

SEVAS Board Visioning Meeting

January 6, 2024

Attendees: Liz Payne Merideth, Robert Merideth, Richard Fasse, Bob Chew, Joyce Riddel, Susan Dayer, Jane Talbot, Bill Cox, Marsha Cox, Dean Spears, John Kendall, Ed Carlson, Jacqui Sulek

Marsha opened the meeting by introducing Jacqui and thanking her for her longstanding support of our chapter and for running this visioning workshop for SEVAS.

Jacqui asked all attendees to introduce themselves, and talk about their role and history with the chapter. After the introductions, she talked about the legacy of Audubon and that we are part of that legacy, a long conservation movement started in 1900. She stated that we should try to refine our mission, vision, goals, and strategies to achieve our goals.

Jacqui had us list what we do as a chapter:

Birding

- Birds & Brews
- Tuesday morning birding
- Field trips

Plants for Birds

- Gardens at MDC, Babe James, Chisolm Elementary, Myrtle Park

Citizen Science

- Christmas Bird Count
- Monitoring nesting plovers
- Backyard Bird count
- Purple Martin Project
- Winter Shorebird count

Education

- Newsletter
- Monthly speaker meetings
- Email blasts on as needed basis

Tabling

- Farmers markets and others

Advocacy

- Clean water petition
- Dogs on the beach legislation
- Shorebird monitoring

Purple Martin Colony – Jacqui lauded our citizen science efforts on this project!

Working towards partnerships

- Marine Discovery Center
- City of New Smyrna Beach
- Babe James
- Boys & Girls Club
- Chisolm Elementary
- Marine Science Center Bird Hospital
- Atlantic Center for the Arts
- Canaveral National Seashore
- Riverside Conservancy
- Native Plant Society
- Lindley's Garden Center

HAVE FUN!!!

Then Jacqui asked us what are the local challenges in our area.

- Water quality
- Seagrass health
- Development
- Loss of habitat
- Manatee health
- Invasive plants
- Environmental challenges

Jacqui's suggestions for going forward were:

- Think about the things we can do that are the most valuable, and get rid of the "noise". For example, anyone can pick up garbage but only we can advocate for shorebirds.
- To diversify, make connections with people from other groups. Find common ground where we can help each other. Be careful not to just support their cause, which would add to our bandwidth issues.
- Consider the impact of our speaker meetings and if it is worth the effort to continue monthly.
- Think about what aspects of our chapter are the most successful and focus on those.
- Develop a vision, which tells us where we are going. Our vision statement in the past was to be a recognized voice in the community for conservation.
- Add local restaurants as possible supporters, offer ads in the newsletter and ask for fundraising help.

Other ideas brought forward were:

- Reach out to local vendors with common interest such as Lindley's Garden Center or Young Bear. Give them free advertising in our newsletter in exchange for support.
- Research green report card information on local legislators, see if the League of Conservation Voters has something.

Action Items:

- All interested in the Membership Committee should meet to discuss how to handle membership going forward. Dean, Liz, Susan, Joyce, Marsha, and Jane all expressed interest.
- A special meeting should be held to discuss a path forward without a president after Bill and Marsha step down. Bill and Marsha should think about what this might look like. Bob Chew, Joyce, John, and Jane expressed interest.
- Add our vision statement to the website
- Ask for folks to volunteer to be the liaison for each of our partnerships. Bob volunteered to be the liaison for MDC and Riverside Conservancy.