

**Sierra Club of Northeast Florida
Executive Committee Minutes
Monday September 25, 2023**

Call to Order: Logan Cross at 6:30pm

Members in Attendance: Logan Cross, Chair; Barbara Gubbin; Carr Smith; Bill Snow; Peter Harding; and Lisa Williams

Members Not in Attendance: Deanna Zastrow, Sandy Bond

Others in Attendance: Suzi Stone and Larry Zwain

Minutes of August 29, 2023 were approved.

Executive Committee:

EC Election- Logan Cross

Logan indicated Executive Committee members who are up for confirmation this year need to send in a profile statement that includes the reasons you want to continue serving on the committee. He also noted we are losing Sandy Bond so need to recruit new committee members.

FI Chapter Meeting in Jax- Logan Cross

Overall, Logan felt very positive about the meeting and SCNEF's hosting of the event. The participants enjoyed the swag bags and the urban hike. Florida has been given a number of Sierra staff members relative to other states showing the importance of our state. Logan also received a commendation given by Melissa Ross on behalf of Mayor Donna Deegan for his good work on behalf of the environment.

Visibility and Advocacy

Communications Team Update- Suzi Stone

Suzi indicated she has been dealing with a number of problems regarding Facebook. She stated that Julie Brown, our new Social Media Administrator, will work with Bill Snow to get our YouTube channel running.

Renew and Brews - Suzi

Suzi is looking for more locations for the next Renew and Brews social event. Need dates from Logan.

Events and Tabling- Bill Snow

Bill indicated the Right Whale Festival again the first weekend in November in Fernandina. Bill related a story about a new member, Scott Durland. Bill had to be out of town the weekend of the Right Whale Festival and was unable to find anyone to man the table. He asked Scott, a new member, if he would help. Scott ended up manning the table and finding volunteers to help him. They had 10 people approach the tent with questions.

Upcoming Events:

- Sept 30- Groundwork Jax 10 K Race
- Oct 3. Film Festival St Augustine
- Oct 4- Good Trouble. Bill speaking
- Oct 6-8- Jax Zoo Wild Program- Kids hired by zoo and become ambassadors. It is important to reach these kids to interest them in Sierra. Bill speaking.
- Nov 17-19- Another Wild program. Josh Milko tentative speaker.

Political and Legislative

Political Team Update- Barbara Gubbin

Barbara indicated we formally endorsed Barbara Blonder for St Augustine City Commission. Susan Creek is our liaison with her. She then recommended we do a fast track endorsement for Angie Nixon. Larry and Barbara will bring her info to the Executive Committee for endorsement. Barbara will also check with Tracie Davis. If you hear about any potential state candidates, let Barbara know.

It was indicated Larry Zwain is working on a relationship with Jimmy Peluso. It was suggested that a Google folder be created for council members to access succinct facts on what Sierra believes and why. Plans are being developed to meet with other council members.

Riverfront Parks Now- Barbara Gubbin

Barbara indicated there is a October 3- Fundraiser for Scenic Jax. We need dedicated funding for the riverfront parks. Mayor Deagan has \$26 million in the budget for parks.

Membership

Membership Team Update- Bill Snow

Bill indicated we lost 37 members this month, canceling out last month's increase of 33. The membership committee is focusing on Members-Only Outings to provide a benefit to membership. It was also suggested we recruit from other environmental organizations.

Education and Engagement

Educational Programs Update- Lisa Williams

Lisa provided the Events Calendar

- Sept 30 and Oct 14- Litter Gitter cleanup by boat
- Oct 16- NFLT is tentatively scheduled for Oct 16
- *Other speakers contacted and waiting for a response:*
- Rhonda Gracie UNF Horticulturalist)
- Jolie Friedrich, Jax Naturalist
- Tree Hill- Sierra speaker forum in the amphitheater highlighting Renew Jax, Okefenokee, native plants, etc
- Kelly Tesiero, The Elegant Garden- Landscaping with natives.

Bill Snow suggested Kay Ehas of Groundworks Jax as a potential speaker in view of the upcoming opening of the first mile. It was also suggested that we do some YouTube programming on natives.

Outings Program Update- Bill Snow

Bill Snow continues to put out good numbers of outings. One leader is out on injury so that might slow down a little. Bill and a contact in Miami are planning to develop a backpacking trip to Ocala National Forest in February. There is a national outings training program in Big Bend and Bill is hoping to get new leaders trained this weekend.

Financial Capacity

Logan indicated we need to fundraise and have a process to thank donors when they donate.

Conservation Priorities and Initiatives

Okefenokee Swamp Mining Update- Carr Smith

Nothing much has changed since March. They will drag this out as long as they can. There is a good show on the Okefenokee called PBS American Outdoors. Carr will send the link to it.

Renew Jacksonville Campaign Update- Logan Cross

Logan indicated JEA leadership appears locked into fossil fuels since that's all they know. Logan has 7 speakers lined up for the JEA Board meeting tomorrow. If nothing changes, the group is prepared to go to the next level. Riverkeeper seems ready to join us since diplomacy is not working.

Bill noted there were many complaints on the complaints app otherwise known as Nextdoor about the rise in prices of energy. JEA CEO says it's due to price of gas going up, yet they continue focused on the Combined Cycle Natural Gas plant as opposed to renewables.

Logan indicated city council lobbying is next. Who is winnable? The Carlucci's seem to be, as is Jimmy Peluso. Notable that jimmy admitted he needed to learn more about the whole issue. Brooks Dame, his assistant, is very smart and approachable.

Logan noted that the Sierra Club is publishing the 2023 edition of its Dirty Truths Report and utility ratings. He noted JEA got a D grade in 2022, but will receive an F this year.

Next Meeting: October 23, 2023 at 6:30pm via zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm

Minutes prepared by Lisa Williams