

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Friday, February 7, 2014

Present:

Board Members: Jay Bushnell, John McPherson, Bob Hudson, John Thalacker, Ed DeHann, Roger McDaniels, Greg Lang, Jennifer Seavey, Russ Hall, Peg Hall, Carmelo Echeverria.

Other Friends Members: Bob and Carol McKinstry, Bill Kilborn, Donna Thalacker, Sherry Beauchamp, Allan Pither.

Refuge Staff: Pam Darty

1. The meeting was convened at 10.04 a.m. by Jay Bushnell, Chair.
2. Minutes from January 3, 2014. **Motion** to approve: Bob Hudson. **Second:** John Thalacker. Passed by unanimous vote.
3. Treasurer's report. No report was provided due to the absence of Jerry Salamon, Treasurer.
4. Financial Review Committee report. Bob Hudson reported that the committee met and that all financial matters are in order.
5. Refuge update. Pam Darty reported on the new schedule: All Refuge staff have every other Friday off, but this can change depending on circumstances. James Burnett from St. Marks Refuge was appointed as the new complex director. Andrew Gude will be working part time at Crystal River, will still be Refuge manager, and may be the Deputy Complex Manager. Kenny McCain got employee of the year for the whole FWS.
6. Initiative updates
 - A. Education
 1. Manatee Paddle. Jay Bushnell reported that this trip went well.
 2. Seahorse Key Signage. Jennifer Seavey reported that draft signs had been prepared and she is looking for input. She asked whether the Refuge had money to put up the signs? Pam Darty stated that she did not think so, but suggested that if UF could get camera-ready materials then the cost might be as low as \$250 rather than \$1,500. Jennifer will check with Larry Woodward and Andrew Gude about funds.

- B. Pepper Busting. Roger McDaniels reported that work is continuing on Lukens Tract, and that it is a difficult job due to some of the pepper trees being very large, and then there are many seedlings remaining. Jennifer Seavey suggested using the college and high school students who will be attending programs at Seahorse Key. The next pepper events for Lukens are scheduled for February 14, 21, and 28 at 9 a.m.
 - C. Art “Behind the Gates.” Jay Bushnell reported on a trip to the Vista property that went well, and suggested that it would be good to have Vista images at the Refuge art show in March.
 - D. Trail Riverwalk. John Thalacker reported that about 4 tons of limerock were placed on the trail to cover up trip hazards. It is now possible to get wheelchairs to the deck, but there’s no ramp from the trail to the deck. He suggested that Friends should try to build a ramp, and also improve wheelchair access from the parking lot. Future projects may include kiosks, benches, etc. John would like Friends members to review what has been done and give ideas for further improvements. He is exploring the possibility of other loop trails.
 - E. Springs Initiative. Greg Lang attended the meeting in Silver Springs and reported that this legislative session is expected to be historic due to bipartisan support for springs protection. The funding levels being discussed range from \$55,000,000 to \$380,000,000. This could possibly be helpful to Friends group, but will need to wait and see. Greg discussed what springs protection programs might look like. There was general discussion about programs that are needed to protect springs and minimum flows. Jennifer Seavey stated that she thought the minimum flows issue is something the Friends and Refuge should get involved in because the flows are very important to oysters, etc.
 - F. Dixie Mainline: Debbie Meeks reported on the sign which was destroyed, thus giving us the opportunity to come up with something new. She submitted a draft layout, and other ideas for signage were discussed.
 - F. Summary. Bob Hudson presented a written summary of the projects which is attached.
7. Communication report.
- A. Proposed changes to the Friends Website. Peg Hall will bring proposed changes to a future board meeting. Bill Kilborn is going to help add Paypal to the site. **Motion** by Greg Lang to go ahead and make changes up to \$100. **Second** by Bob Hudson. Passed by unanimous vote.

- B. Proposed new brochure: Ten Things To Do on the Refuges. Peg Hall presented this new brochure which she had created as a companion to the brochure about Friends; this would be about things to do at the Refuge. Peg passed out draft (attached) and asked for input. All expressed the opinion that it looked good and that it's a good idea. Board approved going ahead and having it ready for the annual meeting.
 - C. Thoughts on importance of the Ibis. Peg Hall reported that more people open the Ibis when it goes out on its own, and that Bill Kilborn will help change it to a flip page format. Many members requested a paper version so it's important that we keep doing the paper version.
 - D. Data on websites and News Briefs. Peg Hall discussed the written report which was passed out and which is attached. Success of Friends media efforts shown by 4,000 people visiting website last month. Peg was congratulated for the good work, and Jennifer Seavey stressed the importance of "sharing" posts on Facebook.
8. Inventory Report. Jay Bushnell showed the new T-shirt with eagle photo by Ann Kamzelski, and said that he will also create one with a barred owl for women. He showed another example of a men's shirt with a panther. Jay discussed other men's and women's shirts that will be ordered. Peg Hall showed the ear rings that have been ordered.
9. Annual Meeting. Scheduled for February 22. Jay Bushnell went over a rough outline and asked for input. A Silent Auction list prepared by Donna Bushnell was passed out. There was further discussion about the schedule, logistics, food, and how to recognize Kenny McCain for his employee of the year award. Peg Hall noted that the bylaws require a business meeting, with treasurer's report, etc. Jay Bushnell agreed review what happened over the past year, particularly with regard to where the initiatives are. The election of officers and new board members will need to be conducted. Donna Bushnell will do the installation again.

There was discussion about the afternoon events which are to include a paddle on Turkey Creek led by Jay Bushnell, one or two ranger led walks, possibly a hay ride, a classroom presentation by Jennifer Seavey on Seahorse and other islands, and a river walk to be led by John and Donna Thalacker.

It was agreed that the set up would take place on Friday starting at 1 p.m., and should take about 1 to 2 hours.

10. Old Business.

- A. School children visit to refuges. It was reported that Maria Sgambati reported that she did not get the grant money. Peg Hall suggested that Maria give us a new proposal for moving forward with a 5th grader program to be funded by the Friends. Peg cautioned that Friends should be careful about funding outside groups rather than just funding Friends initiatives. Jay Bushnell will talk to Maria about coming back with a proposal.

11. New business

- A. Initiatives for 2014. Bob Hudson reported that he will work with Peg Hall to put in a format to be presented at the annual business meeting.
- B. Post Office Box location. There was discussion about whether to move the box to Cedar Key due to the box being rarely checked in Chiefland. The difficulty of changing addresses was noted.
- D. Phone: It was noted that we need to check on having a phone number where people can leave messages.
- E. Liability Insurance: The question was raised as to whether liability insurance is needed for Friends-sponsored paddles, etc. It was noted that state law protects the members and that it is difficult and expensive to get a good policy.

Meeting was adjourned at noon.