



Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, March 17 6:30 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, secretary, Ron DiCola, Bille Gette, president, Doug Chickering, vice president, Ted Olsson, vice president, Weston Forsblad, MaryMargaret Halsey, Matt Hillman, refuge manager, Matt Poole, refuge visitor services manager, Lynette Leka, treasurer, Dave Williams, Cheryl Smith, associate member, Russ Seguin, associate member, Ella Weber, public lands and transportation fellow with Fish & Wildlife

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Bill Gette.
2. Secretary's Report: The minutes of the Feb. 17, 2021 meeting were approved.
3. Refuge Staff Update:

A. Ella Weber explained plans to date for a Car-Free Day on the Refuge in the fall of 2021 and asked for input from the Board. In response to questions, she explained that her purpose is to incentivize alternative modes of travel such as boat, bus, bicycle. The Board encouraged parking at Lot 1. Access to Sandy Point was brought up and Matt H. said he would contact DCR. The exact timing, during or after the fall migration, was left for further discussion. As for admission fees to the Refuge, Matt said probably there would be no charge. Over all the Board was in favor of the event and interesting in participating. There was some concern about raising false hopes regarding regular bike, foot and car travel on the Refuge Road which was not designed for all three modes of travel. Ella invited Board members to share further thoughts with her via email. She will report on the progress of this event at our next meeting.

B. Matt Hillman reported that the budget reduction is in funds for maintenance but the Refuge will have more maintenance workers. He thanked the Friends for our recent contribution of \$6,000 to the internship fund. At Great Bay the Peverly Pond project is almost complete. Completion will free up more time for Bob Springfield to be at Parker River. At Parker River he is assessing the speed limit at the Hellcat crosswalks and thinks it should be less than twenty-five

miles per hour. He announced that the Refuge gate opens about thirty minutes before sunrise and closes at sunset, times that change each day, but the timer is adjusted weekly.

C. Matt Poole reported that the beach will close on April 1 for the plover and tern nesting seasons. The annual spring clean-up will be held before closure, and the Refuge has already gotten a dumpster and trash bags. He also asked for clarification on the bench dedicated to Tom Wetmore that was replaced during the Hellcat Boardwalk project. Bill and Doug have not found any Friends connection. Matt also reported on upcoming films: March 18 is *Beaver Believers*, March 25 is a film on the Merrimac River, and April 20 is *The Nature Makers*.

4. Board Reports:

A. Treasurer's Report: Lynette Leka's finance report was sent out and reviewed before the meeting. She noted that it includes status reports on special funds and that the Winter Birding Challenge was a success, netting \$294 for the Internship Fund. The Board was enthusiastic about repeating this event. With input from the Refuge staff, the Board agreed to put the Purple Martin Project at the Visitor Center for a two year trial period.

B. President's Report: Bill welcomed associate members Cheryl Smith and Russ Seguin. He reported that the Work Group has been busy making frames for posters for Great Bay and will soon assemble six bike racks. The group is using the "Friends at Work, Please Join Us" sign to good effect.

C. Memorial Committee: Bill referred members to the finance report.

D. Technology Committee: Weston and Lynette reported that changes to the website have improved the member payment process.

5. Friends Volunteer Projects:

A. Beach Clean Up: The event will be Sat. March 27 from 9:00 until 4:00. The focus will be on Parker River NWR. Matt H. will contact DCR regarding Sandy Point. Bill will email a shift sign-up to the Board.

B. Pines Trail Maintenance: Bill suggested opening this clean-up to the membership and the Board agreed. The event will be held on April 21 from 9:00 - 12:00. Members are to bring their own tools. A few Board members will be on hand to point out birds. Lynette will notify members via email and Bill will send Weston a notice for the website.

C. New Plank Project: At Ted Olsson's suggestion, the Board discussed initiating a new plank project. After a brief discussion, the viewing platform at the Pines Trail and the Lot 7 boardwalk were identified as possible sites and the internship program and electric charging station suggested as possible recipients for funds raised. Ted will write a proposal for this project and present it at our next meeting.

7. Program Calendar: The artists panel program has been deferred. Bill will host the April 14 program, "Saving the Marsh, Saving Wildlife, Saving Plum Island." Members will be invited via an email flyer (Ted/Lynette) and there will be an announcement on the website (Ted/Weston).

Bill suggested an introduction to birdwatching program for the fall, hopefully in person. Ted will contact Mary Ellen Laponika about repeating her Native Americans lecture.

8. Meeting Dates

Wed., April 21 @ 6:30 p.m.

Wed., May 19 @ 6:30 p.m.

9. Action Items:

*Matt H. will notify DCR of the Mar. 27 beach clean up event.

*Bill will email a shift sign up for the Mar. 27 event.

*Bill will write a notice of the April 21 Pines Trail maintenance event. Lynette will send the notice to members and Weston will post it on the website.

*Ted will write a proposal for the new plank project.

*Ted will write a flyer for the April 14 program. Lynette will send the flyer to members and Weston will post it on the website.

*Ted will contact Mary Ellen Laponika about her Native Americans program.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Eleanor Bailey,

Secretary