



Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020
6:00 p.m.
Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, Secretary; Doug Chickering, Vice President; Bill Gette, President; MaryMargaret Halsey; Matt Hillman, Refuge Manager; Kaytee Hojnacki; Lynette Leka, Treasurer; Dave Williams, Ted Olsson; Kate Murray;

Absent: Ron DiCola,; Weston Forsblad

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 by President Bill Gette.

2. Secretary's Report. The minutes of the Nov. 17 meeting were accepted as presented.

3. Refuge Staff Update. Matt Hillman reported as follows.

*The Roving Naturalist Program has been revived with an emphasis on public education. Volunteers will address, among other things, how human behavior at the refuge impacts wildlife. Jean Adams will coordinate this program.

*There have been many complaints about public behavior at the refuge. In addition to the Roving Naturalist Program, the staff is spending more time on the refuge. Two solar-powered speed indicator signs have been installed to further mitigate vehicle speeding issues. They will go live before the holidays.

*A Rachel Carson film will be shown remotely on Dec. 16 at 7:00. email ['parkerriver@fws.gov'](mailto:parkerriver@fws.gov) ASAP to register"

*The platform currently used for films is not satisfactory. Bill Gette agreed to share his Zoom account with the refuge for future films. Matt Poole will contact Bill.

*The regional office has asked if our Friends group might be able to provide fundraising tips to the Iroquois refuge. Bill agreed to share his contact information. Suggestions from members included attaching a fundraising effort to a specific project and utilizing the Peer-to-Peer program.

*The dam removal at Great Bay is going well. The staff has been spending a lot of time there.

*The staff is working with MA Audubon on the Eagle Festival to be held Feb. 9 - 14.

4. Board Reports

A. Treasurer. Lynette Leka reviewed the highlights of her report.

*An unsolicited check from the Stine Foundation has been received.

*Our income in 2020, exceeded our estimate due to the generous Stine Foundation gift and the large number of premium membership.

*Our expenses were lower than budgeted largely because events could not be held due to covid.

*With \$27, 638.21 cash on hand, the Friends can cover our commitment of \$6,000 for the Internship Program. Bill confirmed with Matt that he can expect funding. He asked that the intern work one day/week on public education and Matt agreed.

B. President

*The volunteer work group has finished the kiosk project. Coming up are some tree work, bike rack assembly and the relocation of the viewing platform at Stage Island.

*Winter Birding Challenge signs are ready to go up. Matt said that they can go up a.s.a.p. at the gate, Hellcat, Lots 1 - 4. Bird clubs have been contacted and the event is on the website. *New England* magazine will do a feature on the event and there will be local publicity in the paper.

*Board members should return their Volunteer forms to Denise a.s.a.p.

C. Memorial Committee Report. Bill Gette noted that this year's gifts have been impressive.

5. Purple Martin Project. Doug Chickering reported that he has ordered (1) 12 rack set and decoys. He will join the Purple Martin Conservation Association as a "landlord" and will keep records. A site has not yet been agreed upon (Doug's preference is at Parking Lot 3 or possibly Parking Lot 2), Kaytee suggested "disturbed" sites where the archaeological impact is not a concern, i.e. sub headquarters and the dike. Katie and Doug will work with Nancy to make a recommendation for a site. The refuge has agreed to store equipment in the off season.

6. Programs. Discussion yielded the following action items.

*MaryMargaret will contact the presenter about a Salt Marsh Sparrow and Salt Marsh Restoration program to be given in April at 7:00, remotely on a Tues., Wed., or Thurs.

*Dave will continue to look for a presenter on iNaturalist.

*Ted Olsson will try to contact Jeff Walker regarding a presentation on duck hunting and the refuge.

*Matt Hillman will speak with Matt Poole about possible photo programs.

7. Peer to Peer Program. MaryMargaret has been attending these workshops and reviewed the highlights of materials previously sent via email as follows.

*Having multiple people familiar with the tasks of each role, especially those involving finances, for oversight, and to provide coverage and continuity is recommended. Create a separation of duties. All Board positions could also benefit from back up and job descriptions. During a brief discussion of this point, Bill stressed the importance of our fiduciary responsibility. Lynette agreed that having a job description for the treasurer was important and will create one that includes protocols for the treasurer's duties. She will also reach out to a professional accountant who has offered to review our accounting practices but not until in-person work is possible.

*It is important to identify the Board/organization's biggest financial risk. Having one to three months worth of cash on hand is recommended.

*When recruiting new Board members, a good strategy is to match what the Board needs with specific people. Use job descriptions and volunteer agreements and recruit non-Board members for various committees.

*Periodically energizing a board seems necessary and important. Popular ways include working in small groups, reaching out with check-in phone calls, and creating a vision.

*Vary the agenda for meetings to stir interest and give attention to new business while the Board is fresh.

*Use a Board mentoring program. Other resources are available to Friends groups.

*Put table in the parking lot and talk to people as they visit.

8. Fundraising. Bill reported that the Annual Appeal has gone out and donations are coming in, and that New England BioLabs will be sending a final check for \$1,000. The funds will be transferred to the artists for their project. The current on-line donation process does not provide a way to designate where gifts should be allocated (e.g., unrestricted, Internship Fund)., Bill will work with Weston to discuss discuss this issue.

9. Annual Meeting. A planning discussion yielded the following.

*The Nominating Committee will send the slate of Board members to Lynette.

*Bill will prepare a PowerPoint to report on the Friends activities and accomplishments in 2020.

*Bill will add his presentation on the Winter Birds of Plum Island to the PowerPoint.

*Kate Murray will send Board biographies out for updating. Members should return them to Ellie or Lynette.

*Lynette will send a meeting invitation and ballots for election of Board members out before Jan 6.

10. Next Board Meeting Dates. The following meeting dates were confirmed.

Board Meeting - Jan. 12 (Annual Meeting preparation)

Annual Meeting - Jan. 16 at 10:00

The Board considered changing the Feb. meeting date as there were conflicts. Bill will work with members on this.

Action Items

Doug and Katie will work with Nancy to recommend a site for the Purple Martin project.

I believe my only action item was speaking to Nancy Pau about locations for the new purple martin colonies. I did speak with her, and the concern with putting them on the island is that the colony at Lot 1 is not at full capacity, so starting a second colony on the island has the potential to pull individuals from that colony, which would create two smaller, weaker colonies instead of one larger, stronger colony. She felt when the Lot 1 colony gets close to capacity, then she'd be open to putting additional gourds on the island. For now, she would prefer the new gourds go at headquarters, possibly between PI Turnpike and the visitor center.

I didn't discuss with Nancy, but just thought about Nelson Island. Would this be preferable to HQ for a location for the new gourds? This would provide a location that has low house sparrow pressure (unlike the two existing colonies and HQ).. To avoid issues with archaeological resources, it would need to go at the parking lot. And to avoid theft and vandalism, the mechanism to raise and lower the gourds would need to be locked. If there is support for this location, I will discuss with Nancy.

MaryMargaret will contact the Salt Marsh Sparrow speaker for a program in April on a Tues., Wed. or Thurs. at 7:00.

Dave will continue to look for a speaker on inaturalist. **Still looking.**

Ted will try to contact Jeff Walker about speaking on duck hunting and the refuge.

Matt will speak with Matt Poole about a photo lecture by someone in his group.

Lynette will write up protocols for the Friends treasurer job. She will (long term) contact a qualified person who will work with her to review her procedures.

This is an ongoing process and she has made "a good start."

Bill will contact Weston regarding the online donation process.

They discussed it and W. made changes to help clarify where the donation should go. Bill wants to revisit.

The Nominating Committee (Dave, MaryMargaret, Doug) will send the 2021 slate to Lynette
Done

Kate will send bios. to Lynette and members (plus Ted) for updating. **Done**

Lynette and Bill will finalize the Annual Meeting notice and send it out before Jan. 6. **Notice went out with ballot and agenda question. Results received and tabulated. Bill scheduled Zoom for Jan. 16 @ 10.**

Bill will work on a date for the Feb. meeting. **Feb. 17 @ 6 pm**