



Friends of the GTM NERR Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 8, 2008

Members Present:

**Pierre Pierce, Anita Pierce, Carl Hampp, Chris Rich, Craig O'Neal,
Jonathan Katzen, Bill Coleman, Irene Kaufman, Frank Pixler, Peter DiFatta**

Staff Present:

Janet Zimmerman, Angel Gonzales, Mike Shirley

Excused Absence:

Nancy Schachnovsky, Michael Timpane, Barb Starck

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

March Meeting Minutes Approval by Board

March meeting minutes were approved.

MAG Meeting Report by Pierre Pierce

Pierre showed a map of the proposed National Heritage Area. The map overlays the GTMNERR boundaries and adds the city of St. Augustine. Mike agreed that we do not want another level of bureaucracy and are in the fact-finding stages. Step One is a feasibility study.

Mike wants to determine whether designation gives National Park Service oversight that will limit what we need to do at the NERR. There will be a public input meeting at the EEC on Tuesday April 15th from 12:30 to 5 on the subject of the National Heritage Area.

Mike spoke positively about the partnerships – LAMP and Scenic A1A among others – that would be involved. Also that since our site has cultural resources, this could help with funding. The goal would be to protect natural and cultural resources in a sustainable way.

Pierre mentioned the National Heritage Areas where Coal Mining and Strip Mining are part of the cultural heritage, but may interfere with conservation of natural resources.

Mike stated that George Gardener (St. Augustine City Commission) and Gordy Wilson (National Park Service) are interested in being involved in the process.

Sea Turtle Festival Request by Irene Kaufman

The Sea Turtle Festival will be held in St. Augustine Beach on April 26th. They requested donations for the silent auction and Craig had responded offering some of his photos currently for sale in the Nature Store. It was decided that in addition to Craig's photos, we would donate up to \$50 in merchandise from the Nature store (sea turtle-related) including a stuffed animal and a book. In addition, we would donate an annual pass to the GTMNERR, and a Sea Turtle Nest Adoption, which are at no cost to the Friends. The items could be presented individually or in a basket. Irene will work with Teri and Janet to supply the items for the festival.

Grant Request Application Proposal by Angel

Angel discussed the YSI Grant Proposal where we would apply for \$60,000 in funds to establish a Volunteer Watershed Monitoring Program in the Pellicer Creek Basin area. The deadline for the grant application is next week. The grant must go through the Friends account. Monitoring equipment will then be purchased from YSI. Mike stated that this would be helpful to ensure equipment and calibration consistency. Volunteers will gather data from the data loggers. The Friends would be able to take up to 20% overhead cost from the funds. The Research committee had reviewed the proposal and agreed to recommend Board approval. Craig moved that we approve the request and Bill seconded. All approved and the motion carried.

Management Plan Update by Mike Shirley

Mike is asking the Friends and MAG Groups which strategies they would like to help with. We are asked to review strategies by committees. Staff has given input on how they would like the Friends to help; this will be emailed to the Board. We should email our responses back to Mike. Mike handed out hard copies of the Strategies (Chapter 6) from the Management Plan.

Development Committee Update by Frank and Jonathan

Another 500 – 600 pieces will be mailed to members who have not renewed. The cost will be approximately \$300 - \$400.

Aquatic Preserve License Plate by Janet

Rookery Bay Reserve is spearheading the project. A minimum of 1000 must be sold in five years. Carl mentioned that Harbor Branch sold 2 million and 750 thousand dolphin and whale license plates, and the funds were used for research. There are currently 58 plates. All are on display in Ponte Vedra Annex.

Other Business

Janet gave out a list of the Friends' accomplishments and stated that this would be part of the PowerPoint presentation about the Friends to be shown at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Angel is working on this Powerpoint. Janet stated that the food for the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner would be paid for by State funds and the Friends would only need to coverage the cost of beverages.

The Friends of the GTM Reserve will run a food table at The Birding and Foto Fest April 10, 11, 12, and 13; all profit from sales is a donation to the Friends of the GTM Reserve. The St. Johns County Visitor and Convention Bureau will give the Friends of the GTM Reserve \$500 for food. Frank and Carl are co-chairs for the Birding and Foto Fest food table, working with Angel. Angel stated that the greatest need for volunteers is Friday and Saturday around lunchtime. Barb Starck will be there Thursday and Friday, Frank, Anita and Pierre will be there all weekend. 200 to 300 people per day are expected. Food will be purchased from Great Wraps of St. Augustine. We will sell ½ wraps for \$4. Fresh wraps will be bought each day. Frank sent a letter to Publix requesting donations of food and is awaiting a response.

New Artist Reception will be April 18th 6 to 8 P.M. Carl will be bartender and Joe Hutnan will be asked to assist. A volunteer is needed for the Friends table.

Janet reported that The Jacksonville Track Club held an event at the GTM Research Reserve and donated an additional \$1000 to the Friends. Teri should send a Thank-you letter.

Bill stated that per the Executive Committee, Teri reports to Pierre and any requests for Teri to do work should go through Pierre.

Frank mentioned that there was recently a lengthy letter in Ponte Vedra Shorelines about taking GTMNERR property to make a four-lane 210. Mike stated that the MAG group had written a letter opposing this and it will go to CAMA.

Pierre mentioned that Chris Benjamin is the new president of the MAG replacing Jim Darby.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:05 by Pierre Pierce

The next monthly board meeting will be Tuesday, May 13, 2008