

FOLA Meeting 10/1/2015

Treasurer Report- Frank

- 1) Bank Accounts-
 - a. \$4,261
 - b. \$5,104
- 2) Bicycles have been purchased for the raffle- these will be used for 2 raffles at the ONP – Wheel works gave FOLA a deal on these- this will be the first time that we will have 2 raffles
- 3) We need to pay for a booth at the Music Festival (\$300)

Volunteers for Music Festival- pass around a sheet to collect names

Archives- if anyone has any old articles on Lake Apopka- pass them along to FOLA for inclusion in this project

Hull Island- still have conversations with owner; Jim will not do the negotiation;

Need to call another meeting of the coalition; Jim will organize this- need to get back to determining the things that we need to do- Jim to start to think through agenda etc. in the next few weeks.

Jim is working to have a meeting with director at SJRWMD to discuss use of land

Tour of North Shore went very well. People really enjoyed it. Have a better sense now of what we can do there and do some organized car pools etc.

- o There were 30+ alligators in pond behind the pump house
- o There are 500 acres set aside there that it is still TBD what will happen with it.

City of Apopka- we still have not made a decision on if FOLA wants to join them or not. They have started working with SJRWMD

New Business

- Review of Proposed Projects; not going to go through whole list; there is going to be a site similar to ONP that will be built (unsure of exact location); size will depend on what they can actually do
- Drive thru trail is getting a lot of use, even without the water fowl coming
 - o Approximately 13k attendees since it opened in May
 - o White Pelicans should be coming in November
 - o Last 5-6 years there have been many less of these
 - o Is there an option to do a donation box on the drive? Can this be added?

- Organization of Public Meeting
 - o Need to get scheduled so that we have a group if needed
 - o Jim will work on this- will be a FOLA meeting (not joint with ONP)
 - o Want to be able to communicate what we are doing and what we are working on; a big part of this is we need to get organized on what our projects are

Newsletter

Will be digital only; need to determine content and updates

Marsh Restoration

Harris Chain of lakes still thinks we should remove the dykes. There are 20k acres that are there and this will mean less for the whole lake

Harris Chain Council

Meeting 10/2/15- need attendees from FOLA- can anyone attend? Meeting is in Tavares county Center- 9 AM tomorrow; they have had a fair amount of influence in the state by working with state senate in the past; This group has a SJRWMD representative.

Wings and Wildflower in Lake County this weekend

J. Browley is our representative from SJRWMD- he is doing a great job; should send along some thank you notes if we can

Boat Ramps

- o We have first description of Boat Ramp to support large boats. NW part of lake- being built from ramp where shad program was run. This is happening in the McDonald Canal Parking
Kayak Launch
Moving slowly due to some budget challenges
- o There is another ramp going in NE corner of Mt Byrd-this is in the works
- o There is a wish to have one in the Oakland area- but there is a challenge as the proposed site is in a neighborhood and this is challenging
- o Hull Island could possibly be a site for this if they are able to acquire
- o Magnolia Park is also very shallow as is Winter Garden
- o There used to be a number of camps along Walker- is there a potential place here for a different boat ramp? The question would be can you get across at this point. Parcel on Walker Road that has the possibility to be similar to the Orange County Sportsman Park; possibly get a committee together to talk so some county commissioners and see if there is a possibility; should put this on the list; go to county commissioner to see what the options are.

There is an aeration project that would help decay the muck that is in the lake- they have bubblers North of Magnolia Park; may see some small results but would we see the same results on a larger scale in the lake. Senator Hays has been a fair supporter of pursuing new ideas even if we don't always have the data to support it- to try different things along the lake.

There is a bottling tap going on in Gourd Springs (Niagara Water) where they are bottling the water out of Gourd Springs. Niagara does not have a permit for this- they work through another company. Is there a process in place where they are managing this and measuring what is being taken from this spring? Is there any action that FOLA needs to take on this?

Air Boats in Apopka- there continues to be opposition to this.

West Orange Airport Authority- This has been fought for 8 years; the last meeting there were more FOLA members than there were Board Members that were fighting this.

What can we as a group do to get people involved?

Citizen Advocacy for Lake Apopka

Get people doing something that they can see and do with the restoration?

So much land around the ponds (north shore) is just wasted land with non-native species

Focus on restoring these lands with plants that will attract non migratory birds

Focus on restoring this land

There are a lot of areas where we could

- Spray and kill non natives
- Bring in native plants
- Landscape around pump house
- Jim has started a list of plants that have high habitat value
- Get enough people- to donate either time or money
- Could we start a fundraiser for this?
- Get people to feel like they are they are a part of restoring Lake Apopka
- This would be a good topic for the annual meeting
- Also want to have Cypress- because these form roots and nesting areas
- Need a really creative name for the restructuring of the marsh so that
 - o Don't get opposition from the purist restoration
 - o Get people engaged and involved
- What do we need to do to get this going?

- Upcoming festivals- do we have time to get something in place ahead of the upcoming festivals; could we even do a sign-up sheet at one of the festivals to get volunteers
- FOLA would support
- ONP would support
- Need to have SJ approval- so need to have a permit; should be a general permit that we can file to get this approved; Cathy is familiar with the permitting process; if we can provide her with a map of what we are looking at, she can get some plots to be able to review
- Need to have a site plan review
- Need to come up with a plan to be able to execute on this
- Before the next meeting we need to have a plan; before the next meeting let's try to get together a plan
- Field trip to look at options
- Need to find a source for the plants that we are going to purchase
- Can store plants at Biosphere
- Can use Native Plant Society to find the plants
- Need to have every detail worked out
- Jim will create a file to capture all the details
- Need to determine what are the "local" or close by native plants
- Do we keep this as part of FOLA or start a second group?

Lake County Eco Tourism director was on the North Shore tour

Orange County did approve the extension of the West Orange Trail from Magnolia Park; Orange County has had a hard time getting the right land

How do we promote this? Graphic would help here; is there something we can pull together?

End of meeting notes