

South East Volusia Audubon Society

April 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marsha Cox, Bill Cox, Jane Talbot, Joyce Riddel, Bob Creedon, Bob Chew, Dean Spears, Richard Fasse

Plants 4 Birds:

Joyce reported on the Chisolm school garden. We partnered with Lindley's Nursery and used Florida Audubon/Florida Power and Light grant funds to plant the native plant garden at the school. This project was started 2 or 3 years ago, and now the gardens are in! Last week annuals were planted with 4 4th grade classes, 3 science and one AP. The kids were excited and have taken ownership of the gardens! Dean and Richard have been at the MDC making the path wide enough to be wheelchair accessible, and pruning was done by Ed Carlson. The garden looks great! On April 22nd, we will be planting annuals and perennials for the pollinator garden. Additional signage will be ordered depending on budget. Summer maintenance – the MDC garden is covered. Joyce is doing Myrtle, and may plant more plants too. Babe James needs someone to cover. Diane and Joyce will cover until someone else takes ownership. Preference is for someone at Babe James to take ownership, which involves being our eyes and ears, notifying SEVAS if maintenance is needed and do some minor weeding. Bob Creedon suggested as part of our process to setup a garden, we should get a commitment from the community to do the maintenance. Joyce agrees, this will be part of any new gardens.

Marsha reported on the Boys and Girls club event. The Marine Science Center brought a bird, the author of Little Owl's Big Day came, photographer Susan Dayer talked about rescuing the owl, and the kids did a craft project. We are looking forward to doing more events at schools next year.

The plaque for Richard Domrowski's bench has arrived, and will be installed. Dean and Richard will install once Gail and Marsha tell them where on the bench to put it.

Dean has 2 fountains, once the Chisolm garden is ready one will be installed there. The other may be given to Pawpaw for the MDC. They will be renovating their garden, so installation would be after that. Richard has what is needed to wire the SEVAS fountain at the MDC and will try to get that done before the Thursday meeting.

Communications Committee:

Bob Creedon asked if we were going to send out a "How are we doing?" email for the end of the year. Marsha and Richard will work to get something sent out.

Joyce asked for a process on how to send out group emails, for example she would like to ask for additional volunteers at garden planting/events. Current process would be to send the content to Marsha to send to everyone. Both the president and newsletter have the full list.

Action item: Bill and Marsha will work to reconvene the communications committee with additional volunteers.

Membership:

The group discussed how to differentiate between paid members and the full list of interested people. Suggestion was for one outing per year that is only for paid members. The newsletter goes to everyone. Richard suggested a window sticker for paid members. Possible perk for paid members is a boat trip (see below)

Dean asked when membership dues should be collected, what is the membership period, and how to handle folks who pay towards the end of the membership period. Lively discussion followed, resulting in decisions that the season is from October 1 through September 30, and anyone who pays after January 1st will be a paid member through the following season (for example, a new member paying on January 2nd 2023 will be a paid member through September 30, 2024).

Dean asked for help recruiting new members for the membership committee and maintaining the membership list. Joyce agreed to join the membership committee, and a request for additional volunteers will be announced at the Thursday meeting.

Conservation:

Bob Chew reported that we assisted the riverside Conservancy planting mangroves and grasses as part of their living shoreline project, which look good. He did a survey of the lagoon, and for the first time since late 2016 he saw extensive sea grass coming back! Hope is that the slow recovery is starting. Bob met with Bill and Marsha to discuss birds at Smyrna Dunes park. Goal is to make sure people and dogs stay out of the dunes. We need more eyes on the park to report abuse. Currently once nesting birds are spotted, the area is roped off. A better plan would be to rope off the areas before nesting birds are spotted. Ed Carlson is the “man on the beach” at Smyrna Dunes, but he needs help with addressing issues. Would like to have volunteers who can walk the beach once a week to observe and report back, observations will be consolidated and reported to the county. Look for ATV or tracks in the dunes.

Action items:

- Joyce walks the park every Wednesday and will observe and report back
- Bill and Marsha will get a list from Ed of the observations he needs and put them in a checklist format
- Marsha will ask Ed if Bob Creedon can help with observations from the point of view of the boat trip, which he takes every Tuesday.

Boat Trip:

Bob Creedon previously reported that to rent the MDC boat, which holds 40 passengers, the regular cost is \$750 and he could get a discount to \$600. Bob reported that Chad at the MDC values their relationship with SEVAS and would rent us the boat at cost, \$250, which includes a captain and narrator. All agree to rent the boat on April 24th at 5:00 pm. Board members and folks who actively volunteer will be invited first, followed by paying members. Next year, this will serve as our paying member perk (limited to the first 40 responses).

Action item: Marsha will send out invitations first to the board, then active volunteers and finally paying members.

Additional business:

Question was asked about sharing board phone numbers and addresses among the board. This would not be published, but only available to the board. All agree.

Action item: All send Marsha your phone number and address

At the Thursday end of year meeting at the MDC, Marsha will recognize our volunteers and Richard will make a pitch for more volunteers along with delivering the report from the nominating committee. Richard also suggested we may want to add a tabling group to coordinate tabling events.

Marsha reported that she had tried “forest bathing” with Audubon in Vermont, and now Eve Payor from Atlantic Center for the Arts is certified to lead this. She is working with West Volusia Audubon on April 30th, and will try to get something going with SEVAS called “Forest Bathing and Birding”.

Liz will publish a final wrap up newsletter for the season which will include Don’s trip reports, Kim’s trip reports, and celebrate all the accomplishments of the season.

Halifax Audubon is having a 100th anniversary party on April 20th. Event is at a museum in Daytona. Joan Tague is in charge. Tickets can be bought online.

Atlantic Center for the Arts has been doing a program called “put a bird on it”, an art project with senior citizens. John Pierce and Mary Schreiber did a presentation for them last week, and SEVAS will get \$500 for our participation. We need a volunteer who will go to the unveiling of the art in June and represent SEVAS.

Action item: Marsha will send out more information with the date in June

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.
Minutes submitted by Jane Talbot