

Friends of the Refuge Headwaters
Meeting Minutes
102 Walnut St., Suite 205
Thursday, August 24, 2023, 4:15 pm

Participating

Members: Wendy Schneider, John Lyons, Bruce Nicklay, Bart Theiler, Meg Hurkman, Steve Norman, Heidi Bryant, Sue O'Brien, Judy Shepard, JoAnn Smerage

Visitor:

Refuge Staff: Mary Stefanski, Stephanie Edeler

Meeting called to order at 4:15 pm by President Wendy Schneider.

Minutes: John made a motion to approve the July minutes. Steve gave a second to the motion and the minutes were approved.

Reports

- **Treasurer's Report** (Meg Hurkman)
 - Checking Acct. Previous Total Balance = \$4,213.02
 - Deposits = \$40.00
 - Expenditures = \$40.00
 - Tree Planting account = (\$3,658.00) sub account within the checking account
 - Checking Acct. New Total Balance = \$4,213.02
 - Money Market Previous Balance = \$64,976.31
 - Deposit (Dividend) = \$106.66
 - Money Market New Balance = \$65,082.97
 - Altra Regular Savings = \$5.00
 - Grand Total = \$69,300.99
 - Pay Pal Account Balance = \$385.24
 - Judy made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Steve gave a second and the motion passed.
 - FORH currently has a debit card through Altra Fed. CU. The debit card is frozen if there isn't any activity for a 90 day period. Meg gave a brief explanation of the pros/cons of having a credit card versus a debit card. After some discussion, the consensus was that it would be better to have a credit card. Meg made a motion that FORH apply for a credit card through Altra Fed CU. Bruce gave a second to the motion and the motion passed. Meg will fill out the necessary paperwork.

- **President's Report** (Wendy Schneider)
 - Concerns about abundance of Purple Loosestrife – Mary explained that the FWS has released beetles, in the past, to help control loosestrife. But the flooding on the river in the past few years has not been good for the survival of the beetles. Flooding in 2023 was less severe and so hopefully the beetle population will come back up and hopefully there will be an overall reduction in the loosestrife over the next few years.

- Possible photo scavenger hunt in 2024 as part of the events for the Refuge's 100th Anniversary. The original idea came from the Happy Dancing Turtle organization. It was decided that we should check with the Happy Dancing Turtles first to see if they are planning another photo scavenger hunt in the Winona area next year.
- **Refuge Manager's Report** (Mary Stefanski, Stephanie Edeler)
- Jones Fish Company from Indiana has completed spraying for phragmites on 21 sites.
- Plans are moving ahead for habitat restoration and enhancement projects on Robinson and Big Lake.
- The Mississippi Valley Archeological Group is doing an evaluation on a parcel above Ricks Lake. Once completed, there are plans to install a boat or kayak ramp.
- The YCC crew is done for this year.
- The Volunteer Recognition Event took place on July 28th. John Lyons was recognized as the Volunteer of the Year. WELL DESERVED!
- Biologist Jenny Froehly is currently in High Level, Canada banding ducks.
- Duck hunting season opens on September 1st and every weekend in September and the first two weekends in October are either an opener or re-opener in either Minnesota or Wisconsin.
- Wendy Woyczik is currently the FWS Deputy Manager at McGregor. On September 1st, 2023 Wendy will assume the role of Manager at Winona. This is a temporary, one year position that will hopefully become a permanent position during that time.
- The FWS is in discussions to purchase a building that would someday house their new offices.
- Stephanie Edeler recently returned from a one month Wildfire duty assignment in Oregon.
- Continuing plans for the Refuge's 100th Anniversary Celebration – 1. Steamboat Days is June 16th, 2024 with plans to have a float in the parade. The float could be used also for other events. The float has to be pulled by a government vehicle. The vehicle can be driven by a volunteer, but is required that the volunteer have taken the defensive driver course. 2. It is possible that FORH could join with the Friends group from Pool 7 and 8 in planning events. 3. There will be a website coming soon where you can purchase 100th Anniversary merchandise. 4. Other ideas; a. have a media tour on a barge/pontoon to showcase the Refuge, b. assemble kits that could be taken to events to include brochures and pull-up banners, etc. 5. The Isaac Walton League is planning a film festival in the spring with themes pertinent to the Refuge. They are also planning to have a film contest for youth.

Continuing Business (Mary Stefanski, Wendy Schneider)

- Prairie Island Dike Road trash pick-up – October date to be determined.
- Free admission to Minnesota State Parks, 2023 – September 9 and November 24.
- Project Compass Fishing Event, Wednesday, September 20th, 5-6:15 p.m., Huff St. Fishing Pier. Looking for volunteers.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p. m.

Date for next meeting: Thursday, September 28, 2023