

# SouthEast Volusia Audubon Society

January 10, 2023 Meeting Minutes

**Attendees: Bill Cox, Marsha Cox, Jane Talbot, Richard Fasse, Mary Schreiber, Dean Spears, Joyce Riddel, Gail Rogers, Bob Chew, Rachel Smith**

## **Agenda:**

- **Update from Plants 4 Birds**
- **Conservation**
- **Finance**
- **Communication**
- **Field trips**
- **Other business**

Marsha gave a shout out to Richard, who is moving on from the Communications Committee, for his great work and leadership of the committee. Also, Sam from University of Connecticut, who does research on endangered American Bitterns, reached out to us through our website. He was tracking a bird that was lost in our area, and asked if we could retrieve it. Susan Dayer volunteered to help, and now we have permission from the land owner where the bird was last known. Trip will be next week. Kudos to the website and Susan! Finally, the Christmas Bird Count was a big success, thanks from Marsha and Jenifer to all who participated!

## **Update from Plants 4 Birds:**

Joyce reports that all is well. Gardens were repaired after the storms, and now there is a more work to do after the freeze. Myrtle and MDC look good, Babe James took a hit from frost. Pawpaw advised us to just leave it alone and the plants will come back. Joyce and Rachel are meeting to discuss plans to contact Chisolm Elementary and will contact them about meeting. Plan is to work with Lindley's Nursery. There will be two plots, one pollinator garden and one food garden. Will fit with end of year curriculum on pollinators. Richard noted that Susan Dayer is a retired teacher, and suggested she go along to take pictures. Joyce would like to do a monthly program in the garden of the schools timing allows. She would like to work with people like Susan. Richard is prepared to install the owl nest. Bill will talk to his friend who works for Swarsky to get leads on inexpensive binoculars for the backpacks. Rachel is trying to contact Vortex also. Five backpacks are planned, so five pairs of binoculars will be needed. The MDC has binoculars that may be used at their facility, so they are only needed for Chisolm, the boys and girls club, and Babe James.

## **Action items:**

- Bill will talk to his friend about binoculars
- Rachel will try to contact Vortex on binoculars

## **Conservation:**

Bob Chew reported that he is meeting with Ed Carlson tomorrow at Smyrna Dunes Park to learn about what happened to birds after the storms and how best to protect the birds. Meeting is at 9 a.m. and all are welcome.

Bob heard from Lisa Micky about the Green Amendment, a proposed amendment to the state constitution. It would give lawyers something to work with on cases to protect our water. They will need one million signatures to get it on the ballot for 2024. If Florida Audubon and SEVAs would like to

support the amendment, Bob would like to collect signatures at the farmers market and would write an op ed piece to get the word out. Bob reports that a lawyer, Kelly McGee, said this amendment is the best thing possible to help protect the Florida environment. Bob will ask Melissa Lammers if Florida Audubon supports this legislation.

Bob and Dean will be receiving training on how to clean the water goat on Riverside Drive.

**Action items:**

- Bob Chew will contact Melissa Lammers to find out if Florida Audubon supports the Green Amendment
- Bob and Dean will get training on how to clean the water goat.

**Finance report:**

Jenifer is out of town, finance report will be provided later.

**Communications:**

Bob Creedon was not able to attend the meeting, but he had provided a report which Marsha will send to the board members. Notes attached below.

Bob had regular boat trips on Tuesday, the board will consider changing the day/time of meetings so he would be able to attend.

**Action item:**

Marsha to send Bob's communication committee report to the board members.

**Field trips:**

Don was not able to attend. Marsha reported that today's Tuesday morning birding trip had 36 participants, more people than birds! Highlights were turkey vultures seen at eye level from the highest platform, white pelicans, loons, and an eagle catching a fish. Tuesday morning birding is going well, next week will be at Indian River Lagoon Park. The next Birds & Brews is January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Marsha asked if we want to schedule a golf cart birding event. All were in favor, so it will be scheduled. Dean pointed out the next event is Saturday, a trip to Lake Apopka. Meet at 6:30 a.m. in the Walmart parking lot. Marsha said Apopka is the main project for Orange County Audubon this year, and we are supporting them by having our event there.

There is also a speaker meeting Thursday at the MDC and on Zoom. Christie Miller will be talking about improving water and bird habitat with the use of native plants.

MDC birding tours of Disappearing Island start on Saturday and will be held monthly. Guides include Joan Teague, Don Chalfont, David Hargrove and Ken Weitzel. The program goes through April.

**Action item:**

Bill and Bob will schedule the golf cart birding event

**Other business:**

Beth Chew is holding a book club meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup> at her house (208 Virginia Ave, Edgewater). Book is Late Migrations by Margaret Renke.

Ed Carlson wrote a letter from the Shorebird Alliance asking for our support for an initiative on the Sunshine Skyway Fishing Pier. Fishermen and pelicans are not "playing well" together. Marsha will send out copies of Ed's letter, which has a website with more information. This is basically a letter writing campaign.

Ed is also looking for help planting sea oats at Smyrna Dunes Park from the P4B group. Joyce reported that the issue with this would be funding. This wasn't requested in any of our grants. Joyce needs to know how much it would cost, and if we have enough volunteers to do the planting.

Bill asked about the proposed water at the MDC P4B garden. Cost is estimated to be around \$500. Bob will check out the site tomorrow. Richard asked if there will be trenching happening to get electric to the area maybe that could be combined with the water trenching. He would like low voltage electric available for the PUMA location. Bob will check codes for requirements of separation for electric and water lines. We would also need to change some signage since our plants are drought tolerant but do still need some water. University of Florida Agriculture Group website says that even with some watering, drought resistant plants are 70% more efficient than regular plants and grass. Joyce pointed out that irrigation was part of our original grant and we have lost some blooming plants due to a lack of available water. Dean visited the garden once a week during the summer, three times he had to water for three weeks in a row and other times he watered every other week. He watered when the plants looked like they needed it. He said having water on site would make this easier, and he hopes for hose storage nearby. All agreed to move forward. Joyce is the contact person for this project, and Bob will work on getting pricing. Bob will be away for February, so Joyce will remain the point person.

Richard asked when is the next farmers market? Marsha reported it is in February, but not yet scheduled. Gail and Mary volunteered to help and if the petition is in play Bob will help.

#### **Minutes:**

Meeting minutes submitted by Jane Talbot

Meeting adjourned 4:50 p.m.

#### Communications Committee Notes:

- Survey - The team consensus is that it is too soon to do another survey. The next one should be late this Spring or next year. We will revisit in March.
- Newsletter - None this month - Presidents' note instead.
  - Beginning with the next newsletter, we will publish the first of every month. (We spoke today about changing this to the last week of the prior month).
  - Content is good, and current length is good.
  - We have a risk that Mary is the only person with a Mac and with the ability to create a newsletter due to the tool utilized.
  - We identified two websites that provide free use of bird images. We have started leveraging these sites.
- MailChimp - Richard did a test run on this automated email tool.
  - There is a free version available that could work for us.
  - There is also an option to create a newsletter using the tool.
  - Promising tool that we will discuss further on our next Communications meeting.
- MeetUp - We discussed event listings in depth.
  - Bottom line is that multiple lists are a huge challenge to keep in sync. We want one record of authority.

- o MeetUp was our choice for the record of authority. Everyone can sign up, and they will receive email alerts.
  - o MeetUP also creates an online calendar: [SE Volusia Audubon Society](#)
- Member's Only Email List
  - o Dean maintained this info at one time, but there is no current method to ID all paid members. He would need info from the President or Treasurer to update his database.
  - o Tabled this topic unless we decide we need the list.
- Rare Bird Alert and Bird ID Page - The team determined that we should use existing resources rather than create our own tools.
- The team has identified two potential new team members.
  - o Susan Dayer is a photographer and attends many of our events. She has offered use of her services.
  - o Liz Meredith is a graphic designer who has volunteered to work on our pamphlet.
  - o We'd like to add both to the Communications Team.