

## **Minutes of meeting of Natural Area Advisory Committee: 27 April 2006**

Thursday, 1:30-3:00pm, NATL pavilion. Members present were Cory Catts, Mark Clark (chair), Susan Jacobson, Marilyn Roberts, and Tom Walker. NATL TA Kevin Ratkus also attended.

### **1. State of NATL**

Mark Clark reported that he had no recent news relative to SNRE's request for \$25K to support NATL during FY2006-07.

The release of the CITF improvement funds is expected within a month or two. NATL is to get ca. \$100 for a self-guided nature trail in the public area of NATL-west and ca. \$67K for fencing parts of NATL-west and NATL-east. The major expense for the nature trail may be for a boardwalk across SEEP.

After seven years of planning, a weir has been constructed to control water flow from SEEP's forebay to the remainder of SEEP. This finally occurred through the efforts of PPD, the Wetland Club, and NATL TA Kevin Ratkus.

Tom Walker reported that the chances for a control burn of NATL's upland pine this season are rapidly diminishing and that Alan Long has suggested that it may be desirable to minimize understory growth this summer either by bush-hogging or careful herbiciding of woody species. The Committee suggested that a means be looked for to do controlled burns in NATL when long-term burn master Alan Long is unavailable.

### **2. TA report**

Kevin Ratkus reported on his activities during Spring Semester, as described in the attached handout.

### **3. Recognition of "Super Volunteers"**

At the 8 Dec 2005 NAAC meeting, Tom Walker proposed that NAAC recognize as "Super Volunteers" those volunteers who make truly exceptional contributions to the development and maintenance of NATL. He also proposed that Ken Prestwich be the first such volunteer recognized and passed out a sheet documenting Ken's contributions. The group discussed the proposals but no action was taken.

On 25 Apr 2006, Walker emailed NAAC members that he hoped that the award category and the first awardee could be approved at the 27 Apr 2006 meeting. He asked for suggestions and criticisms in hopes that final action could be taken at the upcoming meeting.

Walker reported that no suggestions or criticisms had been received and asked that action be taken to establish the award and to name Ken Prestwich NATL's first Super Volunteer. Using the text sent to all members on 25 April as the description of what he was proposing, Walker moved that the award be approved and NATL's first Super Volunteer named. The motion carried unanimously. The text used as the basis for this action was the email sent to all NAAC members on 25 Apr 2006 (copy attached to these minutes).

### **4. Fiscal report**

Tom Walker reported that the NAAC expense account had a balance of \$542.99 as of 27 April 2006. Income since the audit of 20 Apr 2005, when \$1108.43 was brought forward, was \$1000 from the Provost. Purchases since the 20 Apr 2005 totaled \$1565.44.

Purchases exceeding \$100 were \$150 for wiregrass slips, \$480 for signs, \$172.25 for Garlon 3A, and \$255.59 for a sprayer for basal stem application of herbicide. The committee approved spending up to \$300 for 1000 wiregrass slips to be planted in the upland pine ecosystem this summer.

#### **5. Changes in NAAC membership**

Early this spring, Deb DiPietro was replaced by Marilyn Roberts as one of the two representatives of Florida Museum of Natural History. Sally Wazny, the other FIMNH representative, is no longer employed there and is expected to be replaced by newly hired David Webb. Cory Catts, as new President of the Wetlands Club, replaces Elizabeth Hodges as representative of the Wetlands Club.

#### **6. Election of Chair for 2006-2007 School Year**

Mark Clark reported that no one had expressed an interest in becoming Chair of NAAC for the next school year and that he was willing to serve another term. The group voted unanimously to elect Mark NAAC chair for 2006-07.

TA handout at 27 April 2006 meeting.

### **NATL TA Highlights: Spring 2006**

- Introduced NATL to classes that request tours & kiosk demonstration
- 2 separate *Ardisia crenata* plant removals
  - SNRE, Wetlands Club, WEC, Entomology: NATL-West
  - Center for Leadership & Service: NATL-East
    - Dr. Alison Fox lecture on Non-native Invasive Plants
- Greek Volunteer Day (Center for Leadership & Service)
  - Fence removal: east trail/sinkhole pond
  - Trash clean-up (Sinkhole pond)
  - *Ardisia* removal (NATL-West)
  - Saved fence posts for trash fence for Central Pond
- Requested departments that use NATL to provide link to NATL's web site
- Critter-Proof Trashcan: coordinated design and prototype placed in NAP
- Trimmed perimeter of NATL's vegetation (obstructing sidewalks & roadways) to be more pedestrian/bike friendly
- SEEP's weir: coordinated design & construction (PPD & Wetlands Club)
- Draft of Master NATL Intro. power point provided to Dr. Clark & Dr. Walker
- General maintenance of NATL trails
- Attempted to get School of Building Construction's USGBC's student chapter to design, AutoCAD, and project cost estimate for the proposed Boardwalk through SEEP
- Helped coordinate student projects @ NATL
  - Not many happened due to no pine burn during semester
- Attend general NATL meetings
- Keep NATL Chair & NATL committee updated on events

**Email sent to NAAC on 25 Apr 2006.**

### **SUPER VOLUNTEERS**

Recognition of “super volunteers” is on the agenda of Thursday’s NAAC meeting. It was also an item on the agenda of the 8 Dec 2005 meeting, at which the idea was favorably received but no final action taken. I volunteered to see that the matter was brought to a conclusion by email, but events intervened and I failed to do it.

Some of you will miss the meeting on Thursday, so I’m sending this out beforehand to give everyone the opportunity to offer their suggestions and criticisms and in hopes that the matter can be concluded at Thursday’s meeting.

**WHAT IS A SUPER VOLUNTEER?**

During my tenure as NAAC Chair, I considered volunteers to be those who contributed to NATL in excess of what would be expected by virtue of their position (e.g., their being the Provost or a member of NAAC). A super volunteer would be a volunteer who contributed a significant excess over an extended time period.

**HOW SHOULD SUPER VOLUNTEERS BE IDENTIFIED?**

Anyone may propose that a person be recognized as a super-volunteer by submitting to the NAAC Chair a list of that person’s contributions to NATL. The proposal will be circulated by email and comments solicited. A vote will be taken by email after no email comments have been made for a week. No more than one person may be elected a super volunteer in any one school year.

**HOW SHOULD SUPER VOLUNTEERS BE HONORED?**

Super volunteers should be honored by having their contributions described and depicted in a special section of the NATL website and on a dedicated portion of the NATL academic kiosk. On the website, there will be no need to reduce the space devoted to early super volunteers as later ones are added. On the kiosk, early super volunteers may have to be identified only by name and year, with a reference to the full information on the website. At the discretion of NAAC other means of honoring a super volunteer may be used in addition to the two described above.

**PROPOSAL THAT KEN PRESTWICH BE NAMED NATL’S FIRST SUPER VOLUNTEER**

Attached is a summary of who Ken Prestwich is and what he had done for NATL by the time I made this proposal at the December 2005 NAAC meeting. (He continues to work toward restoring NATL’s upland pine almost daily while spending a portion of his sabbatical in Gainesville this spring.)

In addition to the two standard means of honoring Ken’s contributions, I propose that he be presented a plaque with this inscription (or something better phrased):

“Presented to Dr. Kenneth N. Prestwich in recognition of 11 years of volunteer work in the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory. This work greatly accelerated the restoration of the upland pine ecosystem and has led to a block in the restricted area being informally named ‘the Prestwich tract.’”

I’ll buy the plaque, because I understand that state funds are not to be used for awards. We’ll get in trouble with the Florida Foundation if we try to formally name a tract for Ken, but assuming NAAC goes along, I can make the informal designation and its basis a part of the upland pine section on NATL’s web site.

Tom W.

**Attachment to 25 Apr 2006 email sent to NAAC.**

## Ken Prestwich's volunteer work in the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory

Ken Prestwich is an Associate Professor in the Biology Department of the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. His PhD is from the Zoology Department, University of Florida. You can find more about Ken by going to his home page at <http://www.holycross.edu/departments/biology/website/biofaculty/bear.html>.

Every year since before the start of NATL, Ken has worked in my laboratory for a month to six weeks in May and June. Since 1995, most days during each visit, Ken works an hour or more doing what needs to be done next in NATL. From 1995 through 2002, I did not log Ken's work except occasionally when he reached some goal. Starting in 2003, in anticipation of making this proposal, I incorporated most of his work in a log of "actions taken" in NATL (<http://natl.ifas.ufl.edu/NATLlog2.doc>). Here is some of what he has done:

1995-1997 Help girdle laurel oaks in north block of public-area upland pine.

May 1997 Helped plant grass and forbs in public area upland pine

1998-2001 Extensive cutting and girdling of laurel oaks in the northern block of restricted-area upland pine. Accomplished so much that I started calling that area the "Prestwich tract."

1999 Ken and wife Cathy were the principal planters of the myrtle hedge along the west edge of DPI Trail.

2002 Extensive cutting and girdling of laurel oaks in the southern block of restricted-area upland pine

2003 Principal volunteer in planting 248 "one-gallon" longleaf pines in the public-area upland pine

2004 Principal volunteer in planting, mulching and watering 15 trees of 11 species in eastern portion of Natural Area Park and in planting 295 clumps of wire grass in the public-area upland pine.

2005 (24 May to 8 July) Principal volunteer in clearing 48 areas in public-area upland pine each of which was suited to receive 6 grass-stage or ready-to-shoot longleaf pines and in planting 288 such pines. Also principal volunteer in planting 50 two-gallon clumps of wire grass in north block of public-area longleaf pine. Planted three additional trees in Natural Area Park and fertilized and re-applied mulch to trees planted in 2004. Pruned the wax myrtle hedge along DPI fence. Worked on trail between Powell Hall service drive and NATL.

2005 (15 Nov to ca 10 Dec) Ken is on sabbatical this year and has recently returned to Gainesville for a few weeks and is once more working most every day in NATL.