



## Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

### Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2022 7:00 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, secretary; Doug Chickering, vice president; Weston Forsblad; Bill Gette, president; Dan Graovac; Lynette Leka, treasurer; Peg Gould; Ted Olsson; Dave Williams; Matt Hillman, refuge manager; Ella Weber, visitor services manager.

#### Absent:

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 by President Bill Gette.
2. Secretary's Report: The minutes of the Sept. 14 meeting were accepted. A review of action items indicated that most were in progress, had been completed or would be discussed later. Ellie reported that shows by the Artist of the Month have been scheduled through May 2023.
3. Refuge Staff Update: Matt Hillman recognized our new visitor services manager, Ella Weber, conveyed congratulations and thanks from Peggy Hobbs at Great Bay for our help with their thirtieth anniversary celebration and thanked Ellie Bailey for her work on the Artist of the Month Program. He also addressed trail maintenance needs and future Friend projects.
  - Trail maintenance - Trails are in need of clearing, pruning, etc. During a brief discussion there were several suggestions for future maintenance, an "adopt a trail" project and adding trails to the beach clean-up days. In the near future Bill will schedule a trail maintenance day for next week and Lynette will notify members.
  - Future projects - A staff planning session is coming up and future projects will be identified at that time. Matt will give the Board a list in Dec. There is a possibility of establishing an electric charging station at Hellcat. Peg Gould will work with Ella on funding for this project.Ella Weber reminded the Board to send notices of Friend's programming to her for the Refuge website.
4. A. Treasurer's Report: Lynette Leka sent her report ahead of the meeting. She commented that our financial position is strong. Income exceeds projections and expenses are

less than expected. Membership has increased. There was a short discussion of possible expenditures in the future and the Board decided to earmark the following expenses now: two internships @ \$8,000 each; mowing at Stage and Bill Forward @ \$5,000; a new viewing platform or blind at Stage Island and any other projects we adopt before 2023. As our activities have increased, Ellie will design a calendar to include with each set of minutes.

B. President's Report: Bill reported that he has sent a letter to the USFWS Retirees Association and that the installation of the Pines Trail planks is the work group's top priority. Next week the group will work on trail maintenance, including Hellcat leaf removal, as noted above.

C. Technology Report: Weston Forsblad and others reported on a number of areas. Weston had to pay GoDaddy for professional services to fix our website problem. The services will be available until Nov. 18, should others need them.

Lynette has had trouble with Friends webmail due to a huge update done by the provider, Network Solutions. Dan and Weston recommended switching to gMail. Lynette, Weston and Dan will work on this switch.

Dan reported that our social media audience is growing.

5. Board Membership: All Board members are willing to serve for another year. Ted, Dave and Doug serve on the Nominating Committee this year. Lynette will send them a list of members to use in recruiting associate members. They will report back before the Annual Meeting.

6. Pines Trail Plank Project. Ted Olsson reported as follows: We are now ready to stop taking new order donations! Current orders will fill (with perhaps a little room for a late straggler) the platform through Row 22. He plans to send the last work order to CNC this week. Dan at CNC has a backlog with some large projects, and although he cannot guarantee it, he will try to complete our last order by the end of Nov., making a Dec. installation possible. Ted, Dan and Weston will post on their respective sites letting the public know that the project has ended and Lynette will notify members.

7. Collaboration on Plum Island Lighthouse and Keeper's House: Ted Olsson reported that this is a joint project with the Friends of the Lighthouse and that a committee has been formed and includes himself, Ellie, Peg, and Dan as well as representatives from that group. Bill asked to attend at least the initial meeting, possibly to be held next week. The goal of the project is to provide information on the history of the keeper's house and its occupants. As it is a building now owned and used by the Refuge but once part of the lighthouse station, a collaborative approach makes sense. From preliminary investigations into the cost of a kiosk, Ted estimates that a budget of about \$5,000 would be needed. The Board expressed interest in the project but was not ready to make a commitment. There was a general feeling that costs must be shared with the lighthouse group and that more details were needed

8. Critique of NFWSR Week: Ted Olsson reported as follows. Our Walk for the Wild drew 75 participants, including 30 children for a total of \$1,046 less the 5% handling fee. We will receive a check in mid-Nov. that also includes our share of the amplifier fee. Parker River ranked 9th of 32 participating refuges in funds raised. The Board agreed to hold a Walk for the Wild next year and to spend time planning for a bigger event.

9. Winter Birding Challenge: The Board agreed to try this event for one more year with increased publicity.

10. Discussion of Annual Meeting: The Annual Meeting will be Jan. 21 via Zoom. One program possibility is a film on the release of snowy owls at Parker River. Lynette has seen the film and will contact the film maker to see if we might have access to it.

11. Critique of Beach Clean-up: The Board decided to add trail maintenance to the clean-up days.

12. Educational Program Calendar: The Friends will sponsor a two day program on ducks. Bill will do a lecture on Dec. 1 and on Dec. 4, Bill, Doug and Dave will lead a field trip on the Refuge. Bill will do a write up and send to Lynette, Ella, Weston, Dan, and Ted for posting/ emailing.

13. Confirmation of Next Board Meetings

Nov. 16 @ 7:00 Monthly Board Meeting

Dec. 14 @ 7:00 Monthly Board Meeting

Jan. 18 @ 7:00 Monthly Board Meeting with a focus on final plans for Annual Meeting

Jan. 21 @ 10:00 a.m. Annual Meeting

14. Other Business: The Friends have signed on to a letter sent by WildEarth Guardians and calling on Congressional appropriators to exclude the sage-grouse rider. The rider has prevented the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from taking action to protect the Greater sage-grouse under the ESA despite continued population declines and habitat loss. The current House and Senate bills do not include the rider. Lynette was authorized by the Friends to submit the form supporting permanent protection for Sage Grouse.

15. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

## Action Items

\*Bill will schedule a trail maintenance day for next week and Lynette will notify members.

\*Peg Gould will work with Ella on funding sources for an electric charging station at Hellcat.

\*Ellie will design a calendar of Friend's activities/programs to include with each set of minutes.

\*Lynette, Weston and Dan will work on switching to Gmail.

\*Lynette will send Doug, Dave and Dan a list of members to use in recruiting associate members.

\*The Nominating Committee will report back to the Board before the Annual Meeting.

\*Ted, Dan and Weston will post on their respective sites letting the public know that the Pines Trail Plank Project has ended and Lynette will notify members.

\*Lynette will contact the maker of the snowy owls release film to see if we might have access to it for the Annual Meeting.

\*Bill will do a write up for the Ducks program and send it to Lynette, Ella, Weston, Dan, and Ted for posting/emailing.