

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Thursday, April 17, 2014

Present:

Board Members: Bob McKinstry, Roger McDaniel, John McPherson, Bob Hudson, Libby Cagle, Bill Kilborn, Maria Sgambati, Carmelo Escheverria, Sherry Beauchamp, Debbie Meeks, John Thalacker.

Refuge Staff: Larry Woodward, Pam Darty.

Guests: Jaime Jerrels, Kit Lane, Donna Thalacker.

1. The meeting was convened at 10:04 a.m. by Bob Hudson, Chair.
2. Jaime Jerrels was introduced by Maria Sgambati. She is from Levy County, works at the Florida Farm Bureau in Gainesville, and is very interested in maintaining the environment in Levy County.
3. Approval of Minutes of the March 20, 2014, Board Meeting. **Motion** by Carmelo Escheverria to approve the minutes as submitted. **Second** by Maria Sgambati. Passed by unanimous vote.
4. Refuge Update. Larry Woodward reported the following:
 - Minimal staff have been on hand due to so many commitments elsewhere due to complex changes, etc.
 - There was a lot of good burning this year, due to the many opportunities afforded by the wet winter weather. The Refuge is in good shape heading into the summer.
 - Prep work and planting are ongoing in Dixie County, and there is the possibility of having a volunteer planting day even though a lot is being done with machines.
 - The Refuge hopes to have the law enforcement position filled soon, but there is some uncertainty due to budgeting and complex issues.
 - Andrew Gude has been working a great deal in Crystal River with 3 Sisters Springs issues.
 - A non-paid UF intern is coming in for the Summer. Larry would like to pay her a stipend, and asked whether Friends would be willing to pay her up front with later reimbursement by the Refuge. He suggested \$100 per week for 7 weeks, with the starting date being in the middle of May. He stated that is very difficult for the Refuge to pay an intern, even though the money exists to do so. The consensus of the Board was that Friends should help if it can. Larry stated he would write up a request for the Friends to consider.
 - A meeting was held regarding setting up open houses on Seahorse Key, and it was

decided on 5 weekends for a total of 6 days for open houses in 2014. He suggested it would be good to have Friends represented on the island for the open houses, and Maria Sgambati very much agreed with this.

- Larry expressed appreciation for the work that Roger McDaniel and Donna Thalacker have done on pepper busting and the butterfly garden, respectively.
 - There is a person interested in purchasing and keeping the Panther Ridge property in conservation, and there has also been talk of it becoming part of a mitigation bank. John McPherson and Greg Lang agreed to look into this further and report back at the next meeting.
 - There is a need for female applicants for the summer Youth Conservation Corp program. The program runs for 8 weeks, at minimum wage, for ages 15 through 17, and provides environmental training.
5. Bob Hudson recommended that, in light of the Board's decision to hold two meetings each year in Suwannee, the Board meet on May 15 and October 16 at the Suwannee Community Center, and will invite the community to attend.
6. Greg Lang introduced a review and discussion of 2014 Initiatives, with the written report attached and with the following updates provided by champions at the meeting:
- Education: Maria Sgambati reported that there will be a Levy County science teachers workshop on Seahorse Key all day on Friday May 9. The purpose is to introduce teachers to what is available on Seahorse, and to build a relationship with Levy County schools.
 - Refuge Restoration: Roger McDaniel reported that the exotics removal is probably on hold until the fall. He will be submitting a new grant application to US FWS for \$10,000 like last year.
 - Trail Guides: Donna Thalacker reported that the Barnett Creek guide will soon be published, and that she will be working on Turkey Foot trail which has been marked. Larry Woodward mentioned that there is an old tramway between the Refuge office and Fowlers Bluff that the Refuge will be working on and that he could use Friends help to make into a trail.
 - River Trail: John Thalacker stated that he had questions about ADA compliance, and which Refuge staff he should be working with on trail issues. John and Larry Woodward will be working together on ADA and other trail issues.
 - Butterfly Garden: John Thalacker reported that he will be adding signs for the plants using paint stirrers.
 - Science: Libby Cagle reported that with regard to the science project, Dan and Judy Dourson have offered to help set something up and already have several ideas. Until this year they have helped run a research center in the jungle of Belize. Dan is a biologist and Judy a retired teacher, and both are excited about working with kids. Bob Hudson said he would pass this on the Russ Hall.
7. Carmelo Escheverria reported on the 2014 Cedar Key Old Florida Celebration of the Arts. He reported that he had plenty of volunteers, and that the sales total was \$514 with

\$14 in donations. There were thus good results even though attendance at the festival was lower this year. A lot of information was provided about the Refuge, including the distribution of the new flyers. Libby Cagle suggested we have more information at the booth about Refuge-related activities available in the area. Carmelo reported that we sold a lot of the new and old T shirts, with profits at about 40% so we netted about \$200. There was discussion about the design of new shirts, especially regarding pockets and design on the front or back. It was agreed that it was good to have a person out on the sidewalk asking people if they are interested in learning about the Refuge. Maria Sgambati asked about the possibility of shorter shifts, and it was agreed that 3-hour shifts is about right, but that there should be flexibility in how long people work the booth. It was also agreed that it is good to have single person to handle the money, and that we should write up procedures for setting up, taking down, etc.

8. Old Business.

- a. Post Office Box: Bob Hudson reported that a new Friends PO Box has been opened in Cedar Key, and that forms have been filed with the postal service to forward all mail that arrives at the Chiefland box to the Cedar Key box. The following individuals will have keys: Libby Cagle, Marci Wilcox, Peg Hall, and Bob Hudson. In addition, Jay Bushnell and Greg Lang are on the list at the Cedar Key Post Office as authorized to pick up Friends mail at the desk. Libby has notified State of Florida agencies, and it was agreed that Bob will close the Chiefland box at the end of April.
- b. Request by USGS for Friends group participation support of Gulf Sturgeon Research and Conservation Conference: It was reported that Jay Bushnell looked into Friends participation and support of the Gulf Sturgeon Research Conference. Jay talked to Ken Sulak about the event and learned that:
 - The event will be November 11 and 12, or 12 and 13, at the Bishop Cervany Conference Center, Camp Weed, Live Oak, Florida.
 - They have arranged for Save Our Suwannee to be the non-governmental host for the event, to staff the registration desk, to handle the money, etc.
 - They welcome the Friends of Refuges to participate by setting up a booth for sharing information about our refuges and selling Friends merchandise.Jay has agreed to take the lead in setting up and staffing a booth for us, and the Board agreed that Friends should participate in this way and provide additional volunteers to help man the booth.
- c. Reporting and recording of volunteer hours by Friends members: Bob Hudson reminded Board members to report volunteer hours to Pam Darty. It needs to be time on behalf of the Refuge, not just for Friends, so that, for example, attending a Friends Board meeting does not count as volunteer hours.
- d. NWR Vision Statement: Bob Hudson reported that at the March board meeting a question arose whether the LSNWR has a vision statement, and he also reported that

the Board decided to postpone the Friends of Refuges visioning session to the fall. He reported that the Refuge vision statement is as follows:

The watershed and estuary of the Lower Suwannee NWR contain valuable water resources and fish and wildlife habitat. The refuge will be managed for the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitat, with special emphasis on the protection and restoration of wetland and upland communities. Education, research, and wildlife-dependant recreational opportunities will be available, insofar as they are compatible with refuge health and preservation. Management will partner with local, state, and federal agencies; community organizations; and individuals to ensure the protection and conservation of the vast Suwannee River ecosystem for current and future generations.

9. New Business.

Recommendation from Peg Hall Regarding Conservation Forestry Listing: Bob Hudson reported on behalf of Peg that Alachua County Commissioner Robert Hutchinson is preparing a listing of area "conservation forestry" practices, which he hopes to use in negotiations with Plum Creek, one of the largest land owners. Peg recommends that the Friends of Refuges nominate the LSNWR for his list. She cautions that we should not get the FWS embroiled in negotiations between local agencies and developers, but that she believes having the Friends of Refuges "nominate" the Refuge for Commissioner Hutchinson's listing appropriately fits our mission and purpose. **Motion** by Maria Sgambati to support such a listing. **Second** by Sherry Beauchamp. Passed by a unanimous vote.

10. Reports:

- a. Treasurer's Report: Libby Cagle present the written reports attached. She suggested that Board members need to be more careful about documenting reimbursements, and suggested that we might think about using a computer form using something like Google forms. Debbie Meeks offered to create a reimbursement form. Libby also reminded Board members that there is an account at the Print Shop so just put purchases on the account to avoid separate checks.
- b. Communications & Publications Committee Report: Bill Kilborn presented a written report attached, and thanked Donna Thalacker and Debbie Meeks for work on the Barnett Creek trail brochure. With regard to our website hosting, he agreed with Peg Hall that Friends should not pay for Wild Apricot hosting, but should instead just do the work ourselves through an account with HostGator for \$7.95 month. With Host Gator Friends would get access to Weebly and could set up a Paypal account. He also recommended that instead of Mail Chimp, we may want to use Sendy for \$59 that goes on the website. With this program we could enter data just once for sending out emails. He and Peg will come back with a final recommendation at next meeting

after one more committee meeting. Maria Sgambati said that the committee has been very helpful in moving this forward.

- c. Merchandise Inventory Report: Carmelo Escheverria reported that he has completed the inventory, and that there are some items that we are out of, especially T Shirts. He suggested we should try to sell what we have before ordering new ones. There was a discussion on the need to distribute the paddle guides and brochures, and it was agreed that the Communications Committee should report back on how to distribute brochures.
- d. Membership Update, and Membership Tracking: Debbie Meeks reported that she is looking into membership software and will report back at the next meeting.
- e. Schedule of Upcoming Events – John Thalacker and Roger McDaniel reported that library presentations have ended for the summer and will start up in November. They will need ideas for speakers.
- f. Dropbox: Bob Hudson reported on setting it up and continuing its use, e.g., for posting minutes.
- g. River Cleanup: John Thalacker reported that it is scheduled for December 6.

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

2014 Projects/Initiatives – As of March, 20, 2014	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?	\$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); engage officials re: information kiosk	\$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	\$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? 	\$100	Sherry Beauchamp, Maria Sgambati	Pam Darty
Gateway Signage	Work with community leaders to develop signage highlighting key asset role of refuges	\$250	John McPherson	Andrew Gude
Paddling Project – Develop new paddling routes; panels	Keep friends informed of needs; develop Cedar Key guides, distribute guides to community outlets	\$1,500	Russ & Peg Hall	1. Andrew Gude 2. Larry Woodward
Refuge Restoration Projects: invasive species removal, tree planting, etc.	Identify projects; coordinate volunteers; disseminate information.	TBD	Roger McDaniels	?
River Trail Enhancements – Friends may be able to leverage significant funds for ADA compliance	Identify potential sources of outside funding; develop conceptual plan	\$100	John Thalacker	?
Science – Inventories and Surveys of Refuge Biota – conducted in collaboration with scientists ¹	With Refuge staff, marine lab, USGS, and UF staff identify needs; develop storage & retrieval system for inventory data	\$50	Russ Hall Maria Sgambati	Vic
Shell Mound Visitor Enhancements – improve access/interpretation at archaeological site?	Develop information for kiosk.	\$750	Ron Black? Ken Sassaman?	1. Larry Woodward 2. Andrew Gude
Trail Guides Initiative - highlight refuge recreational activities in Levy and Dixie	Conceive, research, design content and flyers	\$200	Donna Thalacker	1. Pam Darty 2. Andrew Gude
Butterfly Garden at Refuge HQ	Enhance, enlarge and maintain the butterfly garden at Refuge headquarters.	\$200 \$500	Donna Thalacker	Larry Woodward
Advocacy & Networking (Outreach)	Supporting causes, legislation, etc. and build mutually supportive relationships with other groups, agencies, etc. that forward the goals and mission of the Friends.	\$500	Jay Bushnell	?

Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Key NWRs				
2014 Budget				
		Annual	As of 28 Feb	As of 31 Mar
		Budget		
Cash Receipts				
Memberships		3,000.00	2,730.00	2,780.00
Donations		2,500.00	2,488.00	2,758.00
Sales		1,500.00	938.00	1,058.00
Total cash receipts		7,000.00	6,156.00	6,596.00
Cash Disbursements				
support lower suwannee & cedar key nwrs				
Annual meeting (food, supplies, honorarium)		675.00	545.38	545.38
Communications		1,200.00	366.34	516.34
Great Suwannee River Cleanup		150.00	26.19	26.19
Butterfly garden		200.00		74.00
Festival fees		100.00		
Other (River Walk Signs)		500.00		
Friends of the Cedar Key Library		100.00		
Outreach		500.00		
Kiosk Relocation		500.00		
Refuge Restoration Projects		50.00		
2014 Initiatives				
Art		250.00		
Dixie County Enhancement		250.00		
Education		100.00		
Paddling Project		1,500.00		
Sub-total		6,075.00	937.91	1,161.91
support refuge-initiated activities				
Interagency Cooperators Meeting		500.00		
Refuge summer program (2013)		250.00		
Luncheon for volunteers		150.00		
2014 Initiatives				
Dixie County Refuge expansion		200.00		
Gateway Signage		1,000.00		
Inventories/survey Refuge Biodata		50.00		
Shell Mound Enhancements		750.00		
River Trail Accessibility		100.00		
Refuge Trail Guides		200.00		32.10
Vista Property Conservation Planning		1,000.00		
sub-total		4,200.00		32.10
support national wildlife system				
NWR Association Membership		150.00		
sub-total		150.00		
administrative & fundraising support				
Purchase of inventory		2,000.00	2,641.25	2,641.25
PO Box, postage, misc				114.00
Florida Department of Revenue		100.00	48.61	113.90
Florida Department of State		100.00	61.25	61.25
sub-total		2,200.00	2,751.11	2,930.40
Total cash disbursements		12,625.00	3,689.02	4,124.41

		March total			50.00	270.00	120.00	435.39	-4.61	21,299.07	
4/3/2014	224	USPS Stamps						19.60			
4/5/2014	225	Jay Bushnell (Print Shop annual mtg)						55.50			
4/10/2014	dep	membership			20.00						
4/8/14	226	Cash for cash box (OFCA)						100.00			
4/15/2014	dep	OFCA sales					535.00				
4/16/2014	dep	donations (Sheila Templin \$25)				39.00					

Communications Report
March 2014

News Brief

Since the February 6 Communications Report, we have sent 4 News Briefs.

- About 45% open the News Briefs.
- About 50% of the 440 people on the distribution list in are Friends members.
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February 8

Subject: Annual Meeting Details, And More

February 20

Subject: Annual Meeting Saturday Feb 22, And More

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March 18

Subject: Call for Volunteers, Membership Report, Exhibit, Nature Walks, Upcoming Events, Information-Advocacy Links, More

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