

Sierra Club of Northeast Florida Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Virtual meeting using the Zoom online system

Meeting Date: Monday February 26, 2024

Time: 6:30 PM

Call to Order: by Logan Cross at 6:32

Members in Attendance: Logan Cross, Bill Snow, Mimi Wahlman; Peter Harding; Larry Zwain; Barbara Gubbin

Members in Attendance: Lisa Williams

Others in Attendance: Susan Creek; Suzi Stone, Julie Brown

Approval of Meeting Minutes; Motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Mimi Wahlman and seconded by Bill Snow. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Executive Committee

FL Chapter Director Visit Recap

There was discussion related to the recent Northeast Florida visit by Susannah Randolph, FL Chapter Director. Everyone was positively impressed and enjoyed the experience. They seemed to feel she got a good sense of our group and what is happening. There was a sense she got a feel for what a group does and how it works.

Emerald Trail Tour Update

Logan Cross indicated we have 11 people who have registered to go. He asked members to let him know if there is someone who we might want to include.

Visibility & Advocacy

Communications Team Update – Suzi Stone

Suzi Stone provided an update regarding the activities of the Conservation Team activities. She indicated she is constructing the newsletter and requested a statement regarding the need for someone to take over the Okefenokee Protection Alliance Representative role. Suzi indicated there is a new newsletter editor, Amanda Bew. She indicated she needs a writeup on Florida Chapter meeting in Jacksonville.

Julie Brown commented on website. She indicated Peter Harding is working with her on making website changes and improvements. Logan indicated the changes may be limited by the Drupal system used to build the website.

Suzi commented that she sat in on a communications committee meeting. There is a lot of focus and good ideas from the meeting and seems it will be ongoing. Proposal moving forward on conservation and political committees are going to be needing to communicate ideas, petitions, etc.

Riverfront Parks Development – Barbara Gubbin

Barbara Gubbin indicated there is an effort to build a restaurant on the waters edge in Riverfront Plaza that was not in original proposal. This has been opposed by Riverfront Parks Now (RPN). It is counter to the resilience plan that was presented. Larry Zwain and Logan represented us at a Downtown Investment Authority meeting. Both conveyed SCNEF opposition to the committee. The proposal was passed.

Events and Tabling – Bill Snow

Bill Snow indicated the SCNEF will have a table at the Seven Creeks Fest on March 9. Great event that is well attended. On March 26-28, Nature challenge through a nature app and

participating with outings. Will table on kick-off We will be having an information table at the Seven Creeks Fest on March 9, as we have the last two years. We will be having a table at the kickoff event for the City Nature Challenge, a worldwide event focused on observing and reporting species in our local community using the Naturalist app. The local coordinator for the NE Florida event is the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens. We will also be leading a few outings that weekend and guiding people in using the Naturalist app and locating species together at diverse environments.

Anastasia Island Beach Outing & Social – Planning & Execution

Logan indicated Joyti Parmar, SC Organizer based in Gainesville, is organizing an event to be held on Anastasia Island Beach in in late March. Let him know if this is something you might be able to help.

Political & Legislative

Political Team Update – Barbara Gubbin

Barbara indicated the St Johns County team members have been active lately with a meeting on zoom. We identified 2 county commissioner races to be involved in. Also district 19 for representative, which has been redistricted recently which could work in our favor with including the city and has a good candidate running.

Barbara indicated there are certain legislative bills that will die due to time. HB1301 which has terrible language about not using state funds to meet transportation goals that would meet Paris Accord goals.

Membership

Membership Team Update – Bill Snow

This month's membership data:

Total Members: 1,678

Duval: 937

St. Johns: 594

Clay: 147

We decreased by 21 members this month with 1,678 total members.

We continued with our monthly Renewal Reminder Emails and Lapsed Membership Emails and New Member meetings.

Education & Engagement

Educational Programs Update – Lisa Williams, not able to join us

Logan mentioned program with Conserve Nassau County on native plants. Environmental Symposium approaching.

SCNEF Environmental Symposium – Lisa Williams

Outings Program Update – Bill Snow

Bill Snow provided an update on the outings activities during the month. In February, 7 regular outings were conducted, with 87 participants. We also conducted our cleanup of the Emerald Trail for Groundwork Jacksonville, which had a total of 14 attending and a Sierra Club Military Outdoors hike with 31 participants. We still plan to conduct 3 more outings before the end of February: a kayak trip with 11 signed up. There was a Sierra Club Military Outdoors trip with 31 attendees and a new cleanup for Groundwork Jacksonville at the Hogans Creek section of the proposed Emerald Trail.

Bill indicated he will be attending the Chapter Outings Rendezvous in Lake Wales on February 23-25.

Financial Capacity

Financial Update

Logan Cross indicated the SCNEF finances are fine at this time, but we may need to raise more money to pay for upcoming efforts.

Resource Recovery Station – Bill Snow

Bill Snow indicated there is an urban farm working to feed homeless people. It is now opening up to the community, in a community garden, bee hives and a Saturday market. We have been asked to sponsor rabbit composting, any food can be separated out for recycling. The sponsorship cost will be \$600. He proposed the SCNEF pay the sponsorship fee. A donation for one day of recognition of providing this service. Barbara asked if they would be giving money to recycling company. Bill states that this is a partner that we might want to support, maybe other ways we could get involved. Barbara would like to see something that lets us know what we get for such a big event. Bill made a motion to vote on funding \$600 for March event. Larry asks if the \$600 is offset, he would personally, match \$25 for each new member we get. Logan stated that we ask for an exception for a donation; discussion on if it is a donation or purchasing a recycling service. Bill's motion was seconded by Larry Zwain. Vote is 4 to 1 and passed.

De-escalation Training – Bill Snow

Bill Snow identified the need for “de-escalation training” to help outing leaders diffuse conflicts with abusive, non-cooperative participants. There is a training that we could purchase for our leaders. A 2.5 hour training for \$1000. Bill makes a motion to train our leaders for the \$1000. There was discussion regarding the possibility of asking if the FL Chapter to share the cost for course. Bill will take it to the state chapter leaders.

Conservation Priorities & Initiatives

☐ Okefenokee Swamp Mining – Opposition Options & Timeline

Logan Cross indicated he will express displeasure that the FL Chapter has not been more involved. He indicated that if it was treated as a state-wide issue, we may reach more people who may be able to get more awareness and more action on this.

-Renew Jacksonville Campaign Update

Logan indicated he will be attending a RenewJax Planning Meeting in Orlando. He indicated the state leadership who are willing to give some assistance with RenewJax.

Regional Climate Action Plan Update – Larry Zwain

Logan Cross indicated Bill Snow and Larry Zwain have been actively involved in efforts to influence the EPA Regional Climate Action Plan being developed. The plan will be submitted to the EPA on March 1. The plan will guide efforts to address the focus on greenhouse gases.

Next Meeting: March 25, 2024: 6:30 PM via SCNEF Zoom Account

Adjourned Meeting at 8:13PM

Minutes Prepared by Susan Creek