

THE IBIS



JANUARY 2012

The IBIS is the journal publication of The Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges

JANUARY 2012 IS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys NWRs grew to over 200 members in 2011. Many of you may have requested the digital form, but this hard copy IBIS is sent to everyone with application for renewal. As we continue to grow, we look forward to your renewal for 2012 and your help in recruiting additional members.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Friends of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges is to provide active advocacy and physical support for the successful stewardship of the Refuges.

- ***Advocating***
- ***Educating***
- ***Volunteering***
- ***Funding***
- ***Fellowship***



ANNUAL/OPEN HOUSE

Mark your calendar. The Friends' Annual Meeting and the Refuge's Open House is scheduled for Saturday, March 24th. Be ready for another fun day with food, speakers, silent auction, and events. It will again be at the Refuge Headquarters just off CR 347.

SILENT AUCTION

Based on the success of last year, the Friends will be hosting the Second Annual Friends Silent Auction. It was a great fund raiser and it was a lot of fun thanks to the 30 wonderful donations, plus the enthusiastic shopping by the Friends. We are hoping that this year will even better! So if you have something that you would be willing to contribute, please contact Donna Bushnell (493-1807), Marci Wilcox (813-215-0050) or Michelle Pearson (352-325-0134) to arrange pick up of your donation. We would love any works of art, objects for decor, sporting equipment, and other contributions, either new or used in good condition.

Be sure to bring your checkbook or cash to the Open House and have fun shopping at the Friends Silent Auction.

FRIENDS' YEAR IN REVIEW

It has been a busy year for the Friends. More than 150 members attended the Annual Meeting/Open House in March, enjoying presentations, a Kenny & Rose McCain prepared feast, and an afternoon of activities. Best of all was the gift to the Refuge of the future title to the 15 acre Vista Camp property on the Suwannee by two new Life

Members of the Friends, Sandra Roe Smith and Linda Roe Alexander. **Please note that Vista is not yet open to the public.** Pictured here are a pair of eagles seen several times around Vista.



Mark Gluckman and Russ Hall have been working to complete the grant-funded paddle project. The target date for completion is in time for our Annual meeting. Twelve paddle trail maps complete with GPS coordinates, habitat biozone descriptions and paddle conditions have been developed. Each of the trails was carefully tested over the summer and fall.

Friends bid farewell to our former Refuge Manager John Kasbohm and Deputy Manager Daryl Magnuson. The Refuge was staffed with subs for six months. In September, we welcomed the new Refuge Manager Andrew Gude. In December, Deputy Manager Larry Woodmark joined the staff. Pamela Garrison also joined the staff as a low enforcement trainee.

There were Board meetings in January, March, April, May, July, September, November, and December. These meetings are open to all Friends. Please know that you have a great group of folks on the board.



Friends sponsored more than 10 presentations on refuge-related topics at the Cedar Key Public Library, in January, February, March, April, May, September, October, November, and December. We post announcements in the electronic news letter and we also get the word out with all the local papers.

Friends Life Members Joyce Tarnow and John and Donna Thalacker led Nature Walks in January, February, March, April, May, November, and December...some on the Suwannee County side and some on the Levy County side of the Refuge.

In April and May, Friends members led a Paddling Trip to Atsena Otie and provided an Airboat Trip near Cedar Key. Members also participated in the Suwannee Hidden Coast Paddling Event.

In December, Friends worked on leading the cleanup of the Suwannee River from Camp Azalea to the Town of Suwannee. Students from Chiefland High School, and the University of Florida, joined community members from Camp Azalea, Fowler's Bluff and the Town of Suwannee with the clean up.

Your president, Peg Hall

SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2012

The nominating committee of Marcie Wilcox, Donna Thalacker and Peg Hall is proud to present the following candidates for the 2012 Friends Board for election at the March 24th Annual meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor.

-Secretary John McPherson

-Directors Bob Hudson, Sean Dowie, Mark Gluckman, Russ Hall, John Thalacker,

Kirby Alexander and Carmelo Echevarrio

Completing the second half of their two year terms will be: President-Peg Hall, VP-Marci Wilcox, Treasurer-Jerry Salamon, Immediate past president-Jay Bushnell and Directors-Ed DeHaan, Richard Herman, & Michelle Pearson.

MEET OUR NEW MANAGER **ANDREW GUDE**

Andrew grew up in Blue Bell, Pennsylvania where he credits his parents for instilling a firm foundation in conservation. He worked his way through Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey. Here he was exposed to one of the best tropical marine biological laboratories in the world. With his undergraduate degree in hand, he then spent a year-and-a-half on a 150



foot Japanese longliners and trawlers in the Bering Sea as a fishery biologist. Does not seem very tropical. There were weeks when he did not even see the light of day let alone a tropical sun. At least, he did earn enough money to pay off his college debt.

Well, once he escaped the frigid north, there was no looking back. He lived in the Florida Keys, Cayman Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Taught scuba diving and environmental science. He captained vessels, commercially lobstered, spear fished, and served as a sport fishing guide. Sounds like he was making up for lost time.

Next stop was Portland, Oregon where he worked as a fish and wildlife biologist for a private consulting firm. At the same time, he attended graduate school for natural resource management/geography at Portland State University.

After a year of delivering sailboats across the Indian Ocean from Mauritius to Thailand, Andrew returned to the tropics. While in the Turks and Caicos Islands, he taught university level classes and was Center Director of The School for Field Studies' Center for Marine Resource Studies.

In 2000, he moved to Florida to work as an Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager in the

Keys. Andrew was next selected by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Ecological Services and then the Florida Keys Refuges. From the Keys he moved to Washington DC in 2004, serving as the NWRS's Headquarters' Ocean and Coastal Refuge Coordinator. As a part of his work, he spent time in South Carolina, Hawaii, Alaska, Palmyra Atoll, and the U.S. Pacific Islands. In this capacity, he worked on a small team that secured the four large Pacific Ocean Marine National Monuments as FWS-managed areas. By early 2009, these 305 million-acre monuments increased the NWRS's holdings by over 50 percent. In 2010, he served the Director as the Service's Liaison to the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks, where he worked on a range of policy issues across all FWS regions, as well as Departmental priority projects including National Ocean Policy and America's Great Outdoors, coordinating with CEQ, sister federal agencies, and a host of special interest groups. He states that, "I am now very happy and honored to be back in Florida at the Lower Suwannee and the Cedar Keys NWRs."



Andrew also is glad to be in Florida because it brings him closer to his children, Madelaine (11) and George (8) who he will have spend time with him on the refuges. Be sure to stop by and say hello. You'll enjoy his company. You will

quickly learn that he is a hands on person. You are not often likely to see him in a rocking chair.

EDITORIAL

“Honey bees- environmental canaries in the coal mine” by Jay Bushnell

As you no doubt know, honey bees are a vital part of our agriculture. Many crops are extremely dependent on bees for pollination. Migratory bee keepers truck their bees all over the United States for pollination. Yet today the bee industry is severely threatened.



Bee keepers have been dealing with a condition called “colony collapse disorder or CCD.” What happens is that one day the hives seem healthy and the next day as many as two thirds of the hives are vacated. As a former bee keeper, I thought there must be piles of dead bees by the hives or the bees absconded due to stress; but when I talked to a local migratory bee keeper, he said no on both accounts! They just vanished. There is a good DVD available from Netflix titled “Vanishing of the Bees” that document this.

The CCD phenomenon is world wide. In the 1990s, the French discovered a connection of CCD to mono crop agricultural practices. Presently, our large factory agricultural practices attempt to control pathogens or pest with genetically altered crops or pesticides.

While this is only one of the latest explanations, it would seem that CCD is not found where bees are not near mono cropping practices. An interesting observation that may confirm the connection to mono cropping and CCD is that last spring I noticed honey bees working flowers on Barnett Creek Road. Of course, there are no commercial stands of bees near there and there is no mono crop agriculture near.

Conservation of our food production depends upon our ability to follow best practices. Colony Collapse Disorder may be the canary warning that something is terribly wrong.

FRIENDS HELP WITH GOPHER TORTOISE SURVEY

On January 4 and 5, 2012 the Refuges conducted a Gopher Tortoise Survey. More than 20 Friends members helped. The survey was needed because timber sales will be conducted this spring in some areas along the 9-mile Narture Drive. Thinning will help reestablish the



natural habitat, a primary goal of land management on the Refuge.

The problem is that the equipment needed to thin the trees would likely collapse gopher tortoise burrows if it drove over them. Gopher tortoises are a key stone species and they are protected in Florida. According to Refuge Forester Daniel Barrand, the FWS takes their protection seriously.

Under the leadership of Daniel and his Refuge colleagues, the Friends volunteers, armed with heavy clothing to protect against brambles and brush, walked the three areas in grid formation looking for burrows. Each of the approximately 50 burrows they identified was marked so the loggers can avoid damaging them.

It was a rewarding day for the participants. “I knew when I saw the announcement in the News Brief,” said Friends member Bev Ringenberg, “that we’d really enjoy the Survey. And I was right. It was a great experience.”

REFUGE UPDATE

The new managers and staff hope that all had a wonderful holiday season and we thank all who visited the very special Holiday Lighthouse

opening hosted by the Refuge and the Cedar Keys Historical Society. The hot cider and cookies went well with the holiday decorations.

In the next months, the refuge staff will be putting the finishing touches on the recently acquired new environmental education classroom. The classroom will be used for children's programs. This space will also help us with our mission to provide programs for the nontraditional public such as elders, mentally challenged, or those with sight, hearing and mobility impairments.

Many thanks to the Friends members who helped Daniel Barrand, the Refuge Forester with the gopher tortoise survey. If you are interested in helping with Refuge projects in the future, please email us at lowersuwanee@fws.gov.

The new law enforcement Ranger, Pamela Garrison, has completed her required training and now will go on to train in the field at other Refuges. Upon her return in the spring, she will begin patrolling the Refuges independently providing another full-time officer for the first time since 2000.

Our valued coworker, Terry Kelly, will be retiring the first of March. Join us in wishing her the best retirement can offer.

Andrew Gude is attempting to add more hunts to our hunt season. He hopes to bring more youth to the Refuge by offering youth hunts for hog and turkey. If you'd like to learn more and to attend the **Annual Hunter Working Group Meeting**, contact us at lowersuwanee@fws.gov for more details. by Pam Darty

GETTING THE WORD OUT

As an organization, we work hard to communicate items of interest to our members and the public. The IBIS is just one way we do this. We also make every effort to communicate programs using our local papers. For quicker updates, we send the digital News Brief monthly by email. The News Brief has also successfully allowed us to reach a broader audience than in the past. At anytime, you want to learn more about what we are doing, just contact one your board members listed at the end of this publication.

SCHEDULED EVENTS COMING UP

As a part of our education goals, we work to provide informative programs that are always open to the public. We also seek to cooperate with other organizations that share our environmental conservation mission.

- Jan., 24th-10:00 AM @ Dennis Creek, Photo walk with Michelle Pearson-(Michelle will lead a photo walk every 4th Tuesday starting at 10:00 AM) contact Michelle Pearson at 352-325-0134 or Michelle@MichelleEpearson.com for future time and place of walks.
- Jan. 26-5:00 PM @ Cedar Key Library, Refuge Night, meet the new managers of the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys NWR and learn about upcoming programs for the year.
- Feb. 11th-10:30 AM @ Cedar Key Library, Barbara Woodmansee, 'Butterflies in the Lower Suwannee.'
- April 7th -'Butterfly safari with Barbara Woodmansee,' contact Barbara at [mistyoaks@earthlink.net](mailto:mistyorks@earthlink.net) for more information.
- March-SALUTE TO WILDLIFE-Cedar Key Arts Center is hosting an exhibit open to everyone in the community saluting wildlife and the Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys Wildlife Refuges. Entries can be any medium and must be original works by the artist. Entries (limit 3 per artist) are to be delivered to the Arts Center by 5 pm, Tuesday, February 28th. Works will be displayed (and can be for sale) in the CKAC Gallery during March. There is a \$5 per piece entry fee and four cash prizes will be awarded. Salute to Wildlife Gallery Opening and Artist Reception is March 3rd, 5-7 p.m. and is open to the public. We hope that members of the Friends will have many wonderful entries in this wildlife exhibit.
- March 24th-Friends Annual meeting and Refuge Open House @ Refuge headquarters off CR 247-10:00 AM-3:00 PM-Open to the public. There will be election of board, a speaker, lunch for members, silent auction and events after lunch.

**FRIENDS OF THE LOWER
SUWANNEE & CEDAR KEYS
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES
P.O. BOX 1306
CHIEFLAND, FL 32644**

WEB PAGE

www.friendsofrefuges.org

BOARD MEMBERS

Peg Hall, President, 352-335-0162, peg@peghall.com, Marci Wilcox, VP, 813-215-0050, marciwilcox@verizon.net, Bob Hudson, Secretary 352-332-6373, bobhudson@bellsouth.net, Jerry Salamon 352-543-5897, salamon@indiana.edu, John Thalacker, 352-543-6738 or 515-573-8398, johnthalacker@gmail.com, Sean Dowie, 352-591-4644, smdphoto@msn.com, Ed DeHaan, 612-590-4414, cdrkey@gmail.com, Richard Herman, 352-542-9075, raherman@bellsouth.net, Mark Gluckman, 352-331-6279, markgluckman@bellsouth.net, Russ Hall, 352-335-0162, randphall@cox.net, Ron Black, 352-543-8065, mcbblack@hotmail.com, John McPherson 352-543-5682, jkmcperson@att.net, & Michelle Pearson, 352-325-0134, Michelle@MichelleEpearson.com, Directors, and Jay Bushnell, Immediate past President, 352- 493-1807, djbushne@bellsouth.net

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION-ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUE IN JANUARY

NAME/S: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

Species of membership-please check level of membership

* Swallow-tailed Kite--\$1000 or more, *Life membership*; * Bald Eagle--\$500-999

Life membership; * River Otter--\$250-\$499 *Life membership*

* White Ibis--\$20 annually *Family membership*; * Gopher Tortoise--\$10 annually

Individual membership; * Other--annual plus any additional contribution.

I understand and agree to abide by the Friends' Code of Ethics: available on our webpage.

Signature _____ **Date:** _____

Please check one of the follow: __1. Send my IBIS in printed hard-copy through the mail __2. Send my IBIS digitally in an email (except for the one with the Annual Renewal Form)