

ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION, Inc.
Wildlife Committee Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 AM.

Members present: Debbie Yeager (Chair), Jim Peterfeso, Belinda Olsen, Don Olsen and Joan Gotthardt

Not Present: Patti Cowin, Cari Hale, Lynda Chamowitz, Jan Meades, and Steve Froggatt

Approval of the Minutes of the January 21, 2020 meeting was deferred until the March meeting due to the absence of so many members.

Sharks: The shark presentation by Katherine Baumgartner of Ocean Family Games will take place tomorrow at the Rotonda West Community Center at 1 PM.

Belinda mentioned that today's Englewood Sun contains an article "No shark soup from Florida fins" by David Whitley of the Orlando Sentinel. The article states that humans kill roughly 100 million sharks each year, many of which are subjected to an inhumane practice called "finning" in which the dorsal fin of a shark is cut off and the live shark is then thrown back into the water. The mutilated shark drowns or is eaten by predators. Finning has been banned in the U.S. since 2000, but fins can still be imported from countries without bans. Belinda said she would try to follow up with the article's author.

Gopher Tortoise Burrows: There was a general discussion concerning burrow marking. Patti has markers and signs for members that don't have any. At the next meeting we'll decide who will mark burrows for different sections of our community. As before when we were marking burrows, Jim indicated his willingness to use an app to show where marked burrows are located.

Iguanas: Several members voiced concern about iguanas taking over tortoise burrows. Iguanas have been seen in several areas of Rotonda West. It was mentioned that The Wildlife Center of Venice and Peace River Wildlife Center will humanely euthanize iguanas if homeowners will trap and bring them in. Jim volunteered to research what other Florida communities have done to control iguana populations. Jim said he would also research articles and potential costs. Members wondered if the BOD might take on this issue much like the effort to control Brazilian pepper trees. Debbie said she would talk to Patti, the Committee's Board member liaison, about this.

Display Boxes at Broadmoor Park: After a short discussion, members agreed that we need clarification about who has responsibility for loading pictures, etc. in the locked display boxes.

Additional Upcoming Presentations:

There will be a presentation on Wildlife Rescue To Release on March 20th, and a presentation on gopher tortoises in April. Cari has additional information about both presentations.

We will co-sponsor a coyote/bobcat presentation on May 21 from 6 to 7:30 PM in our Community Center. The newly formed Rotonda Sands Wildlife Committee is partnering with us for this presentation and Rhonda Douthett of FWC will be the presenter. The title of the presentation will be Urban Coyotes and Bobcats in Florida.

Advertising Presentations: Several methods were discussed including putting flyers on Facebook; asking David Kelly about posting flyers at Rotonda's golf courses; posting on the Next Door app, etc. Debbie said she would check into our advertising in the Waterline publication and also in the Community Briefs portion of the Englewood Sun. Some of these advertising possibilities would be free for us, while others would involve a small charge to post an ad. We will also explore the purchase of one or more "sandwich boards" to advertise much like they do for bingo at our Community Center.

Miscellaneous: Debbie mentioned that she would prefer our monthly meetings to be at 9:30 instead of 10:30. This will be explored further at the next meeting.

Jim and Stan will be in an upcoming WestWays article by Connie Smith. She's writing an article about the nature walks that occur monthly on the 4th Friday at Broadmoor Park. The walks scientifically record birds seen, etc. Jim will give Debbie's contact information to Connie. West Ways is published 6 times a year.

Debbie would like to create an ongoing list of the topics, speakers and dates of previous presentations sponsored by our committee. To that end, she asked all members to provide her with any information they have regarding past presentations.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 PM.
Our next meeting will be March 17, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Gothardt