



Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023 7:00 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, secretary; Doug Chickering, vice president; Bill Gette; Dan Graovac, president; Peg Gould; Kevin Komiega, Lynette Leka, treasurer; Dave Williams; Jeff Christianson; Matt Hillman, refuge manager; Ella Weber, visitor services manager.

Absent: Ted Olsson.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Dan Graovac. Dan introduced Plum Island resident and business owner, Jeff Christianson.

2. Secretary's Report: The minutes of the Jan. 18 meeting were accepted. A review of action items indicated that all were in progress, had been completed or would be discussed later. The Board reviewed the design for an "Ethical Owling" handout. Kevin will incorporate feedback into a revised design.

3. Refuge Staff Update: Ella Weber reported as follows.

*Visitor compliance with rules has improved since the 4:00 p.m. closure was instituted.

*A new gatehouse ranger begins work on April 23 and Bill, a seasonal gatehouse staffer, will return in early May.

*A C.D.I.P. intern begins in late May also.

*Ella is participating in two career fairs, one at Triton on March 7 and one in Newburyport on April 4. Board members who wish to be more involved with high school students on the Refuge should send their ideas to Ella.

*The deadline for March/April programs is Feb. 28. Friends should send program descriptions to Ella by then.

*The E.V. charging station company plans to send Ella a quote and specs by the end of Feb.

*Plover warden training will be held on March 25.

*A training for the invasive species removal team is coming up this spring.

*Let's Go Outside will be June 3 from 10 - 3, a car-free event.

Matt Hillman reported that the windows at the Visitor Center will receive a "feather friendly" treatment during the week of May 8. Volunteers are needed to prepare windows and place film.

4. Board Reports

Treasurer: Lynette Leka sent her financial report ahead. On another matter, she asked the Board to authorize her to apply for a business credit card.

It was moved and voted unanimously to authorize Lynette Leka to apply for a business credit card with Bank of America. Dan and Ellie will co-sign these minutes as requested by Bank of America.

President: Dan Graovac reported as follows.

*Winter Birding Challenge: The Board discussed alternatives to this event. Suggestions focussed on a family-centered event, perhaps in conjunction with another program and featuring a scavenger hunt with a prize.

*Game Cameras: The Refuge has purchased cameras and plans to place them in areas not accessed by visitors. Kevin and Dan have volunteered to collect photos/videos and post those of interest on social media, etc. Others are invited to help out.

*Live Wildlife Camera: The Board had a preliminary discussion about sponsoring a livestream video of the osprey platform, possibly year-round. While there was enthusiasm for this project, there was also concern that ours would only duplicate efforts already online. Dan will speak to Dave Rimmer (Gloucester camera) and report back at the next meeting.

*Refuge Hours: Several Board members reported that many types of Refuge visitors want to know why the gate can't open before sunrise. Matt Hillman explained that the sunrise opening is a Parker River policy of long standing and tied to concerns about safety, staffing, signage, and scheduling. While he is not in favor of a change, he agreed to discuss the matter with the staff.

Technology: Kevin reported that the switch of our email and website to Google is underway. Once basic changes occur, our various web platforms will be integrated and can be refined for better communication. Kevin will be on hand to help Board members with the transition.

Maintenance: Bill Gette reported as follows.

*Relocation of Stage Island Viewing Platform. Bill will meet with Bob Springfield and Ella to work out exactly what is involved and report back as to whether or not the Friends need to do a fundraiser to support this change.

*Hellcat Benches. Bill will also discuss with Ella and Bob the construction and placement of several benches along the boardwalk and report back.

*Lot 7 Boardwalk. The structures in this area are to be removed and replaced with mats, a project the Friends could help with in the future.

5. Beach Clean-up: Dan reported that the date suggested by Jean Adams (visitor services) is Sat., Mar. 11. The Board decided to request alternatives, either March 19 or 26. Dan will speak with Jean. Once plans are definite, Ted will contact Boy Scout troops and Dan will contact Newburyport High School to enlist volunteers.

6. Educational Programming. The following programs are planned.

*Intro to Birdwatching with Bill on Apr. 25 @ 7:00 to 8:15 via Zoom.

*Intro to Birdwatching on the Refuge, April 29 @9:00 - 11:00 with Bill, Doug, Dave.

*Intro to Common Wood Warblers of Parker River, May 3 @7:00 to 8:15 via Zoom with Bill.

*Sparrows with Bill, Oct. 26, 7:00 - 8:15 via Zoom.

Suggested programs are: Poetry reading; surfcasting; sustainable hunting; clamming; landscape photography; history topics including lighthouses, custom house, Native Americans, polio camp. Members able to do or coordinate a program should let Dan know.

7. Surfcaster Event. The Friends will have a table or share one with the Refuge at this March 18 event. Anyone able to assist should let Dan know.

8. Next Meeting Dates

March 22 @ 7:00

April 26 @ 7:00

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Action Items

*Kevin will incorporate feedback on the "Ethical Owling" handout into a revised design.

*Board members who wish to be more involved with high school students on the Refuge should send their ideas to Ella.

*The deadline for March/April education program publicity is Feb. 28. Friends should send program descriptions to Ella by then.

*Dan will speak to Dave Rimmer about the osprey camera he works on in Gloucester and report back at the next meeting.

* Bill will meet with Bob Springfield and Ella to work out exactly what is involved in both the moving of the viewing platform at Stage island and the construction and placement of benches at Hellcat and report back as to cost, etc.

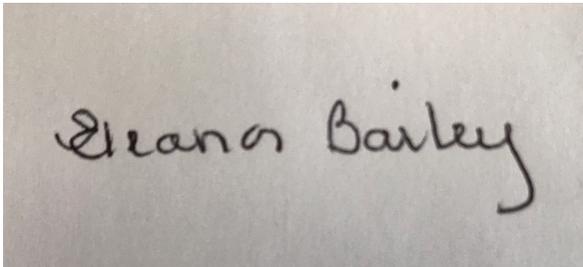
*Dan will speak with Jean about either March 19 or 26 as a date for the Beach Clean-up.

*Once plans for the Beach Clean-up are definite, Ted will contact Boy Scout troops and Dan will contact Newburyport High School to enlist volunteers.

*Members able to do or coordinate an education program should let Dan know.

*Anyone able to assist with the surfcaster event on March 18 should let Dan know.

Respectfully submitted,

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature reads "Eleanor Bailey" in a cursive script.

Eleanor Bailey, Secretary

Dan Graovac, President