

Minutes of the Mingo Swamp Friends Annual Meeting

July 29, 2014

The Swamp Friends meeting in the Mingo Visitors Center multipurpose room was preceded by a 20-minute video on Feral Hogs. The video was produced by Mississippi State, with comments by wildlife specialists from several southern states.

CALL TO ORDER

President Sharon Tuschoff called to order the Annual Meeting of Mingo Swamp Friends at 7:32 pm in the multipurpose room of the Visitors Center.

ATTENDANCE

Eight Friends members and three Mingo Refuge staff were present:

Friends Members:

Bruce Beck, secretary

Gary Beacham, treasurer

Amanda Mossman

June Romine

Leroy Romine

John Stanard

Sharon Tuschoff, president

Brad Watkins, vice president

Refuge Staff:

Ben Mense, Refuge Manager

Lindsey Landowski, Assistant Refuge Manager

Peter Rea, Visitors Services Park Ranger

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The minutes of the May 6, 2014 Quarterly Meeting were read by secretary Beck. **Motion** to approve the minutes as read, made by Brad Watkins. Second by Leroy Romine. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Beacham reported a balance in the checking account of \$10,337.79 as of July 1.

BEGINNING BALANCE May 1, 2014	\$9080.72
DEPOSITS	
Family Fishing Day donations	125.00
DVD (Leroy Romine)	60.00
Memberships	40.00
Book Store sales	1548.83
Total Deposits	1773.83
EXPENSES	
Bill's Market – Fishing Day	69.15
Sharon Tuschoff	49.60
Shelter Insurance – for Bookstore	189.00
Melvin Roos –Bookstore fixtures	209.01
Total Expenses	516.76
BALANCE July 1, 2014	\$10337.79

Motion by Watkins to accept the report as given. Second by Leroy Romine. Motion passed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Tuschoff presented the nominations of officers as follows:

President – Sharon Tuschoff

Vice President – Brad Watkins

Secretary – Bruce Beck

Treasurer – Gary Beacham

No additional nominations were made from the floor, so these current officers were reelected by acclamation for the coming year, August, 2014 through July, 2015.

ANNUAL REPORT TO MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

Tuschoff reported that she submitted the annual report to the Missouri Department of Revenue as required to maintain the Mingo Swamp Friends non-profit status. The report is due annually by July 15.

OLD BUSINESS

As requested by the Friends at the May quarterly meeting, Peter Rea reported that he is looking to purchase a 10 ft x 15 ft banner to be used at refuge events. Tuschoff said that she would also check a source of banners.

Ben Mense reported that repairs need to be made to the hunting blinds and the photo blinds. Plexiglass needs to be replaced, bungee cords are needed, and rubber floor mats are recommended. **Motion** by Watkins, second by Beck that the refuge staff could spend up to \$400 to purchase eight rubber floor mats. Motion passed.

Mense reported that the Refuge and the Missouri Department of Conservation have paid approximately \$500 in past years for the Eagle Days presentation from the zoo in Springfield, Missouri, plus approximately \$200 for the rental of a stage. He said that the Friends may at the October quarterly meeting want to consider contributing to the costs of Eagle Days in February, 2015.

Tuschoff reported that the application sent to Paddle Nation for a \$2,500 grant for fishing equipment and youth life vests was turned down.

There was discussion on the finances of the Bookstore. It is anticipated that within two weeks the Friends will have Internet access in the Visitors Center and can begin using the QuickBooks software. This will allow monthly reports on expenses, income and profit margins, allowing us to determine how much we will have available to spend on discretionary projects and items.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Friends Bookstore will not accept MO Department of Conservation Heritage cards for discounts on MDC items sold in the bookstore.

Rea reported that work to clear a canoe trail through the Wilderness Area is to be done by outside volunteers in October.

NEW BUSINESS

Tuschoff reported that she was invited to submit a grant request for \$2,000 for Friends-sponsored activities. In support of the request she is citing past events co-sponsored by Mingo Refuge and the Friends – Eagle Days, the Wounded Warriors hunt, Family Fishing Day, and the Canoe Ride.

Tuschoff said that she wants to start a Junior Swamp Friends program. The program would be for youth 8 to 18 years old and would include education and activities such as photography, wildlife conservation, refuge clean-up, serving breakfast for the Wounded Warriors, and other refuge activities. She would like to cooperate with local 4-H and FFA chapters, and church youth groups.

Gary Beacham reported that he was seeking donated or inexpensive wheat seed for food plots on the refuge. Motion by Beck, second by Watkins that Beacham could spend up to \$300 for seed if needed. Motion passed.

Tuschoff said that she would like to look into t-shirts for Mingo Swamp Friends volunteers. Watson said that he will look into suitable name tags. Both will report at the next Friends meeting.

STAFF REPORTS

Ranger Peter Rea:

The Grand Opening proposed for Refuge Week October 24 and 25 will highlight the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Wilderness Areas. The event would be more appropriately call “Swamp Fest” or something similar. Rather than ribbon-cutting and speeches, there will be activities such as a paddle through the Wilderness Area and educational programs and activities such as a duck calling demonstration or contest. The Friends may want to donate to the cost of a large sheet cake with the Refuge logo. The staff have been collecting giveaway items such as posters, water bottles and duck calls. Many volunteers will be needed to help with the activities.

The Swamp Saturday Programs held each Saturday in June and July have been successful, with 702 participants.

There have been more than 4,000 visitors to the new Visitors Center since it opened to the public on May 12.

The refuge’s Facebook page has about 4,000 “likes”.

Help at the front desk has been provided by an intern from Southeast Missouri State University and a volunteer from the Mingo Job Corps.

The summer intern from Puerto Rico, Dana Malave-Miller has helped a great deal this summer. She will return to Puerto Rico in two weeks.

Manager Ben Mense:

Work on placing the pave stones should be done soon.

The Ozark Highlands Road is now open.

Replacement of the Spillway will not be able to begin until next year's construction season. This is a \$1 million project. Ducks Unlimited is providing the engineers.

Finishing touches on the new Visitors Center should be completed within the next two weeks.

The new hunt area west of Ditch 4 will be open this fall.

Pool 7 will be available for duck hunting this year.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Mingo Swamp Friends will be Tuesday evening, October 7, at 6:00 pm in the Visitors Center. This date will allow us time to plan and prepare for the Grand Opening/Swamp Fest on the weekend of October 24-25.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn made by Watkins, second by Beacham. Motion passed. Adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Bruce Beck, Secretary