South East Volusia Audubon Society

December 7, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marsha Cox, Bill Cox, Liz Merachnik, Don Chalfont, Shannon Murphy, Gail Rogers, Rachel Smith, Mary Schreiber, Richard Fosse, Jane Talbot, Jenifer Russell

Agenda Items:
Field trips
Birds and Brew
Purple Martins
Treasurer
Farmer's Market
Membership letter/dues
Fledje
CLI
Newsletter
Other business

Field trips:

Don reported that there have been three field trips so far, a walk at the Marine Discovery Center (MDC), the trip to Merritt Island, and Birds & Brews at the Dunlawton Bridge. Don is keeping track of what species have been seen, 84 so far including some nice surprises. Next field trip is December 11, A One Morning Bird Challenge where folks will bird anywhere in Volusia and keep track of what is seen, then meet at the MDC for lunch and to discuss what was seen. The following trip will be to Lake Apopka. Don would like to stress that folks are encouraged to RSVP so the leader will know how many attendees to expect. Marsha will notify Don of folks who RSVP to her for the next trip. Also, may have two meeting places, one local and one near the destination. Mary will list in the newsletter trip announcement that registration is recommended. Carpooling is encouraged, but can be a challenge due to COVID concerns. Don suggested breaking the group up with multiple leaders and will try to find additional leaders.

Action item: Marsha will notify Don if folks RSVP to her for field trips

Action item: Don will try to find additional trip leaders to split larger trips into groups

Treasurer:

There is currently a balance of $8,700 total, $2,650 in the general fund which is an increase due to membership dues and proceeds from the farmer’s market. The last Plants 4 Birds (P4B) grant was used for signs, balance includes the 3rd grant of $2,400 and trees grant of $2,072. There are also $1,600 in memorial funds.

Membership dues can be mailed to SEVAS, P.O. Box 46, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170. Jenifer maintains a list of who has paid their dues. Mary questioned who gets the money for National Audubon memberships, SEVAS gets 100% of the first-year dues, and a very small percentage of future years.

A draft letter requesting membership dues be paid was sent to board members, Bill requested a vote if this is OK to send to our mailing list of approximately 100 people. All voted yes. Email will go out on Thursday.
**Action item:** Bill and Marsha will send the letter requesting membership dues to the mailing list

**Farmer’s Market:**

Bill and Marsha reported that the table at the farmer’s market was quite successful! Thanks to Joyce, Gail, Dean, Richard and Liz who helped. $305 in cash was raised in cash and sales, and $100 in new memberships. Gail made bottles that light up, and suggested that folks can either buy a bottle for $20 or become a member and get one for free. Foot traffic was slower than last year, but total money raised was about the same. Marsha also said this event is a good way to get the word out about SEVAS and our mission. Folks were added to the mailing list, and wanted information about birding trips. Marsha met the guy from the MDC who leads kayak trips, he said if a birder wanted to join his trips and lead the birding part, he would comp a kayak.

**Newsletter:**

Mary is looking for input or pictures to use in the newsletter. She would like pictures of the action of field trips, showing people interacting, something that would make folks want to join a birding event, and include a story about the birding location and what was seen. She complimented Don’s descriptions from the birding events.

Fern Murphy submitted a story about a bird from Grenada which will be in the January newsletter.

Mary asked Rachel for a picture of herself doing something with the group or birding, and a personal story to include.

Bill mentioned having a bird of the month. Don suggested using a local bird or bird seen on a SEVAS trip. Liz said rotate the task of writing between folks. Don said get a pic of the person from a field trip and ask what their favorite bird is, something like a birder of the month and their favorite bird.

Gail volunteered to do February bird of the month!

**Action item:** Rachel will send a picture and article for the newsletter to Mary by January 2\(^{nd}\).

**Action item:** Gail will write a bird of the month article and send to Mary

**Purple Martin (PUMA) Update:**

The $2,500 grant from FPL and FL Audubon included $1,000 for PUMA project at MDC. MDC is excited, willing to give some financial support, installation, web cam possibly. Marsha said we are ready to order $1,000 worth of PUMA housing which is the start-up kit. She wants to receive it by January 1st to install in the beginning of January so it is installed in time for this season. MDC will want co-publicity or sponsorship for their participation. Bill asked if there are any objections? Don said we have a shared mission, and it is good to support each other. There is no opposition, all gave a thumbs up so the purchase will be made and the MDC will be asked to support.

**Action item:** Marsha will order the PUMA starter kit

**Birds & Brew:**

The first program was rained out, but Richard brought a bird trivia game which was played, all had a good time and two new members joined. The second program was under the Dunlawton Bridge lead by
Kim Ramos. The group saw 32 species, then went to a new brewery. Joan Tague attended, and would like to lead a B&B in Ormond and will include Halifax Audubon. All agree to this proposal.

**Action item:** Marsha will reach out to Joan Tauge will lead a B&B in Ormond

**Fledje:**
Liz reported that the team is learning how to create a community that is engaged, how to reach out and to be available to meeting new people. She said it is important to have a diverse situation, and learn how to reach out to different types of people. Marsha said they have been setup with another group from West Volusia, who are also doing a P4B garden. They are meeting and talking about the ways the groups are different and the way they are the same. This is helping form a better relationship with West Volusia and provide a comfortable community to diverse groups. The training goes until April, then they will have a project due. The project is P4B and how to make it more open and inviting. We can then apply for a $1,000 grant. Marsha is happy to answer questions on this training. Liz will write up something for the January newsletter.

**Action item:** Liz will write up something for the newsletter on the Fledje training by January 2nd.

**CLI:**
Rachel loves the experience! She enjoyed working with Chilsonl Elementary School on P4B, and is reaching out to an Embry Riddle student. She also attended first B&B event and loved it!

Marsha said CLI is Conservation Leadership Initiative. Rachel has taken a leadership role and is doing a great job!

**Other business:**

Dean was unable to attend, but send his comments:

- He supports the dues letter, commented that the organization does good work and folks should not let money interfere with participation or support
- Activities are essential, new folks are joining meetup (Marsha sends email welcoming new members)

Richard commented that using Meetup to limit attendance at events would be a barrier for some folks as they would have to sign up to participate.

Marsha requested that everyone email her their mailing address.

**Action item:** All send Marsha mailing addresses

Meeting minutes submitted by Jane Talbot

Meeting adjourned 5:00