Apalachee Audubon Board Minutes

September 11, 2019

6:30 – 7:45pm, Audubon Florida Office

Submitted by Donna Legare, Secretary

**Board members attending**: Peter Kleinhenz, Donna Legare, Ben Rangel, Amelia Fusaro, Peter Kelly, Elizabeth Georges, Dara Miles Wilson, Howard Kessler, Jake Hartung, Chase Brestle

**Intern attending:** Nelson Ball – FSU Biology student, last year volunteer at Lake Elberta, this year “promoted” to paid intern

**Treasurer’s report** – no treasurer’s report

**August Board Minutes were approved** with a few minor changes. Elizabeth will post on website.

**News:**

**Audubon Assembly** – October 25 – 26 – in Gainesville – Peter highly recommends attending and participating in the Mentorship Program at the Assembly. Early Bird Registration ends September 27. Cost is $135 which includes meals and drinks. We did not discuss paying for Audubon Assembly registration.

**Lake Elberta** – Additional plants were purchased from Native Nurseries with remaining grant money. Native Nurseries’ landscaping crew along with Lilly volunteered to plant. Ben and Nelson have kept plants watered (thank you!). Peter is working on the grant report and has had the initial intern meeting with Harbria (FAMU) and Nelson (FSU). They are each being paid $500 and we may be able to increase this amount over the year. Nelson reported that he is applying for Audubon Assembly scholarship. If he does not get it, we agreed to pay for him to attend. **There will be a Clean-up at Lake Elberta on September 14 from 9 – 11 sponsored by Geocatchers.**

**Field Trips** – Jake reports that Natasza’s birding trip went well and they have decided to co-lead one at Lake Henrietta.

**Horn Springs Bird Bioblitz** – **Peter is leading this on September 28** to collect bird data at this newly designated park which Jim Stevenson’s son Mark manages. All are welcome to participate. Good birders needed too.

**Programs:**

Brochure was mailed right after Labor Day – looks great – Elizabeth did a wonderful job on this, as usual. Bruce Means has confirmed for next week, but unfortunately Knight Tract has been sold to a development company. Lilly has already submitted Rob’s article about the Knight Tract and Bruce’s upcoming program to the Tallahassee Democrat. It should run Friday. We decided not to pull it.

We need a process for getting **events posted on Facebook, Instagram and Meet Up**. They are not getting posted early enough. Donna will talk to Kathleen about this (the process) and it may be that Harbria is interested in working on social media.

**FSU Involvement** - Ben reports that we can team up with Environmental Service Program to share a table at FSU Market Wednesday on the Wednesday before our monthly programs to encourage FSU students to attend. Nelson volunteered to be at the booth next Wednesday (9/18) from 11 to 2 or so and Peter Kelly will try to be there as well. Ben will get brochures from Elizabeth and tabling stuff from Carol and Pat. We would also like to do something similar at FAMU. Ben is checking on this. Donna sent an announcement of program to Tyler Dye and he will get the info to ESP.

**Conservation Activities:**

**Commission Meeting Report** – Ben and Peter attended the meeting about Southside development/holding pond/live oak removal and Killearny Way Extension. Their takeaway is that there needs to be an improvement in process and transparency. Peter believes that Commissioners Dozier, Miner and Matlow understand the relationship between community and trees and would welcome an improvement in process and transparency in development issues.

**Big Bend Environmental Forum (BBEF)** – We voted to pay the increased dues of $100 annual. (up from $80). Peter, Craig Diamond (Sierra), Kent Wimmer (Defenders of Wildlife) and Neil Fleckenstein (Tall Timbers) have volunteered to form a subcommittee under Peter’s leadership to try to work on improving the process and transparency of issues that arise.

**Community Conservation Approach** to tackling conservation issues – Amelia reports that they used a Neighborhood Association approach, working on becoming an active partner with neighborhoods ahead of issues. Build trust. Peter Kelly suggests we monitor commission meetings and checked into FSU Urban Planning to see if we could enlist students. His contact did not think this would work for students.

**Citizen Advisory Boards** – Dara highly recommends serving on these boards to find out about issues in advance. Ashley Edwards invites anyone to go to the Bond Community Grant meetings. Dara goes to these.

**Citizen Science Woodstork Project** – We will look into starting this when Rob returns.

**Old Growth Forest Network program**: See [www.oldgrowthforest.net/](http://www.oldgrowthforest.net/) We formed a committee separate from Conservation Committee – **Ben, Peter, Amelia, Donna, Elizabeth volunteered**. Amelia has contacted the speaker, who is willing to provide a public lecture (program meeting), facilitate a workshop for professionals such as city park staff, and attend a private type of fundraiser event if we opt for that. She is willing to stay at Amelia’s house and we would pay airfare from Maryland plus an honorarium which goes to the non-profit of $300 to $1500 depending on the extent of her involvement

We will schedule either late fall 2020 or spring 2021**. Possible forests include Ochlockonee River State Park (Florida State Parks - Wakulla County), Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve (Nature Conservancy – Gadsden County) and Timberlane Ravine Park (City of Tallahassee Parks and Rec – Leon County)**. Peter recommends that we contact Liz Sparks, who is retiring soon, as she has lots of contacts in surrounding counties. Ideally, we would recognize a forest in each county in our Audubon region. Other possible partners are Tall Timbers, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, Outdoor Afro, FAMU, ESP. See also 2 attachments about OGFN. Here are some notes from Amelia:

**A Celebration of Forests**

**Sponsored by Apalachee Audubon**

*Initial Brief - Updated: 9/14/19*

*Description*

***To identify, share and promote our unique old growth and original forests in the Florida Panhandle***

In partnership with the Old Growth Forest Network (OGFN)—a national network of protected, old-growth, native forests where people of all generations can experience biodiversity and the beauty of nature. OGFN’s goal is to designate at least one protected forest in every county in the United States that can sustain a native forest. [https://www.oldgrowthforest.net](https://www.oldgrowthforest.net/)

*General agenda for a two-day event*

* Large public lecture
* Local forest dedications
* Private event (for fundraising, donor/member recruitment, or other purpose)
* Technical educational session for urban planners and other professionals

*Timing*

Fall 2020 – Spring 2021, preferably when outside conditions are good with reasonable temperatures, fewer bugs and the forests look beautiful

*Costs*

* OGFN Founder Travel – airfare from Maryland
* OGFN Lodging – covered
* Honorarium, donated to OGFN – typical range $300 – 500 (small nonprofits) to $1,500 (universities & municipalities)
* Event expenses (budget TBD)

*Candidate Counties for Forest Dedications: must be publically accessible and protected from commercial logging (see OGFN document “Protection Description”)*

* Leon
* Jefferson
* Wakulla
* Gadsden
* Liberty
* Franklin

*Initial Action Items*

* Establish subcommittee (including Board member volunteers from 9/11 meeting & other key participants)
* Begin volunteer recruitment (Peter to announce at 9/19 public meeting)
* Create initial task and resource list (Amelia)
* Hold preliminary meeting and determine Project Lead
* Determine targeted counties
* Find/assign Country Coordinators (see OGFN document “County Coordinator description”)
* Select date
* Develop preliminary budget for Board approval

**Brainstorming Lists**

*Potential Partners*

* Nature Conservancy
* Friends of St. Marks
* Sierra Club
* Tall Timbers
* City of Tallahassee, Urban Planning/Arborist Division (potential sponsor)

*Candidate Forests*

* See minutes (above)

**Fireworks (Sensory Friendly Fireworks) Articles** – please read the following if you plan to write an article for the Democrat or other publication or letter to editor. Peter plans to write an article, but he is very busy – may be able to do it after grant report is finished.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/01/science/july-4-fireworks-quiet.html>

<https://www.newportri.com/news/20190628/quiet-fireworks-event-relief-for-some>

<https://www.audubon.org/news/do-fireworks-cause-bird-deaths-what-do-fourth-july>



**NW Florida Sentinel Landscape** – Kick-off meeting concerning acquisition of lands in NW Florida – September 30, 2 – 4:30 pm St. Augustine. Kathleen plans to attend and would like someone to join her. She was not at board meeting because she was attending the RCC (Regional Conservation Committee) meeting

A few other reminders:

**Pineview Elementary Bird Club Volunteers** – starts Tuesday 9/17 at 4:30 and takes place every other Tuesday. Let Peter know if you will be there.

**Next Board Meeting**: Wednesday October 9, 6:30pm at Audubon Florida office.