

**Minutes**  
**Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges July 19th,**  
**2017 Meeting Agenda**  
**Refuge Headquarters**

**Present:**

**Board Members at headquarters:** Peg Hall, Russ Hall, John McPherson, Libby Cagle, Maria Sgambati, Mackenzie Russell, Roger McDaniels, Doug Maple

**Board Members attending by phone:** Debbie Meeks

**Refuge Manager:** Andrew Gude

**Guest:** Belinda Nettles, Dr. Ken Sassaman

1. The meeting was convened at 10 a.m. by Russ.
2. **Agenda** adoption was moved, seconded, passed. One change was made for Andrew to give Refuge Report early on in meeting.
3. **June meeting minutes** were moved, seconded, passed. Three corrections were made including changing Mr. Dan Frisk to Refuge Staff instead of Guest, omitting YCC participants' names, and re-wording motion for Ms. Nettles's services as signing a contract.
4. **Treasurer's Report** was reviewed and moved, seconded, passed.
5. **Refuge Report:**  
According to Vic's frequent bird surveys, nesting roseate spoonbills are up by 50% over last year. NCBS Intern Will Wolfson completed his self-guided paddling fishing trails. A copy of the finished project was e-mail out to Friend's Board members. In mid-July, the Refuge fire team completed a 900-acre prescription burn in Dixie County. YCC participants are busy working on putting a pole barn up in the Dixie County compound and assisting in completing the Three Sisters Spring board walk in Crystal River. The refuge, along with several other county/state/federal partners, has applied for one hydrological grant for refuge land and they are preparing for a second grant application. Andrew discussed options the refuge is reviewing for land easements, etc. The FL DEP is in talks with refuge staff regarding closing the waters of Snake Key for nesting birds seasonally. This has not yet gone into effect.
6. **Booth at Suwannee 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festival:**  
The Friends booth at the Suwannee festival was a success and was worth the participation, even though it was last minute. Debbie Meeks, who led the booth, reported positive feedback from visitors and many people were encouraged to join the Friends group. The booth sold 12 t-shirts and had \$25 in donations.
7. **Vista Planning:**  
The FWS cultural resource officer, Rick Kanaski, will do a cultural assessment of the Vista property in mid to late August. Archeologist Dr. Ken Sassaman was shown the

property on 7/19/2017. He stated there would most likely be archeological findings and he is willing to assist in planning for the archeological assessment and sub-surface analysis.

Possible grant ideas for the property were further discussed, as were ideas for internships for the visitor contact program.

**8. Clyde Butcher**

The renowned nature photographer will still visit Cedar Key in mid August, despite recovering from recent stroke. He will likely follow a scaled back version of the original plan, with the exhibit likely occurring in March or April. The exhibit will be a fee-based event.

**9. Fall Membership Meeting/Other Fall Activities**

The board discussed possible plans for joint activities with the Audubon chapter in Cedar Key for the fall. Ideas included a Seahorse Key/Snake Key boat tour, with more ideas to come. The group decided that nature/bird walks should be more consistent starting back up again in the fall and that we should utilize our connections with the St. Marks Friends group to come up with joint activities.

**10. Communications committee reports:**

The group will be looking into a new layout/theme for the website. More to come on this soon.

**11. New business:**

Dr. Ken Sassaman discussed his UF group's summer solstice event at Shell Mound this past June, which included his students and staff camping at the campground and celebrating the summer solstice. This highlighted how Native Americans used the Shell Mound site during the annual summer solstice. The Friends group shared insights into possibly making this a partnered event with UF in the future.

Invasive species control: Although there is no grant money available yet this year for supplies, the refuge has purchased basic necessities that will allow the invasive species control group to start controlling again in October. The Friends shared that financial assistance could come from the group as well, if needed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM  
No meeting in August. Next meeting September 20<sup>th</sup>.