

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

#43 - April 15, 2005

Report of 2005 Annual Meeting

The Blue Goose Alliance held its annual meeting at the Hampton Inn, Covington, Louisiana, on March 10 - 12, 2005. The meeting was attended by an excellent representation of affiliates from across the country.

President Reffalt reported that the amended bylaws dated February 15, 2005, are now functional. The previous bylaws had been edited to clarify language and remove ambiguities and were approved electronically by the affiliates. He thanked several affiliates for their work on them. Copies of the signed bylaws were distributed to each attendee. The outgoing Secretary has filed the new bylaws with the IRS.

Reffalt also summarized the positions taken by the Alliance on individual refuge problems since the last annual meeting, particularly those problems that could affect the entire system. These positions and actions have generally been reported in previous issues of the Bulletin. In addition, there was considerable discussion of other issues in which the Alliance may want to become involved in the coming year.

Discussion of outreach strategy centered on which organizations support Alliance goals and which ones might be willing to support Alliance goals given the proper incentive. Congressional strategy and priority targets will focus on members of committees and subcommittees that are most involved with refuge affairs.

Vice President Martin reported on progress in the development of a Vision/New Horizons document for a National Wildlife Refuge Service. Several drafts had been produced and there was spirited discussion by attendees about the document's purpose, audience, contents, and issues to be addressed. Two affiliates volunteered to review the existing drafts in light of other documents, such as Fulfilling the Promises, and report back to the board by May 15, 2005.

A nominating committee presented a slate of nominees for officers and Directors, either for those whose terms were expiring or to establish new positions. These nominees were approved by the attendees. They are:

Officers:

Vice President: Burkett Neeley
Vice President, Communications: Les Beaty
Secretary: Joe White
Treasurer: Gail Fishman

Directors:

Ed Crozier
Charles Danner
John Doebel
Bill Grabill
Phil Morgan
Don Redfearn
Evelyn Redfearn

During a break in meeting proceedings, the group was treated to a guided tour of the Big Branch Marsh NWR on the north shore of Lake Ponchartrain. This refuge was created in 1994 and is still in the acquisition phase. It is thus one of the newest refuges in the country. Its 13,000 acres are representative of how the fast-changing Lake Ponchartrain shoreline once looked. Winding bayous thread their way through pine forests, cypress swamps, and fresh and salt marshes on their way to the lake. In addition to its normal component of resident and migratory water bird species and upland wildlife, the refuge is home to several active nesting colonies of the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the gloomy news which has surfaced at individual refuges throughout the year, meeting attendees departed with a renewed dedication to advancing the Alliance cause in the coming year. Recognizing that accomplishment of the Alliance's mission will not be easy, affiliates are nonetheless committed. To borrow a quote intended for a different audience and purpose, the attendees left with the conviction, "If not us, who? If not now, when