

# Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges

July/August Board Meeting Minutes

8/1/2023

Recorded by Pete Tirrell

Present:

Genessa Mahr, Barbara Woodmansee, Debbie Meeks, Boyd Kimball, Linda Kimball, Peg Hall, John Thalacker, Dan Kline, Debbie Jordan, John McPherson, Jeri Treat, Ron Kamzelski, John McPherson, Denise Feiber, Peter Tirrell

Representing the Refuge: Refuge Manager Andrew Gude

Guest: Jay Bushnell

GiNESSA M did an overview of document locations and usage, and will send out a document with details.

Meeting called to order 10:08 am

## Approval Items

- Accept or modify the agenda
  - Denise F requested adding nominating meeting timeline discussion to agenda
  - Agenda accepted
- Approve Minutes from previous Board Meeting
  - Postponed until we have the notes to review
- Treasurer's Report
  - [Financial statements in Dropbox](#)
  - Linda K reported recent additions to financial reports, due to timing of meeting additional payments and credits not reported in financial documents yet. John T. to discuss with Cedar Key Library use of \$100 annual donation.

## Refuge Update

Report from Andrew G

- Debbie has been working with Rex and Claudette on placing the new Refuge QR coded signs.
- The Refuge can use end-of-year funds to purchase the Friends' Outreach Trailer. I really want to spend the money by September.

- We are buying a dehumidifier for the new storage shed to decrease the potential for mold.
- Staff: John, George, Johnny and I are in this week; Jason and Daniel are on leave.
- YCC's have finished a successful summer. They must miss us as they are volunteering with the Marine Animal Rescue team.
- Hydrologic Restoration: work on this coordination continues, selecting a project manager. Also, the Gulf Office is applying for a USDOT grant for wildlife passage to supplement what we believe will be a shortfall of funding for all of the work on the Nature Drive and the Dixie Mainline, and funding the low water crossings project.
- Shellmound pier replacement will start sometime in October - November. We will make signs to place down there well in advance of the work, to avoid disappointment by visitors...
- Hunters' Group to receive information from the Refuge is up and running. The hunters signed up will be offered a Special Use Permit to hunt hogs for a couple days outside the regular hunt seasons; as an incentive and thank you. We need to establish a protocol for receiving feedback from them as I hope the better informed they are the more engaged and supportive they will be. We need to do this before we start sending them information.
- Vista: John found that the caretakers house is in one of the sisters' names so a title transfer will be easier.
- No additional agreements needed for fundraising! The current Friends Partnership Agreement covers fundraising up to \$25,000.
- The Refuge can purchase supplies, materials, and tools for the Vista building work. Get me a list of all of the details and vendors.
- Debbie is working with a trailer-hauler to see if they can remove that thing and not cut trees down. If we cannot remove it because we would have to cut trees down, then on to plan B . . . demolish and junk.

## Discussion Items

- Mobile Trailer (Debbie/Bill)
  - Andrew is able to commit funds to purchase mobile trailer  
Debbie and Bill D received quotes from two vendors, American Trailer and Southern Trailer  
<https://www.dropbox.com/home/07%20and%2008-2023?preview=Outreach+Trailer+Quote+Comparision.xlsx>  
Debbie got 5 quotes and compared them in the spreadsheet. When Andrew said he is willing to purchase the trailer, Bill worked with American Trailer to fine-tune quote and get everything we need. The quote looked good but they have

emphatic warnings not to expect it for 12+ weeks, maybe longer. Andrew's spending deadline is Sept. 20 and, after Bill left on vacation, Debbie didn't feel comfortable paying in full for something we don't have in hand. She called Southern Trailer to find out if the delay is industry-wide. Southern said 4-6 weeks, their quote is \$500 higher for close to the same trailer.

- **VOTE to accept proceeding with purchase from Southern Trailer, approved unanimously.**
- Damage and theft insurance? John M will contact insurance company
- [Friends Agreement Review](#) (Debbie/Ginessa)
  - **VOTE to accept, approved unanimously.**
- Two-year Plan Discussions (Debbie/Denise/Ginessa)  
[Review the notes from discussions](#) held during meetings held on July 6 and July 7  
Focus on fundraising, cook's house restoration, making Vista safe for visitors
- Vista (Debbie/Ginessa)
  - Reports: In-kind match window work. John M and Catherine Duncan persisted and the State agreed to allow Debbie to contribute the labor to re-glaze the windows as Friends in-kind match.
  - Termite/pest report from Orkin. No live termites were found so no treatment is necessary for them but powder post beetles were found in the main house which needs to be treated, possibly only by removing the infested wood. Orkin quoted \$4,000 for the treatment but it is not clear what they would do. Borer bee damage on the back porch of the main house also needs to be repaired.
  - Removal & sale of the non-mobile trailer, use of proceeds
  - UF Historic Preservation department students are interested in coming out in the fall. There hopefully is a project at Vista that would benefit us and be educational for them.
  - State involvement, disassembly and removal of buildings (options). John M donate materials, Debbie M coordinate window restoration, \$11500 gift in kind
  - Reallocate committed funds – i.e. keep Vista-marked funds for Vista, should in-kind funds return back to General Expenditures? Debbie asked whether the \$11,500 cash that we set aside for the Friends match could be shifted to the architect fee shortfall since our match is now an in-kind contribution.  
Additionally, the money we tagged for the shortfall could be released back to the general fund. John M explained that we never officially set shortfall money aside

for the architect so there is no reason to vote to reallocate. Our Vista earmarked cash will now almost cover the architect shortfall.

- **VOTE no vote held, not necessary**
- Contact State re: Vista Partnership (GiNESSA)
  - Instead of Greg Strong, pursue contacting Larry Woodward for further research about partnering with state.
  - **VOTE unanimous to pursue additional research.**

## Subcommittee Reports

- Advocacy (Peg/Scott/Ron)
  - Reach out to Kat Cammack's staff
  - Law enforcement on the Refuge Updates
    - Jay B staffing shortages in law enforcement endangers mission of the refuges. Board endorse Jay to contact Kat Comak and other reps and staff for "show and tell" visit to the refuges.
    - Peg attended a Zoom with Senator Rubio's staff organized by NWRA with 6 of the other Friends groups in our region. The discussion focused on needing more money for the refuges and in particular law enforcement. Peg noted what seemed to be a lack of interest amongst the staff.
- Membership (Debbie) **Report in Dropbox**
  - There was one renewal and one new couple last month. But the best membership news is that Dan agreed to help appreciate and cultivate our members. Thank You, Dan!
- Merchandise (Boyd)
  - Simplification of merchandise, ordering  
New tree hoodies coming. Passport books very popular
- Vista poster Design Team (Debbie & Denise)
  - We plan to write a multiple choice or ranking-type survey for the Seafood Festival asking how Vista can best serve the local community. The poster will support the survey.

## Reports

- Governance (GiNESSA) no update
- Outreach and Jr. Ranger (Debbie)- **Report in Dropbox**
- Communications (Peg)- **Report in Dropbox**
- Refuge Support (Scott)
- Finances (Linda)

## Open Discussion

- Happy birthday to Ginessa!

## Action Items

- Mobile Trailer Vote **APPROVED**
- Friends Agreement Review & Vote **APPROVED**
- Reallocation of Committed Funds Vote **No VOTE \$11500 will offset Vista shortfall**
- Contacting State Parks Rep Greg Strong Vote **APPROVED (Larry Woodward may be better contact)**

Meeting adjourned at 12 pm, next meeting Sep 19