



Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, June 23, 2021 6:30 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, secretary; Bill Gette, president; Ted Olsson, vice president; Weston Forsblad; MaryMargaret Halsey; Matt Hillman, refuge manager; Matt Poole, refuge visitor services manager; Lynette Leka, treasurer; and associate members Cheryl Smith, and Peg Gould

Absent: Doug Chickering, Ron DiCola, Dave Williams

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by President Bill Gette.
2. Secretary's Report: The minutes of the May 19, 2021 meeting were approved. Action items from the May 19 meeting were addressed as follows.

Weston Forsblad has posted Cheryl Smith's plant research, illustrated by Bill Gette's photos, on the web site.

Matt Hillman has discussed number signs on the Hellcat boardwalk with the staff and reported concerns about increasing signage. Bill and MaryMargaret Halsey will create a design for the proposed signs and report back.

Matt Poole will update the list of volunteer tasks, as many had already been carried out.

3. Refuge Staff Update: Matt Poole thanked the Board for its many contributions and reported as follows.

The River Valley Charter School has ended their year on the Refuge. Student feedback was very positive.

The Guardian will be shown on June 24 at 7:00 and with that the current conservation film series will close. Matt will be planning for future films.

Volunteers will be able to resume duties inside the Visitor Center soon. A mobile information desk will be set up and staffed by volunteers at Parking Lot 1.

Krystal Bradley, a new employee, begins on July 4. Overseeing the gate house will be one of her duties.

Outdoor programs, such as mountain bike tours at Great Bay, will begin soon.

4. A. Treasurer's Report: Lynette Leka sent her report ahead of the meeting and there were no questions. Bill Gette stated that our financial situation is good and that we now have 256 members.

B. President's Report: Bill Gette reported that the Wed. Morning Work Group and other volunteers have been working on kiosks, frames, Black Pine removal, and garden maintenance. Volunteers have also removed sand from the boardwalk at Parking Lot 1 and have cut back vegetation on the Hellcat boardwalk.

Donations to organizations not related to the Refuge was discussed after a review of Article II of the by-laws and the Board agreed that such donations are not allowed. Matt Hillman added that they are also not permitted under the Partnership Agreement. The Board then discussed changing the by-laws and agreement to make such donations possible. It was moved and voted unanimously to revisit this matter when the Partnership Agreement is next reviewed.

A request for support from the National Wildlife Association was discussed. Matt Hillman stated that Friends groups from all over the country contribute to this organization. After a brief discussion, the Board voted unanimously to donate \$200 to the National Wildlife Refuge Assoc.

The Merrimac Valley Bird Club is considering a donation to the Friends.

The grant proposal submitted to the National Wildlife Refuge Assoc. for a water system for the Visitor Center garden was rejected.

C. Technology Committee Report: Weston Forsblad reported that he has added plant profiles and plover updates to the website. He encouraged Board members to send him new articles.

5. Friends' Volunteer Projects:

A. Bill Gette reported on plans for the traffic survey. Ella Weber, transportation fellow, is developing this project and the Friends will provide volunteer support in gathering data. The focus is on the interactions between vehicles, wildlife, bikes, walkers, i.e. all who use Refuge roadways. The goal is to gather hard data for use in improving traffic control on the Refuge. The survey will probably take place in Aug.

B. Plank Project. As the Parking Lot 7 boardwalk has been found to be structurally unsuitable as well as too vulnerable to storms, there was discussion of the boardwalk and observation platform at the Pines Trail as a new site for the project. Ted Olsson stated that larger planks used as decking on the platform are feasible and can be subdivided for engraving with an estimated total of 200 engravings. It was moved and voted to change the site for the Plank Project to the Pines boardwalk and platform. Bill and Ted will work out the details.

7. Friends Articles and Publicity. Bill noted the new materials recently posted on the website and encouraged everyone to contribute.

8. Educational Programs: Story Walks. Ted Olsson reported on his meetings with Jen Bogard, author of a children's book, *The ABCs of Plum Island*. Jen has offered her book and her help for a story walk. Matt Hillman lent enthusiastic support for temporary story walks and Stage Island and the Pines Trail were discussed as possible sites. The Board agreed to support this project. Ted and Jen will develop an action plan.

9. Long Term Activities Calendar: The Board chose Sat., Jan. 22, 2022 as the date for the Annual Meeting.

10. Next Meeting: July 21, 2021 at 6:30.

11. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:51.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Bailey, secretary

Action Items

*Bill and MaryMargaret will do a design for the Hellcat birdwatcher signs.

*Matt P. will update the list of volunteer tasks.

*Bill and Ted will work out the details for a Plank Project at the Pines boardwalk and platform.

*Ted will work with Jen Bogard on the Story Walk Project.