

# Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

#27 - April 8, 2003

## **Alliance Holds Special "Centennial" Meeting**

Members and Officers of the Blue Goose Alliance held a special meeting on March 16, 2003, in Sebastian, Florida. The meeting date and location were scheduled to coincide with the celebration of the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System in and around Sebastian. Nearby Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, created by Presidential Order of Theodore Roosevelt on March 14, 1903, was the first refuge in the Refuge System.

President Noreen Clough reported that contacts with staffs of Senators and Members of Congress had increased considerably. More contacts are proposed and pending. Alliance members are expanding efforts to inform and educate representatives and their staffs.

Mike Daulton reported that there are very few copies of Audubon's Hidden Lands brochures left. The Alliance decided to reproduce the brochure to ensure an adequate supply to fill future needs. These will be black and white copies and will not have the visual impact of the original brochures. But, the message remains the same.

John Oberheu reported that the booth at Loxahatchee on February 8th was successful. There was much interest shown and some important contacts made. This affair, an annual event hosted by the Everglades Audubon Society, was held at the Arthur R. Marshall--Loxahatchee NWR and attended by several thousand birders and other outdoor enthusiasts. BGA members Noreen Clough, John Oberheu, Burkett Neely, and Phil and Karen Morgan set up a display booth and passed out BGA literature and answered questions. Several folks signed up for BGA membership and other important contacts were made.

The Alliance has been working to meet the requirements for inclusion in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). The final hurdles are expected to be crossed in time for inclusion in the fall campaign. The CFC could be an important source of funding of Alliance activities.

Another source of funding which was reported on is the numerous foundations which make grants to environmental non-profit organizations. Unfortunately, the downturn in the market has placed severe restrictions on the amount of available grant money in these foundations. Nonetheless, the Alliance will continue to pursue grant applications where ever the opportunity exists.

An Alliance policy provided for the naming of deserving individuals to an Honorary Board. In considering the desired function of this Board, Alliance members decided that it should be more appropriately titled the Advisory Board since the intent is to seek guidance and advice from notable individuals. This change in policy was approved by the membership.

There was considerable discussion of the need to reach out to Friends groups with our message. Fundamental in this discussion was the Alliance's intent not to be divisive, but to inform Friends groups of the long range benefits to the Refuge System and their

individual refuges of separate agency status. Don Redfearn and Clay Hardy will co-chair a committee to develop and implement strategy for contacting, educating, and working with Friends groups

The membership reaffirmed the critical importance of bringing other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into the Alliance in support of the BGA mission. Additional strategies and task assignments were adopted for contacting, informing, and educating specific NGOs.

A number of other individual strategies were discussed with some being tasked for implementation.

The membership agreed that the 2004 Annual Meeting will be held on January 24-25 on the Texas Gulf Coast. The exact location and other details will be announced as plans become firm.

Although not a part of the regular meeting, the Alliance took advantage of an opportunity to host a public information display at a grand celebration of the birth of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Many people had a hand in arranging the celebration but none more so than the local staff of Pelican Island and Merritt Island Refuges and the Pelican Island Preservation Society. There were dozens of booths, many from Refuges throughout the United States. There were speeches by dignitaries and entertainment by local school groups and Disney's Voices of Liberty. 'President Theodore Roosevelt' appeared as did Jack Hanna of Wild Animal Adventures. The U. S. Postal Service had a First Day of Issue Ceremony and the U. S. Mint presented its plans for a commemorative coin series. A massive fireworks celebration capped the March 14th celebration. Nearby, several hundred Service retirees gathered for their annual reunion, and the managers of Region 4 Refuges held a regional conference.

The festivities continued through the weekend and were attended by several thousand visitors. The Alliance booth received a lot of attention; and we signed up some new members, got a few donations, and made some important contacts.

Several photographs of the weekend's activities may be viewed below.