

**Friends of Balcones NWR
Board Minutes
October 19, 2016**

In attendance:

**Board members: Lynette Holtz, Dub Lyons, Ruth Lyons, Bill Carr, Jane Brunclik, Gary Caylor, Joan Mukherjee, Pat Wilkinson, Fred Zagst
Future board members: David Brady, Shelby _____
Staff: Cindy Fronk NWR, David Maples NWR**

Meeting started at 5:20 with Jane Brunclik chairing

Minutes for the September 21, 2016, meeting were distributed and approved

**Treasurer's report – Money market account \$126,100.99 and checking account \$74,312.
Pat reported that the draft 2017 budget will be distributed to board members the first week of November. Members are encouraged to review and offer changes or suggestions for the budget. Budget will be discussed at the November meeting and voted on at the December meeting.**

Refuge report: David Maples – Refuges has \$56K for fence removal, but has over nineteen miles of fence that needs removal. House on Johnson track has been removed except for the slab. Baird conservation easement is almost finished. Texas Highway magazine has article about hiking at refuge. REI did a photo shoot for their web site and a wall mural in their stores. TPWD is conducting the drawing for the public hunt. TX Dot is adding a center turn lane at the refuge entrance. Work to start in December? There will be traffic congestion during construction.

Refuge report: Cindy Fronk – Refuge week doubled attendees from previous year. 137 participants, 37 volunteers. Upcoming events Pokémon Go: Oct 21; Milkweed planting: Nov 4; New volunteer registration: Nov 8

Volunteer appreciation gathering and lunch is scheduled for Saturday, Nov 19th. John Herrington will get his 2,000hr pin. Ruth Lyons and Sharon Macut to organize.

Fund raising committee: Joan Mukherjee reported on the planning for the donor appreciation party at Peaceful Spring Nov 13th. Board members are invited to attend.

Membership: Ruth Lyons trying to maintain existing members and get new members. Suggestions for help are appreciated.

Other:

Jane:

Working on an article for the NWF Newsletter. (Workshops, talk on bats, hikes, night sky, astronomy, on line webinar) I don't know what this is about

Looking at possibly contracting for a trail app/game that could be used at the refuge. It's like a scavenger hunt using a smart phone. Cost \$30,000. More research and information is needed.

Workshop on conservation easements in Oatmeal Saturday Nov 12 RSVP (need more information on this).

Dub reported that the house should close on Friday and net a little over \$150,000 to the FOB

Short term, intermediate, and long term goals and action items were discussed. See listing below

- Cow Creek Watershed – Balcones Canyonlands Preserve is looking to spend more money. Land along Cow Creek could serve as public access to the refuge. Joan, Gary, Jim Nosler meet with the working group. Melina _____ Program Manager for Transportation and Conservation of Travis County was at the meeting and sounded enthusiastic about the concept.
- Open up refuge to more people
- Goal to add protection along the corridor along Cow Creek
- Do more education particularly since we are an urban refuge
- Trail extensions/make them more difficult and longer
- More land acquisition
- Conservation easements as a way to “acquire” land
- Get more kids out to the refuge
- Education for all folks. Presently we offer mainly beginner education/knowledge and we should have intermediate and advanced educational opportunities.
- Do more outreach, send out more speakers
- Improve Peaceful Springs road
- Increase FOB membership by 50 people in the next year
- Talk to folks and spread the word. Friends need to spread the word about the refuge and ask people to come out to the refuge and join the FOB
- Need person to handle PR
- Talk up the refuge, work the crowd in social settings
- Have a special event and tie it in with Dark Night Sky, Owl Prowl
- Bring in groups from REI
- 5-10 miles hikes
- State Trekkers
- Sierra Club

Comments from David Maples concerning goals and action items

- Remember the purpose of the refuge is the Golden-cheeked warbler and Black-capped Vireo
- The main purpose of the refuge is for wildlife
- Need to be aware and look at the possible impact of FOB activities on the refuge
- Refuge is not set up to deal with emergency issues. Need to address this if we get more public access

Meeting adjourned at 6:53