

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Thursday, September 18, 2014

Present:

Board Members: Peg Hall, Bob Hudson, Bill Kilborn, John McPherson, Greg Lang, Allan Pither, Jay Bushnell, Debbie Meeks, Carmelo Escheveria, Sherry Beauchamp, By phone: Maria Sgambati, Marci Wilcox.

Guest: Anne Lindgren.

Refuge Staff: Andrew Gude.

1. The meeting was convened at 10:00 a.m. by Bob Hudson, Chair.
2. Approval of Minutes. **Motion** by Allan Pither to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2014, board meeting as submitted, with Kit Lane and Russ Hall moved from the “Members” list to the “Guests” list. **Second** by Carmelo Escheveria. Passed by unanimous vote. **Motion** by Greg Lang to approve minutes from the annual meeting, March 16, 2013. **Second** by Jay Bushnell. Passed by unanimous vote.
3. Refuge Update. Andrew Gude reported on the following:
 - a. Cooperators annual lunch: Scheduled for December 5, with Friends board members to be invited.
 - b. Exotics: Vic Doig continues to work on exotics control on the islands.
 - c. Shired Island: The parking lot is being repaired.
 - d. Tram Line: The trail link from River Trail to Fowlers Bluff and back around to River Trail is under construction.
 - e. Light Station: Maria Sgambati has talked to the Refuge about a number of events at Seahorse Key. She’s looking into more open houses that are not Refuge-related. The Refuge supports Maria’s efforts so long as there is no substantial impact on Refuge staff. The Refuge is providing more support to Seahorse Key through Kenny McCain.

- f. Nature Coast Paddle Adventure: Andrew will be a sweep on one of the paddles that will be held within the Refuge.
 - g. Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition: The expedition will be coming through this area during October, and Andrew will talk to them about the Big Bend Conservation Area Partnership. Any Friends who want to be involved should contact Andrew.
 - h. Bat House: The new bat house arrived, but it was damaged. A new one is on the way.
 - i. Law Enforcement Officer: A new person was offered the position, has accepted, and will start in about 45 days.
 - j. Crystal River: The impact of the manatee viewing in 3 Sisters springs is a big issue that Andrew is working on, including questions such as whether to close the springs completely or come up with a new management plan.
 - k. Coastal Cleanup: The Refuge will provide one boat.
4. Volunteer Hours. Allan Pither reported that Pam Darty is being very cautious about reporting hours; the hours must be directly for the Refuge or requested by Refuge staff. Thus, for example, the hours working on FWS/Friends agreement may not be eligible.
5. Friends 2014 Initiatives. A handout was provided by Greg Lang (attached) and the following updates were provided at the meeting:
- a. Dixie County: Debbie Meeks reported that she is working on more kiosks and trails.
 - b. Art Initiative: Maria Sgambati reported that she had received several entries and got a panel of jurors. The artist in residence for Seahorse Key will be announced before the end of the year. There will be no impact in the Friends budget because others are covering the costs.
 - c. Paddling Project: Bill Kilborn reported that the waterproof test map had been printed to take to the Paddling Adventure in Jena/Steinhatchee. The printing cost will be \$1.00/piece.
 - d. Trail Guides Initiative: Barbara Woodmansee is working on a butterfly trail.

6. New Business

- a. 2015 Budget Committee: Peg Hall will chair, with the following members: Debbie Meeks, Maria Sgambati, Libby Cagle and John McPherson.
- b. Cedar Key Seafood Festival. Allan Pither will be in charge of the Friends booth and asked for volunteers to help man the booth and help with setup. Carmelo Escheveria will make an inventory list so people can keep track of what is sold.
- c. Friends Group Educational Grant. Bob Hudson received an email from FWS and Andrew Gude and Jay Bushnell agreed to take the lead on this. Jay suggested that the project should entail contacting other Friends groups about hosting Friends from other groups, but now not sure it fits in with the grant criteria. Bob Hudson noted that other groups have hosted a conference regarding how to have an effective Friends group. Peg Hall stated that she likes idea of Friends talking to Friends from other refuges, for example, by way of 10 minute presentations about what's great about the group and Refuge. Greg Lang agreed that this is a good idea, and that we should do this with others in the supergroup even without grant money. Several other ideas were discussed, and Jay will bring back a proposal to the next meeting based on the ideas expressed.
- d. Nominating Committee. Bob Hudson reported that the Nominating Committee must be named by the President by September, and is to consist of 2 board members and 1 non-board member, with the proposed slate due to the Board by the November meeting, and presented to the membership by January. Katherine Dunlop was suggested as a possible non-board member.
- e. Hidden Coast Paddling Festival Friends Booth/Display. Debbie Meeks and Bill Kilborn will set up a table with brochures, etc. After discussion, it was decided that the waterproof maps should be sold for \$5.00 each, and that Friends pins would not be provided this year because they are needed for handing out at the front desk.

7. Old Business:

- a. Panther Ridge Property Update. Andrew Gude reported that the State of Florida has authorized money for purchase of the land and has asked Andrew if the Refuge would manage the land. Andrew is working on a draft MOU which he will be sending to the state.
- b. Cedar Key Kiosks. Bob Hudson has talked to Sue Colson about the new location and they agreed to meet after the coastal cleanup to discuss further.

- c. Update on New U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service Policy on Friends Organizations, and Agreement Template. Bob Hudson reported that everyone should review and offer suggestions. There was discussion about the limits on lobbying and Andrew Gude will look into the issues. Andrew suggested that it would be good to talk to other Friends groups about their concerns and possibly have a meeting to discuss.
- d. Suwannee River Clean Up. Jay Bushnell raised the question of what sort of event it should be and that there needs to be good planning between Refuge Staff and Friends. Andrew Gude will talk to his staff about whether anyone is interested in helping. Date: December 6.
- e. 2014 Friends Science Camp on Seahorse Key. Donna Bushnell asked that someone else take over due to a conflict with her schedule. It is scheduled for November 2 and 3, with the cost set at 100 per person, to include food for first night. It was reported that the Marine Lab is looking at it as a possible fundraiser. There will need to be 10 people signing up for the overnight stay or, if not, the event will be cancelled. Maria Sgambati stated that she is open to it being whatever Friends wants it to be, but needs to break even on costs. Peg Hall stated her concerns about the \$100 cost and it being a fundraiser for another organization. Questions were raised as to whether it would really be a Friends event and whether there should be a discount for Friends members. John McPherson agreed to work with Maria and Donna to organize, and to bring back a proposal for scholarships.
- f. Sturgeon Conference. Jay Bushnell reported that the conference will be held on November 12-14, that Friends will have a booth there, and that Friends could provide items for a door prize. The Board authorized Carmelo Escheveria to pick some items to provide as door prizes.

8. Reports

- a. Inventory Report. Carmelo handed out a written report and discussed new earrings with new designs. He will check to see if in the budget and, if so, he will move ahead with the order. He reported that we have run out of certain sizes of T-shirts, but that we should wait until next year before the annual meeting to decide how to replenish.
- b. Communications and Publications Committee Report and Recommendations. Peg Hall handed out a written report (attached), and reported that the Communications Committee met in July at Trenton library, that the Newsbriefs have gone out monthly, and that many non-members read the articles online. Greg Lang and Bill Kilborn have provided good

photos that many people click on. It helps when people “share” posts on FaceBook. Jay Bushnell continue to work on the Ibis for October Ibis and he needs articles by the beginning of October for mid-month publication.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

2014 Projects/Initiatives – As of March, <u>June 19, 2014</u>	Actions Needed in 2014	2013 Budget Allocation	Friends Champion(s)	LACKNWR 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? <u>Maria is planning another "Artists in Residence" experience at Seahorse Key Marine Lab to help create an interface between science and art. Calls to artists have been made.</u>	\$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 etc. <u>The kiosks at both ends of the Dixie Mainline have been turned and the new panels have been installed.</u>	\$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. <u>Per Andrew on June 19, work is progressing on the Big Bend Conservation Area concept. Multiple government agencies are involved, and the challenge is dealing with their differences and priorities. Local counties need to be involved and work is underway to get them engaged.</u>	\$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. • <u>Children's paddling grant proposal?</u> <u>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.</u>	\$100	Sherry Beauchamp, Maria Sgambati	Pam Darty

		<u>The Friends board agreed to conduct an adult Science Camp at Seahorse Key in fall of 2014. Donna & Jay Bushnell have agreed to chair a planning group to work with Maria for the event.</u>			
Gateway Signage		<p>Work with community leaders to develop signage highlighting <u>the</u> key asset role of refuges.</p> <p><u>John reported that work is continuing to finalize an Interagency Agreement between the Nature Coast Conservancy and the LSNWR. The Agreement would bring Section 29 within the Refuge and arrange for appropriate signage. The NCC has the Agreement and is reviewing it.</u></p>	\$250	John McPherson	Andrew Gude
Paddling Project – Develop new paddling routes; panels		<p>Keep friends informed of needs; develop Cedar Key guides, distribute guides to community outlets.</p> <p><u>The Suwannee Tech Center has received tear sheets for the 7 paddles near Suwannee, and is advertising around Suwannee that they are available. Peg reported that Brasington’s trail shop in Gainesville has received waterproof panels and has asked if they can reproduce the panels.</u></p> <p><u>It was reported that the Nature Coast Paddling Adventure is on October 6-7, 2014, out of Steinhatchee.</u></p>	\$1,500	Russ & Peg Hall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Andrew Gude 2. Larry Woodward
Refuge Restoration Projects: invasive species removal, tree planting, etc.		<p>Identify projects; coordinate volunteers; disseminate information.</p> <p><u>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.)</u></p>	TBD	Roger McDaniels	?

		<p><u>Larry reported that restoration of long leaf pine and possibly red cedars will be undertaken in large areas using machine planting.</u></p> <p><u>Andrew reported that additional grant funds for eradication of invasive species have been received, bringing total grant funding in 2014 to approximately \$50,000. He also reported that some of the work will be performed by outside contractors.</u></p>			
River Trail Enhancements – Friends may be able to leverage significant funds for ADA compliance		<p>Identify potential sources of outside funding; develop conceptual plan</p> <p><u>John requested that Refuge staff find a source for determining what would be required for the River Trail to be ADA compliant. Andrew will follow up. Complete ADA compliance may not be feasible within our resources, but the concept of making the trail wheelchair accessible and more user friendly was discussed, e.g. ADA “compliant light.”</u></p>	\$100	John Thalacker	<p>?</p> <p><u>A Refuge staff champion to work with John is needed. Larry will follow up.</u></p>
Science – Inventories and Surveys of Refuge Biota – conducted in collaboration with scientists ¹		<p>With Refuge staff, marine lab, USGS, and UF staff identify needs; develop storage & retrieval system for inventory data.</p> <p><u>Russ reviewed and discussed a comprehensive Science Initiative proposal that would involve long term monitoring of water levels and other measures at various strategic locations in the LSNWR. Following discussion, the board voted to endorse the Initiative as proposed.</u></p>	\$50	Russ Hall Maria Sgambati	Vic
Shell Mound Visitor Enhancements – improve access/interpretation at archaeological site?		<p>Develop information for kiosk.</p> <p><u>Andrew reported that additional signage and access would be desirable. He will follow up with staff to determine the status of research efforts by Dr. Ken Sassaman currently being conducted.</u></p>	\$750	Ron Black? Ken Sassaman?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Larry Woodward Andrew Gude
Trail Guides Initiative - highlight refuge recreational activities in Levy and Dixie		<p>Conceive, research, design content and flyers</p> <p><u>Dixie County Trail Initiative: Debbie reported that she and Pam briefly discussed developing a new hiking</u></p>	\$200	Donna Thalacker	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pam Darty Andrew Gude

	<p><u>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.</u></p> <p><u>Bill distributed copies of the new Barnett Creek trail guide. Copies will be put at Refuge HQ and the trail head. The Turkey Foot Trail brochure, which is near Pond 5, is almost finished. Andrew discussed the old tram road running between Refuge HQ and Fowler's Bluff that ultimately will be developed into a trail that runs from the existing River Trail to Fowler's Bluff and circles back to Refuge HQ. Bill also reported that a Butterfly Trail, highlighting butterflies throughout the Refuge, is in early stages of development.</u></p>			
Butterfly Garden at Refuge HQ	<p>Enhance, enlarge and maintain the butterfly garden at Refuge headquarters.</p> <p><u>It was noted that the butterfly garden is growing nicely and native plants have filled in and are blooming.</u></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><u>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.</u></p> <p><u>Andrew reported that he wants to host our Federal congressional delegation, and possibly our State delegation, for a tour and discussion of the Refuges.</u></p>	\$500	Jay Bushnell	?

Communications Report September 2014

Communications Team Met July 3

Bill, Debbie, Jaime, Peg, Kit met at the Trenton Library. Joan Stephens joined us for lunch. Allan couldn't make the meeting.

Decision: Order the Shired Creek paddling panel on water proof paper for the Hidden Coast Paddling Adventure (HCPA) and see how it sells there.

Discussion: Improving our website

News Brief

We have 470 subscribers. 156 are in the interest group for paddling.

- **September 3**

This was a special News Brief to the Paddling interest group. It was picked up by the Cedar Key News and posted on their website just as it went to our subscribers.

61 opened the email.

16 clicked through to the details for the event.

- **August 27**

197 opened the email

Stories and number who clicked on them

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. HCPA | 15 (Bill gets the prize!) |
| 2. Our Facebook page | 8 |
| 3. Science Camp | 7 |
| 4. Board meeting | 4 |
| 5. Archaeology | 2 |
| 6. Advocacy links | 2 |

- **July 30**

207 opened the email

Stories and number who clicked on them

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Hunters scouting | 56 (Greg gets the prize!) |
| 2. Seahorse Key Open House | 30 |
| 3. Science Camp story | 10 |
| 4. HCPA story | 10 |
| 5. Jaclyn's baby | 7 |
| 6. Advocacy links | 6 |
| 7. Facebook page | 5 |

- **June 22**

199 opened the email

Stories and number who clicked on them

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Kayak fishing | 42 (Greg again!) |
| 2. Suwannee kiosk | 31 |
| 3. Advocacy links | 18 |
| 4. HCPA | 16 |
| 5. Seahorse Key Open House | 11 |

Facebook

- 12 new fans = 231
- 12 new posts since June 21, by Peg and Bob
 1. Call for Coastal Cleanup – 70 reach, 9 engaged, 1 share (Bob)
 2. Driving Nature Loop in August – 136 reach, 14 engaged, 2 shares (Tidewater Tours, Coastal Conservancy)
 3. Gopher Creek in August – 94 reach, 1 share (Bob)
 4. Way We Worked exhibit – 47 reach, 2 engaged
 5. July News Brief – 130 reach, 4 engaged
 6. Paddling in Summer on Refuges – 266 reach, 16 engaged, 3 shares (Tidewater Tours, Bob)
 7. Brown Pelican rookery – 652 reach, 15 engaged, 5 shares (Tidewater Tours, Jim Connor, Kat Hunter, Visit CK, Peg)
 8. McCrory Cove photo – 245 reach, 13 engaged, 2 shares (Tidewater Tours, Bob)
 9. Seahorse Key Open House report – 55 reach, 6 engaged, 1 share (Tidewater Tours)
 10. Call for attendance Seahorse Key Open House – 464 reach, 7 engaged, 12 shares (Tidewater Tours, Carmelo, Bob, Kat Hunter, Stan Meeks, Karen Coats Legree, Kim Newsome Legree, Visit CK, CK News, others not listed)
 11. June News Brief – 66 reach, 1 engaged
 12. Pam at Levy Visitors Bureau presentation – 43 reach, 4 engaged

Friends Websites

- <http://www.friendsofrefuges.org>
 - 4 new posts since June 20
 - Pageviews in the last month = 3319
 - Pageviews in the previous month = 5583
- www.paddleLSCkrefuges.org
 - No new posts
 - No reliable data on pageviews or unique visitors