Minutes, Board of Directors’ Meeting
Friends of A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
March 25, 2017

Present: Elinor Williams (President), Sue Rowe (Secretary), David Lurie (Treasurer), Denise Valentin (Vice President), John Siegel, Harvey Lee, Mike Winokur, Cathy Patterson, Tom Poulson, Peter McKelvy
Guest: Steve Henry

Absent: Jay Paredes, Bill Ross

1. Welcome – Elinor calls meeting to order at 9:09 am.
2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – Elinor distributes minutes of Feb 18 meeting for review. A motion made by Mike Winokur, seconded by David Lurie to accept the minutes. Minutes accepted.
3. Reports
   a. Refuge Report – Steve Henry reporting. The FWS Southeast Region Friends of the Year award has been awarded to the Friends of A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge! This is a huge honor. Elinor will be going to Atlanta for the award ceremony. The Southeast Region includes: North Carolina to Florida to Louisiana - a total of 10 states plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Thank you to everyone who came to the volunteer appreciation luncheon. March 28 is a Congressional Field Day and the purpose is to bring congressional staffers to the Refuge to learn about we are doing and to educate them about the importance of the Everglades. They will get an airboat tour of the interior followed by a lunch provided by the Friends. The last permit has been received on installing a new fee booth at Lox Road, and work has already begun. The hope is to have the booth in place within the next few months. The National Wildlife Refuge Visitor survey which will be conducted here is still being prepared and there is nothing new about it from last meeting. We continue to work together with Pine Jog and Grassy Waters on the ASAP (Apple Snail Adoption Program) urban wildlife refuge partnership. So far over 900 trees have been planted including pond apple trees and cypress, and goal is to plant 2,500 on the Refuge!
   b. Treasurer’s Report – David reporting, distributes the February 2017 Friends Operations Report. We made a lot of money last ($7,900) month in the Gift Store. Also donations into the boxes, sale of Plein air paintings, and bricks sold well.
   c. Gift Shop Report – Cathy reporting, distributes the February 2017 Store monthly totals. There was a discussion about adding items to sell in the store: posters, small souvenirs with our names on them, and photos to be promoted.
   d. Grant writing Proposal & Committee – Peter and Mike reporting, Mike reports that procedures are being worked up so we can use them with the grant writers that we use. We need to spend money to get it done. They are about $80 per hour. Peter distributes the...
Friends Request for proposal with a draft of our priorities (3 pages). It provides a guide of requirements that will be used for grant writers so that they are clear what our objectives are to be successful. There was a discussion about how to proceed in developing the grant writing process. The objective is to find the right individual to work with us. Steve suggests that we contact the Ding Darling Friends contact since they have had success on this area. Also, the NWRA may have names of successful grant writers.

e. **Photo Contest** – Cathy reporting, we are receiving entries with 22 entries so far, only 7 are Friends members. We have taken in $405 so far. We are working on the matting process, the judging will take about 3 weeks.

f. **Speakers Bureau** – John reporting that there is one presentation in Coconut Creek and one in Boca in April. The average time is about 45 minutes to an hour for a presentation. Steve looked at the Refuge presentation and it does need updating and Veronica is updating.

g. **Everglades’s restoration current events** – reservoirs, Aquifer Storage and Recovery, Deep well injection- Tom reporting about the latest media coverage Everglades Restoration. There is a lot of misinformation and disinformation out there. The huge issue is the reservoir that Negron wants to put in. The reservoir will do nothing to improve the water quality. We are an exception because the Refuge is rain driven. The National Academy of Science has done a report on the Everglades restoration which is largely being ignored. They recommend at least 5 to 10 more STA’s (Stormwater Treatment Areas) to get the water clean. A look at Tampa Bay and the successes they have made are primarily in the area of controlling fertilizers and making everyone go on sewer systems. It shows we can work on restoration at a local level. In the St. Lucie area, 80% of problem is runoff from sewer and nutrients from agriculture. It is local runoff. Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) has not been shown to be effective at storing freshwater over a year to be recovered later during a drought. Deep well injection only gets rid of a limited amount of water and is very expensive.

h. **Other** – none today

4. **Unfinished Business**

   a. **Possible board meeting dates other than Saturday** – The only day that works is Weds after 2:30 pm. It may depend on who the Secretary is when Sue is away.

   b. **Membership development** – Elinor asking if we want to do more on this, Denise volunteers research on different levels of membership. We have good retention, and our issue is that we need more members. We need more outreach. What are the benefits of joining the Friends? Sue suggests that we develop an on-going membership committee to develop and understand better reasons for joining the Friends and best strategies to use in outreach to gain new members. Denise and Sue agree to work together on this.

c. **Other**

5. **New Business**

   a. **Monthly Friends get-together** – Denise reports and offers an idea for a monthly event and asks if anyone would be interested in a bike ride. There was a discussion about putting various ideas out on the Facebook page and see what works. Mike asks if we could do a
bike race or running marathon on the levee. Steve will look into this especially if we can do it as a fundraiser.

b. Monthly Facebook photo contest – Denise reports and suggests an idea, the photographer could be a cover photo for the month. The judging could be done by the members who participate for the month. It is determined by popular vote. We currently have over 2,000 people on the Facebook page. There was a lively discussion about this project and Denise will explore it more.

c. Butterfly garden – Harvey Lee reports that he would like to upgrade the butterfly garden on the sunny side, facing the parking lot. Can we bring in native milkweed? We want to create a wet area, dig a hole, put in a liner and create a moist area for the milkweed to grow. Rebekah’s concern is the tending the plants once they are planted. Harvey is here year round and he is willing to contribute $500 towards the project. Denise suggests it might be an opportunity to work on teaching people how to create a butterfly plant garden. There was a lively discussion about this project and everyone was enthusiastic.

d. PA system – Mike reports on updating the PA system and it might be $400 to improve it. We use it 3-4 times a year. To rent one, it is $100 per event. Tom states the lapel mikes are the best for audiences to hear the speaker. It would be a portable system. The Speaker’s Bureau would use it as well as events for the Refuge. Motion made by Mike, seconded by Denise, to have the Refuge buy up to $500 for a new PA system. No further discussion, all in favor, unanimous to accept the motion.

e. Posters – Cathy working on developing them.

6. Announcements, Elinor reports
   a. Little cards at front desk, they are stored in the Friends office by desk.
   b. Friends Group of the Year Award! Thank you Rolf and Steve! Elinor will attend the award ceremony in Atlanta.
   c. Volunteer Awards – glasses and pins, if you didn’t get one, see Elinor.
   d. Congressional Field Day – Tuesday, March 28 – Elinor, Peter, and Sue will attend.
   e. Florida Earth Foundation workshop – Thursday, March 30 – free for Friends
   f. Everglades Action Day in Tallahassee – Tuesday, April 4 – Everglades Coalition members will be asking for more funding for the Refuge and exotic removal. Pauline will attend on our behalf. Each legislative representative needs to be approached to this end.
   g. Munson Foundation Annual meeting – Thursday, April 6, Peter & Elinor, Friends have been invited to talk about the Refuge.
   h. Plein Air painting removal – April 8, Saturday, Linda Lee Phillips & Roy Truelove & Elinor
   i. Florida Conservation Voters –Meeting with Rep. Brian Mast (Stuart office) – Tuesday, April 11 – Elinor states he is new and has expressed support for Everglades restoration. Members of Florida Conservation Voters and Peter will meet with him to discuss this as well as the issue of invasive exotics on the Refuge.
   j. Friend’s quarterly 5 pm conference calls: April 11, July 11, And Oct 10, Call in number: 877-491-9146 Pass code: 5520467# - Elinor asks for volunteers and Denise agrees to attend.
k. Lee Road Cleanup – Earth Day, Saturday, April 22 – Cathy is planning it. Steve Henry states he has been contacted by the Climate Change Coalition and they have asked to have a table for their purposes. Elinor talked with their contact and told her that only about 8 people show up so it might not be worth their time.

l. Ocean River Institute podcast – March 9, Elinor, Rolf & Mark Musaus, there is a link on Facebook page and it was done to promote the Refuge and to talk about exotics.

m. Donation for field trips - $1,925 YTD and Michael Balmaceda $1,000 in memory of Hal (grandfather) and Mary Bardis $20; Elinor states that this activity of providing funds for field trips seems that people donate more money for this purpose. Elinor suggests that we try to match what we did last year, $4,000.

n. Donations for intern, etc. - $2,300 YTD and Gabriele Little $100 in honor of Harvey Education fund and $25 in memory of Vivian Burch

o. Other

7. Next meeting date – Saturday, April 29, 9:00 am

Meeting adjourned at 12:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Rowe, Secretary