

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - January 21, 2020

Those Attending:

Bill Gette, President; Directors Doug Chickering, Dave Williams, Lynette Leka, and Kaytee Hojnacki (via teleconference); Kate Murray, Secretary; Sharon Ware and Jean Adams, PRNWR; and guests Tom Wetmore and Ellie Bailey, members.

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Tom Wetmore - Discussion of Annual Meeting Program

Tom's working title for the program is "Birds of Plum Island - Data Lists and Trends". He is analyzing trends 2006-2019, the percentage population gain/loss per year for bird species seen at the refuge. His program will report on the biggest gainers and losers; he will describe his methodology. Dave expects many questions from the audience, and he recommended that a Board member take notes and provide detail for Tom afterwards; Bill volunteered to do that. The Board discussed providing access to the data. Dave recommended posting it on the Friends website to drive traffic to the site rather than producing printed copies (also more environmentally conscious). Tom noted that some "magic" would be needed to turn his data into something graphically interesting; Friends should identify a volunteer to help. The Board agreed to begin by posting the information on the website; if there is significant demand for printed versions, we can consider how to provide those.

Approval of Minutes: The December 3rd regular Board meeting minutes were approved.

Refuge Staff Update

- Sharon reported that the refuge manager posting is currently posted on the US Jobs website.
- Ben Rice, the new four-year term maintenance worker, has started working with Bob.
- Graham Taylor from the Regional Office will be at Parker River this week and Sharon will set up time with him if any Board members are interested in chatting with Graham. Graham was at PRNWR for several years and was the Refuge Manager prior to Bill Peterson.
- Public excitement about the presence of Short-eared and Snowy owls has been challenging to manage. With Gareth away on assignment at the Texas border, PRNWR arranged for a law enforcement detailee from Rachel Carson NWR last weekend. Gareth returns soon.
- Hellcat Trail: Work has been underway for two weeks in multiple areas. The Dune Loop and the Marsh Loop stretch from the new section down to the overlook have been demolished. Some helical pilings have been installed. So far, public feedback has been good and no complaints have been received. Doug noted that folks he encountered are anticipating the improvements.
- Jean requested a volunteer for Eagle Fest - to locate birds of prey in the refuge, report sightings to the coordinator, and station themselves with a scope for visitors. Doug volunteered.

Treasurer's Report

- Lyn reviewed the 2019 annual finance report and budget for 2020, emphasizing how important our fundraising efforts will be in order to sustain camperships and the internship fund.
- Membership at year's end is 205, reflecting 69 new members and 14 non-renewals in calendar 2019.

- Lyn circulated information on Amaral Enterprises, a Salem trash removal firm Friends will approach to donate their services in support of CoastSweep.
- Lyn circulated thank you letters received recently from Merrohawke Nature School for the Friends \$600 donation to their scholarship fund, and a letter from the USFWS Regional Office for the \$15,000 check Friends donated towards the Hellcat Trail project.

Planning for Annual Meeting

Kate reviewed the documents that will be made available at the meeting. Bill showed the Power-Point presentation he has prepared and made minor edits as discussed. The meeting announcement will be sent out later this week. The Nominating Committee recommended a slate of candidates to present to the members for approval; the Board unanimously approved their recommendation.

Educational Programs

- Decoy Program - Kaytee's waiting to hear back from the speaker.
- Spring Introduction to Birdwatching (Lecture and Field Trip) Saturday, April 19th. Bill will present the lecture portion of the program and Dave and perhaps other Board members will assist with the field trip.
- Massacre on the Merrimack Thursday, April 30th, evening program. Friends will co-host this program with the Museum of Old Newbury, topic is the 1697 Abenaki raid on the Village of Haverhill.

Peer-to-Peer Workshop:

- The Friends have been invited to this workshop for the Northeast Region Friends groups, hosted by the Assabet Valley NWR. Bill circulated the agenda to the Board last week. He encouraged Board members to attend the workshop on Saturday March 28th and/or the social gathering the evening of March 27th; he will be out of town. The Board agreed to pay overnight accommodation expense if a Friends attendee wants to join the Friday social event as well as the Saturday workshop. Sharon offered the possibility to carpool with refuge staff who are participating.

Confirmation of the Next Board Meeting Dates:

Annual meeting Saturday February 8, 2020, 10 a.m.-12 noon; Tuesday March 10 and Tuesday April 7th, 6-7:30 p.m.

Adjournment: 7:26 p.m.