

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes July 25, 2020; Updated August 25, 2020

Present:

Alan Meier, Bernie Buchholz, Betty Higby, Bill Kleiman, Charles Larry, Dee Hudson, Desiree Klimek, Emmylou Studier, Heather Baker, Heather Herakovich, Holly Jones, Jeff Cologna, Jim Higby, Joe Richardson, Joy McKinney, Kathy Lawrence, Kent Lawrence, Marilyn Carr, Mark Jordan, Mary Meier, Mary Vieregg, Mike Carr, Mike Saxton, Sandy Phillips, Stew Pagenstecher, Susan Kleiman, and Tim Sherck

Zoom Platform: The meeting took place via Zoom, an online video and audio sharing service.

Exhibits: Links to the exhibits shared during the meeting are posted on the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands 2020 Annual Meeting web page (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/friends-annual-meeting-2020.html>)

- [2019-2020 Treasurer's Report](#)
- [2019-2020 Endowment Balances and Distributions](#)
- [Recommendation to the Board – Cash Flow Designations: Gifts, Grants, CRP, and Endowments](#)
- [2019-2020 Donors and Donations](#)
- [“Bison Babies” Spring 2020 Fundraising Campaign Results](#)
- [Cash Flow Model](#)
- [2020 Board Candidates](#)
- [2019 Scientific Research Grant Reports Status](#)
- [2020 Scientific Research Grant Status](#)
- [Auditor's Report Financial Statement 2018-2019](#)
- [SAS Audit Letter](#)
- [Hamill Family Foundation Challenge Update](#)
- [Social Media Report – Website and Team Members](#)
- [Social Media Report – Facebook and MailChimp PrairieE-Updates](#)
- [Social Media Report – Friday Science, Instagram, Twitter, and Blog](#)
- [Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Donor Communication Strategy](#)
- [Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- [Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Donor Confidentiality Policy](#)

Opening: President Bernie Buchholz called the meeting to order at about 1:30 p.m., when all participants had successfully logged on.

Bernie first described the difference between Friends of Nachusa Grasslands (Friends) and Nachusa Grasslands/The Nature Conservancy (TNC). TNC owns and operates Nachusa Grasslands. Friends is a separate 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation committed to supporting Nachusa Grasslands. Many Friends members make financial gifts to both entities, recognizing that both have an important mission. Donations to TNC can be designated for the benefit of Nachusa Grasslands, if desired.

Bernie also stated that the Friends Bylaws establish that we are a strong Board-led organization. The voting members elect the Board of Directors, and then the Board makes

all the decisions affecting the group by a majority vote, after listening to the views expressed by the members.

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Voting Member Description from Bylaws: Any person may become a voting member who has either (i) been a volunteer at the Preserve for the full calendar year prior to the Annual Meeting, has contributed at least forty (40) hours during that year and has paid the annual dues; or (ii) been a volunteer at the Preserve for at least three (3) years of the preceding ten (10) years with a minimum contribution of forty (40) hours in each of those years and has paid the annual dues.

The members have decided that a donation of any amount qualifies as dues.

Bernie reviewed the Friends mission. We have three primary goals. We conduct and encourage stewardship, and we're collectively doing about 10,000 hours of stewardship each year. We also fund endowments that will help defray the cost of Nachusa's management, staff and operating expenses. We are trying to reach \$3 million, and we just surpassed \$2 million, so we are doing well in achieving our goal. In addition, Friends supports science at the project by awarding grants for scientific research, about \$210,000 to date.

Bernie noted that our Friends organization is doing very well and encouraged members to think big so that we can continue to grow in the future. We provide opportunities for everyone's skills and interests, and all contributions of time and treasure are appreciated.

Quorum: A quorum (10% of the 44 potential voting members) was established.

2019 Annual Meeting Minutes: The 2019 minutes were approved as presented.

Board of Directors Election: The membership elected Mike Carr and Heather Herakovich to two-year terms and Heather Baker to a one-year term. Descriptions of their involvement at Nachusa are provided in the "2020 Board Candidates" file on the Annual Meeting web page.

Jeff Cologna and Betty Higby were thanked for serving as Friends Directors. Bernie listed the many ways that Jeff and Betty have contributed to Friends and Nachusa efforts over the years.

Election of Officers by Board of Directors: The Board elected the following officers for one-year terms: President: Bernie Buchholz; Vice President: Mike Saxton; Vice President: Mary Vieregg; Treasurer: Mark Jordan; and Secretary: Mary Meier.

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Treasurer's Report 2019-2020:

Mark Jordan presented a revenue / disbursements / expenditures report covering July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020, as well as the proposed budget for July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.

Mark pointed out key details and highlights of the Treasurer's report:

2019-2020 Revenue and Disbursements:

Based on advice from our auditors that income received during the fiscal year should be attributed to that year regardless of when the funds were deposited in our checking account, the beginning balance of \$18,929.57 differs from the \$20,854 ending balance listed in the 2018-2019 Annual Report.

Mark will apply that accounting principle to all income going forward, so the amounts recorded in QuickBooks and NeonCRM (our donor management system) should now synchronize.

Total revenue from all sources was \$516,483.78, including cash donations, CRP payments, endowment income, grants, Amazon Smile proceeds, and t-shirt revenue.

Disbursements of \$491,623.74 were made to the CFNIL Endowment, science grants and symposium, Nachusa operations via TNC, stewardship, other organizations, and t-shirt expenses.

Bernie explained that \$100,000 of the grants to other organizations was a pass-through from a donor who wanted to help pay for a forestry mower for the Middle Rock Conservation Partners (MRCP) by donating to Friends. We then sent the funds on to MRCP. This was an unusual situation, and we don't expect it to happen again.

Mary M. noted that no donations to the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands managed by TNC were shown on the statement, even though \$7,856 was designated for that endowment during the past fiscal year. Mark has now sent that amount to TNC, and Mark and Mary will work together to make sure that all of this coming year's special designations are honored during the fiscal year in which they are made.

Other expenses included government fees, auditing fees, insurance, and development.

The development category includes expenses related to fundraising, donor acknowledgments, publications, and social events, such as the 2019 annual meeting meal and the Prairie Potluck (cancelled for 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Total expenses are very low at only 4% of our revenue due largely to the fact that all of our administrative tasks are performed by volunteers. Therefore, 96% of our revenue goes to the initiatives that directly fund our mission: our endowments, science grants, and stewardship activities. Mary M. said that she has included this information on various donation-related web pages and encouraged everyone to share that very impressive statistic with others.

2020-2021 Proposed Budget:

Mike Carr asked about the anticipated \$325,000 in cash donations and the \$210,000 in anticipated grants. Because of the pass-through \$100,000 we received last year, he wondered if these figures are realistic.

Mark and Bernie reviewed the proposed income amounts and determined that the budgeted revenue was correct as presented, and the Board subsequently approved the Budget.

Science grants will increase to a maximum of \$49,000 in 2021.

Appended to the end of these Minutes and linked to the annual meeting website is the final budget approved by the Board of Directors.

Cash Flow Chart: To help members and supporters better understand the sources and utilization of Friends income and the role of the Board of Directors in directing the money to the appropriate funds, the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Cash Flow Model was distributed and discussed.

Heather Baker asked about CFNIL Endowment distributions funding “other expenses.” Bernie explained that we have included that option as a placeholder in case the Directors decide to use distributions for a purpose that isn’t considered Nachusa operations. Grants to other organizations or donations to TNC fundraising projects not related to operations could also fit into this category, although we believe supporting local peer organizations benefits Nachusa.

Grants Received: Friends worked on several grant projects last year:

Illinois Clean Energy Foundation (ICE): In the spring of 2018, Friends was approved for the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation’s Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Program, which encourages increased local support and participation in habitat care by providing grant funds as a match to local dollars raised and labor donated. In August 2019, we received the final payment of \$2,000 for 100 volunteer hours logged on promoting the grant project site and stewardship workdays on social media. The Social Media Team publicized the project on the website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram with announcements, blogs, and photos.

In the spring of 2020, Friends was approved for another Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation’s Community Stewardship Challenge Grant Program, which encourages increased local support and participation in habitat care by providing grant funds as a match to local dollars raised and labor donated. Each grant provides possible payments under three categories: (1) a 3 to 1 match on cash received from individual donors, not to exceed a grant payment of \$21,000; (2) two payments for volunteer hours – \$4,000 for 400 volunteer hours logged on habitat, and \$2,000 for 100 volunteer hours logged on promoting the grant project site and stewardship work days on social media [the Social Media Team decided not to pursue this aspect of the challenge, although the challenge will be publicized on various platforms]; and (3) an equipment reimbursement of 80% not to exceed \$5,000. The current project is located at Stone Barn Savanna and is being coordinated by Mike Carr and Mark Jordan. The grant funds will be used to dramatically reduce invasive shrubs via spot application of herbicide. Once the invasive shrubs are under control, prescribed fire can successfully limit their regrowth. Overseeding of native savanna species will also take place.

Tawani Foundation: In 2017 and 2018, Friends conducted a social media fundraising campaign spearheaded by Mike Saxton for a 1:1 \$30,000 Tawani Foundation Challenge Grant for scientific research funding. We received the second \$10,000 match in July 2019 and the third and final installment in July 2020 (the last one will be included in the 2020-2021 Treasurer's Report).

Hamill Family Foundation: Friends is engaged in several different challenges sponsored by the Hamill Family Foundation (HFF), which were discussed later in the meeting.

The definition of "grants" is under discussion regarding how to categorize donations from charitable foundations that individuals or families have set up as a financial mechanism for making tax-free gifts. Mark is working with the auditors on this topic.

Endowment Balances and Distributions: Friends has two Endowments, both with permanent principal.

The Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment was set up in 2009 through an agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

The Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands, held and managed by the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL), was established in 2014 at the request of donors who prefer local control of their gifts.

Endowments do not permit withdrawal any of the endowment funds (other than annual distributions) or transfer of the balances to other endowment managers, regardless of the wishes of our Board of Directors or other members, ensuring that the donors' intent will be permanently honored. Annual distributions primarily benefit Nachusa Grasslands by partially funding operations at the preserve.

Our goal for the combined endowments is \$3,000,000, which will yield approximately \$145,000 per year to support stewardship at Nachusa. As of June 30, 2020, the total of our two endowment funds was \$2,172,857, so we have exceeded two-thirds of our goal. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, distributions from both endowments were about \$62,534 and are expected to increase in future years, as the annual payout is typically 4.5 to 5% of each endowment balance, based on historical multi-year balances.

Jeff asked if distributions will ever exceed operating costs at Nachusa, which are estimated at about \$900,000 per year. We would need to endow several million more to achieve that amount of distributions, so such a development is highly unlikely.

Gifts, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Endowment Cash Flow Designations: Because (1) the CFNIL Endowment has generated dramatically higher returns than the TNC endowment and (2) the CFNIL distributions are controlled by Friends, the Board of Directors approved the following rules for handling cash flow for the 2020-2021 fiscal year:

After expenses are paid and donor designations are honored, all revenue will be directed to the CFNIL Endowment. All CRP receipts will also go to the CFNIL endowment.

The 2020-2021 endowment distribution from CFNIL will be paid by Friends to TNC for operations at NG. This distribution is projected to exceed \$40,000 and is expected by the end of September.

Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment: The balance in the Nachusa Grasslands Stewardship Endowment (TNC Endowment) was \$715,824 as of June 30, 2020. TNC makes distributions to itself from the TNC Endowment without direction from Friends. Distributions, however, are used by TNC to fund Nachusa operations.

Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands: The balance in the Friends Endowment for Nachusa Grasslands (CFNIL Endowment) was \$1,457,033 as of June 30, 2020. Distributions from CFNIL are paid to the Friends and used as determined by the Friends' Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors approved this proposal in early July 2020. A copy is linked to the annual meeting website.

Audit: In the State of Illinois, a certified audit is required if a nonprofit has gross contributions that exceed \$300,000, which occurred in 2018-2019. Therefore, in the fall of 2019, Friends engaged Wipfli LLP, CPAs and Consultants of Rockford, Illinois, to perform an audit. Wipfli also prepared our 2019 tax return. The audit was quite complicated, due to several record-keeping issues which have now been resolved. As a result, the \$3,750 cost predicted in the 2019-2020 budget increased to \$7,500. The fees should be considerably less this year, so \$6,200 has been estimated.

As noted above, Mark will follow the auditors' advice regarding our basis of accounting and begin allocating donations to the fiscal year in which mailed checks were postmarked instead of when they were deposited in our checking account.

The auditors stated that they encountered no difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing their audit. They had to make significant journal entries in order to balance the accounting records and also made prior period adjustments in order to have the beginning balances agree.

Concerns about our internal controls, mainly segregation of duties, were noted by the auditors in a letter that accompanied the Financial Statement:

Condition – General Ledger Segregation of Duties:

The size of the Organization's staff in charge of accounting and reporting functions indicates a lack of segregation of duties over: general ledger accounting, expense transaction record keeping, revenue and cash receipt and disbursement transaction record keeping and monthly financial statement preparation. The basic premise is

that no one individual should have access to both physical assets and related accounting records or to all phases of a transaction.

Potential Effect:

Without adequate segregation of duties, the likelihood of unauthorized or false transactions will be prevented or detected in a timely fashion is significantly diminished which may result in misstated financial statements.

Mark pointed out that our policy of requiring two authorized Directors or Officers sign all checks is the main way we prevent fraudulent transactions. Mike C. and Betty both commented that our small, all-volunteer organization does the best we can to ensure the integrity of our financial and accounting information, promote accountability, and prevent malfeasance.

We also recently invested in a QuickBooks subscription, which will considerably enhance our accounting practices going forward.

Bernie and Mike C. expressed appreciation for Mark's efforts regarding our audit as well as improved record-keeping. Both referenced documents are linked to the annual meeting website.

Volunteer Development: Bernie reported that several new volunteers have been helping out with workdays, equipment and vehicle upkeep, and facilities management. We always strive to welcome and mentor folks interested in volunteering at Nachusa, so please encourage others to become involved.

Volunteer Workdays: Mary M. explained that we are now requiring workday volunteers to register in advance via SignUpGenius. This year we began Thursday workdays in addition to ones on Saturdays. Steward leaders are needed for several upcoming workdays, so please volunteer via SignUpGenius if you are willing to lead. Training and tasks will be provided to new leaders. COVID-19 safety protocols have been established and are being followed by all volunteers.

Volunteer Introductory Sessions: Susan developed a monthly program introducing Nachusa to potential volunteers at different times and on different days. She will look into promoting the opportunities in local papers.

Citizen Science: Mary Vieregg leads the Stream Monitoring team, Cindy Crosby leads the Dragonfly Monitoring team, and Susan Kleiman and Paul Swanson monitor frogs at several sites on the preserve. All of these efforts contribute to our scientific understanding of Nachusa's ecosystem.

Donor Development:

Total 2019-2020 Donations to Friends Recorded in NeonCRM: \$411,770

- TNC Endowment: \$7,856
- CFNIL Endowment: \$62,133

- Science Grants: \$29,930
- Undesignated: \$311,852

Increase in Donations from 2018-2019: \$80,952 (+21%)

Donation Tender Types:

- Check/Cash Donations: 198 \$384,428
- Credit Card/E-Check/Wire Donations: 353 (many recurring) \$27,343

Donors:

- Total Donor Households: 2019-2020 – 285 [-12% from 2018-2019]
- New Donors: 2019-2020 – 86 [-9% from 2018-2019]

Donor Tiers:

- Restoration Benefactors – \$5,000 or more: 13
- Conservation Champions – \$1,500 to \$4,999: 16
- Supporters – \$1 to \$1,499: 256

Prairie Perennials (Donors who have given to the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands in consecutive years [July 1 through June 30] at the same or a higher level): 110

(We believe that because many donors gave an additional gift during the 2018-2019 Tenth Anniversary Campaign, the number of Prairie Perennials decreased from last year's 152)

Recurring Donors: 25 (up from 19 in 2018-2019)

Voting Members: 44 Nachusa volunteers donated to Friends during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Hamill Family Foundation Challenges:

New Volunteers/New Donors (Updated August 13 with new volunteer and donor numbers):

- Goal: A combination of 150 new donors, donations from donors who last gave three years ago, and new volunteers from November 1, 2019, to October 31, 2020
- Amount: \$100,000
- New Volunteers since November 1, 2019: 69
 - About 15 have volunteered more than once. Some have become regular volunteers, and one has stepped up as a unit steward.
- New Donors since November 1, 2019: 78
 - 44 from Spring 2020 "Bison Babies Broadcasts" Social Media Campaign
- Donors since November 1, 2019, who last gave at least 3 years ago: 17
 - At least 8 resulting from June 2020 *A Prairie Calling* newsletters, cover letters, and remitters to lapsed donors
- 69 + 78 + 17 = 164

- We have therefore exceeded our 150 goal, Bernie has reported the results to HFF prior to their fall board meeting.
- We continue to need many more volunteers to share their talents at Nachusa.
- Please send the names of new or prospective volunteers and their contact information to Mary M., so she can add them to our list.
- Friends has developed several new outreach efforts to encourage volunteerism and new donations, including orientation sessions, invitation and follow-up social media posts and emails, *A Prairie Calling* newsletters, *Prairie Primer* booklet gifts for new volunteers, and a welcome video.

Revenue Increase:

- Goal: Increase of \$100,000 over average revenues in the preceding five years (\$325,000) from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, excluding any donations from HFF.
- Amount: \$100,000
- Basically, we will receive the grant if our Fiscal Year 2020-2021 income is at least \$425,000.
- Our primary appeal will be part of our Annual Report mailing in November 2020 followed up by our February 2021 newsletter and another appeal closer to the end of the challenge period, if needed.

Total Volunteer Hours:

- Goal: 8,000 or more total volunteer hours to be logged from January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, including Friends Board and Officers organizational activities.
- Amount: \$100,000
- Starting January 1, 2022, stewards and other regular volunteers will need to record and report their hours. Friends will devise a system for doing so.
- Workday volunteer, tour leader, and day of AOTP hours can be exported from SignUpGenius.

HFF has also committed to giving Friends an additional \$100,000 outright grant for three years, starting with January 2020 (the first installment was already received). Friends is very grateful for the foundation's generous support of our mission.

Heritage Heroes Legacy Project: Heritage Heroes is a Friends initiative that encourages planned giving among Friends donors. To date, 17 couples or individuals have named or are committed to naming Friends in their estate plans or as a beneficiary of life insurance or retirement accounts – we added one this year. We are therefore very close to reaching our goal of 20 Heritage Heroes.

Communications:

Donor Communication Strategy: In early 2020, the Friends Board of Directors approved a Donor Communication Strategy, focusing mainly on our approaches to fundraising. A copy is linked to the Annual Meeting web page.

Bernie opined that both Friends and Nachusa provide our supporters with the feeling they are a part of a wonderful, rich, natural community where they are isolated from the

day-to-day bombardment of solicitations, promotions, and products. We generally only ask for donations during the fall with the Annual Report and in the spring with a targeted social media and/or mail campaign. We also sometimes follow up with donors who have not responded in the last few years. It's likely that this year, with having to stretch to fulfill the HFF donations increase goal, we may have to ask again before the end of the challenge period. We want each communication to our donors to be thoughtful, special, and personal, especially when we request financial support. Therefore, we don't promote donation opportunities via AmazonSmile (although we do have an account), other commercial enterprises, or Giving Tuesday.

Mike C. noted that our volunteer hours are limited, so we can't engage in all activities that might be profitable. We have to choose how to spend our time on the most appropriate, beneficial fulfillment of our goals.

Joe Richardson suggested that, since AmazonSmile has already been set up for Friends, we publicize the opportunity on our website Donations page. Bernie replied that doing so doesn't fit with our current Board-approved strategy.

Mike S. added that the small amount of increased income we'd receive from AmazonSmile by marketing it wouldn't be enough to warrant changing our fundraising strategy.

A *Prairie Calling* Newsletter: Dee reported that Friends began sending quarterly newsletters in early 2020. She is the designer, James Higby is the editor, and our first two authors were Bethanne Bruninga-Socolar, who wrote about bees in March, and Cindy Crosby, who wrote about dragonflies and damselflies in June. Another one about parasitic plants by Anna Scheidel was mailed in late August. By providing in-depth information and photographs related to various aspects of Nachusa, we stay in touch with our donors and volunteers. This is not considered a fundraising project, although we did include a remitter with newsletters sent to donors who had not supported us in the past few years.

Feedback has been very positive so far. Bernie and Dee invited others to join the project – contact them if you are interested. Dee especially requested assistance with taking the text provided and fine-tuning it into small, artful vignettes.

See <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/a-prairie-calling-print-and-digital.html> for links to PDF versions of the newsletters.

“Bison Babies Broadcasts” Social Media Campaign: Mary M. reported that, in the spring of 2020, Friends conducted a “Bison Babies Broadcasts” online fundraising campaign, focusing especially on encouraging new donors to support our Scientific Research Grant program. Volunteers created and posted three bison calving, viewing, and research videos on Facebook and other social media. Links to the videos are posted at <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/bison-babies-broadcast-videos.html>.

We raised \$5,305, which exceeded our \$5,000 goal. New donors totaled 44, including 8 new recurring donors. Total donations were 55. Each donor received a 5X8” bison print

by Dee Hudson, and recurring donors also received an 8X10” bison print by Dee. The cost of the campaign was about \$165. We will track the new donors to see if they continue to support Friends in the coming years.

Thank you to:

- Greg Baker – Videographer
- Tony Ross – Narrator
- Dee Hudson, James Warner, and Charles Larry – Photographers
- Mike Saxton – Social media coordinator
- Emmylou Studier and Marilyn Carr – Thank you note writers
- Mary Meier – Script author and producer

Annual Report: Our 2019–2020 Friends Annual Report will be called “Beauty at Scale” and will focus on looking at Nachusa from both macro- and micro-perspectives. Writings, photographs, and artwork are being contributed by Nachusa Grasslands volunteers and supporters.

Thank You Notes: Emmylou reported that she and Marilyn took over responsibility for sending handwritten thank you notes to our donors in the summer of 2019 (noting that it took two people to replace Betty’s efforts). Photo cards that include the Friends’ mission statement and contact information were previously mailed to everyone who gave over \$100, and, in February 2020, they began sending them to donors who give under \$100 as well. This past year, 311 notes were mailed. Turnaround time from when Mary M. sends a formal donation acknowledgment is less than 3 days.

Bernie and Betty both commended Emmylou and Marilyn for carrying on with this very powerful way in which we build goodwill and stay connected with our donors.

Appreciation Books for New Donors: Marilyn also mails *The Prairie – Swell and Swale* book Torkel Korling to first-time donors who have given over \$25. To date, she has mailed 85 books, and Mary M. recently notified her of a few more recent donors. We have about 300 in stock, and each book costs approximately \$4 to mail.

Mike S. commented that the Korling book was Bob Betz’s motivation for his initial exploration of prairies. He became a pioneer in prairie preservation, so our utilization of this publication is a very fitting way to welcome new donors.

Social Media Team: The Social Media Team consists of Dee Hudson, Mary Meier, Jeff Cologna, Joy McKinney, Heather Herakovich, and Erin Rowland. Charles Larry doesn’t attend our meetings, but he continues to contribute marvelous photographs to our social media platforms. We welcome new members, especially ones interested in helping out with our Twitter, Instagram, and Blog posts.

Friday Science Posts: Friends began this new type of social media post in September 2019, and thus far there have been a total of eight. They don’t occur every Friday, but whenever there’s some interesting science to showcase. The green section design remains the same from post to post while compelling photos are used with a short

amount of text. The posts are created by a collaborative effort between the scientists, Elizabeth Bach, and Dee. Friday Science posts have been a great way to draw attention to all the scientific research grants that Friends funds.

Instagram (Nachusa; <https://instagram.com/nachusa?igshid=aq74ny20ovk>): Dee also reported that 30 Instagram posts were made since our last annual meeting, and Instagram has gained another 390 followers, for a total of 1,389. With Heather Herakovich and Erin Rowland recently joining the Social Media Team, she is looking forward to spending more time on Instagram and significantly increasing our followers during the next year. A new volunteer from Chicago on one of her workdays discovered Nachusa due to Instagram, so it has been successful at reaching interested people. In the coming year she wants to continue to build an awareness and appreciation of Nachusa through this particular social media. Another goal for this next year would be to switch to a business Instagram account so that we have some analytics information. Ones featuring two bison calves and autumn along the Stone Barn Savanna trail received the most likes last year.

Twitter (@Nachusa; <https://twitter.com/nachusa>): Since our last annual meeting, 172 posts were made, and Twitter has gained another 290 followers, for a total of 1,289. The top tweet was on the sandhill cranes nesting at the preserve. With Heather Herakovich's help, Dee is looking forward to expanding our Twitter presence. She noted that Nachusa's scientists mention us on Twitter frequently, especially regarding the bees at Nachusa.

Blog (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/nachusa-blog.html>): Fourteen blogs were posted, written by eleven different authors. Varied topics included: Blanding's turtles, fritillary butterflies, bison, small mammals, snakes, reed canary grass, the fire refresher, science coding, the new crew, the 2019 planting, Tellabs through the entire year, Nathaniel and Amanda, and the year in photos. The blog averages 185 readers per post, determined by the number of readers that click the "like" button found at the end of each post. The most popular post was written last fall by Charles Larry, with the help of Bill Kleiman. A total of 349 readers "liked" this post. It was titled "To Everything There Is a Season," and it walked the reader through an entire year at Tellabs, discussing the importance of fire to natural landscapes. Dee is the blog coordinator, and James Higby is our editor.

Facebook: Mary M. reported that the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Nachusa>) has about 6,500 followers, reaching about 15,000 users each month. Mary M., Dee, and Charles update the page frequently with beautiful photos, workday news, blog posts, and links to other items of interest. We are always careful to project a good impression of what happens at Nachusa.

Charles is the administrator for the Photography at Nachusa Grasslands Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/356617574475489/?ref=bookmarks>). He has about 1,100 followers who post a variety of photos of flowers, birds, and bison.

Prairie-Updates (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/prairiendashupdate-email.html>): Mary M. is the newsletter editor and writes about various interesting happenings at

Nachusa. From August 2019 to July 2020, she sent out 8 emails to 960 subscribers via Mailchimp. Usually 50% of our emails are opened, which exceeds our average peers' performance by about 10%.

Website (www.nachusagrasslands.org): Mary M. noted that the Friends' website receives quite a bit of traffic and is continually under development. In the past year, we had about 24,000 page views by 11,000 unique visitors.

Both Bernie and Betty complimented the team on crafting high-quality social media messages accompanied by terrific photography.

Science Grant Program

Science Awards: Mary V. shared that the reports from most of the 2019 researchers are linked to their project titles on <http://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2019.html> and are very well written and fascinating. Because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, two researchers have been given extensions in completing their findings.

In 2020, Friends funded 12 researchers with a total of \$47,782 in grants. However, one recipient had to decline his award because of COVID-19 pandemic travel restrictions, so the total awarded was actually \$46,782. For a list of researchers and their projects, see <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2020.html>.

Additionally, \$3,500 was received from the Etnyre Foundation to support research by Holly Jones' lab at Northern Illinois University regarding Evidence-Based Restoration Practices at Nachusa Grasslands. Thank you to Bernie and Holly for pursuing this funding.

Mary V. encouraged attendees to review the list of potential research projects posted on <https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/potential-research-topics.html> and make additional suggestions immediately, so they can be included in the 2021 grant application invitation sent to her mailing list. Eight of the topics currently listed on the page are already being addressed in recent projects, so applicants are definitely referring to the ideas when developing their projects. Please email suggestions to nachusafriendsscience@gmail.com as soon as possible.

The 2021 maximum award amount will be \$49,000. Guidelines and applications were uploaded to the Friends' website (<https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2021.html>) and emailed to prospective researchers and their advisors in mid-August. We do not know how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect applications this year.

Bernie expressed thanks from all the members for Mary V.'s continuing dedication to the science program at Nachusa Grasslands.

Science Symposium: Elizabeth Bach coordinates the annual Science Symposium with support from Friends. The next symposium is scheduled for April 24, 2021.

Administrative Items and New Business:

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policies: As required by our Bylaws, the Directors and Officers acknowledged that they had all read and were in compliance with the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Conflict of Interest Policy. Friends also has a Donor Confidentiality Policy, which the Directors and Officers have reviewed. Both are linked to the annual meeting website.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): The Federal government reimburses landowners for reserving tillable acreage for wildlife habitat and soil conservation. Friends currently leases 279.4 acres in four CRP contracts (139 acres of totally restored prairie; 94.6 acres of partially restored prairie, all at least over seeded with combine mix; and 45.7 acres of unrestored CRP land) from TNC for this purpose and is responsible for monitoring and managing the land.

Mike Carr administers the CRP program. He reported that all the areas have been swept for noxious weeds and woody shrubs, so we are in compliance with management requirements. In two years, we will be losing our Clear Creek CRP property. Bill has been working with Mike to make sure we can add TNC-owned land so that Friends can receive the full \$50,000 maximum allowed from the USDA. Bernie reminded him to contact our liability insurance agent to make sure our coverage is up to date.

Friends T-Shirt Initiative: Heather Baker is now coordinating our t-shirt program. Her 2020 design features a rusty-patched bumblebee on the front and our Friends logo on the back of each shirt. The shirts have been delivered and are in the Barn loft. Since Autumn on the Prairie isn't taking place this year, selling them will be a challenge.



Kent Lawrence asked if we could offer them via the website. Since we sell our t-shirts at our cost, rather than for profit, we can sell the shirts year-round, without any sales tax issues. Betty mentioned considering the human resources needed to do so, and Dee suggested selling them at workdays. Bernie offered his opinion that we could just save them for next year. Heather will look into various options.

TNC-Nachusa Grasslands Updates by Bill Kleiman:

Building Construction: Nachusa is contracting with Morton Buildings for a structure to replace the one that burned down earlier this year. Construction should begin this fall and be completed by next year's fire season.

The new building will have a concrete floor, and be larger, insulated, and heated. There will be spaces for crew and steward seed processing as well as a room for scientists.

Minor modifications to the Headquarters Barn are also planned.

Mary M. asked about TNC fundraising for the new building. Friends as well as individuals will be invited to donate to the project. Bernie mentioned that we are frequently asked by TNC to support specific initiatives, which we usually decline, because we don't budget such gifts as part of our mission to build endowments.

Science at Nachusa: Bill offered kudos to Elizabeth for continuing to enhance the science program at Nachusa and mentioned that she has been publishing and engaging in several nation-wide science projects. Holly Jones and Nick Barber were recently awarded National Science Foundation grants for research at Nachusa as well.

Bernie emphasized that Friends' increasing support of science at Nachusa is very significant in this endeavor.

2021 Annual Meeting: The next Friends Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, July 31, 2021, hopefully, in person.

Closing Remarks: Sandy Phillips commented on how impressed she is by Friends and that she enjoyed learning about all our activities during the meeting. Bernie thanked our former and current Board members again as well.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Meier, Secretary
August 25, 2020

Friends of Nachusa Grasslands Treasurer's Report July 2020

Budget and Actual Results:	2019-2020 Actual	Percent of Actual	2019-2020 Budget	Variance	Proposed 2020-2021 Budget	Percent of Budget
Beginning Balance	18,929.57		18,929.57		43,744.61	
Revenue						
Cash Donations	324,614.78	62.9	220,000.00	94,324.78	325,000.00	51.8
CRP Annual Payments	50,000.00	9.7	50,000.00	0	50,000.00	8
CFNIL Endowment Distribution	37,718.08	7.3	20,000.00	17,718.00	42,000.00	6.7
Grant Income	102,000.00	19.7	10,000.00	92,000.00	210,000.00	33.5
Amazon Smile Income	157.92	< 1%	100	57.92	100	< 1%
T-Shirt Income	1,993.00	< 1%	3,000.00	-1007	200	< 1%
Total Revenue	516,483.78	100	303,100.00	203,093.78	627,300.00	100
Disbursements						
In Direct Support of Our Mission Statement						
Gifts to TNC Nachusa Endowment	0	0	25,000.00	25,000.00	15,000.00	2.3
Gifts to CFNIL Nachusa Endowment	275,000.00	58.3	180,000.00	95,000.00	520,000.00	79.6
Science Grants and Symposium	49,012.18	10.4	45,500.00	3,512.18	49,000	7.5
Nachusa Operations via TNC	37,718.08	8	20,000.00	17,718.00	42,000.00	6.4
Stewardship	7,057.44	1.5	3,000.00	4,557.44	3,000.00	< 1%
Grants to Other Organizations	100,500.00	21.3	2,500.00	98,000.00	3,000.00	< 1%
T-Shirt Expenses	2,492.46	< 1%	2,500.00	-7.54	2,500.00	< 1%
Other	44.92	< 1%	0	44.92	0	0
Subtotal	471,825.08	96	278,500.00	193,325.08	634,500.00	97.2
Expenses						
Banking Fees	0	< 1%	80	-80	0	0
Government Fees	138	< 1%	70	68	70	< 1%
Auditing Fees	7,500.00	1.7	3,750.00	3750	6,200.00	< 1%
Insurance	2,252.00	< 1%	2,200.00	52	2,200.00	< 1%
Development	9,908.66	2	10,000.00	-91.14	10,000.00	1.5
Subtotal	19,798.66	4	16,100.00	3698.66	18,470.00	2.8
Total Disbursements	491,623.74	100	294,600.00	197,023.74	652,970.00	100
Ending Cash Balance	43,744.61		27,429.57		18,074.61	