



Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022 6:30 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, secretary, Doug Chickering, vice president, Bill Gette, president, Lynette Leka, treasurer, Ted Olsson, vice president, Peg Gould, Dave Williams, Matt Hillman, refuge manager, Matt Poole, visitor services

Absent: Dan Graovac, Weston Forsblad

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 6:35 by President Bill Gette.
2. Secretary's Report. The minutes of the Jan. 19 meeting were accepted. Action items from the Jan. 19 meeting have been completed or are in process. Ted Olsson volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee, a two year term ending 2024.
3. Refuge Staff Update.

Matt Poole reported that Parker River will be hosting an orientation for summer interns participating in the CIDP program in this region. (For information on the program see this link: <https://www.thesca.org/cdip>.) He invited the Friends to host a social gathering (tentative date is Wed. May 25) for interns and their mentors, a group of about 50. The Board agreed to discuss Matt's invitation at a future meeting.

Matt also reported that the annual Eagle Festival was successful, that there will be a film on the duck stamp program on Feb. 27 and that he is planning for the eventual reopening of the visitor center.

4. Board Reports

A. Treasurer: Lynette Leka sent her treasurer's report ahead of the meeting. She noted the balances in project accounts, i.e. the Internship Fund, Winter Birding Challenge and Pines Trail Plank Project, are good. There are 262 members.

Mowing at Bill Forward Pool is a project the Friends is considering. Matt Hillman suggested using the Essex County Mosquito Control's equipment and will put Bill in touch with their director. If the cost is reasonable, the Friends will cover it. This is likely to be an annual expense.

B. President. Bill Gette. Bill followed up on a major contribution by contacting the donor and explaining how the Friends uses donations. The work group is lining up projects for spring. There was some discussion of the amount of sand that has blown on the Lot 1 boardwalk and ways to have it removed. This discussion will continue at a future meeting. Due to covid concerns and scheduling conflicts, the Friends will not be able to attend the Environmental Stewardship Open House.

5. Annual Meeting Review. All agreed that the format worked well, program was interesting and attendance was good.

6. Pines Trail Plank Project. Ted Olsson reported that 70 inscription orders have been received, and 27 inscriptions have been installed. Orders keep arriving at a rate of 0 - 2/week. Installation will resume in spring, working from the back of the observation platform to the boardwalk entryway. Board members noted that the telescope on the platform does not work and can be a hazard to children. Matt Hillman agreed and said none of them do and that they all need replacing. Dave Williams suggested an interpretive panel instead.

7. Parker River Winter Birding Challenge. Lynette reported that fewer teams registered this year. The Board will revisit the program at a future meeting to decide whether it is worth continuing.

8. Internship Program. Matt Hillman proposed that the Friends donate \$6,000 this year to expand pepper weed pulling internships that the Refuge co-sponsors with Mass. Audubon. The funds would pay for additional time and allow interns to do conservation/education work on the Refuge under Refuge staff supervision. It was moved and voted to make a direct payment to Mass. Audubon of \$6,000 to be used for expanding the scale, scope and length of internships the Refuge and Mass. Audubon sponsor as partners in the summer of 2022. Ted agreed to draft a letter of agreement to Mass. Audubon. ([link to the position announcement for our Great Marsh Biological Technician](#))

9. Educational Program Calendar

Bill will contact Neil Haywood about doing a program about eBird.

Ted will contact Mary Ellen Laponika about another program on Native Americans.

Dave will look into a speaker on sea life, possibly someone from Fish and Wildlife.

Bill, Dave and Doug will do the Introduction to Bird Watching class on June 3 & 5.

11. Major Projects. A wildlife web camera(s), possibly on the Purple Martin colony, was added to the list of possible projects.

12. Other Business. Speeding on the Refuge was brought up again.

12. Confirmation of Next Meeting Dates:

Wed. Mar. 16 @ 6:30

Wed. April 13 @ 6:30

13. Review of Action Items

*Bill will add these items to the agenda for the next meeting: May 24 social gathering for interns, removing sand from the Parking Lot 1 boardwalk,

*Matt will send Bill contact information for the Essex County Mosquito Control District

*Ted will draft a letter of agreement to Mass. Audubon regarding our \$6,000 contribution to the Mass. Audubon/Parker River internship partnership.

*Ted will contact Mary Ellen Laponika.

*Dave will research presenters on sea life.

*Bill will contact Neil Haywood.

13. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Eleanor Bailey