

**Friends of Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park  
Membership meeting  
November 11, 2019**

Board members present: Larry Beer, Milagros Dougan, Kathy Foster, Heidi Gagnon, Gabriella Miyamoto, Phil Nye, and Valerie Thompson. Absent: Clarette Frank, and Todd Richards. (a membership quorum was established)

Park Staff present: Caitlin Brunk, Sara Grant, Daniel Coggins and Terrance Torvund

We welcomed our guest speaker, Ashlee O'Connor, Panther Outreach Specialist from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Ashlee presented an enlightening, enjoyable session that covered Florida Panther habitat, characteristics, what to do if you see a panther, safe ways to live in panther country and what is being done to recover the population. Pamphlets were available. More information on living with Florida panthers can be found at the following website: [MyFWC.com/Panther](http://MyFWC.com/Panther).

Following Ashlee's presentation, the business meeting was called to order at 10:49 a.m. by President Kathy Foster.

New Park staff members Daniel Coggins and Sara Grant were introduced.

**Presidents Report:**

- Kathy reported on the October 26 ceremony and reception for Jared Marques' Eagle Court of Honor. For his Eagle Scout project, Jared completed the design, construction and installation of trash and recycle containers at the Park. Jared is the son of Park Administrative Assistant Jenn Marques.
- Kathy and Terrance attended the annual statewide meeting for Park managers and CSO representatives. Forty-eight Friends groups were represented. There are 82 Friends groups in the entire state with our district having 21 of those.

**Vice President's Report:**

VP Heidi Gagnon updated the Adopt a Turtle project numbers: Since September 2018, donations have been received for 706 turtles. Five dollars of each donation goes to the DWSP Sea Turtle Preservation project. This successful donation campaign has resulted in an increased budget for supplies and equipment for sea turtle preservation at the Park. Ranger James Aldridge won the three-month incentive for turtle donations.

**Secretary's Report:**

The minutes from the October 14, 2019 meeting were approved. Minutes from past meetings are on file in the CSO Room and available on the Friends website.

**Treasurer's Report:**

- Milagros announced she would be leaving the Treasurer's position as of January 2020. Kathy asked anyone interested in working as Treasurer, contact her. Milagros said the time commitment is approximately 30 hours per month.
- The September financial reports show that net income through September 2019 reached \$15,400, which is \$15,550 better than the same period in 2018. Greater revenues from donations for turtles and memberships combined with lower expenses because of the purchase of the ATV last year contributed to the positive performance. In September 2019, total assets reached \$114,775, which are invested in money market funds and CDs.

**Membership Chairperson's Report:**

- As of November 7 there were 183 memberships.
- The Board members thanked Jennifer Marques for working with memberships over the summer.

## **Park Manager's Report:**

Administration: Terrance thanked Alicia Astorga for her work on the Friends website. Visitor count: To better determine Park usage, Terrance announced that a visitor count for individuals walking through the beach side Park entrance on Vanderbilt Beach will be conducted. Those interested in volunteering to count should contact Caitlin. The District chief will be visiting the Park monthly. The Beach Bus will once again be bringing visitors to Vanderbilt Beach and the Park. The service will begin on December 24. Terrance said the busiest day at the Park is Christmas Day, with Easter a close second.

Visitor Services: Ranger James, now a certified interpreter, will begin offering interpretative programs in January. Caitlin will attend interpretative training in the near future. Terrance announced that a few park staff members had attended the "Beach and Brews" event at Lovers' Key State Park. This is an event that is being explored for DWPSP.

Maintenance: Renovation is being completed in the men's bathhouses in Area #3 and the pavilion. Additional support beams are being added to boardwalks to the bathhouses. A recent Fire Marshall's inspection was passed. One boardwalk in each parking area is being removed. A scout group will be working with this project and donating the dumpster. The parking lots are being restriped and location of the ADA spaces are being evaluated and, if needed, moved. Plans for a new, improved Park entrance are 90% complete; work would be over the next couple years.

Resources: Caitlin introduced herself and reported on the turtle-nesting season. She shared a map of the location of the 2019 nests. There were 53 identified nests and only 3 did not hatch naturally. Rangers patrolled the beach each morning and are specially trained to identify false crawls. Loggerhead turtles are the most common sea turtles found at Delnor-Wiggins Pass S.P. Caitlin encouraged everyone to record his or her volunteer hours. There is a link on the Friends website: [www.delnorwiggins.org](http://www.delnorwiggins.org). Go to "Friends info" and click on the tab "Submit Hours".

As a Veteran's Day tribute, Kathy recognized military veterans and thanked them for their service.

## **Committee Report:**

Seashells and Santa: Committee Chair Barb Craig explained the event and what is being planned. Eventbrite is being used for registration; unwrapped toys are requested and will be donated to a designated charity. Caitlin passed a volunteer sign-up page.

Wildlife and Wildlands Art Show: Valerie reported the Committee would meet on November 20, 10 a.m. in the CSO Room. Interested members are welcome to attend. Barb Craig shared a "wish list" of items that members are encouraged to provide for the "Drawing of Chance".

Children's Art Show: Committee member Larry Beer reported that the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Show would be February 22 and 23. Larry explained the event, set-up and need for volunteers. Last year children from 10 different schools participated. The cost of the event is paid through a donation from an anonymous benefactor.

## **Unfinished Business:**

Terrance will be "Principal for the Day" at Naples Park Elementary School later this month. Increasing partnerships with Naples Park Elem. helps fulfill one of the Park staff's major goals—to increase awareness of DWPSP and increase visitation.

Caitlin will be providing "volunteer passes", when needed, to individuals volunteering in the Park.

## **New Business:**

Kathy described a Rookery Bay fundraising project, "Adopt a Sea Turtle Nest".

The Earth Day Network is working with Keep America Beautiful; Friends are exploring partnering with this nonprofit organization for a Park cleanup the day after Easter.

**Next Meeting:** The December Friends Picnic will be held in the pavilion on December 9 at 11:30 a.m. Attendees are asked to bring a dish to share. Drinks, chips and paper plates and utensils will be provided. More information will be sent to members via email.

Friends member Dave Darrah informed members of the transit of Mercury and brought a sun-protected telescope so members who wished to do so could have a look.

The meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by, Valerie Thompson

Date approved: January 13, 2020