

Meeting Minutes
Board of Director's Meeting
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
April 23, 2014, 9:00 am

Present: Elinor Williams (President), Judy Colvard (Vice-President), Linda Steinmuller (Secretary), David Lurie (Treasurer), Mike Winokur, Steve Horowitz, Jeff Kramer, Tom Poulson, Max Wald, Harvey Eisen, John Marshall, Tony Lang, Kay Larche, Jay Paredes, Rolf Olson (Refuge Manager), Jake Tuttle (Wildlife Refuge Specialist), Sylvia Pelizza (Area II Refuge Supervisor)
Absent: Pauline Stacey

President Elinor Williams opened the meeting at 9:00, with a quorum present

1. Welcome

2. Minutes. Minutes from the March 22, 2014 meeting were approved.

3. Reports

a) Refuge Report (Rolf)

Refuge Priorities/Concerns

The initial part of the meeting focused on communications between the Refuge Management and the Friends Board of Directors. Discussion included interaction with Refuge staff and volunteers, early review of all planned Friends projects with Refuge Management, a request that the Friends BoD use a project template for project approvals, prioritization and records, and the need to align Friends projects with Refuge priorities such as exotics removal from Refuge interior, fire management.

Rolf stated that the Friends groups is very much appreciated, supports the Refuge and accomplishes a lot. However, with a limited Refuge staff, the staff focus needs to be on Refuge priorities.

Also suggested is a work order sheet near the 'hot read' book in the Visitor's center for items like light bulb changes.

New Friends Policy

Sylvia said the policy has been under review for several years - there are some differences, but the new policy is not substantially different. For details, please refer to the meeting handouts on the Policy, Policy Action Items (Rolf's summary), Policy Fact Sheet with FAQs, and the 2004 Friends Memorandum of Agreement. The biggest change is with regard to the Visitor's Center gift shop, where Refuge service personnel will no longer be supporting gift shop operations. This is because some separation of duties is needed, for example Refuge staff is not permitted to handle gift shop funds. Volunteers may be both a Friends volunteer and a Refuge volunteer,

just not both on the same day/shift. Another example is that the Gift Shop/Friends group may not sell Refuge passes, however, the Refuge staff at the Visitor's Center desk may sell passes.

Clarification on the blue goose logo use. The Friends group is OK to sell items with the 'blue goose', however, the Friends group may not sell items with the full logo of either the US Fish & Wildlife Service or the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Ok for Friends Use:



Not Permitted for Friends Use:



New policy on funding.

Indirect funding: for example, gift store revenue, donations without soliciting; funds goes to Friends.

Direct funding: for example, Exhibit project fundraisers; funds must go to USFWS and not to Friends.

Webinar. A Webinar on the new policies is planned for Wed., May 7 at 1pm for Friends groups. Judy or Elinor will send information in advance.

Waivers. The new policy allows charging for a limited number of events, up to 2 per year. For example, we could charge for a photo workshop. But Friends groups may not charge or solicit donations for an 'everyday' event such as the tram tour.

Non-compete. Another policy is that Friends should not compete with other businesses in the area. This Refuge has stores within a few miles, so that's the reason for the restrictions on selling water, sunscreen and bug spray. Elinor and some other board members feel this policy is unreasonable as these items are a courtesy, and not offering them may shorten visits.

Insurance. Friends events like canoe tours, star gazing will no longer be covered by Refuge insurance. Per Steve, our current insurance policy aligns to current MOU for operation of the gift shop, transport of money to the bank. It also covers Friends Board and volunteers from liability. The new MOU may require an update on the insurance. Steve and Harvey are the committee working on the MOU update with Rolf. Once updated, the Friends Board will review.

Urban Initiatives

The first initiative is underway today with the Queen of Peace church group, with 20 kids here. Jake, Bill Miller are competing for urban refuge funding, which would be a \$1 million re-occurring funding award. Have passed at regional reviews and now competing at the national level. One facility wins nationwide. Winning would allow staffing of 5 new public use positions.

Impoundments

The Marshall Foundation is planting trees this morning. This still leaves other approved items on the project sheet for the Friends Group

Update on the Canoe Trail – The weed clearing was finished April 25.

Funding Requests

Pay for Star Teacher program this summer. This program was included in the October 2013 budget, funded via the Environmental Education H. Eisen fund. VOTE: A motion was made by Tony to pay for the program as budgeted. Judy seconded and the motion was passed.

Pay for Everglades Day. VOTE: A motion was made by Judy to pay \$2,500 to the Everglades Day Committee. Harvey seconded and the motion was passed.

Pay for an intern (like Cassie). Funding for Cassie was \$2,000 of the \$3,000 budgeted, so approximately \$1,000 left. Rolf would like \$2,000 to fund an intern to start in May or later this fiscal year. Stipend is \$75 per week. VOTE: Tony made a motion to continue funding the \$1,000 already budgeted and add \$1,000 more for a total of \$2,000 that should cover this fiscal year. Steve seconded and the motion was passed.

Rolf asked that the Friends group continue to pay for the DSL line, as that's one of his priorities.

b) Financial Report – Elinor

The Financial Report was presented by Elinor. The Balance Sheet and P&L statements have the 6 month update on budgets against actuals. The QR system expense is under Cypress Swamp boardwalk sign. The budget is basically on track. There are more donations, fewer memberships. The Everglades Day expenses include refunds to food truck vendors. Have opened an Everglades Day account for food truck vendor payments. Friends owes \$2,500 less expenses. There will be a transfer in from Audubon Society. Grant expenses fall under the Everglades Day expense.

Ongoing commitments include DSL line (look at reducing price?); the Onsell QR system at \$2,000 per year, and the exhibit maintenance fund at \$3,000 per year. More fundraising will be needed to increase the overall balance.

c) Treasurer's Report - The Treasurer's Report was presented by David Lurie.

d) Gift Shop Report

Harvey Eisen presented the Gift Shop report. Have made up shortages and now even YTY through March 2014. April Month-To-Date is a little behind. New glass shelving will go in soon, which will create more display area. He is also getting proposals to change the overhang to a proper door.

Palm Beach State College sent a thank you letter for the T-shirt donation supporting their event. In recognition, Friends will be listed in the event's promotional materials. Elinor- how about working with PBSC on PR? Mike had already mentioned that to his contact there.

There was a question from Max about the lead time for re-stocking inventory in back room. Per Harvey, the inventory is minimal, other than post cards.

e) Photo Contest

Jay Paredes reports that all entries are in and processed. Entries included a total of 57 photographers, including 7 youth, and a total of 337 images. There was \$1,000 collected from entry fees, however, Jay expects a net loss since more than \$1,000 is paid out in prizes. The Photo Contest awards will be on Sunday May 18 at the Visitor's Center, and Friends members are encouraged to attend.

f) Art Contest - Steve

Steve asked whether we should continue the Friends Fall Art Contest? A special use permit will now be needed to sell art on consignment, but this isn't a big hurdle. And, the contest does not count against the 2 events per year limit. Judy asked about the cost? Per Steve, there's only 3 prizes, so it's about even with prizes vs. entries. If any of the art is sold, the contest can make money. VOTE: Tom made a motion to continue the Fall Art Contest. Judy seconded and the motion was passed.

g) Everglades Day – Steve

A Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 1 at the Visitor's Center to select the 2015 theme. Everglades Day next year is Sat., Feb 14, 2015, so perhaps a theme around Valentine's Day. The Palm Beach Arts Council pays in Summer 2014 for this past February, after the Final Report on the grant is submitted. Once paid, the Everglades Day account will have over \$20,000. Also, they just won \$6,000 for next year's grant. So the event should be funded for the next 2 years. The grant process itself was interesting. A Grant council of 8 people asked specific questions on each request. The grants were scored by the panel and winners announced publically during the meeting.

Max said the Everglades Day visitor count lower in 2014, and there were no paper advertisements. Would like to fund an ad next year, and will bring up to the Everglades Day committee. Elinor said that the Palm Beach Post is not actively promoting events, but that the Sun Sentinel (Jan Engoren) proactively contacted Elinor about Earth Day events.

h). **QR System** – Jay Paredes reports some progress - he's submitted information to Elinor. Most work is on hold until after photo contest completes on May 18. Information should be ready to go to the QR sign makers in the next few weeks.

4. Unfinished Business

a) Proposed Friends Events

- Fishing Tournament plans have been set aside – as Rolf does not support this event.
- Bus Tour – on hold for now, Steve is out of time to work on this item.
- Other – Jeff proposed some ideas for fund raising: a bus tour, a QR grand opening event, luncheon with silent auction.

b) PR – Tony. After Tony contacted them regarding Public Service Announcements (PSA), a new radio station, 100.3, and they promoted the Refuge in a PSA. This shows the potential in sending PSA to local stations prior to events. Tony also heard back on costs for advertising at 3 movie theaters, the Movies of Delray, Movies of Lake Worth and Alco Capital Theater. Delray is fully booked. Lake Worth cost is \$175/month per month for 6 months. Alco is \$300/month for 6 months. No action taken, since we're not advertising the tram at this time.

c) Other – the Refuge web site is not yet working.

5. New Business

a) Store Improvements – Judy, Harvey. In the past, store improvements were done without Board approval. The expense goes against P&L. Bringing this to the board since it's a capital expense. The work is to remove the glass case and expand merchandise display space and put out items on open shelving. VOTE: The \$475 expense was approved.

b) Stone Alligator – Steve. Craig Gray added stones and improved the area. A sign will be added. Craig also plans to come on Everglades Day and do a stone work session for kids. The gator is on loan. To keep the gator after February 2015, funding would be needed. The cost would be \$10,000, however, there's a possibility of grant funding. Lacoste is on the Everglades board, so that's a possibility. While Rolf likes the gator, it's not a priority expense. Deferred for future meeting.

c) Proposed New "Super Senior" Membership – Steve. Steve suggests that when a Friends member reaches 90 years old, they become a member for life. Idea only, there was no vote during the meeting.

6. Announcements

a) Kay reports that the Facebook page reached 4,068 people

b) Donation in honor of Harvey, Hal for \$250

c) Donation in honor of Tom, providing \$250 to Friends

d) George Forrest photo collection. Tom has been looking through, has selected some items & will transfer to Elinor. Will digitize some to use on the website.

e) Busing Cindy Bhebe's 9th graders to the Refuge. Thank you to David Vance for funding this bus trip. Elinor asked whether Friends should give a receipt to David for tax purposes. Steve said it's probably not needed.

f) Bricks – Steve. The pathway has had many new bricks added. Bricks are added/replaced when bricks named. Cost is \$82.50 for 5 bricks. So order 5 bricks for every \$100 payment on a brick.

g) Plein Air Artists – Steve. The Plein Air artists are coming to the Refuge Wed. April 30. Sold 1 piece. This group is also on display at PB County center in Lake Worth. Jeff mentioned that they come here regularly and contribute a lot.

7. Next BOD Meeting Date – June 14, 2014, 9:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Steinmuller