

South East Volusia Audubon Society

January 11, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marsha Cox, Bill Cox, Richard Fasse, Dean Spears, Mary Schreiber, Trish Wheeler, Jenifer Russell, Joyce Riddel, Don Chalfont, Rachel Smith, Gail Rogers, Jane Talbot

Agenda Items:

Review minutes

Survey results and communication

P4B garden update and Phase 3

Great Backyard Bird Count 2/18-2/21

Winter shorebird survey

Field trips

Misc. events:

- Tomoka regional Science and Engineering Fair \$100 scholarship
- Possible tabling events
 - NSB craft fair/farmers market 1/29
 - Water wise 2/5
- Kayaking with Bob Creedon
- The Nature Conservancy City Nature Challenge 4/22

CBC update

Walkie Talkies

PuMa project

AOB

Review Minutes:

Bill asked who should receive the minutes, and who should approve/accept. Bill moved to accept the December minutes, Dean seconded and all voted to accept. It is agreed that Jane will compile the draft minutes, send to Marsh and Bill to review, then post a link to the minutes on the website. Jane will send Mary a link to the minutes, and Mary will publish the link in the newsletter. The website will be a repository for the minutes.

Action items:

- Jane will publish a link to the minutes on the website
- Mary will publish the link to minutes in the newsletter

Survey Results and Communication:

Richard reported that the survey was published on the website January 1st, published in the newsletter and sent to Meetup members on January 4th, and Marsha sent an e-mail on January 5th. We received 41 responses, 19 from e-mail and 15 from Meetup. There are 100 members on Meetup, 30 have RSVP'd to trips. Dean sends an e-mail to all Meetup joiners, 52 last year and 7 last month. This is the platform where we are getting new members. Folks are viewing field trip photos on Facebook, but events are less popular there. 100+ people are on e-mail, which includes people who are not on Meetup so they only learn about trips from the newsletter. It is important to maintain push communication to get

information on trips to members. From the survey, bird trips are the most popular events, all types! Richard will summarize the survey results for the newsletter. Mary suggested digging further into the results, and Marsha pointed out that we should follow up on the suggestions so people know they are being heard and there is action being taken. Liz had suggested putting the standard wheelchair symbol on trips that are handicap accessible. Richard will follow up with Mary and Dean on suggestions. Dean said we don't have email addresses for the Meetup folks, but we can send them emails through Meetup and point them to our website where they can learn more about the group and could sign up as members. The month activities schedule can be published in the newsletter and referenced on the website. There are approximately 100 people on Meetup and 100 who get the newsletter, probably 50 are overlap so 150 individuals paying attention to SEVAS. Thanks to all who worked on the survey!

Action items:

- Richard will reach out to Dean and Mary to review results of the survey.

Treasurer's report:

Blast e-mail asking for people to send in membership dues provided a good amount of income! 21 members paid their dues, the previous year was about 10. Total funds are around \$9,000; \$1,600 in the memorial fund and \$4,500 in grant funds.

P4B Garden update:

MDC Garden, Dean reports, is doing OK. Dean pruned and weeded. Dean has draft plans to add a water feature to the garden. It would be built with 2 logs approximately 40 inches long and 18 to 20 inches in diameter, oak would be the first choice of wood. Joyce has offered to provide the wood. The water would flow from a cistern in the ground and use a solar powered pump. Dean will do a final drawing of the design.

Joyce reported on the newest addition to our garden program. Joyce, Shannon and Liz met with the director of parks and rec maintenance for New Smyrna Beach, John. 5 potential sites were identified, with a plan to create 2 this year. Sites should be where pedestrian traffic is high so people will see the gardens and become interested in our program. Liz had ideas about staging the gardens in a way to get people to stop and look, and read the signage with a QR code sending people to the P4B Audubon site. Suggestions to include a Little Library and a bird wooden cutout where folks can pose for pictures. The city has an expert carpenter who can help build structures. The city also has coquina rock we can use for edges or a path, which they will haul and they will help prepare the sites.

We have also been asked to participate in a county greening program. The county will provide grant money. Native plantings would be done around canals helping with runoff. This is good for birds and will help promote clean water. The hope is that this will happen this year, site selection has just started.

The program working with Chisolm Elementary school is going well. Rachel will be presenting a PowerPoint there tomorrow all about the program. She is working with the 4th grade advanced placement science teacher on the first project. Rachel is looking forward to developing a relationship with the school, hoping to involve parents and siblings, getting kids involved in Audubon at a young age. She is hoping to do a backpack program at the school library. Backpacks would have binoculars, Sibley's

field guide, a binder with birding activities, back yard bird bingo, how to become a junior Audubon member. Richard suggested also showing them how to use the new Merlin app.

Joyce and Marsha met someone from Pawpaw, who suggested that we apply for their grant, which must be used for flowers or plants. Every chapter has a grant program, as well as the National Native Plant Society. Joyce will follow up.

Action items:

- Dean will proceed with design/build of a water feature
- Joyce will provide logs for the water feature
- Joyce will follow up on native plant society grants

Field Trips

February will be a big month for field trips! Don reported that the MDC has canceled their Tuesday birding programs due to COVID. He is planning to start Tuesday Morning Birding program for SEVAS every Tuesday from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. There will be no technical “leader” on the Tuesday trips, but Don will attend each week and expects other knowledgeable birders to participate and help newcomers. February trips will be to Indian River Lagoon Preserve, El Dora, Turtle Mound, and Spruce Creek. Major field trips in February are to Lake Apopka and Orlando Wetlands. There will also be a Birds & Brews and the Great Backyard Bird Count.

January remaining trips are Birds & Brews in Ormond on January 20th and Lake Woodruff on January 29th.

Purple Martin Housing

PuMa house components have arrived! Marsha wants to get the houses built in time for the martins to nest, and is looking for volunteers to help. The MDC has committed to help, providing cement and labor, and will fund a webcam. A site recommendation is needed by Dr. Anna Forsman. Nancy White’s husband is a PuMa person, he has a colony up north, so he will be recruited to participate. Richard, Dean, Trish and Joyce have volunteered to be involved.

Miscellaneous events

The great backyard bird count is coming up February 18 – 21. Marsha will talk to Don about making that a program.

Winter shorebird survey is coming up, Jennifer Winters will present on this in the Thursday meeting.

Tomoka Regional Science Fair is upcoming. Each Volusia Audubon group provides \$100 for scholarship prize money. All present voted yes to fund this again. The fair is at Stetson University in DeLand, and will use masks and social distancing. They are looking for volunteers to judge.

Tabling events upcoming:

- Waterwise put on by the New Smyrna Beach utilities commission on February 2nd from 9:00 – 12:00. This is a great way to get our message out.
- New Smyrna Beach farmer’s market January 29th, this conflicts with a birding outing, but would be a great opportunity to sell goods and raise money. Rachael and Joyce will volunteer

Bob Creedon from the MDC is still looking for a volunteer to help identify birds on his kayaking trips. Trips are at Brown's Bay. Anyone interested should contact Marsha.

Nature Conservancy Challenge, an effort to develop greenspace in urban areas, will take place April 29 – May 2. Volunteers will go out and take pictures of every living species of plant, bird, bugs, etc, and upload to iNaturalist. They will identify and put together a list of thousands of species and use to get interest in nature. Rachael will participate, and work to get the Chisolm group involved.

Action items:

- Marsha will talk to Don about doing a program for the great backyard bird count
- Marsha will find out the exact date of the Tomoka Regional Science Fair.
- Anyone interested in judging the Science Fair should contact Marsha
- Rachael and Joyce will handle the NSB Farmer's Market on January 29th.
- Rachael will participate in the Nature Conservancy Challenge, and work to get the Chisolm group involved.

Christmas Bird Count

Update will follow. Generally, fewer birds than previous years were seen and some expected species were missed.

Walkie talkies

Walkie talkies were ordered, but were not delivered. Too many cars on a field trip can be a challenge, but with COVID some folks are not comfortable with more people in vehicles. Decision made to re-order and have shipped to Bill and Marsha's house.

AOB

Joyce reported that more birds on extinct list, ivory billed woodpecker and others.

Meeting adjourned at 5:15

Minutes submitted by Jane Talbot