

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - October 29, 2019

Those Attending:

Bill Gette, President; Lynette Leka, Treasurer; Directors Doug Chickering, MaryMargaret Halsey and Dave Williams; Kaytee Hojnacki via teleconference; Kate Murray, Secretary; Sharon Ware, PRNWR; and Tom Wetmore, member and guest.

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The September 17th regular Board meeting minutes were approved.

Refuge Staff Update

- Sharon reported that Gareth led the Youth Waterfowl Hunt on October 12th; he coordinated all activities, providing orientation, identification information and safety training for the 11 youths involved (7 male and 4 female hunters).
- Interviews for the 4-year term maintenance worker have been completed and references are being checked. It will be great to have help for Bob!
- Parker River staff are helping Groundworks Lawrence compete for funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation's Five Star Urban Waters Restoration grant program for a project along the Shawsheen River; awards will be announced late January 2020. (Parker River collaborates with Groundworks Lawrence as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System's Urban Refuge Initiative.)
- Submissions for the next edition of *The WrackLine* are due to Matt Friday; Kaytee will draft.
- The Parker River Project Leader position is being re-advertised in November.
- Nancy reports that the salt marsh ditch and plug removal work this summer has been completed and results are being monitored. Several peat islands were created using plug material removed and hopefully these will become salt marsh sparrow habitat. Drainage has improved, algae mats are diminishing (perhaps partly due to recent high winds), the edges of the pannes are re-vegetating, and more shorebirds are present. Staff are working with Mosquito Control on additional salt marsh restoration initiatives.
- The New England Cottontail project at Great Bay: the 10 adult rabbits that spent the winter in the pen produced at least 8 young (New England Fish & Game may be able to trap more young).

Treasurer's Report

- Memberships are at 196 (compared with 171 last month).
- Lyn went over the report dated 10/27/19 and Bill showed new pie charts Lyn prepared to show revenue and expenses by categories.

President's Report

- Bill described the recent Chamber of Commerce meeting and Behind the Scenes Tour. The Chamber members seemed very enthusiastic. MaryMargaret also participated in the meeting and tour. Kate will assist MaryMargaret with the Chamber's website and e-mail.
- Bill provided his monthly update on gifts, memorial contributions, and premium memberships.

Secretary's Report

- Kate asked that Board members, particularly those who are out in the refuge regularly, provide Kaytee with content to post on Facebook. Suggestions include posting that admission is free on Veterans' Day, calls for volunteers and Board members, interesting wildlife sightings, and clean-ups (local Ploggers have been very busy at Lot #2 this week).
- The large Friends poster in the Visitor Center needs updating; Kate will work with Kaytee on a draft.

Maintenance Projects

- Lot #3 railing replacement has been completed.
- Headquarters Deck Replacement has begun.
- Headquarters Garden will be "put to bed" for the winter soon.
- Bill and Bob have discussed potential spring projects including the Lot #7 boardwalk (is this a potential site for plank donations?) and the Pines Trail platform.

CoastSweep (Beach Clean-up, September 14th)

- Bill spoke to David Moon and Dave Weaver at Joppa about the Friends taking over co-leadership for CoastSweep (with Coastal Zone Management). He described the level of effort required and suggested Friends might seek a couple of corporate donors (businesses that would provide work teams as well as financial support). The Board unanimously agreed that the Friends should take this on. Dave cautioned that a few Friends volunteers are needed to manage this and good publicity will be critical. Lyn recommended that Friends create a Publicity Committee.

Educational Programs

- Ducks of New England - Bill's program on November 13th. Flyers have been made and posted locally; website and FB have the info; Kaytee posted it on the birding calendar and will do a press release; Lyn will e-mail members.
- Decoy Program - now that the annual meeting date has been settled, Kaytee will proceed with scheduling this presentation.
- Dave suggested having a program on coastal marine mammals; he will research an individual and/or organization to present.

Planning for Annual Meeting

The Board agreed to schedule this meeting for February 8th at 10:00 a.m. Bill showed a draft powerpoint presentation describing accomplishments in 2019; the Board agreed that a slide with objectives for 2020 should be included (funding an internship for the refuge as the first priority; take over CoastSweep; camperships; more beach clean-ups; more maintenance). Dave recommended posting the presentation on the Friend's website. MaryMargaret advised that the financial presentation should clearly state how much was given to the refuge for Hellcat and the funds supporting the salt marsh grant project. Sharon noted that the Hellcat funds will be used for that project - not to pay the contractor but to pay for related expenses, eg, signage.

Bill asked the Board to help identify candidates to fill two vacant positions (including the Secretary) for 2020.

Tom Wetmore - Discussion of Possible New Initiatives

At Bill's invitation, Tom was at tonight's meeting to share his ideas for projects based on the knowledge he has gathered. His website now covers 20 years and 700,000 sightings! Tom asked if

the Friends would be interested in a new field checklist that includes phenology data; an analysis of sighting trends; articles on certain groups of birds (Dave suggested a seasonal article on the Friends website); or an update to Griscom (Griscom's work was the impetus for Tom's website). The Board was very enthusiastic about all of these ideas plus having Tom be a regular Guest Lecture speaker, but decided it was best to focus on one as the priority: an updated checklist, specific to Parker River NWR. While Friends would not charge for the checklist, "please consider a donation to the Friends" should be printed on it. Dave suggested doing a big kick-off when it's ready and publicizing it in national birding publications. Board members offered Tom any assistance we can provide.

The Board also asked Tom to consider being the featured speaker at the annual meeting in February, to speak for about 30 minutes on a few trends for winter birds. Tom will consider and get back to us soon.

Board Discussion:

- Fund raising strategy: Dave proposed having just one "donate button" for the website rather than one general button and one for internship support.
- The Board decided not to set a specific dollar goal for 2020. Dave thought that Friends could do one direct appeal annually, have a donation jar at events, and seek more sponsors.
- Interns: Sharon explained that the refuge is planning right now for 2020 summer interns and the standard stipend is about \$600/week.

Confirmation of the Next Board Meeting Dates:

Dates are all Tuesdays from 6-7:30 p.m.: December 3 (no meeting in November), and January 21, 2020. Annual meeting Saturday February 8, 2020, 10 a.m.

Adjournment: 7:57 p.m.