

Meeting Minutes
Board of Director's Meeting
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
March 19, 2016, 9:00 am

Present: Steve Henry, Judy Colvard (Vice-President), Jeff Kramer, Linda Steinmuller (Secretary), Elinor Williams (President), Mike Winokur, Cathy Patterson, Bill Ross, Tom Poulson, Harvey Eisen, Kay Larche (by phone)

Absent: Jay Paredes, John Siegel, Tony Lang, David Lurie (Treasurer), Harvey Lee

1. Welcome - President Elinor Williams opened the meeting at 9:10, with a quorum present.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes from the February 27, 2016 meeting were approved.

3. Reports

a) Refuge Report – Steve Henry

- New refuge biologist Missy Juntunen started in early-March. She transferred to the refuge from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation commission (Areas 2 & 3).
- Intern Jackie Blakely left the Refuge a few weeks ago and is now preparing for grad school in Michigan.
- The Refuge is interviewing candidates for a new Urban Outreach coordinator. This is a position requiring bilingual skills.
- The Refuge is planning to hire a new person for fee collection and volunteer coordination. This is also a bilingual skills position.
- Lew Hecker will be here through June.
- Ryan Hudgins has taken a firefighting job in Idaho and will leave in early-May.
- Jake Tuttle is leaving March 29 for new job with DoD in Georgia. Steve will be the interim liaison for the Friends and volunteer coordinator until Jake's position is backfilled which could take months.
- The Refuge has selected a new person for the EPT position held by Melissa Martin, who will start in June. The person has not yet been announced.
- There will be a summer intern from May until mid-August through the Greening Youth Foundation.
- The volunteer lunch is on Monday and will include both volunteer recognition and a going away celebration for Jake.
- The Go Board is now installed in the Visitor's Center lobby. Right now, it's displaying default content. Additional content will be added over the next 2 months, with photos, custom information, and an electronic logbook for wildlife sightings, etc.

- The permit for the fee booth on Lox Road was received from the South Florida Water Management District. Now waiting on estimates for electrical installation. The fee booth should be ready and staffed in 1-2 months.
- A 'Meet the Manager' meeting was held last Wednesday but had no attendance other than Refuge staff and volunteers. The meeting was held on a week day evening at the request of some members of the public. Given this result, future meetings will likely return to week day scheduling.
- A key public meeting about the lease agreement with the South Florida Water Management District is scheduled for April 6, at 6 p.m. The SFWMD has published a web site on this subject which is critical of invasive plant control on the refuge.
- Mike Oetker, the FWS Deputy Regional Director for the Southeast Region, will visit Thursday morning and go on a tour of the Loxahatchee Refuge.
- There's a Nile Monitor early detection-rapid response workshop planned for April 6, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. There have been unconfirmed reports of Nile Monitors on the north end of the Refuge near 20 Mile Bend. The Friends will plan to provide some refreshments for this meeting. Elinor will coordinate with Rebekah.
- Lygodium biological control. This is a bright spot as there's some progress in some areas. This is a method where moths that feed on Lygodium are released. Based on good results so far, more releases are planned. Andrew Eastwick will write an article for Gator Tales.
- The Refuge is hosting an Everglades Coalition meeting on Friday, April 15. Airboat and tram tours, and other activities will be planned for meeting participants.
- New trail and boardwalk. There's been some work done to map out possible paths, and 3 options are under consideration, at distances of 0.15 mile, 0.5 mile and .1 mile through the cypress swamp. The shortest boardwalk is the furthest north. Once a preferred path is decided, there will be work with engineers to put together a map and cost estimate which can be used to help raise funds for the trail. This project expands on the existing infrastructure, as the trail would connect to others and offer a longer loop trail of potentially 3+ miles. Bill Ross asked whether the Strazzulla Marsh should be the focus? Per Steve, since Strazzulla will take a while, they'd like to focus on this trail now. Also, the north option gets close to Strazzulla, which is a benefit as the access points to Strazzulla are limited.
- The next board meeting in April will be at the EPT building. Envirothon will be using the Visitors Center that day.
- Tom asked, that prior to the planned vegetation trimming in the impoundment area, that flags be used to mark native plants that have been planted, so that the desirable plants aren't cut.
- Non-Harassment Policy. Kay asked whether there should be a separate meeting for the Board. Steve said that the staff will have their training on June 23rd. It's up to the Friends to decide when and how to cover training for volunteers. Note: A 2-hour optional training for Friends and volunteers has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 22 from 1-3pm.

b) Gift Shop – Harvey

Harvey reports that February 2016 gift shop sales were \$1,281 below February 2015. This could be due to lower Everglades Day attendance. But, Harvey also wonders if the register receipts report lower amounts than the old baseline numbers reported by Mimi, making the comparisons unequal. Per Elinor, the P&L draft she is working on includes PayPal payments for memberships, photo workshop payments and art work, which are not in the store sales report. If these items have been rung up in the store register, then reports can be pulled for the payments. While they are not part of store sales, they are part of income. If this income isn't rung up on the register, then there's no accounting record for input to the financial statements. Judy and Elinor will look at what's rung up and if the additional income is there. Harvey would like to clear up how the income is rung up, which will give us an accurate view of the store sales.

c) Financial Report - Elinor

Elinor went through the draft Profit and Loss and Balance Sheet for the first five months of the 2016 fiscal year, which is October 1, 2015 through February 29, 2016. Highlights discussed include:

Balance Sheet: As of Feb. 29, 2016, the Balance Sheet has \$77,284 in Total Friends Operations. This amount does not include \$15,004 for the Everglades Day fund.

Profit & Loss Statement

- Ordinary Income includes Store Sales of \$24,455 for the five month period. This included some donations from PayPal. This amount is still being reviewed and may be corrected for the final P&L statement.
- Expenses include store merchandise, at \$8,341, plus cash register expenses and internet lines. Due to security requirements, resident volunteers must use a different line from the Refuge staff. ATT is the internet service provider and our experience has been that the service is expensive and unreliable.
- Gross Profit from the store is \$13,774.
- Community Outreach expenses include the calendar expense and the one-time expense for radio advertising.
- Donations to the Refuge were \$3,452 and included entry fees for the photo and art contest, the internet service expense, the annual expense for the QR system (\$2,160 paid to OnCell, plus \$493 for QR brochures) and special requests (meeting refreshments, etc.)
- Donations to the Friends are itemized and now tracked by source and type of donation.
- Total Other Income is \$17,397 and includes Donations and Membership Dues.
- While the Everglades Day account is managed by the Friends, it's kept separate from the Friends P&L reporting as the Everglades Day committee controls the expenses.
- Mike asked whether the current income covers our current obligations. Per Elinor, there are no issues with meeting obligations.

- The Refuge Repair fund is up to \$17,063, so it's in good shape. Exhibit cleaning will be needed sometime soon, which this can cover.
- Any new projects, such as a boardwalk, would require new fund raising.

d) Photo Contest – Cathy

Cathy reports that there are now 15 entries and 71 photos submitted for the photo contest. More entries are expected before the April 15th deadline.

e) Cookbook – Cathy

Cathy said that Elinor's email request resulted in a number of recipe submissions. All recipes are welcome. The cookbook will have one section on recipes using native plants.

f) Fundraising / Grant writing – Elinor / Mike

- Batchelor Foundation. Elinor spoke to a person at the Foundation, asking about grants, especially in consideration that the Marshall Foundation is closing. The Foundation representative suggested that the Friends send in a proposal for a grant, requesting a match of the \$9,000 Every Kid in a Park transportation grant, plus supporting documentation, Form 990 and they will consider it. Serena is working with Tom Salinsky of the Palm Beach County School District, and the District is very excited and wants to bring in many kids. The transportation grant will be extended into the fall of 2016 so that the planning can be done for more groups. Kay asked if the funding is focused on 4th graders (answer is yes).
- Grant writer. Elinor asked for any volunteers for grant writing, as that would be greatly appreciated. Judy will finish the Everglades Day request, then look at the Impact 100 grant program.
- Elinor has a neighbor who writes grants full time in her Palm Beach County job and recommended some people that might be interested in paid grant writing. Elinor contacted one person, Linda Salzman, for information. Linda charges by the job, starting at \$300 for research to match the funding request with suitable grants. Typically 1 in 8 requests are successful, and picking better matches improves the odds. Linda has also worked on grant evaluations, which would be helpful. Grantors first look for a "Letter of Inquiry" (LoI), and Linda's price for that is \$150. If the grantor is interested, then Linda would proceed to write the grant and put the \$150 LoI expense towards the grant form expense, which can range from \$200 - \$2,000 or higher, depending on the grant form requirements. A basic grant request would likely cost around \$650.
- Another possibility is to help train a person to write grants, and pay a smaller amount as they learn. The Board's views leaned towards paying for an experienced grant writer with the intention of raising more funds faster.
 - VOTE: A motion was made by Judy, seconded by Mike and passed for a \$200 payment to Linda Salzman to write a proposal for a transportation grant to the Batchelor Foundation.

- Kay mentioned that the Great Give is May 3 this year and asked whether the Friends will participate. Elinor would prefer focusing on a fund drive around transportation purposes and appeal directly to Friends members.
- Blimp ride. Mike reported that the Goodyear blimp and Met Life blimp are available for fundraising. The main requirement is that the ride must be auctioned. It's not clear if a silent auction meets that requirement. The ride would be for 4-5 people. A \$500 minimum price at auction is also required. There's no expense to the Friends Board, and the next step is to fill out the form requesting consideration. Lead time would be at least 6 months from the time the form is submitted until a ride would be approved, so that leaves time to set up an event where the ride auction could be held, for example at a Friends luncheon. The initial target would be for a luncheon next Spring. Mike will complete the form and start this process. If approved, we'd want a small event committee, Jeff, Bill, others to focus on this activity.
- Power2give.org – The Cultural Council of Palm has a crowd funded kick starter campaign that includes some matching funds from the Cultural Council. Linda will look at this program and report back on how the Friends might be able to benefit.
- The next issue of Gator Tales will mention the fundraising campaign for the transportation grant.

f) Advisory council – Jeff

The new Advisory Council is planning an initial meeting on March 25. Jeff asked about connections in the business area. The initial meeting will include introductions and discussion about areas where they'd like to focus their time.

g) Legislative Report - Elinor

Elinor and Chris Lockhart have contacted staff members for several local legislators, including Reps. Lois Frankel, Ted Deutsch and Alcee Hastings. Elinor also brought an information packet to Rep. Patrick Murphy and Sen. Bill Nelson's office. Elinor sent a link to the South Florida Water Management District page which criticizes the lack of federal funding for combating exotic invasive plants. See this link:

<http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/xweb%20protecting%20and%20restoring/lox%20refuge%20exotics>

The US Fish and Wildlife Service hasn't made a specific budget request for the Loxahatchee Refuge, but more money for controlling invasive plants across the Fish and Wildlife Service system would be helpful. Steve said that senior management in the Fish and Wildlife Service is aware of the South Florida Water Management District issue. Tom suggested further discussion with Nat Reed about the possibility of funding from Amendment 1, and the need for involvement at the state level.

h) Other – none discussed.

4. Unfinished Business

a) Other

5. New Business

a) Other

6. Announcements

- We are very sorry to report that one of our long time Board members, John Marshall, has been in hospice care. Through their leadership of the Marshall Foundation, John and his wife Nancy, contributed greatly to the preservation of the Everglades, including tree plantings and environmental education.

7. Next Meeting Date - Saturday, April 30, 9:00 a.m.

NOTE: April meeting will be in EPT building due to Envirothon

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Steinmuller