

Friends of the GTM NERR

Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 12, 2009

Members Present:

Anita Pierce, Peter Difatta, Irene Kaufman, Triss Padgett, Pierre Pierce, Carl Hampp, Nancy Schachnovsky, Jonathan Katzen, Mike Timpane

Staff Present:

Teri Webley, Janet Zimmerman Angie Golubovich, Marty Healey, Emily Montgomery

Excused Absence:

Kay Henderson, Bill Coleman, Chris Rich

Meeting called to order at 5:00 pm by Pierre Pierce at the EEC

Joy Hampp thanked the Friends of the GTM Reserve for their support of the 2008 – 2009 Marineland Right Whale Project.

In addition to financial support (\$5000. donated to the Marineland Right Whale Project by the Friends of the GTM Reserve), Friends of the GTM Reserve President Pierre Pierce and his wife Anita Pierce captained a boat used in the research project attempting to identify how Right Whales communicate with each other. Information gathered from this project could aid in the development of an early warning system for ships when Right Whales are in the area, potentially reducing significantly Right Whale, ship collisions.

April Meeting Minutes Approval by Pierre Pierce

Peter motioned to approve the April meeting minutes
Jonathan seconded, all approved none objected, April meeting minutes approved.

Call to Action by Pierre Pierce

After a conference call between the presidents of Friends of Rookery Bay, GTM Reserve, Charlotte Harbor a call to action was sent to email lists and memberships all over Florida concerning proposed budget cuts that would cut funds to state parks and reserves in Florida. Recipients of the Call to Action were asked to contact Governor Christ immediately about the proposed cuts.

As point man for the Call to Action Pierre has contacted and been contacted by 10 Nature groups, radio personalities, and several editors of sport magazines in Florida about the proposed budget cuts and the Call to Action. As a result the number of contacts made and potential correspondence to Governor Christ is in the thousands.

Call cont.

Janet reported that the GTM Research Reserve could lose some LATF (Land Acquisition Trust Fund) expense money if the proposed cuts are made.

The Call to Action was sent all email contacts on the Friends of the GTM Reserve database.

Executive Committee Report by Pierre Pierce

The Executive Committee met to review the Kayak Operator Partnership Criteria. The most recent draft of the criteria was passed out to the Board members present. Any suggestions for edits or changes to the criteria can be directed to Carl Hampp in writing. The Executive Committee will meet prior to June's meeting and the final draft of the criteria will be presented to the Board for vote at the June meeting. Ripple Effect will remain the partner Kayak Vendor at this time. To date all reports concerning Ripple Effect programs have been positive.

Research Reserve Update by Janet Zimmerman

Reporting on the status of the EEC building repairs Janet said that the project is waiting for contractor bonding. Once that is done the letter to proceed can be signed off on by the director. After that a begin date can be scheduled. The project is expected to begin in early June. Joe will work with the contractor to minimize the impact of building closures to business at the EEC. The plan is to close portions of the building leaving other parts of the building open for use. As more information is known it will be passed on to the Board.

The Land Management Review at the GTM Research Reserve went well. A team of reviewers from around Florida met at the GTM Research Reserve and compared land management activities at the GTM Research Reserve with the Management Plan.

Mike S is in Tallahassee for final approval of the Management Plan by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees consists of Cabinet members who oversee all state lands in Florida.

Once the Board of Trustees has signed off on the Management Plan it will go to NOAA for approval. That step is expected to go quickly since NOAA's feedback has been received and addressed.

The GTM Research Reserve staff will be ready to participate in the budget workshop with the Friends of the GTM Reserve board by late June.

The budget workshop will be used to develop budgets and funds requests for the rest of the 08 – 09 fiscal year and for the 09 – 10 fiscal year.

RR cont.

After reviewing 08 – 09 funds requests and comparing them to past years Nancy pointed out the difference in funds requests and the need to document the reason for the reduction in funds requests for the 08 – 09 fiscal year.

The reason for the reduction in funds requests being the expected closure of the Environmental Education Center early in 2009 for building repairs resulting in canceled and unscheduled events and programs that happened and were supported by the Friends of the GTM Reserve in previous years.

The delay in beginning the repairs is expected to further impact funds requests by closing the Environmental Education Center to the public later in the year than expected.

This has also had a negative effect on income for the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Other Business

Angie sent an email to Teri concerning the Friends of the GTM Reserve involvement in the National Estuaries Day event at the GTM Research Reserve. Teri forwarded the email to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee met and the following was decided:

The Friends of the GTM Reserve will participate by planning, arranging, and / or manning:

1. food vendor
2. passport table (with assistance from the education dept.)
3. raffle
4. Friends of the GTM Reserve membership information table

Note – Chris Kelly of Ripple Effect Ecotours will provide raffle item(s)

Mike T suggested that all National Estuaries Day requests be given to the Executive Committee instead of the Education and Communications Committee as it has been in the past due to the size and scope of the event.

Pierre agreed so all requests related to the National Estuaries Day event will be directed to the Executive Committee.

An unidentified animal sighting at Bings Landing was reported to Pierre. Based on the description GTM Research Reserve staff member Marty has suggested that the animal could be a Monitor Lizard. The animal is approximately 5' long with a long neck with a dog like head and a long tail. The animal was spotted swimming out of Bings Landing with a fish in its mouth.

Carl Hampp and the Nominating Committee interviewed and recommend Ellyn Cavin as a Board member. Ellyn's experience includes, knowledge of the corporate donation process, lobbying efforts in both Tallahassee and Washington, and is Environmental Manager for Gate Petroleum.

Jonathan motioned to appoint Ellyn Cavin to the Board of Directors of the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Other cont.

Nancy seconded, none opposed, all approved, Ellyn Cavin is invited to become a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Janet informed the Board that they could view chapter 6 of the management plan and invited them to think about becoming active in any items they felt the board and members could take on independent of the GTM staff.

The GTM Research Reserve has a new website. The web address can be found in the May GTM newsletter. <http://www.floridadep.org/gtm/>

Peter announced that the Friends of the GTM Reserve web Nature Store is up.

It can be accessed by visiting the Friends website, go to the Nature Store page, the link is there.

Peter suggested that a committee be formed to look into increasing visibility of the web store.

Irene announced the opening of the Ponte Vedra Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center. Irene reported that the GTM Research Reserve and the Friends of the GTM Research Reserve have flyers displayed there.

Pierre adjourned the meeting at 5:45pm

Triss motioned to adjourn

Mike T seconded, all in favor, none opposed

The next Friends of the GTM Reserve Board meeting will be June 9, 2008