

**Mingo Swamp Friends
Minutes of Quarterly Meeting
January 12, 2017**

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Amanda Mossman.

Attendance: Seven persons were present – the four officers, two refuge staff, and a reporter from the Puxico Press: President Amanda Mossman, Vice President Leroy Romine, Secretary Bruce Beck, Treasurer Sharon Beck, Assistant Refuge Manager Corey Kudrna, Refuge Ranger Debbie Koenigs, and Amy Walker, reporter with the Puxico Press.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the October 11, 2016 Quarterly Meeting were read by Secretary Bruce Beck. Motion by Leroy Romine to approve the minutes as read. Second by Sharon Beck. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: The financial summary for the year 2016 was presented by Treasurer Sharon Beck. Motion by Romine, second by Bruce to approve the report as printed. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

Facebook: Mossman reported that she checks all new member requests on Facebook to be certain that they are legitimate requests and not spam.

Website Management: Mossman reported that the website contract with GoDaddy is up for renewal soon and she will renew the contract. An update will soon be required of GoDaddy's website design software. Mossman plans to work on the update and improvements this summer.

Bookstore: Mossman has been replenishing the bookstore and stocking new items, especially with items appropriate for Eagle Days in February. She has done considerable work in selecting new items, according to customer requests and recommendations from intern Natalie Badolato-Larrin, Bruce Beck, and refuge staff.

Unfinished Business

Photo Contest: Bruce Beck and John Stanard met and outlined procedures for the Mingo Swamp Friends Photo Contest. Mossman, Romine and Kudrna have had input as well. The recommendations as amended in discussion are attached. Bruce Beck, John Stanard, and others will begin to seek sponsors to help with the contest expenses. Bruce Beck, in consultation with the refuge staff and Friends officers, will work on the display schedule.

Membership Promotion: Increasing Friends membership is critical. Several ideas were discussed with no definitive strategy agreed upon.

Newsletter: Mossman reported that she has been outlining a newsletter. Koenigs volunteered to help her finish it. It is intended to have the newsletter posted on the Friends' website and emailed to members, with printed copies at the reception desk. It was agreed that the newsletter was important to promote and maintain membership.

Meeting Programs: The pros and cons of having an educational program preceding the quarterly business meetings were discussed. It was agreed that Kudrna, Koenigs and Bruce Beck would propose

some programs to precede the business meetings or at other times more convenient to the public, with the intent of promoting Friends membership.

Greater Poplar Bluff Area Chamber of Commerce Membership: Bruce Beck reviewed the promotional benefits of membership including free newspaper ads and radio spots, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. It was agreed that we would take advantage of these when announcing the Swamp Friends Photo Contest and the first showing of the photos.

Ag Expo in Poplar Bluff, January 20-21: Kudrna, Koenigs and Bruce Beck are working on the display for the booth. Kudrna, Koenigs, Beck and Mossman will be manning the booth. There was discussion on the disposition of the Friends banner and display board, with no answers.

Eagle Days, February 3-4: Motion by Bruce Beck, second by Romine to reimburse Kenny Schiwitz \$358.10 for materials for the replica eagle hacking tower to be displayed at Eagle Days, and perhaps in the Visitor Center. Motion passed.

New Business

Fishing Rig Loans: Motion by Bruce Beck, second by Romine, to make available up to \$100 for fishing line and tackle to outfit existing fishing rods at Mingo NWR. The poles and tackle will be loaned, without restriction, to the public at no cost. The Mingo staff and Friends volunteers will prepare the rods and gear, and loan them out. Romine volunteered to add new line to the rods and make them usable. Motion passed.

Pavestone for Gerald Clawson: Motion by Bruce Beck, second by Romine, that the Friends order and pay for a pavestone dedicated to former refuge manager Gerald L. Clawson. Motion passed.

Food Plot Discussion: There was lengthy discussion regarding the planting of food plots on the refuge. The Mingo staff will bring more information and recommendations to Mingo Swamp Friends at the April meeting.

Staff Reports

Debbie Koenigs introduced herself as the new Mingo NWR Ranger. She is coming from Minnesota and her last assignment was as a professional intern for one year in Bloomington, Minnesota. This was her second day in uniform. Koenigs completed her studies in wildlife management. She has had previous experience in public relations and retail management.

Corey Kudrna reported on activities and issues on the refuge:

Spillway and Ozark Highlands Road: Refuge manager Ben Mense is anticipating that the spillway structure will be completed and the Ozark Highland Road opened for traffic for the weekend of Eagle Days, February 3 and 4. The Ozark Highlands Road will be opened on March 1 (when the refuge waters open).

Jacob Plunkett is now working for USDA in the Ironton area. He has already been notably successful at trapping feral hogs in the area.

Deer hunting and deer population on the refuge: The current population of deer on Mingo NWR is estimated to be between 800 and 1,200. This is the projected goal to maintain a healthy population on the refuge and avoid extensive browse lines. The deer harvest during various hunts on the refuge has been down. There was about 40% hunter success rate, on the youth hunt which is comparable to hunting success across the state. The muzzleloader hunt success was low. At Mingo and across Missouri the rate of no shows for managed deer hunts was about 20%. The rate of no shows is increasing at Mingo and across the state.

Student Conservation Internships: Natalie Badolato-Larrin and Mitch Baalman have finished their internships. Applications will be reviewed soon for another student intern, hopefully arriving in March. **Student volunteers from Missouri Western State University's Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society** were here recently for 3 ½ days working to control the invasive alien autumn olive on the refuge. A great deal was done. Refuge staff will follow up with continuing control. The Friends group may be asked in the future to help sponsor working trips like this to the refuge.

Next Meeting: April 11, 2017 at the Mingo NWR visitor center at 6:30 p.m.

Bruce Beck, Secretary
January 16, 2017