



FRIENDS OF TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE COMPLEX

January 25, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held via Zoom.

Present: Bonnie Anderson, Dawn Carovano, Alan Christensen, Cheryl Hart, Tom Hartz, Keith Mays, Michelle Miller, Phyllis Millan, Sharon Miller, Louie Olivares, Keith Palevsky, Tom Stibolt, Willem Stoeller, Irene Vlach.

Staff: Natalie Balkam, Larry Klimek, Eva Kristofik, Todd McKinney.

I. Quorum

We have a quorum (8 directors required).

II. Call to Order (6:30)

III. Welcome, Roll Call and Introduction

IV. Approval of Agenda

V. Approval of last meeting's minutes

Motion to approve the minutes:

1. Bonnie
2. Tom H.

Passed.

VI. Committee Reports Consent Agenda

A. Financial Reports

Reports were submitted electronically.

B. Restoration Report

Report was submitted electronically.

C. Photo Society Report

Report was submitted electronically.

D. Governance Report

Report was submitted electronically.

- E. IT Report
Report was submitted electronically.
- F. Membership Committee Report
Report was submitted electronically.
- G. Store/Visitor Services report
Report was submitted electronically.
- H. Advocacy Report – See reports
- I. Tualatin River Bird Festival Report
Report was submitted electronically.
- J. Any additions/supplements to reports.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda and the Reports:

- 1. Tom S.
- 2. Louie

Passed

VII. Programs: Guest Speakers: Todd Mc Kinney, Natalie Balkam, Larry Klimek (Introduction to the Refuge Complex Annual Work Plan process)

Larry gave an overview of the Refuge:

- The public use plan for Wapato Lake will be completed at end of March with the Refuge opening to the public in April. This soft opening will be communicated to the public through news releases. The Grand Opening is tentatively scheduled for September 25, which also is National Public Lands Day, National Urban Refuge Day, as well as the day of our Annual Meeting. We are anticipating having a community celebration comparable to the Bird Festival. In addition, the Oregon Waterfowl Festival will also be celebrated at Wapato Lake at that time. Wapato Lake has been open for waterfowl hunting on Thursdays and Saturdays since mid-December. The new pumps have been tested.
- Chicken Creek: USFWS is going forward with additional bridge designs. Hopefully the creek will be rerouted later this year.
- Tualatin River NWR has been very busy with visitors especially on nice days with parked cars far exceeding available parking spots. We are hoping to increase compliance with regulations through increased staffing and additional signage.

- a. Power Point overview of Visitor Services

Todd described the objectives of the annual work plan for Visitors Services (VS). Sterling will assist Natalie and Todd. The break from school visits caused by Covid offered an opportunity to reevaluate and restructure the programs.

Environmental Education: Future on-site field trips will become increasingly self-guided to address capacity issues both with staff and volunteers. USFWS is planning to create partnerships with 1-4 schools that will lead to a more comprehensive program, with an emphasis on building a longer term relationship with the selected schools. Additionally, through this, the Refuge will be able to align more with the National Urban Program guidance.

VS is developing videos for the Puddle Stompers which are being posted online, along with other resources. Natalie is designing 4 virtual field trip options, aimed at middle schools, based on videos created by USFWS.

Due to staffing constraints, EE at Wapato will be primarily self-guided programs and fall in line with what is being offered at Tualatin River NWR.

Interpretation: Elements of the new master interpretive plan for Wapato Lake NWR will hopefully be implemented before the end of the current fiscal year.

Bird Fest will again be virtual (25th anniversary).

The VS Team is planning to use the gallery space in the VC regularly when reopened. FWS Staff will coordinate with the store committee so they are aware of what will be highlighted in the gallery, throughout the year. This has happened in the past, so the store can offer items that relate to what is on display. At this point, despite the federal mandate for wearing masks, there is no plan to reopen the VC as we do not have the capacity for the required cleaning, among other issues.

The VS's Team is reviewing the Refuge's Volunteer Program, assessing volunteer recruitment, training and engagement, along with many other facets of the FWS Volunteer Program. This project will create a comprehensive road map for how the Refuge's Volunteer Program is structured and delivered to create more efficiency.

Going forward the FWS Volunteer newsletter will be published bi-monthly. VS has started sending emails, again, to each specific volunteer groups in the hope to generate better engagement and prevent attrition due to the pandemic. This includes Visitor Center/store volunteers. Sterling is the FWS point of contact for the VC volunteers and will work with Sharon on their training and other coordination efforts.

At this point the role of the Friends Board with respect to the Visitor Services Program is unclear. The key role of the Friends Board is support, advocacy and promotion of the Refuge.

A facilitator might be hired to help establish a vision and the goals for VS. Representatives of the board of the Friends, some volunteers and other stakeholders would likely be invited into this process.

VS will continue communication on Chicken Creek and 1P/2P restoration projects, on social media and on the refuge 2020 website. The VS Team is planning to increase its communication efforts about various project and activities happening with the Refuge, by creating a communications plan.

VS is hoping to develop with the FWS Regional Office Visual Communications Team a kiosk and other signage for Wapato Lake NWR. The VS Team is also planning to create a grand opening

event for Wapato Lake NWR in September. The waterfowl hunt, at Wapato Lake NWR will again take place next fall.

USFWS is scheduled to launch a new website, nationally, at the end of 2021.

With the change in Administration, diversity is again a priority and discussions on climate change will be integrated into the programs.

Bonnie, Tom and Sharon meet twice per month with the Visitor Services Team to discuss various items related to Visitor Services throughout the year.

b. Open for Q&A and discussion

Engagement of the volunteers is critical during this time of transition. USFWS needs to be receptive to the feedback from volunteers. This will require consistent and good communication with a positive view of what the future will be.

At this point, despite the federal mandate for wearing masks, there is not plan to reopen the VC as we do not have the capacity for the required cleaning, among other issues.

VIII. Reports

a. President: Friends Partnership Agreement

The Governance committee added clarifications to the template Agreement and updated sections with our own wording, using the current/old template. The new Agreement has been released as a draft and we must submit comments by February 8. We might be able to extend our current agreement until the new template Agreement is finalized, hopefully in May. Nevertheless, we should be ready to sign the current template in case the extension is not approved. At this point it is not known whether, if we sign a new agreement before the finalizing of the new template, we are locked into the newly signed agreement for another 5 years, or whether we will have to sign the new template as soon as it is released.

Go to: <https://coalitionofrefugefriends.com/> to find the new template and talking points for comments, as well as forms for comments. We will have to decide which points the Friends want to prioritize.

Motion: to authorize FOR President Micelle Miller to proceed with the final negotiations of the Friends Agreement, including the attachment with clarifications, with Larry Klimek, Project Leader of Tualatin River NWR Complex and to execute it in consideration with the draft of the Governance Committee:

1: Alan
2: Keith P.
Passed.

The Agreement will be sent to Chelsea McKinney after Larry and Michelle have signed it.

b. Project Leader

c. Refuge Staff/Visitor Services

d. Financial Update / Small Business Grant, 2nd PPP

Willem and Bonnie applied for a loan for \$10,000 through the Paycheck Protection Plan. (\$11,003 were received, as per an email from Willem on February 2).

Bonnie applied for a grant from the Washington County Small Business Fund for \$4,361 to be used for her payroll to offset Covid-19 effects on our organization.

Keith and Willem are modernizing the organization's financial reporting according to new financial principals.

e. Store – Online Sales Update: Sharon

No sales were made since Christmas. During the holidays 58 different sales were made for \$2,700, of which about half went to the Good Neighbor Center. New items for sale are featured on the website. They are advertised on social media and linked to the Puddle Stompers program.

f. Advocacy – NWRA email / Federal Registry Talking Points: Cheryl

g. Any committee report needed to present in person

IX. Old Business

a. Action Items from last meeting:

- Status of Photo Society: will be dealt with at the end of the pandemic.
- Invite Chelsea to the February Board meeting to discuss the Service's expectations for the Friends fundraising goals: no longer needed.
- Extension of Intel grant: Bonnie did what needed to be done.
- Additional funding for planting at Wapato: on-going, as opportunities come up.
- Brainstorming to identify companies to be approached for grant requests: will be dealt with in committee.
- Comments on the Federal Register announcement: see above.

From the November meeting:

- Signing and updating of bank documents: in progress.
- Community Asset Funds for Greenway ES: Bonnie is still working on it.
- Wapato Lake visit: postponed until the pandemic allows.
- DEI training: with the new Administration in place, we can resume activities relating to diversity (book club). Kim is pursuing funding for more training. Larry will follow up. Natalie and Bonnie will be working again with Derron Cole.

- b. Any other old business

X. New Business

- a. Committee change to Membership and Fundraising:

See email from Bonnie dated Jan. 25. We will discuss this at the February board meeting.

- b. Blog about Friends and Refuges nationwide

Erika Gilsdorf, the producer and owner of South Shore Productions, will be traveling around the U.S. for one year in a PHEV pulling a tiny house and visiting wildlife refuges and the communities that surround them. Erika might want to talk to a board member. This is an opportunity for free publicity for us.

- c. Tom Stibolt to represent FOR in King City Master Planning

The first meeting will be held on February 8.

- d. Any other New Business

XI. Announcements

In December Keith Palevsky emailed the draft tax form for FY ended September 30, 2020. It has to be submitted to the IRS by March 15. The form is ready to be sign and submitted. (Keith subsequently sent a correction to the effect that the due date for the 990 is February 15).

Keith Mays reminded us that we have 4 days to submit a grant request to the City of Sherwood, for Community Enhancement. A request will be submitted in the amount of \$20,000 – 30,000.

XII. Adjourn (8: 40pm)

Motion to adjourn:

1. Tom S
2. Louie

Passed.