Apalachee Audubon Board Meeting Minutes 3-10-2021

Submitted by Nelson Ball, Secretary

In attendance: Donna Legare, Rob Williams, Amelia Fusaro, Peter Kelly, Harvey Goldman, Peter Goren, Peter Kleinhenz, Heather Levy, Nelson Ball, Dara Wilson, Norma Skaggs, Howard Kessler, Tallulah Biletzskov, Noelle Stillman

* Pete introduce Noelle Stillman, MFA student at FSU
  + Has met with Pete at Lake Elberta to learn about our community engagement projects—linking art and nature
  + She’s an amateur birdwatcher!
  + Discussion about Chimney Swift tower at Lake Elberta to see if she might be interested—Arts in the Park event
  + Rob brings up art in NYC—paintings of migratory birds on buildings, also public art about historic trees where his daughter lives and works. Rob will email her information on these things.
* Minutes from Feb. meeting were approved
* Harvey emailed out a treasurer’s report
  + Received $1000 from National Audubon for grant for LEP and Pineview
  + Paid our new FAMU intern $500/semester. Two payments of $250 during each semester.
  + Treasurer’s report approved.
* Nominating Chair or Committee
  + Kathleen is incumbent President, Harvey will remain Treasurer, Donna will be Past President, Nelson will remain Secretary
  + Natasza, Heather, Norma, Nelson and Liz all have one more year of their 2 year commitments
  + Chase and Peter Kelly are nearing the end of their 2 year commitment and will not be renewing, nor will Peter G.
  + Amelia will let us know whether or not she will renew over the summer due to family circumstances
  + Dara, Pete, Howard and Rob will continue to serve!
  + Rob will not be able to be Conservation Chair next year—Pete says he can do that as long as Robin can take charge on things that he is currently working on (more on this later)
  + Heather agrees to organize the birding field trips
  + **Need to fill Vice President and Program Chair**
* Possible new board members.
* Robin Will is planning to wait 1 year to decide on board service. However, she will serve on the Education Committee. She is interested in the Pineview School program, Audubon Adventures, possible library programs and coordinating field trip with Pineview and St. Marks NWR. She thinks Lori (from St Marks NWR) might serve on an Education Committee. She even mentioned having the Bird Club students attend St. Marks nature study day camp in summer.
  + Caleb Crow would like to be considered for the board.
    - Dara asks if every qualified person should be on the Board or should Chair a committee—Is there a role he would be filling that would not be stepping on others’ toes?
    - Donna has worked with him doing volunteer work in their neighborhood and suggests that maybe he might join us next month at the Board meeting so we can meet him
    - Pete says his letter states his experience and shows he is committed
  + Amelia knows somebody that may be interested but would like to discuss it more with them before she discloses a name
  + Peter G. will ask the Master Naturalists if anyone might be interested
  + The search is still on!
* Communication
  + March Newsletter looked great this month. Articles needed by 3/26 for April Newsletter
  + Tallahassee Democrat – Donna submitted Peter G’s article about our March program to the newspaper, should be printed Friday or early next week.
* Environmental Education
  + February – Pines to Palms
    - 187 registered participants, 133 attended!
    - Tom Flannigan from WFSU called Pete and said it was one of the best community events he has been involved with—well done everyone!
* March 7th birding trip for beginners at J.R. Alford Greenway
  + Natasza led trip
  + 9/10 participants
  + Natasza says “It was a really nice group and we birded for about 2.5 hours between J.R. Alfred Greenway and Lafayette Heritage Park. I may be able to do another walk sometime during the last two weeks in April or the first week in May.”
  + April and May birding field trips
    - Sustainability Summit - Tobias Raether request for us to lead a bird walk on Sat. April 10 - several board members have expressed interest in participating. Prefers one or two bird walks at Lake Elberta or Lake Henrietta. Contact Tobias 606-5022 to firm up time convenient to leader/leaders. Limit 10 – he handles registration.
      * Pete will lead one at 9am, Dara will attend.
      * Pete will get the binoculars
      * Kathleen will lead a later one.
    - May field trip is still to be determined
  + March – Mark Tancig
    - Please promote!
    - Peter G. will introduce Mark on Zoom during the program
  + April – Nicole Jackson
    - Dara is putting the info up on the website
    - Donna mentions potentially using Dara’s writeup as a press release in the newspaper
  + May –Jeff VanderMeer
    - Dara has a newer graphic for the website
  + May field trip –Deep Roots Meat
    - arranged by Peter Kelly
    - see newsletter for details
    - sign up by March 31 by emailing Peter Kelly
  + Collaborative Grant –
    - We received the $1000 grant from NAS to continue our work with interns next year at Pineview Elementary School and Lake Elberta.
    - The intern (Cierra Nelson) will work with our FSU Sustainability Fellow (Sarah) who will supervise both our intern and the WFSU intern from SAIL high school on projects at Lake Elberta.
    - We are paying Cierra $500 per semester (Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022)—$250 at the beginning of semester and $250 at end of semester.
    - First project - Lake Elberta Cleanup Saturday March, 27, 10am– noon. Cierra will contact Howard to get gloves and trash picker devices from his house.
      * FSU Environmental Service Program will help with clean-up.
* Conservation Updates
  + Blueprint - upcoming meeting Lake Jackson Greenway Virtual Community Engagement Sessions March 11 (Donna to attend) or March 15 (Pete to attend)
    - Bannerman – Pete says that a member asked us to work on it, he replied that we would like to but we have a lot on our plates already
    - Donna will ask them for no unnecessary lights, no cosmetic plantings, plant native trees, no mow zones around pond, budget for invasive plant removal. Pete will ask for the same.
    - Donna’s cyclist friend has complained to the city about trash and they have been responding positively so they are paying attention to comments.
  + South Walton County mobility plan—a road building plan in the fastest growing county in the US. Developing their beachfront area. Nice coastline with dune lakes, bordered by protected lands (FL Forever $—State Park and State Forest). Plan brings road right through forest—a pristine forest. Would hinder wildlife movement, prescribed fire, etc. FL Audubon is a leader in the fight, AAS responsibility would be to write a letter in support of the efforts. Rob will write the letter.
  + Rapid Infiltration Basin in Wakulla – Proposed site is on US 98 and Shell Point Rd. Pete attended meeting.
    - Rob—there was a consensus that a water treatment wetland would be a good idea. New water treatment facility has lowered the effluent in the water to the accepted standard of 3 mg/L (it’s not good enough!), a secondary treatment would be necessary and welcomed. There is still a lot of talk about where the treatment facility (wetland or RIB) might go. The wetland would still have an outflow to a RIB, but treatment people said they could lower effluent to <1 mg/L. The future is still unclear.
    - Pete—much of the comments from the public and the Commissioners were inaccurate or uninformed. There were some people that were swayed to the treatment wetland option. There was no public comment during the meeting.
    - Howard—Wakulla Springs Alliance wrote a letter saying that the plans don’t go far enough, pushed for a treatment wetland. Consultants claim good things about the project but that is expected and probably biased.
  + We signed on to a NAS letter in support of Migratory Bird Treaty Act
* Additional Items
  + Pete—We fundraised to save property on Tram Rd. 12.31 acres of nice swamp area. Putnam Land Conservancy in Palatka is being considered for the conservation easement. PLC asked for a reverter clause in addition to easement to protect against loss of easement in the event that Putnam Land Conservancy goes defunct in the future. A lot to consider. FL Audubon might be in a better position to hold the property. $115-120/yr for property taxes.
  + Next meeting - We need to finalize the ballot. Amelia says Bill will help with a website so our members can vote!

**Next meeting – Tuesday, April 6th, 2021. 6:30pm via Zoom**