

Meeting Minutes
Board of Director's Meeting
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
July 23, 2016, 9:00 am

Present: Steve Henry, Judy Colvard (Vice-President), Harvey Eisen, Tom Poulson, Linda Steinmuller (Secretary), Jeff Kramer, Elinor Williams (President), Mike Winokur, David Lurie (Treasurer), Ana Maria Castillo Ruiz

Absent: John Siegel, Cathy Patterson, Jay Paredes, Bill Ross, Harvey Lee

1. Welcome - President Elinor Williams opened the meeting at 9:08, with a quorum present.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting. Minutes from the June 25, 2016 meeting were approved.

3. Memorial Bricks

John has taken over responsibility for ordering memorial bricks. We have ordered bricks in memory of Frank Bodofsky, Margaret Zuber and Hal Albertson.

4. Resignations

Kay Larche submitted her resignation from the Board. Kay has moved to St. Simon's Island in Georgia. Many thanks to Kay for her years as a volunteer and Board member, and best wishes for the future!

5. Reports

a) Refuge Report – Steve Henry

Refuge update from Steve Henry.

- Welcome to Ana Maria Castillo Ruiz, a new staff member at the Refuge. Ana was previously at the Marshall Foundation. She joins our Public Use staff and will focus on fee collection and volunteer coordination.
- Patty Palma, Greening Youth Foundation intern will be here through mid-August. She is doing a great job and will be missed.
- Kris Baenzinger has transferred to the Park Service in GA. Ivette Gonzalez, from Ding Darling NWF has been filling in Kris' role, mostly remote, but on site every few weeks. Kris job will be filled in the near future.
- Lew is taking a summer sabbatical and will return in November.
- The Refuge is still recruiting for urban refuge coordinator. The selection process has been slowed by new procedures that require all vacancies must now be cleared through Washington DC before openings can be advertised.

- Loxahatchee had the highest number of Every Kid in a Park passes distributed of any site in the Refuge system, and in the top 5 nationally. Only a few large national parks had higher numbers. The transportation grants bringing school kids out was a major factor.
- The Refuge was able to complete the 37,000 acre prescribed fire a couple weeks ago. The burn included most of the southern refuge area and went well, with minimal complaints. Two wading bird colonies were protected. Fire is very helpful for the District's invasives control work.
- The Refuge will schedule a new volunteer orientation in August. The date isn't final yet, but will likely be on the 10th. Please contact Joseph for information if you would like to attend. Another orientation session will be planned in November.
- The Go Board custom content is in final stages of development. A virtual wildlife log will be one of the features, so there's been work to find public domain images for all the possible species found on the Refuge. Thanks to Patty for collecting 400 wildlife images for use in the log. Tom and Elinor have been looking at the slide photographs by George Forrest, which were donated to the Refuge by his wife. There's a number of really good photos, however, they will need to be scanned and digitized. Once digitized, the photos can be tagged with descriptions, to build a searchable gallery of photos. Per Elinor, photos on the Friends web site have already been tagged, and can provide another source.
- The wastewater treatment plan is now 100% designed and work will begin in August. Tom asked if it's secondary or tertiary treatment? Per Steve, it's secondary, and decomposes in the leach field. There's no expected impact to operations during the work.
- An RV couple (Bruce and Mary Lou Dickson) will arrive in early August and stay through the end of September.
- The Marsh Pavilion is closed to public use right now due to a nearby alligator nest. The pavilion will re-open once the alligator moves away.
- The Strazzulla land exchange is slowly moving forward, and currently with the Senate for review. One delay on the exchange is the differing land values for Strazzulla and Compartment D. Strazzulla is valued more than the Compartment D which brings up the complicated issue of exchange credits. Plans for Strazzulla can only move forward after the deal completes.
- The South Florida Water Management District and University of Florida are advertising for a 3 year position specifically to focus on Lygodium control. There may be a full time PhD level researcher on site funded by the District and UF. The Refuge has offered housing and office space. Steve Enloe, a professor with the UF Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, is leading this program.
- Next staff meeting will be on Thursday August 4 at 8:30 am in the auditorium
- Rolf and Steve will be in Chattanooga, TN next week at a regional Project Leaders meeting.
- National Public Lands day is coming up on September 24. Last year, we had cypress tree planting at the Refuge. About 50% of last year's seedlings have survived their first year. We may want to plan now for activities for this September.

b) Treasurer's Report – David

The Operating Account is \$24,512, which includes \$5,800 in the Eisen Education Fund and \$3,917 in the Refuge Employee Fund. The Refuge Repair is at \$17,065, and CD savings are \$14,007. The Friends also received memorial donations were also received in honor of Frank and Hal. Non-store income was \$568 and total income was \$2,769.

c) Gift Shop Report – Harvey

Harvey reports that as of June, gift shop sales were \$2,590 behind June 2015. Attendance at the Refuge has been low and not all shifts were staffed. For July to date, we may be close to last year's total, if we get \$800 over the remainder of this month, we'll hit the targets. The shop is getting some new merchandise. A vendor is selling thermometers and license plates at a discount, so Harvey purchased more of those, 15 and 12 respectively.

Hal and Frank were both long time volunteers and will be badly missed.

d) Store Committee report - Judy

Judy reports that Cathy is going to pick up responsibility for store volunteer scheduling and training. Judy has been leading gift shop volunteers for the past 8 years, so the transition to Cathy will give fresh input to the store committee. Judy will continue to volunteer as a backup at the store, at the visitor's desk and other activities.

e) Fundraising / Grant writing – Elinor / Mike / Judy

Mike will talk to Harvey Lee for the next step for grants. Harvey is out of town so it may be a few weeks. Elinor contacted the Batchelor Foundation, and learned that the Refuge did not get the grant. While the Palm Beach county representative was supportive, others in Miami were not. There wasn't much feedback, however, it appears there were concerns about the numbers, the cost per bus and number of kids per bus.

Cathy Patterson found the grant application for the 'Great Ideas Initiative' grant, and Serena will submit this application.

Judy and Helen Fleischman will work with Serena on submitting an application for the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin County Impact 100 grant for Everglades Day 2017.

Linda Salzman, who wrote the Batchelor Foundation grant, has supplied a couple of other leads.

Jeff said he has information on some other federal grants which may be helpful, but follow up is needed. His sister in law had done some work and Jeff will ask her to pull together a list of possible grant opportunities. Mike, Harvey and Judy will try to review and come back with a recommendation on grants where there are possible fits. Elinor also has a list of foundations

from the National Wildlife Refuge Association and of some South Florida organizations that provide grants.

For Friends funding, Steve said a Refuge priority is to have the Friends fund a biology intern for 12 months next fiscal year, at an estimated cost of \$25,000 or \$30,000. The Greening Youth Foundation may have additional funding next year, and their interns cost about \$250 - \$300 per week, so that would be a good option in 2017. In this program, the Greening Youth Foundation is the intern's employer, so funding by the Friends is only cost and the Friends has no employer responsibilities.

f) Legislative Report - Elinor

Elinor met with Dragana Connaughton, who is on the board of the National Wildlife Refuge Association and a Palm Beach County resident. Mark Musaus put Dragana in touch with Elinor. They discussed the invasive exotic plant problem and approaches to take action and how to raise awareness of the Refuge in Palm Beach County. Dragana also met with Peter Antonacci, Executive Director of the SFWMD, and would like, at a later meeting, to discuss the exotics issue.

Elinor met with Joe Negron's staff. He's a representative in Palm City, FL, and will be the incoming State Senate President. Rep. Negron was primarily responsible for the Legacy Florida bill to provide up to \$200M in funding from Amendment 1 for use in Everglades restoration. He is also involved in this summer's issues with the blue green algae in the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon. Elinor's visit was to discuss invasive exotics, and she asked whether \$1M in Amendment 1 funding was possible for use by Refuge for treating invasive exotic plants. Rep. Negron's staff had not heard of this, but agreed that it's an issue after reviewing the fact sheet and the SFWMD web site on the subject. Document stamp taxes fund Amendment 1, and a percentage of that will go to Everglades restoration. Elinor sent an update to Dragana, Pauline, Janet (Everglades Coalition alternate) and to Martha Musgrove. The advice from Rep. Negron's staff is to align our work with the county lobby to the state, and make sure that all Palm Beach County delegates know of this problem.

Elinor also contacted Sen. Tom Rooney's office and will try to talk to his staff as well. Sen. Rooney is on the Congressional appropriations committee and will try and discuss with them.

g) Other –

Past events with the Astronomy group in Palm Beach County have been popular, and it was suggested that the Friends coordinate with them for possible future activities. Elinor doesn't want to be the primary point of contact for arranging events, as cloudy weather can result in last minute cancellations, and not everyone receives updates. No further action at this time, however, there was some discussion about having sign ups at the Visitor's Center and ask the Astronomy group's contact to work directly with the Refuge for arranging public telescope activities.

6. Unfinished Business

a) QXC – Internet access for bunkhouse, Windstream – cash register

The Bunkhouse internet service appears to be working fine after the switch to QXC. We still use Windstream for the internet connection in the store cash register and that fee is also significantly increasing from \$75 to \$150/month. Right now, the Refuge is looking into whether the Friends can be permitted to join the existing T1 line that the Refuge uses. That would be the best option, as adding a new IP address to the ATT T1 would cost just \$8/month. Steve is checking with IT, with questions regarding network security for a separate Friends line. Once those questions are answered, we'll know what's feasible. There's also a public WiFi, ASUS, that works in the Visitor's Center, but it's not clear if ASUS is part of the Windstream service.

b) Speakers Bureau – John

Steve would like to revive the Speakers Bureau with a small number of well-trained volunteers. John recently talked to 60-70 people from a Palm Springs travel club and received positive feedback. The main comment from the group was that most people in Palm Springs had no background or awareness about the Refuge. Harvey reminded Mike that the Speaker's Bureau should keep records on who they talk to, and also that there's a book in the Visitor's Center with the historical information from Harvey and Hal's work in the 1990s. There's also a projector and slides from the original work they did, maybe 2,000 or more slides. Once Bill Ross returns, Steve will set up a meeting with Speaker's Bureau volunteers and review presentations, presentation requests, etc. Tom said he would like to volunteer for events in his home area around Jupiter.

c) Brochure distribution – Jeff

Jeff requested volunteers to help distribute brochures to the same locations as last year. Per Steve, distributing brochures counts as Refuge hours. For Friends and volunteer hours, hours are tracked, but kept separate. Most work that people do is Refuge hours.

One option is to mail the brochures to the locations, however, without the personal connection, there's some concern is that the brochures may not be put out.

Jeff asked if the Friends can send an email to the full membership and ask for volunteers for specific committees. Elinor said she's done that in the past, but generally gets only a small response. Her view is that a specific email asking for support on just one or two items might be more effective than a general appeal. Elinor would also like to send a separate email fund raising appeal this Fall.

d) Calendar ads

Elinor is looking for calendar ads. If anyone has ads, please let her know as soon as possible. As of now, she's lined up the same advertisers as last year.

e) Other – None discussed.

7. New Business

a) Art contest – Awards Presentation & Reception Sunday, November 13, 1:00 p.m.

Ralph Papa agreed to be a judge for the Art Contest. Ralph has also contributed in the past by coordinating the Plein Air painters' events at the Refuge.

b) Other – None discussed.

8. Announcements

a) Donations in memory of Frank and Hal

Memorial donations were received in memory of Frank Bodofsky and Hal Albertson. Hal was a volunteer for over 20 years, a past president of the Friends Board of Directors, on the Speakers Bureau and more recently working with Frank and Harvey in managing the gift store. Frank and Hal will be greatly missed.

b) Legends Radio Community Focus interview – Sunday, July 24, 6:00 a.m.

Tony Lang will be on the radio show early tomorrow morning. This is a community service activity by the station, and at no cost to the Friends.

c) Lee Road Cleanup – Saturday, September 17, 9:00 a.m.

Cathy will lead the clean up on September 17. If you're interested in helping, please contact Cathy.

d) Other – None discussed.

9. Next Meeting Date - Saturday, September 10, 9:00 a.m.

Post meeting update – the next meeting has moved from August 27 to September 10, 2016

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Steinmuller