agencies, etc. that forward the goals and mission of the Friends.</p> <p>Based on Jay's follow up, the Friends board agreed to participate in the November Sturgeon Conference in Live Oak with a booth/table of information items and merchandise. Jay sent an excellent letter to Congress on behalf of the Friends group asking for support of funding for the Refuges.</p> <p>Refuge Mgr. Andrew suggested getting together with other Friends groups in our "super complex), Jay will be developing ideas /proposals.</p> <p>Jay presented and discussed a draft proposal for engaging other Friends groups with mutual visits. The board concurred with Jay's proposal.</p> <p>Andrew reported he would like to take political leaders and staff on a tour of the Refuges and educate them on what is here and why it is important. The best time of year for it needs to be determined in light of the congressional calendar.</p>	\$500	Jay Bushnell	?

Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Key NWRs				
2015 Budget Recommendation				
	Annual	Annual	Actual	
	Budget	Budget	As of	
	2014	2015	31 Jan	NOTES
Projected Revenue				
Memberships	3,000	3,000	905	
Donations	2,500	1,000		
Sales	1,500	3,000		
Subtotal	7,000	7,000	905.00	
Transfer from Reserves (as needed)		4,125		
Total Revenue	7,000	11,125	905.00	
Projected Expenses				
Recurring Organizational Expenses				
Administrative costs	100	400	94.81	State corp fee 61.25, sales tax 33.56
Annual meeting (Feb)	675	675		
Communications Team functions + Ibis	1,200	2,000		
Festival fees	100	100		
Inventory	2,000	2,000		
Membership recruitment and retention	0	500		
Recurring Support				
Friends of the Cedar Key Library	100	100		
Great Suwannee River Cleanup (Dec)	150	150		
Interagency Cooperators Meeting	500	500		
Outreach/Advocacy	500	500		
Refuge Restoration Projects	50	0		
Refuge Trail and Wildlife Guides	200	200		
Refuge Summer Program	250	0		
Vista Property Fund (Jan)	1,000	1,000	1000	
Volunteer Luncheon (Dec)	150	150		
NWRA Donation (June)	150	150		
Champion-Led Initiatives				
Art	250	0		
Butterfly Garden	200	100		
Cedar Key Kiosk	500	500		
Dixie County Enhancement	250	600		
Dixie County Refuge Expansion	200	0		
Education	100	100		
Gateway Signage	1,000	1,000		
Paddling Project	1,500	0		
River Trail Accessibility	100	200		
Science	50	200		
Shell Mound Enhancements	750	0		
Total Expenses	12,025	11,125	1095	

Communications Report February 2015

News Briefs – 477 subscribers

	# Opened		# Opened
January Ibis	201	February 14 News Brief	186
Clicked on the Ibis text	77	1. Annual Meeting	34
		2. Library Series	14
		3. Slate of Officers	12
		4. Pepper Busters	11
		5. Wildlife Corridor Expedition	9
		6. Butterfly Garden	8
		7. River Trail Work Day	8
		8. Nature Walk	6
		9. Science Team	5

Facebook Page

6 new fans = 254

Posts since January 11	Reach	Clicks/Likes	Shared by
February News Brief (Peg)	42	7	Carmelo
Annual Meeting (Peg)	32	2	Barbara Winter
Boating day on Suwannee(Bob)	71	27	11 shares!!
Scrub Nature Walk (Donna)	71	4	
Redfish(Bob)	63	22	
Beautiful Cedar Key(Bob)	124	22	
Wonderous Cedar Key (Bob)	625	69	
Fishing with granddaughters	366	58	

Website

Pageviews in the last month = 3650

Pageviews in the previous month = 4311

14 posts since last board meeting by Peg and Donna T, with Maria, John T, Debbie, Russ, Ann K, Molly, and Bob providing text