

Minutes
Board Meeting
Friends of the Lower Suwannee & Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuges
Thursday, September 17, 2015

Present:

Board Members: Greg Lang, John McPherson, Jaime Jarrels, Carmela Echevarria, Allen Pither, Bill Dummitt, Maria Sgambati (by phone).

Refuge Staff. Larry Woodward.

Guests: None.

1. The meeting was convened at 10:05 a.m. by Greg Lang, President.
2. Approval of Minutes: Board Meeting on July 16, 2015. **Motion** by Jaime Jarrels to approve the minutes of July 16, 2015, as presented. **Second** by Carmela Echevarria. Passed by unanimous vote.
3. Refuge update: Deputy Manager Larry Woodward gave the following update:
 - a. Staffing: Need to replace Pam Darty and the fire position, but no word yet. Money is still there in the Complex budget, but questions remain about where the positions will be located. The decision should be made within the next month. Andrew Gude did not get the job in the Keys job so he will continue locally.
 - b. Seahorse Key Open House: First day only of Seafood Festival, October 17.
 - c. Hunting: Archery season begins next month.
 - d. Bird Rookery: Since many birds moved to Snake Key, they are trying to expand the Seahorse Key closure rules to include Snake Key.
 - e. Big Bend Science Symposium: Set for February of next year—expecting about 100 at the Cedar Key Community Center. Saturday will be for scientists only; on Sunday the public will be invited. It was suggested that Friends could help with registration and check in, refreshments, and possibly as the local sponsor. This should be discussed further at a later meeting, with the consensus of the Board being that Friends should be involved.
 - f. Healthy Cedar Key/Healthy Gulf: Will be promoting walking trails in the Refuge and Larry will be participating.

- g. Fire: New person, Josh, started and it looks like he will do a great job. The Western fires caused FWS to be put on Preparedness Level 5 which means everyone is put on call. Larry went to Washington state for about 24 days. Others were sent as well, and all the fires outside of California are basically out.
- h. Jim Wortham: FWS pilot has been granted permission to be located permanently in Cedar Key.
- i. FWC: Refuge will be providing office space for state FWC enforcement officer.
- j. Flooding: Loop and Mainline had to be closed due to flooding, but both are now back open.
- k. MOU with FNCC: Need to move ahead with.

5. Committee Reports:

- a. Treasurer's Report. Libby Cagle not present at the meeting so no report was presented. Greg Lang reported that there was an email from Libby regarding invoices from the Print Shop in Chiefland and whether anyone new anything about them since they were very old. The Board agreed that although very late, the invoices appeared to be for printing that was ordered by Friends. **Motion** by John McPherson to pay the invoices subject to confirmation by Libby that they have not been paid in the past. **Second** by Jaime Jerrels. Passed by unanimous vote.
- b. Communications: Jaime Jerrels reviewed the written report sent by Peg (attached).
- c. Invasive Species. Roger McDaniel absent but the plan is to get the project going again in the Fall.
- d. Inventory. Carmelo Echevarria reported that he wanted to order new hats and needed a new company to do the embroidery work. He will be checking on a company in Gainesville. Carmelo also asked the Board to give him ideas as to any new items to offer for sale, and he will look into what is needed to prepare for the Seafood Festival.
- e. Membership. Marci Wilcox reported by email that there had been little activity.

6. Initiatives update:

- a. Tram Trail Panels: Debbie Meeks provided drafts to be considered at a future meeting.

7. Old business and updates:
 - a. Promotional video concept/budget: Communications committee still working on.
 - b. Letter to David Viker, Chief of SE Region: We received a letter stating that about 100 positions were lost in the Southeast Region and that he will get back to us with a more thorough response.
 - c. Seahorse Key rookery: Maria Sgambati reported that there is no news, and that Coleman Sheehy will give a talk at UF in Gainesville in November on the issue.

8. Other business / reminders:
 - a. 30th Annual International Coastal Cleanup in Cedar Key is Saturday, September 19th, 8 a.m. until noon. Sign in at the Cedar Key City Marina.
 - b. Action item: Consideration of request by organizer Sue Colson for a trash receptacle on North Key and Seahorse Key. Maria Sgambati reported that there is a container on the outside beach on Seahorse and that UF could use help in emptying this container. After discussion, the general sense of the Board was that people should be encouraged to take their trash with them off the islands.
 - c. November Friends Board meeting & River & Creeks Cleanup to be held in Dixie County on November 19. Greg Lang thanked Debbie Meeks for organizing this meeting, and reviewed the location and schedule of events. At the October meeting the Board will need to decide whether to partner with the Suwannee Chamber of Commerce and contribute half the cost of lunch.
 - d. 46th Annual Cedar Key Seafood Festival, October 17-18. Greg Lang thanked Allan Pither for submitting the Vendor Application and working on the organization. Allan stated that volunteers are needed for booth set up, staffing, storage of items and take down. A sign-up sheet was passed around. The consensus of the Board was to purchase a second banner for street side of the booth and to order it before the Festival.
 - e. Next Friends Board Meeting: 10 a.m., October 15, Refuge Headquarters.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:18 a.m.

Communications Team Report September 2015

Publications

Debbie has drafted wording and graphics for 4 new interpretive panels

- 3 for the new Tram Trail
- 1 for the Dixie side, "Restoring Your Refuge, Restoring Your Heritage"

August 26 News Brief

Received by 488, opened by 41%

Topics were –

Invitation to the Board Meeting, Save the date for Suwannee River Cleanup and the board meeting in Town of Suwannee in November, Photos and story on flooding on Dixie Mainline, Refuge staff called to fight wildfires, Rookery abandonment media coverage, Advocacy and information links

The links opened were

1. Audubon rookery story (30)
2. Natural Resources Defense Council rookery story (22)
3. NPR rookery story (19)
4. NWRA photo contest (4)
5. NWRA August newsletter (2)

July 15 News Brief

Received by 489, opened by 44%

Topics were –

Board Meeting announcement, Seahorse Key Open House, Rookery abandonment media coverage, Advocacy and information links

The links opened were

1. MSNBC rookery story (18)
2. NY Times rookery story (15)
3. Canadian Broadcasting Company rookery story (15)
4. Seahorse Key open house (12)
5. Associated Press rookery story (8)

Facebook Page

15 new fans = 369

11 Posts – by Maria, Bob, Peg, Kit, and Russ

Posts reached a total of 1275 people. The most popular were about the Artist in residence program at Seahorse Key (639), the NPR story on the rookery (231), and the Audubon story on the rookery (101)

Friends Website

5 posts - by Debbie, Peg