Apalachee Audubon Board Meeting Minutes 2-10-2021

Submitted by Nelson Ball, Secretary

In attendance: Kathleen Carr, Rob Williams, Donna Legare, Amelia Fusaro, Harvey Goldman, Peter Goren, Peter Kleinhenz, Heather Levy, Caroline Andrews, Chase Brestle, Nelson Ball, Dara Wilson, Norma Skaggs, Howard Kessler, Tallulah Biletzskov

* Minutes from Jan. meeting were approved
* Harvey emailed out a treasurer’s report
  + Harvey has filed annual incorporation report: $61
  + Two donations of $500 received in memory of George Willson and Jim Quinn
* Nominating Chair or Committee
  + Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer roles need to be re-elected or seats filled
  + Kathleen, as current Vice President and incumbent President, will help with the process. Donna will also since she will be the outgoing President. Feedback will be appreciated.
  + Discussion about positions’ terms as described in the Chapter’s Bylaws.
* Communication
  + Newsletter looked great this month
  + Tallahassee Democrat – Heather submitted an article for Pines to Palms.
  + Zoom– Dara updated our zoom account for up to 500 participants.
  + Pete is forwarding pertinent announcements to Florida Conservation Coalition and Amelia to Westminster Oaks.
* Environmental Education
  + January review – Leigh Davis – 210 participants!
    - Kathleen received many requests to view the program after the fact.
    - Thanks to Kathleen for staying on top of the YouTube account
  + January birding field trip for beginners at Lake Elberta review
    - Caroline, our CLI intern, had a great time on the field trip. 42 species seen on the trip!
    - 9/10 registered attendees showed
    - A few people that were at the field trip continued birding at Lake Henrietta per Heather’s recommendation and enjoyed it
    - Natasza may host one on 3/7 for more beginners
  + Establishing a Birding Field Trip committee for the remainder of this year (May)
    - Birding trips with limited number of attendees
    - Pete suggests sending a want ad in newsletter
  + February – Pines to Palms
    - Need to ramp up outreach, Pete needs us to help with that
    - Register in advance
    - Pete asks for volunteers for the in-person event at Wakulla Springs & help with the subcommittee
    - Wakulla Springs (Fri 2/19 11am) event is filling up fast, register if you’d like to go
    - Ochlockonee River (Sat 2/20 11am) event - only 10 spaces for AAS
  + March – Mark Tancig
    - Peter G to write an article for Tallahassee Democrat promoting it.
    - Field trip possible, Peter G will talk to him and let Heather know what he says so she can promote. 3/20, since after the program. Limit to 10 attendees.
  + Rob is doing a birding field trip for Scouts to get a merit badge 3/6
  + April – Nicole Jackson
    - Dara will get the info up on the website after the Pines to Palms event(s)
  + May –Jeff VanderMeer
  + May field trip –Deep Roots Meat
    - arranged by Peter Kelly
    - see newsletter for details
  + FSU Sustainability Fellows - Chimney Swift Tower project
    - Heather already has the proposal she submitted last cycle so she will update and resubmit to see if any student would like to take that on this Summer/Fall.
    - Donna would like to see an “Art in the Park” type event with a decorated tower and birdwatching.
    - Jody said he will help build the tower.
    - Chase knows somebody who may be interested and he has connected that person to Laurelin (program director) to talk more about the program. Uncertain if they will be committing or not.
    - Many people on the AAS Board are willing to help with the construction/installation.
    - Rob has book that has plans to build chimney swift towers.
    - Looking for somebody to take lead on this project. Heather can take charge if nobody else wants to.
  + Collaborative Grant –
    - Received the $1000 grant from NAS to continue our work with interns next year at Pineview Elementary School and Lake Elberta.
    - Currently accepting applications from FAMU students, but only 2 have expressed interest in applying—resumes and recommendations had not been received yet (deadline is February 22).
    - The intern will work with our FSU Sustainability Fellow (Sarah) who will supervise both our intern and the WFSU intern from SAIL high school on projects at Lake Elberta.
    - Donna has one student who is interested. Her contact at FAMU is no longer at FAMU so we are still searching for a student intern from there.
  + WFSU and Sustainability Fellow
    - Pete has recruited a 9th grader from Sail High School that is very driven and interested. Focusing on continuing our work at LEP.
    - Sarah C’s bat house project is going great and has agreed to take the high school student under her wing (flying animal joke)
  + Lake Henrietta Trash Problem
    - It is a County Park – Leigh may be asked to boost a call for a cleanup day
    - Possibly lobby the City/County to install traps upstream?
    - Donna will talk to her friend in her Neighborhood Association about joining forces on that
    - Peter G, Pete, Heather to form a Trash in Stormwater System/Waterways Committee!
  + Rewilding Video with Jeff VanderMeer – Donna
    - Donna suggests possibility of pushing the event back to Sept.
    - Kathleen is still ok to keep it as scheduled
    - Dara would like to move it back to at least April since there is a lot on the table for March.
    - Moved to Sept or sometime in the Fall since more will be showing.
* Conservation
  + Wakulla County Treatment Wetland – (Wakulla Springs Alliance meeting Feb. 12 and public meeting Feb. 23)
    - Bill from Friends of St Marks thanked us for allowing him to sit in on our AAS Board meeting. We’re happy to have you here!
    - Rob – This is a complicated issue. Land purchases in Wakulla County are often suspicious. County bought property to use as a rapid infiltration basin. Land is in the Wakulla Springs protection zone so the water that comes from the RIB, into the aquifer, will make its way to Wakulla Springs. Wakulla is considering a treatment wetland to reduce nitrogen load in grey water before it enters RIB. Wakulla Springs Alliance suggests using money to buy property outside of protection zone to use for the treatment of this water. AAS should support whatever WSA’s stance is and follow their lead.
    - Rob and Peter G will attend 2/12 Zoom meeting. Rob will send synopsis and date/time confirmation to Board members
    - Pete will attend 2/23 in-person meeting and will speak on the issue
  + Climate Watch – over the summer (May – June)
    - Citizen science project to get point counts of a single bird species at multiple locations.
    - Heather suggests possibly the brown-headed nuthatch
    - Heather asks if anybody would like to take lead. If it is left to her, she may not be able to commit to the work.
* Conservation Updates – Rob
  + Rob has confirmed that there will be an Ochlockonee River to Bay Park constructed.
    - AAS is interested in being involved with planning.
    - The land may be accessed by the public now, even though there is no park yet.
    - Eric is willing to have AAS out to go on a 5 mile hike
    - Rob submitted public comments to the Apalachicola River WEA - The incredible potential that this land has to be doing hydrological restoration. Need for a long term plan to combat invasive species. They did respond and said they appreciated his comments and would work with them in their plans.
* Additional Items
  + Pete tells us that Susan Tanski from Blueprint asked that we provide match on a grant for Tallahassee Junction. She’d like us to invite the Walker Ford kids out there the next time we take them on a field trip.
* **Next meeting – Wednesday, March 10, 2021. 6:30pm via Zoom**