



“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society
Board Meeting by Conference Call Due to COVID-19 Pandemic
Wednesday, March 25, 2020 – 12:30PM
Minutes

Attendees: Wendy Kindig, Sarah Ashton, Mike & Terry Baldwin, David Jeffrey, Birgie Miller, Lynnae Messina, Rich Yanke, Barb Bluedorn, Jen McSorley, Phyllis Gresham, Bill Valerian, Susan Cassell, Dick Levinson, Dot Voorhees, Joann Hinman, Chelle Walton, April Boehnen, April Arthur, Sierra Hoisington, John McCabe, Kevin Godsea

- **Roll-call – Mike Baldwin:** Thanked everyone for participating. Instructions were given to mute phones when not speaking and how to vote on motions.
- **Remembering Mark Banks:** Baldwin commented that board member Mark Banks was a very very special individual and a generous person whose wisdom and counsel were valued and who will be sorely missed. If board members wish to convey their personal condolences to his wife, her address is:
Gretchen Banks, 4634 Edgebrook Place, Minneapolis, MN. 55424
- **Approval of Minutes of February 26, 2020 Meeting – Wendy Kindig:** Valerian moved to accept, Gresham seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.
- **Finance Committee Report – Bill Valerian & Joann Hinman**
 - **January Financial Results** were very positive and strong.
 - **Question by Jeffrey** about whether the \$1.4M DDWS endowment investment can be used for anything else. The accrued interest can be used for the designated purpose. However, the board has the authority to change the rules around the endowment to allow less restrictive expenditures should circumstances merit such action.
 - **Impact of Recent Stock Market Decline on Society Investments.** Reports sent out from Hightower were included with the meeting documents. Valuations have gone down but are better than the market averages. We have a strong cash position and hold short-term high-quality bonds. Our investments are in high quality dividend yielding stocks with strong balance sheets. We are currently able to meet all of our financial obligations. Gresham moved to accept the finance committee report, Jeffrey seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.
- **Land Acquisition & Restoration Update – John McCabe & Birgie Miller**
 - No update on the dock easement potentially associated with the Boone property since the court system is not processing any documents during this COVID-19 pandemic. McCabe spoke with Boone & his attorney last week and everything is currently on hold.

- Working on restoration project plans for wetland work. No update yet.
- **Executive Director’s Report – Birgie Miller** (See attached director’s report)
 - **COVID-19 Impact/Cancelations:** All scheduled activities for April have been canceled. Staff of the DDWS are working remotely. There are concerns about the loss of revenue. The decision was made not to send out all island fundraising mailing. It was judged inappropriate given the current social and economic climate associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - **Public Lands Alliance Award:** Joann accepted the award for our bathroom project.
 - **Results of “Twist Tie Optional”:** Update indicates the event netted about \$12,000. This was a new and complex event to stage so it was not surprising that it didn’t bring in more money. Sarah Ashton thought it was particularly valuable since it attracted a new and different crowd to a DDWS-hosted event. Kindig was pleased to meet the Lee County recycling team that supported the event. Many very positive reviews.
- **Acting Refuge Manager’s Report – Kevin Godsea**
 - **Overview:** A very scary and concerning time with the COVID-19 pandemic but the refuge and staff is adjusting to new working conditions. The visitor center is closed but Wildlife Drive, Indigo Trail & Bailey Tract remain open.
 - **Staff Update:** Most are teleworking from home. Law enforcement on site. Kevin here much of the time. Donny is working on repairs which are much needed. Erin Meyers starts on Monday. Toni working on Jr. Duck Stamp, how it needs to be managed to comply with social distancing. Education team is working with Chelle to post a program at 10AM weekdays, titled “Ding” at Home for educational purposes. Electronically log into the educational programs to view. Jeff is calling all the volunteers and checking in on them.
 - **Lee county agreement:** for Wulfert Bayous is being reworked to combine with the Woodring agreement. Restoration work at the Lee Ann Tauck preserve has not been put up for bid yet.
- **Board Nominations – Mike, Sarah:**
 - Have lost 2 board members, Gooch and Banks, so 2 new people are being nominated. **Robin Kirk**, retired teacher on our Education Committee has been interviewed by Ashton & Baldwin. Ashton indicates she is very bright, enthusiastic and interested. She is now a full-time resident of Sanibel. **Bill Harkey** is a full time Sanibel resident, retired from his military career in public outreach. He is an active refuge volunteer and donor. **Motion was made to add them to the board by Ashton, seconded by Valerian, motion carried unanimously.**
 - Still searching for a Latino to join the board but the potential candidates haven’t worked out yet. Still have room for additional members with our maximum number of 15.

- It was suggested that we produce a list of skills that each board member holds to insure we have a good variety. Baldwin committed to follow-up.

- **Committee Reports:**
 - **Advocacy – Sarah Ashton:** State Legislature approved funds for Everglades restoration. Federal funding was allocated but will have to see if anything changes related to the COVID -19 pandemic. Water quality is good for now.
 - **Community Outreach – Birgie Miller:** Sierra and Toni are working hard on the WoW bus which will be a great teaching tool to reach new communities.
 - **Education – Wendy Kindig:** Scholarship applications are due next week. No award ceremony will be held this year. Teacher grant projects won't all be completed with school closings which will affect grant reports and follow up visits. Will need to contact teachers to obtain information about their project's progress.
 - **Nature Store – Jen McSorley:** Working hard on marketing the e-store and adding new items. Currently only one staff can accept shipments and work on deliveries.
 - **75th Anniversary – Mike Baldwin for Doris Hardy:** Scavenger hunt is still being planned for June 1st but may need to be delayed to a different month. Asking board members to help find additional local businesses that are willing to participate.
 - **Refuge Association Representative – Mike Baldwin:** Federal government supports National Parks at a rate of \$39/acre but NWR system is supported by only \$5/acre. Senate updating an old bill for NWR begin to receive 5% funding which would be about \$95 million per year for a few years. The RA has started a new electronic newsletter called The Link and targeted at Friends Groups.

- **Old Business**
 - **April Board Meeting** was originally to include a half-day workshop on strategic planning facilitated by David Allen. This will be postponed. Will work with David to reschedule in the fall. Regular board meeting will be April 22 at 12:30PM by conference call.

- **New Business: None**

- **Adjournment: 12:33PM**

ON THE HORIZON:

NEXT EC/FC MEETING: Wednesday, April 8th at Noon, Conference Call

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, April 22nd at 12:30PM, likely via Conference Call