

## ICHETUCKNEE ALLIANCE (IA) MEETING MINUTES

6:30 p.m. Wednesday, November 15, 2017

@ North Florida Springs Environmental Center, 23695 W. U.S. Highway 27, High Springs FL

### **Board Members Present**

Paul Donsky  
Eric Flagg  
Jasmine Hagan  
Lu Merritt

### **Board Members Absent**

John Jopling  
Amelia McKnight

### **Guests**

Lars Andersen, Adventure Outpost  
Rhonda Long, Our Santa Fe River  
Bob Ulanowicz, IA Advisory Board

In President Jopling's absence, other members of the board co-facilitated the meeting.

### 1. Agenda approval/additions/deletions.

### **PRIORITY ITEMS**

2. *Guests:* Rhonda Long, stewardship chair of Our Santa Fe River, and Lars Andersen, river guide and owner of Adventure Outpost, attended to discuss the situation with water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) in the Ichetucknee. We had a good discussion of the issues involved. Salient points of the discussion included:

- We all agreed that for many reasons, our goal is to avoid the application of herbicides anywhere on the Ichetucknee River.
- Water lettuce has historically been treated as an exotic but in reality, it is a native plant. Dr. Jason Evans at the University of Florida has documented that ancient *Pistia* seeds found in Florida date back to 10,000 B.C.
- Manatees eat water lettuce.
- Water lettuce can form mats that make canoeing or paddling difficult. People need to be able to canoe and paddle the Ichetucknee because they need to experience the river before they will want to protect it.
- Given the above, our goal should be "trail clearing" for canoes and kayaks. Trail clearing should be done manually rather than with herbicides. Our goal should not be removal of all water lettuce found in the river.
- We need to educate people about our goals and why we have chosen them. Our message should focus on recognizing a new relationship with nature and the value of natural systems apart from human aesthetics ("nature can be messy"). The education effort should be multi-pronged (online, printed cards/brochures, public program, etc.).

Action Items. Lars will write an article about water lettuce that can be cross-posted on the Ichetucknee Alliance's website and his own blog, with links to be shared to various Facebook pages. Rhonda will maintain connections with staff members of the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission and maintain a list of volunteers from several groups, including the Ichetucknee Alliance; those volunteers can then recruit additional volunteers when Rhonda sends out a call to remove water lettuce. Lars and Amelia McKnight will be Rhonda's contacts for the Ichetucknee Alliance. Rhonda and Lu will talk about a public program similar to "Water Voices" that would have a focus on issues involving herbicides and water lettuce. We will continue to brainstorm ways to mount a multi-pronged education effort.

3. *Status of IA's legal appeal and funding.* Lu read an email from our attorney with an update on the appeal, which is making its way through the court system. All paperwork has been filed and action is expected within the next four months.

### **OFFICER REPORTS**

4. *Review/approval of September meeting minutes.* The minutes were approved with no changes.

5. *Staff Assistant's reports, September & October 2017.* There were no questions.

6. *Treasurer's report.* Jasmine reported that the Alliance currently has \$4,756.03.

7. *Membership Report.* Lu reported that as of 11/12/2017, we have a total of 81 members. Eric Flagg mentioned that he is encouraging people who might want to give him holiday gifts to purchase memberships or otherwise contribute to the Alliance—good idea!

### **OLD BUSINESS & UPDATES**

8. *Science Team update.* Jasmine reported that the monitoring team would be going out the day after Thanksgiving.

9. *T-shirt and hat sales update.* None to report, per Jasmine.

10. *Report on SRWMD meetings.* Lu reported that there has been no discussion of IA's legal appeal.

11. *PowerPoint presentation report.* Lu has purchased an adapter for her laptop and is working to resolve this problem. She encouraged others to think about giving presentations to various groups.

12. *Report on Columbia County Legislative Delegation meeting.* Lu reported that she went to the meeting, read our statement and provided printed copies to the legislators.

13. *Second opinion re: "vote for water" as opposed to "vote wisely" in IA messaging.* Tabled pending information from John.

14. *Follow-up on action items from September meeting minutes.*

- *Any leads on new members?* None reported.
- *Putting Amelia on email list for monitoring sessions.* Completed (Paul).
- *Correcting hat vs. t-shirt confusion on PayPal pages.* Still needs to be done. (Jasmine)
- *Use of #IchAlliance hash tag.* Mentioned.
- *Messaging: second opinion on legality of "vote for water."* See #13, above.
- *Billboard costs.* Lu reported on information received from Heather via email: "The range varies a bit...Lamar offers a 50% rate discount to non-profits. The rate listed is for 4-weeks, so the cost include a one-time billboard production and installation cost of about \$300-500 and a monthly cost of about \$350-475." Lu recommended, and others agreed, that a bigger "bang for the buck" would come from replacing the information signs at Cannon Sink and Rose Sink.
- *Release/waiver forms from FSI and Paddle Florida.* Lu reported those had been emailed to board members.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

15. *New Instagram page.* Paul reported that the new Instagram page, Ich\_Alliance, has 17 followers.

16. Possible action items related to discussions held on the basin tour with Jim Stevenson on Sept. 23:

- *Requesting money from Three Rivers Trust to hire an experienced person to help with land acquisition in the springshed (recommended by Jim).* Lu will stay in communication with Tom Kay of Alachua Conservation Trust and secure an estimate from him.
- *Replacing interpretive sign at Rose Sink and possibly Cannon Sink (recommended by Jim).* We agreed this was a good idea. Lu will research what needs to be approved and by whom.
- *Continuing the basin tours and/or creating a "basin tour experience" for people.* This will be an ongoing discussion.
- *Following up on establishment of the required restoration focus area for Ichetucknee.* Lu reported that follow-up information has been sent to board members and that Jim Stevenson recommends we monitor this process as the draft of the priority focus area moves toward becoming final when the revised BMAP is issued in 2018.

17. *Tabling at the 2018 Alligator Lake Spring Festival (April 14, 2018).* Lu expressed interest in "retiring" from tabling. Eric and others are interested in tabling, so Lu will let the Alligator Lake organizers know that IA will have a table. Jasmine mentioned that SpringsFest at Silver Springs is March 3-4, 2018, and we might want to

have a table there, too. Lu mentioned we have gotten a few members at the O'Leno Chili Cook-off and Springs Festival.

*18. Meeting schedule for 2018:* Tabled in lieu of information about John's availability. Lu will ask him, share that information, and ask others for their information so we can determine a schedule.

*19. Other new business:* Jasmine floated an idea for an "adopt a spring" program so that different people could adopt different springs to monitor for flow, clarity, pollution, and other conditions. She also offered space on the concrete slab under her house for storage of IA materials, a problem Lu had raised in emails, but there would be no climate control. Lu will ask Three Rivers Trust if they would consider paying for a small storage unit with climate control. If that is not acceptable, Lu will purchase plastic tubs and store the items on her back porch (not climate controlled).

20. The meeting was then adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lucinda Faulkner Merritt, Secretary