



Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, Jan. 18 , 2023 7:00 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, secretary; Doug Chickering, vice president; Bill Gette, president; Dan Graovac; Peg Gould; Lynette Leka, treasurer; Ted Olsson; Dave Williams; Scott Millin; Kevin Komiega; Ella Weber, visitor services manager.

Absent: Weston Forsblad.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President Bill Gette.
2. Secretary's Report: The minutes of the Dec. 14 meeting were accepted. A review of action items indicated that most were in progress, had been completed or would be discussed later.
3. Refuge Staff Update: Ella Weber reported as follows.
 - *Matt Hillman will send Bill his slides for the Annual Meeting.
 - *Amy will continue on the staff through the winter.
 - *Matt has requested another ranger for the gate house, etc.
 - *Raina, the new Hispanic Access Foundation intern, is now working on outreach, primarily in Lawrence. She is from UNH.
 - *Parker River and Great Bay had successful Christmas bird counts.
 - *Programming will be going out every two months. Friends are encouraged to send Ella text and photos for program descriptions. She will do the formatting.
 - *Staff will be doing annual planning. Once projects are identified, Ella will add them to the Friends' spreadsheet.
 - *Ella has re-requested an EV quote.
 - *The NCTC Friends workshop will be held 28 April and 21 May in West Virginia. They are accepting nominations. Friends should let Ella know if interested in attending.
4. Concerns Regarding Visitor Behavior and Wildlife. Board members reported a number of concerns including the following.

*Large groups of photographers and/or birders congregate for an hour or more, blocking traffic and stressing birds. When asked to move on they often are uncooperative.

*Visitors chase the coyotes and owls.

*Some visitors enter off-limits areas.

Ella reported that the staff is aware of these concerns and have asked for more law enforcement support. They are spending more time on the Refuge on weekends; educating visitors about proper behavior; and ticketing improperly parked cars.

After some discussion the Board and Ella agreed to try handing out a card at the gatehouse that lets visitors know what expectations for appropriate behavior are. Dan, Kevin and Ella will work on this infographic.

Bill will also add a reminder to members to his Annual Meeting presentation.

5. Annual Meeting Planning. The Board previewed Bill's PowerPoint presentation and made suggestions. Ella will send photos of interns and Dan of wildlife. Dan will also send the Instagram link.

6. Election of Officers. The Board chose the following as officers for 2023.

President: Bill Gette

Vice President: Ted Olsson

Vice President: Peg Gould

Treasurer: Lynette Leka

Secretary: Ellie Bailey

7. Change in Friends' email provider. Dan explained that a switch to Gmail would provide many advantages: Our address can remain the same; each member can have their own email account; the Board can share and store information via other Google services, i.e. Googledocs etc. ; Google integrates well with other services; security is greater; and the transition/migration is fairly easy. The Board agreed and a switch to Google is imminent.

8. Winter Birding Challenge. Feb. 12 - 18. Bill reminded everyone that publicity should go out right after the Annual Meeting, i.e., week of Jan.19.

9. Educational Programming. The following programs were planned/suggested.

*Intro to Birdwatching with Bill, Doug and Dave in June.

*Intro to Common Wood Warblers of Parker River in May with Bill.

*Birding by Ear with Dave in April.

*Sparrows with Bill in Oct.

*Surf Casting with the Plum Island Surfcasters in August.

*Plum Island Lighthouse Talk with Roz or Jen.

Dan offered to coordinate education programs for 2023. Members can send him their descriptions and dates.

Kevin will work with Ella to make smoothly functioning hybrid programs possible at the Visitor Center Auditorium.

10. Next Board Meeting Dates

Jan. 21 @ 10 for Annual Meeting

Feb. 22 @ 7:00 via Zoom for monthly meeting

Mar. 22 @ 7:00 via Zoom for monthly meeting

Action Items

*Matt Hillman will send Bill his slides for the Annual Meeting.

*Dan, Kevin and Ella will work on an infographic re: appropriate visitor behavior.

*Bill will also add a reminder on appropriate visitor behavior to his Annual Meeting presentation.

*Before the Annual Meeting, Ella will send Bill photos of interns and Dan of wildlife. Dan will also send the Instagram link.

*Members will send education program ideas to Dan.