



Friends of **Willapa** National Wildlife Refuge
Board Annual Membership Meeting
Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum, Ilwaco, Washington
November 16, 2019

Present

Current board members: Kathy Freitas, president; Dave Hoch, treasurer; Barbara Norcross-Renner, secretary; Bob Duke, director; Dianne Fuller, director; and Kitt Fleming, Director. Prospective 2020 board members: Cathy Cruikshank, Charlie Pelizza, and Sylvia Pelizza. Approximately 35 people were in attendance.

Call to Order and President's Welcome

Kathy Freitas called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and extended a warm welcome to all FWNWR members and guests present. She noted the main purpose of today's meeting is to elect the 2020 board and to provide an overview of 2019 activities including:

- A very successful second year for the Wings Bird Festival.
- Continued fundraising for the future NRC visitors center. Construction of the NRC Refuge headquarters is already underway with a Fall, 2020 projected move-in date.
- Recent award of a \$15,000 grant by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for construction of the South Bay trail Willapa Bay overlook.
- Another successful year for the 4th grade environmental education program.
- Recruitment of three well qualified prospective new board members.

Other recent and current grants include Environmental Education, Junior Duck Stamp, Biological, and Willapa on Tap. The second Willapa on Tap, on Ecotourism, is scheduled for January 30, 2020.

Election of 2019 Board Members

Kathy Freitas verified a quorum of 10 FWNWR members present for purposes of the election. Bob Duke, representing the board nominating committee comprised of Todd Wiegardt, Kathy Freitas, and Bob Duke, introduced and reviewed qualifications of each prospective 2020 board member as approved by the board at its November 9, 2019 board meeting.

The following 2020 board member nominees were ratified by unanimous voice vote:

President: Kathy Freitas
Vice President: Charlie Pelizza
Secretary: Kitt Fleming
Treasurer: Sylvia Pelizza
Director: Dianne Fuller
Director: Cathy Cruikshank

Kathy Freitas recognized and extended thanks to three 2019 outgoing board members: Dave Hoch, Barbara Norcross-Renner, and Bob Duke. Kathy also recognized the service of board member, Dee Snider, who needed, for family reasons, to step down earlier this year.

Treasurer's Report

Dave Hoch summarized FWNWR financial activities from the beginning of January to the beginning of November for the current year as follows:

- Friends checking account beginning balance, as of 1/1/19, was \$16,204.41 with an ending balance, as of 11/1/19, of \$20,895.90.
- Wings checking account beginning balance, as of 1/1/19, was \$12,816.48 with an ending balance, as of 11/1/19, of \$20,040.50.
- Trails money market account beginning balance, as of 1/1/19, was \$11,092.31 with an ending balance, as of 11/1/19, of \$13,547.98.

The current balance of the Natural Resource Center Fund, held by the South Pacific County Community Foundation and allocated specifically for the future NRC visitors center, is \$15,138.96.

Dave also summarized the status of three federal grants:

- Remaining funds in the Environmental Education grant have been disbursed, including \$8,700 for the purchase of Refuge interpretive signs.
- Junior Duck Stamp grant has a remaining balance of \$17,000.
- Biological grant has a remaining balance of \$22,000.

Two scholarships, \$1,500 each, were awarded in 2019.

Dianne Fuller made a motion, seconded by Bob Duke, with all in favor, to approve the treasurer's report.

Committee and Activity Reports

Environmental Education Committee: Kathy Freitas reported that the fourth grade environmental education program, coordinated by Martha Williams, partnered this year with six elementary schools with approximately 200 students from ten classrooms participating in classroom and field trip activities. Environmental education, our oldest program, is a cornerstone of FWNWR. Kathy noted the college scholarships, awarded this year to Jake Eaton and Jeb Shelton, are an offshoot of the environmental education program.

Membership Committee: Kathy Freitas reported that we currently have approximately 250 members, a significant increase from 143 at this time last year. Kathy noted special members-only events held during the year including the barge trip and the National Trails Day birding hike with more members-only events planned for the coming year.

Infrastructure/Trails Committee: Kathy Freitas reported a number of successful Leadbetter scotch broom removal work parties were held during the year as well as clean up work parties on Greenhead Slough and highway 101, and the recent Cutthroat Climb trail hike.

Community Outreach Committee: Bob Duke reported continued FWNWR outreach participation at this year's Garlic and Kite Festivals as well as regular FWNWR presence at the Ilwaco Saturday market. KMUN Willapa Nature Notes broadcasts are now in their fourth year. Bob noted two new community outreach activities this year:

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- A Refuge photo contest through Pat Tollefson's Peninsula Shutterbugs. The photo contest winner, Jane Winkler Webb, was awarded a framed print of her winning photo, certificate, and one year FWNWR membership.
- Creation of the Wonders of Willapa video. (*See below.*)

Wings Over Willapa: Dianne Fuller reported a very successful second Wings bird festival this past September with 245 people who attended the expanded four day festival. Last year 184 people attended. There were 38 different events including boat trips, art projects, hikes, and family projects as well as the inaugural Willapa on Tap session. Dianne noted that the bird festival is designed to celebrate the Refuge, and for local people as well as visitors to become aware of Refuge resources. This year 45% of participants came from 50 miles or more away. Dianne anticipates award of a Pacific County Lodging Tax \$10,000 grant to help fund outreach and an administrative staff position for the coming year. Dianne seeks bird festival trip and class ideas for the coming year.

Refuge Report

On behalf of Jackie Ferrier, Refuge Complex project leader, and Deputy Refuge Complex project leader, Matt Lloyd, Charlie Pelizza presented the following report of this past year's Refuge activities and upcoming projects:

Accomplishments during the past year:

- Restoration of 400 acres of snowy plover habitat in Leadbetter.
- Haying and cattle grazing in Tarlatt to improve wintering geese habitat.
- Preparation for early blue violet planting in Tarlatt for silver spot butterfly restoration.
- Continuation of Willapa Bay spartina surveys detected only 0.026 acres remaining; over 99.99% of the spartina in the Bay has been eradicated.
- Continuation of biological surveys, including the Willapa waterbird survey conducted twice yearly.
- Construction of the new NRC Refuge headquarters in Riekkola began in June; construction is on schedule.

Upcoming Projects:

- Continued Tarlatt habitat restoration including planting of 10,000 early blue violets for the silver spot butterfly; thinning approximately 30 acres including removal of non-native trees; and continued work to modify and restore wetlands.
- Creation of new public use trails in the South Bay unit, including those linking the NRC and other Riekkola trails with Tarlatt trails.

On behalf of Refuge staff, Charlie voiced staff gratitude for our work to support the Refuge.

Wonders of Willapa Video

Bob Duke introduced videographer, Andy Zahn with warm thanks for his work. Andy, along with Bob and with Kitt Fleming, produced a four minute promotional video, *Wonders of Willapa*. The premier screening of the video followed this introduction.

Door Prize Drawings

Newly elected board members, Sylvia Pelizza, Charlie Pelizza, and Cathy Cruikshank conducted the door prize drawing and prize distribution.

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Closing/Adjournment

Kathy Freitas extended her warm thanks to all present, and to the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum for use of their meeting space. Next year will be our 20th year anniversary; the support of FWNWR members is essential to our organization's support of the Refuge.

Kathy closed with this quote from Henry Thoreau: "We need the tonic of wildness. At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature".

The meeting was adjourned by Kathy Freitas at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Norcross-Renner,
Secretary to the Board

Next Board Meeting (Annual Planning Meeting): January 2020 (Date, time, location TBA)