Apalachee Audubon Board Retreat Minutes

July 21, 2019

12:00 – 3:00pm

Submitted by Donna Legare, Secretary

**Board members attending**: Peter Kleinhenz, Lilly Anderson-Messec, Donna Legare, Kathleen Carr, Rob Williams, Ben Rangel, Peter Goren, Amelia Fusaro, Peter Kelly, Elizabeth Georges, Dara Miles Wilson, Howard Kessler, Jake Hartung

**Board members not able to attend**: Harvey Goldman, Chase Brestle

**Committee members present**: Carol Franchi, Pat Press (Education Committee)

All future minutes will include first names only.

**Treasurer’s report** – submitted by Harvey, attached at end of minutes, $17,842.21 at end of June 2019

**Introductions**

* Who are you, what do you do, what do you want to be involved with, what would you like to see in the next year? Some of the personal goals included:
* Work on turning developed spaces into more natural spaces (from Lake Elberta to providing information for residents)
* Improve digital work to let people know what we are doing
* Develop membership committee and volunteer coordinator position
* Get more people involved and make it fun!
* Add sustainable agriculture to the mix
* Build bird friendly community and also work on protecting critical pieces of land
* Engage locally but don’t forget about our region which includes Leon, Jefferson, Wakulla, Gadsden, Liberty and Franklin Counties
* Engage youth
* Extend field trips/programs to churches, camps, schools, scouts
* Contribute on needs that aren’t being met and learn from board members with experience
* Work on habitat restoration

**Ground Rules for Meeting**

* Try not to interrupt when someone else is talking
* Stay on task (let’s try not to get derailed into political/larger scale discussions)
* Do not commit to tasks unless you are reasonably sure you can help complete them

**Based on Accomplishments, What Do We Want to Keep Doing**

**Lake Elberta** - We received another Audubon Action grant from National Audubon Society for a lesser amount than last year. It should be received in the next month. We will use it for people-related expenses such as interns, events, programs at Lake Elberta. We have one intern lined up from FSU – Nelson Ball. We need to find an intern from FAMU. We would like both interns to work with Pineview after-school bird club if it works into their schedules. Peter applied for another grant through FPL for $2500 – Plants for Birds Grant. We will use that to fund plantings, perhaps at other parks. Peter has been meeting with city officials about every 3 weeks. They have agreed to leave a buffer around Lake Elberta and will not mow it down completely this year. In mid August we need to mark off sections to not mow at all. Peter reports that Outdoor Afro bird hike went well, STEM for Girls program went well. City wants to expand our efforts to include planting around a holding pond in a park in Frenchtown near McDonalds. We may encourage City to conduct Arbor Day there. Dara suggest looking into Coal Chute Pond – trees needed there.

* **Field Trips**
  + Beginner/Advanced – Jeff O’Connell will continue these birding field trips
  + Consider Other Groups – Jake is willing to do some of these.
    - Churches
    - Scouts – Donna is willing to work on Scout badges as a volunteer at Native Nurseries (troop would need to come to nursery)
    - Schools
  + Field Trips – consider co-field trips with FNPS and Sierra Club, possible field trip led by Peter Kelly to sustainable hog farm/forestry operation in Jefferson County
  + Run with your idea – if you want to lead a trip – let the program committee know

* **Education**
  + **Continue Pineview** – a definite yes – every other week from 4:30 – 5:30, day to be chosen by volunteers (Betsy, Kathleen, Peter, Lilly, David committed – others welcome)
  + Other Schools – not at this time
  + **Audubon Adventures Support** – yes, continue with this
  + **St. Marks NWR Environmental Education** – continue to fund school buses to Refuge for Title 1 Schools or underserved schools ($1250)
  + **Festivals** – Pat and Carol will need help. They are also looking for people who will eventually grow into taking on this job into the future – not right away. So far:
* Oct 26 Monarch Festival 9 – 4, St. Marks NWR
* Oct 31 DEP Health and Safety Fair, 11 - 2
* Oct Halloween Challenge – Maclay Gardens State Park TBA
* Nov Blessing of Animals 10 – 4, Mission San Luis
* Dec 14 Winter Solstice Festival, Mission San Luis, 10 – 4
* Jan 25 Tall Timbers Fire Festival
* Jan Tallahassee Arbor Day Tree Planting Event TBA
* Feb Backyard Wildlife Tour, TBA, 10-4
* Feb 14 WHO Festival (Wildlife & Outdoor Heritage), St. Marks NWR, 10-4
* Mar open
* April Arbor Day Tallahassee Tree Planting Events, TBA
* April Maclay Gardens Earth Day Events TBA, Sustainable Tallahassee Earth Day at Tall Timbers Event TBA
* **Programs**
  + Theme selected by board – **Living in Harmony with Nature**
  + Donna, Lilly and Dara will serve on Program Committee
  + If you have ideas for specific programs, email the committee (some ideas urban raptors, wood stork colony, minimizing threats such as cats, building collisions and lights, planting natives for wildlife, removing invasives, bears)
  + Focus some on appreciation – Kathleen suggests Glendy Vanderah, an author and biologist from Gainesville for our May banquet program
  + Donna will contact Fran James to line up room in King Building
  + Out-of-town program in Apalachicola or at St. Marks – offer carpools
  + **Wildlife Friendly Yard Tour will be February 15 and Tammy has agreed to be in charge again.**
  + Develop an event that would work with local artists to focus on appreciation (Kathleen’s idea).

**Conservation**

**Good news first –** Rob reports of 6200 acres donated to St. Marks NWR by individual Sam Shine, 720 acre Ferrel Tract purchased with 9 sinkholes that adjoins Wakulla Springs State Park and a 611 acre preserve donated on Plank Road to Aucilla River. This adds 12 square miles – all about connectivity corridors for wildlife.

* RCC Updates – Regional Conservation Committee – 4 panhandle chapters – main goal this year is to promote purchase of Knight Tract, 55,000 acres in Washington County, owned for 45 years by Knight family. It is unique with unusual steephead ravines, over 12 karst lakes, a red rim lake, rimmed with carnivorous plants. Bruce Means did the biological survey and discovered 2 new species of salamander. They are willing to sell. It will be ranked in November or December. It needs a high ranking with Florida Forever. George Wilson is also intimately familiar with the property. It adjoins Nokuse Plantation for great conservation corridor connectivity. The uplands need restoration.
* Amelia is joining Rob and Donna on Conservation Committee. Anyone else? Email Rob.
* South Side project
* Bond Community Project – There is some controversy over the removal of several of the large trees in the path of this project. The project is supposed to correct drainage problems and help with springshed protection and therefore the trees need to be sacrificed. Others feel that the project should work around the trees. Dara suggests that when talking with City Commissioners, we should focus on the needs of the people in the community affected by project. They will be more inclined to consider our point of view with this approach. For instance, mention that the trees could provide much needed shade for a pocket playground and greenspace for the neighborhood.
* Community Conservation program – see attachment for this and next 3 ideas from Amelia
* Wildlife friendly celebration initiative
* Old growth forest network program
* Wildlife sanctuary certification program

**Member Engagement/Communication**

* Summer movie series – social – food and drink – uplifting conservation themed movies
* Website – looks good (Elizabeth) – anyone can contribute blog articles (less than 500 words preferred)
* Social media – 1000 followers now on facebook (Kathleen)
* We should table at Wednesday FSU Market on the Wednesday before our meetings – any volunteers?

**Next Board Meeting** – We did not decide if we were meeting in August. **We will meet the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm at Florida Audubon headquarters** at the corner of Monroe and Tennessee Street (in Trust for Public Land Office). Parking by Envision or in back of building.