

**Friends of Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
February 22, 2011**

**Attendees:** Judy Colvard, Joan Davis, Harvey Eisen, Steve Horowitz, Kay Larche, Cynthia Plockelman, Tom Poulson, Mitch Rosenheim, Pauline Stacey and Elinor Williams. Bill Ross joined later. Rolf Olson represented the Refuge. Absent were Jeff Kramer, David Lurie and John Marshall.

Last month's minutes were distributed. Corrections and approvals will be circulated by e-mail after everyone has a chance to read them.

**Resignation:** The Board has accepted the resignation of Lance Warley, with deep regret. He resigned due to the increasingly overwhelming workload from his day job. He will continue to run this year's photo contest but will no longer be editor of the Gator Tales. There are many articles for the Gator Tales ready to go, with the lead one from Rolf.

**New Board Member:** Bill Ross has accepted an invitation to join the Board to fill the remainder of Lance's term, which expires in January of next year. Bill has already been helping the Friends tremendously in his unofficial capacities as assistant Treasurer to David Lurie and assistant Gift Shop Manager to Harvie Eisen. Bill is a Friends member who has been volunteering in the Visitor Center in recent months and who also volunteers at Green Cay. Steve provided the Board with his resume which lists, among other accomplishments, being Treasurer of his Credit Union. The Board unanimously approved Bill's nomination. (Harvey – motion, Cynthia & Mitch – 2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Additional Board Opening:** The Board position recently vacated by Marta Isaacson also expires in January of next year. The maximum number of Board members is 15 and we currently have 14 after the resignations of Lance and Marta and the addition of Bill. Marta continues to work with Serena on educational materials and projects. The Board still lacks a Secretary. Steve clarified that a nominating committee is a temporary body whose purpose is to recommend Board members for complete 3-year terms which begin in January of each year. Such a committee is not necessary to fill unexpired terms.

**1<sup>st</sup> Lee Road Cleanup:** The first cleanup since the Friends adopted Lee Road is scheduled for this Saturday, February 26 at 10:00 a.m. The cleanup will start in the parking lot of the Visitor Center and then head east on Lee Road to U.S. 441. Rolf would also like to see the canal cleaned; the Refuge can provide a shrimp net. Steve and Kay met with Owen Miley of the Palm Beach County Engineering and Public Works Department and got safety vests and trash bags from him. After the cleanup the tied bags are to be left under the road adoption sign. A county truck will pick them up.

**H&R Block Green Bio Bags:** The office manager of H&R Block on Atlantic Avenue in Delray was at Bedner's this weekend and saw the Bedner plastic bags we are using in the gift shop. He called and offered us H&R Block green bio-degradable bags to use while supplies last, along with a donation from the company. Rolf will check to see if this kind of advertising is permissible within federal guidelines. The Board voted unanimously to accept and use the bags if it is. (Mitch – motion, Elinor – 2<sup>nd</sup>)

**Display Case:** Kay and Becky Garcia are working on a “Birds of Loxahatchee” display for the case over the water fountain in the Visitor Center.

**Videographer/Swamp Stroll Training:** Marvin Badler has volunteered to video some of our swamp strolls, nature walks, etc. for use in training and education. He needs a good video camera, estimated to be in the \$400 - \$500 price range. Tom suggests the camera should be one suitable for recording TV spots like the Public Service Announcement we aired last year. Mitch volunteered to check with Delray Camera for advice and a possible contribution. Lucille Weinstat has been recruiting and training future swamp strollers and documenting the script she uses when she leads her swamp strolls.

**Everglades Day:** It is unclear whether we will receive any of the money the Sheriff promised us for Everglades Day to make up for the loss of the Palm Beach County cultural grant. This is money in the State Law Enforcement Trust Fund from sales of property confiscated from drug dealers, etc. and is intended for organizations that build safer neighborhoods and healthy communities. The Sheriff came under criticism for offering the money in lieu of the cultural grant. Sue Snyder of the Everglades Day Committee and

Audubon Society asked Steve to write a letter to Palm Beach County in support of the cultural grant for next year.

Approximately 2200 people attended Everglades Day this year, only about half the number who attended last year, probably due to the cold, rainy weather in the morning. Harvey reported disappointing gift shop sales overall, although they picked up in the afternoon. People on their way out typically account for a large part of the sales.

Rolf was very pleased with Everglades Day in spite of the lower turnout. Possibly because of the lower turnout he feels the visitors who did attend were able to enjoy a better quality experience (if they weren't too cold or soaking wet). Approximately 2200 visitors attended. Rolf pointed out that even the Ding Darling Refuge only had 2600 attendees at their similar event, and that was on a good day. Rolf wanted to thank the many volunteers who helped Serena and helped make the day a success.

Cynthia said people who came in the afternoon were disappointed that the tours were all booked, but the people who braved the cold and rain to come in the morning obviously really wanted to be there and seemed to really enjoy everything.

Suggestions: Tom suggested we should do more to try to encourage sales. Pauline said she had some ideas. Steve found that the person coordinating the buses needs to also be in charge of the bus volunteers. Elinor suggested next year picking a weekend other than the Delray Garlic Fest, because in the past the city has been good about promoting us on their website and in their press releases to all of their media contacts. Also it would probably be better not to promo a weather-dependent event like the prescribed burn as the highlight of the festival just in case.

**Store Report:** Harvey handed out a breakdown of gift shop sales, donations and membership dues rung up for the months October through January:  
Store Sales: \$2927.49 (Oct) \$3929.15 (Nov) \$4376.01 (Dec) \$5197.15 (Jan)  
Donations: \$612.48 (Oct) \$1274 (Nov) \$1112.60 (Dec) \$900.05 (Jan)  
Memberships: \$515 (Oct) \$655 (Nov) \$2160 (Dec) \$695 (Jan)

**USFWS/NWRA Vision Process:** Pauline reported on the National Wildlife Refuge Association webinar on December 16 in which she participated. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NWRA are developing a long-term

vision for wildlife conservation over the next 10 – 15 years. A forum has been created for documents and ideas; Pauline will send us the link to it. The objectives of the vision process are 1) to raise awareness of wildlife conservation and the role of the National Wildlife Refuge System, 2) to inspire and educate new conservation leaders, and 3) to create a vision document which will be adopted at the conference in Madison, WI in July 2011.

Rolf reports that the USFWS has reserved 144 slots for Friends groups at this conference, resulting in each Friends group getting 1 or 2 slots for representatives to attend, presumably with funding.

**Everglades Coalition:** Pauline attended the quarterly EvCo meeting. She is concerned about the Treasury reports, which are lacking necessary information. She and others are working on this issue.

She checked into the Great Waters Membership Charter and confirmed that we are members (at no charge).

The retreat that she didn't attend due to bad weather established common sense (but apparently much-needed) rules for meeting conduct. Two resolutions were approved: 1) Support for the adoption of numeric nutrient criteria for Florida waterways and 2) Support for stronger water quality improvements in the Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan Update.

This year's Everglades Coalition Conference was well-attended and considered a success. Pauline presented the George M. Barley Conservationist of the Year to Nancy Marshall, who emphasized the importance of getting children involved early in conservation.

The place and time of next year's conference has yet to be determined. Palm Beach Gardens is a possibility. Earthjustice and the Izaak Walton League will host. Pauline is on the conference committee. It is recognized that in the future the place and time of the next conference should be known and announced at the conference itself.

**Everglades Headwaters NWR:** Pauline attended a public scoping meeting called by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss the proposed Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. About 600 angry hunters and ORV riders attended, afraid that this would cut

off their access to public lands. Pauline was very impressed with John Marshall who commanded the attention of this crowd during his comment period by saying, “I am a 6<sup>th</sup> generation Floridian. If you don’t do something to protect this land, your heritage, someone will take it from you.” The here-to-fore unruly crowd was quiet for his remarks and applauded him afterwards.

Because of the extent of the public concern, the comment period for the proposal has been extended another month to March 28. It is very important for all who support it to write as individuals. Steve will also write a comment for the Friends as an organization. Steve stressed that the Everglades Coalition should also go on record as supporting this.

**Proposed Wind Farm:** Steve, Joan, Cynthia and John attended a meeting of the Wind Capital Group and 1000 Friends of Florida, along with Sylvia, Rolf and a number of other Refuge employees, to discuss the proposed wind farm on the east side of Lake Okeechobee. Several notable local environmentalists attended as well. While most environmentalists support clean and renewable energy, the concern is that the wind farm will be located in the middle of a principal flyway for birds between the Lake and the Refuge. There are 3 towers in the area now, where bird counts and wind studies are currently being performed.

Concern was expressed by the Board that this project has been in the works for 2 years, and yet neither South Florida Water Management District Executive Director Carol Wehle or the district’s Water Resources Advisory Commission were aware of it.

Steve would like to see the Everglades Coalition take a stand against the location of the proposed wind farm.

**SFWMD Governing Board Changes/Budget Cuts:** The Governor will name four new members to the SFWMD governing board in March, so the potential for losing conservation-minded members and the strong leadership of Eric Buerman, along with the Governor’s very steep proposed budget cuts, may well put Everglades restoration plans and water quality improvements in jeopardy.

**Refuge report:** Prescribed burns have been conducted on 5,000 acres at the north end of the Refuge. Compartments C-5, C-8 and C-9 have all been

burned this year and are looking good. Trainees came from all over the country to help.

All of the Palm Beach County Commissioners have now been given tours of the Refuge, with the exception of Burt Aaronson.

Construction has begun on the Site 1 Impoundment Project. The levee and canal are closed in the construction area.

Electro-fishing training for counting and analyzing fish populations is coming up.

Refuge Biologist Marcie Kapsch went on temporary assignment to “Wing B” in Illinois. Biologists there analyze wings and bones brought in by hunters and use the data to predict the size and health of bird populations.

The 5 resident volunteers are doing lots to help the Refuge.

Surveys show the south entrance to the Refuge at Lox Road is most popular with boaters, followed by 20-Mile Bend, with the Headquarters area coming in last in popularity.

Chuck Ryan is back from jury duty and will be responsible for coordinating and maintaining the calendar of events.

**Potential Government Shutdown:** If the government should shut down because Congress reaches an impasse over the budget, the Refuge gates will presumably be locked and only Law Enforcement personnel will report to work, assuming the procedures that were followed when the government shut down in 1995 are repeated.

**File of Meeting Minutes:** Elinor has assembled a file of Board meeting minutes from late 2007 to the present and the last 4 years’ worth of tax returns. They will be stored with prior meeting minutes and other Friends archives in the Friends cabinet in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor stairwell. Steve and David Lurie have the keys to this cabinet. The electronic minutes are now available on the website from 2008 to the present. We need to be careful that all corrections are made to both the electronic version and the final hardcopy and that the two versions match before archiving.

**Budget:** Elinor presented the proposed budget for the fiscal year October 2010 – September 2011 as recommended by the new finance committee (Steve, Judy, Elinor) which met last week. The proposed budget was based on the previous fiscal year's Profit and Loss statement and includes some actual expense already incurred in this fiscal year and proposed expenses for the remainder of this fiscal year. Emphasis was put on increasing the Friends' donations to the Refuge, particularly visible projects that we can highlight in the Gator Tales and in fundraising appeals to Friends members. Specific budget items, particularly those relating to donations to the Refuge were discussed so as to clarify the item, but no votes were taken to approve or disapprove any particular item to give everyone time to study the budget and discuss it in more detail at the next Board meeting. The proposed budget is appended to the end of this document.

Some specific items that were discussed briefly include:

Visitor Guide – Tom believes he will have this ready for printing before the end of this fiscal year in September. Steve proposes we print 5000, which he estimates is a 5-year supply. There was some discussion as to whether we should print fewer copies, bringing the overall cost down but raising the price per copy, to save money in the short term and to give us the ability to make more frequent changes to the Guide in subsequent years. There was also some discussion as to whether we wanted or would even be allowed to place ads in the Guide to bring down the cost. Rolf will check into this.

Exhibit Maintenance Fund – Rolf explained that we have money left over from the original Exhibit Fund account enough to carry us through 5 years of maintenance with Southern Custom. However, the Friends have committed to pay \$3,000/per year to maintain the exhibits and more than that may well be needed after the 5 years are up. So, the Friends will set aside the money each year as we have committed so that it can be used for that purpose when the original money runs out.

Deaf Services – A deaf visitor inquired in November about the possibility of a sign language interpreter for any nature walks or other activities here at the Refuge in February. We tried to no avail to find a volunteer with these skills through e-mails, the website, etc. We subsequently learned that accommodating such a request was an ADA requirement for a federal agency such as ours that provides visitor services. We were able to get a very good interpreter who was recommended by the Deaf Services Center in

West Palm Beach both for her skills and because her fee is \$50/hour, 2-hour minimum, which is less than the going rate for agencies in the area that typically charge \$75/hour. She interpreted for our deaf visitors for well over 3 hours on Sunday afternoon, February 13, and charged us \$150. They were able to enjoy the Dragonfly Talk and Swamp Stroll and more informal activities without missing out and they said they enjoyed it tremendously.

Canoe Structure/Chickee Hut – Kim Detore of Loxahatchee Canoeing is planning improvements for the boat ramp area that include a structure to hold the canoes and a chickee hut to handle visitor transactions. We do not yet have a final price tag for this. Kim is offering to pay the full cost, but the budget proposal is for the Friends to pay half, both to help Kim out after all the free canoe rentals she's given us and calendar ads she's paid for, and to be able to point to a visible structure that the Friends can say we built for fundraising purposes.

Cell Phone Guided Tour – This would allow visitors to use their own cell phones to call from certain points on the Refuge and listen to information about the Refuge that is pertinent to that location. David Underwood had started work on this effort. We do not have actual cost information for this yet, so the proposed budget item is a placeholder for now.

DSL and Local Phone Line for Refuge Resident Volunteers – Currently the seasonal volunteers who are staying on the Refuge must drive miles to check e-mails and get Internet connections. They cannot connect to the Refuge system for security reasons and the Refuge cannot justify the expense of a separate line for volunteers. The Friends have offered to pay for the cost of installation and share with the volunteers the monthly connection fee.

Other Refuge Supplies and Improvements – In the past Refuge management has solicited requests from staff and presented them to the Friends Board for approval in order to buy some items such as night vision goggles, educational materials, etc. This process has proved cumbersome and left some needs unmet as Board members have sometimes been uncomfortable approving non-budgeted items. This proposed budget item would allow Refuge management to approve staff requests up to the proposed amount without waiting for Board approval on each individual request. We hope that this will make the Friends more responsive to Refuge requests and that that, in turn, will give the Friends more visible accomplishments that can be

used in fundraising appeals to hopefully leverage more donations to support the various projects.

One Final Note - In reviewing last year's Profit and Loss statement, it is clear that some expenses were not categorized properly. For example, the Friends' contribution to Everglades Day is lower than expected, probably because payments made directly to vendors were categorized as store expenses or some other type of expense. It is very important that in the future our accountant Mimi Walling is given sufficient information to categorize expenses properly. We especially want to make sure that all donations to the Refuge such as Everglades Day are categorized as such, because we want to publish our financial statement in the Gator Tales and on the website and we must provide it to foundations when applying for grants, and we do not want to short-change ourselves by appearing to help out the Refuge less than we are!

**Next Board Meeting:** Saturday, March 19 at 9:00 a.m. The first agenda item will be the budget.

Submitted by Secretary for the Day,  
Elinor Williams

### **Proposed Friends 2011 Budget Oct. 2010 - Sept. 2011**

#### Store

Anticipated Store Sales - \$45,000

Store Liability Insurance - \$870

Cash Register - \$2,060

Credit Card Fees - \$1,500

Anticipated Store Profit - \$13,000 (same as 2009)

Anticipated Membership Dues - \$6,000

Anticipated Donations - \$14,000

Anticipated Visitor Guide Ads - \$1,500

Calendar Ads - \$2,200

Total Anticipated Income (see above) - \$36,700

Total Anticipated Expenses (see below) - \$40,500

Estimated Dip into Reserves - \$3,800

### Community Outreach

Calendar - \$4,720

National Wildlife Refuge Association - \$1,000

Dues and Subscriptions (PBC Convention Bureau, Eco-Voice) - \$350

Everglades Coalition - \$350

Total Community Outreach - \$6,420

### Membership Outreach

Gator Tales Printing & Mailing - \$3,660

Postage - \$600

Annual Membership Meeting - \$200

Other Special Events - \$400

Office Supplies - \$520

Total Membership Outreach - \$5,380

### Donations to Refuge (\*) Denotes Refuge Priority Request

Photo Contest - \$1,500

Everglades Day\* - \$3,500

Exhibit Maintenance Fund\* - \$3,000

Teacher to Write Environmental Education Plan\* - \$2,000

Food for Special Occasions, Events, Meetings, Tours\* - \$1,000

Refuge Manager Discretionary Funds\* - \$500

Visitor Guide Printing (5,000=Estimated 5-yr. Supply) - \$5,000

Deaf Services - \$150

Canoe Structure/Chickee Hut - \$3,000

Cell Phone Guided Tour - \$2,000

DSL and Local Phone Line for Refuge Resident Volunteers - \$500

Other Refuge Supplies & Improvements (To Be Used at Refuge Mgmt Discretion) - \$2,500

Total Donations to Refuge - \$24,650

### Administrative

Accountant - \$2,050

Service Charges, Licenses, etc. - \$200

Directors and Officers Liability Insurance - \$900

Total Administrative - \$3,150

Conference Expense - \$900