

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for March 22, 2014

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (president), M. Soderberg (vice-president), B. Breen (treasurer), S. Breen, S.Perry, D. Weiser

Also present: M. Schmidt (volunteer coordinator)

President's comments on Park Manager

• We note with regret the departure of Park Manager Jason Zimmerman (promoted to DCNR Assistant Regional Manager). He is also still our “acting” Manager pending assignment of a new person. No word on who or when, but we certainly hope to have a new Manager “soon” as we head towards the busy summer season.

Treasurer's report

- Current balance = \$30,677 (detailed report available upon request).
- In the first 3 months of the year, we took in \$3,475 which includes memberships and merchandise sales. Expenditures of \$2,967 include previously budgeted items for 2014 such as donations to local fire companies that assist at Park events; purchase of sales items including bumper stickers and the new embroidered patch; and a power sprayer for Park to use to control invasive plants.
- Board approved expenditures to support Iron Run race timer and the Ironmaster's Mansion (see below).
- Other significant outlays of funds already budgeted for 2014 are still to come: examples include the furnace repair project; purchase and installation of a playground set at the Family Campground in the next few months; and preparations for our major annual events such as the Iron Run race and Fall Furnace Fest.

Furnace repairs

- Contractor had to delay start due to weather (ground next to stack was too soft to support equipment).
- Their current plan is to start Monday March 31, but may be delayed further if necessary.
- Friends president issued a press release with assistance from PPF, as required by the mini-grant.

Iron Run half-marathon & Charcoal Challenge 5k races, June 7th

- Update from Sheena our race director.
- Still need to arrange more sponsors for this event (long list from last year, many still to be contacted).
- Working on required DCNR paperwork and insurance. Discussion of extending insurance purchase to cover both events, not just the portion in the State Forest (the half-marathon). Based on legal advice from PPF, Board agreed to purchase \$75 insurance for both events (\$150 total) even if not strictly required by DCNR.
- Volunteer planning for race day is progressing well.
- Board agreed, as we did at a previous meeting, to donate \$500 to the volunteer chip timer who has helped with past races. Timing is a significant hassle to arrange in any other way. We should make it a regular practice to donate to the timer for his efforts at each year's race. Treasurer authorized to send check via PPF.
- Need to put up race fliers on local bulletin boards. President will post around Harrisburg, for example.
- 5k Charcoal Challenge advertising will be altered to promote registered walkers in addition to runners.

Assistance to Central Pennsylvania Conservancy/Ironmaster's Mansion

- Friends received a request to help sponsor the major annual fundraiser for the Mansion: their set of races (15k, 25k, and 50k) on Sunday April 27th. See www.ironmasterschallenge.com. We were asked to assist with money, and with people to help staff a water station/checkpoint. Note that our 2014 budget already earmarked \$2000 to support Mansion-related issues.
- Board agreed to donate \$1000 for the race.
- Also agreed to donate \$1000 for the Goddard Leadership Legacy summer camp.
- We will need **volunteers** from Board and perhaps some Friends members to staff a race water station.
- This is a nice way to promote partnership between major entities at our Park. We should discuss our respective fundraisers further with Central Pennsylvania Conservancy for mutual aid in 2015 and beyond.

Warrior Hikers on the Appalachian Trail, June 15th

- Request from the Park to support a special event for veterans hiking the A.T. (<http://warriorhike.com/>). This year's group of hikers will be met by supporters at a "meet-and-greet" cookout which may include a local Marine Corps League detachment, a girl scout troop, local high school sports team, etc. Friends asked to supply burgers & franks to supplement shared foods from organized groups; Board agreed to support this event. Our president will attend to represent us and probably will run a small sales table (hats and patches etc.)

Firewood

- Sale of firewood at the campground remains a major source of funding for the Friends, but also a significant amount of labor – most notably to bundle with twine. As usual, Bill (our Treasurer) and Sue B. have been putting in enormous amounts of time. We held a firewood work session on March 15th: special thanks to Tom Heckles, Mike Rish, and Margy and Jeff Schmidt for joining four Board members to tie more than 150 bundles.
- It's a good start, but many more are needed. Next firewood work session is scheduled for Saturday, April 5th from 8 AM to noon.
- Discussed possibility of changing sales arrangement to allow campers to select their own firewood "loose" – this approach is used successfully at some other parks in PA and elsewhere. Will have to wait for arrival of the new Park Manager. If we can switch to this alternate arrangement, it would save a lot of time and energy!

Merchandise sales

- The 2014 embroidered patch is now available for purchase showing "Iron Production 1764-1895." If this patch is as successful as the 2013 Anniversary patch has been, we can continue the series in future years. Possible designs for 2015 and beyond are already being drafted.
- Web orders: experiment with an online catalog over the Winter apparently did not generate a large amount of sales, and may not be worth repeating.

Updates from the Park

- Half Pints program for 2-6 year olds very successful last year, will be repeated again Fridays in April.
- A busy May is expected: 1,000 schoolkids for various programs with the Park Environmental Educator.
- Backpacking gear purchased by Friends for special programming is much appreciated. "Women's Backpacking 101" will be held again for 2014 (June dates TBA)

Earth Day on Saturday April 19th

- Depending on volunteer turnout, planned projects this year include maintenance on the Brickyard Trail and brush cleanup around the park store. Come help the Park and respect the Earth! All ages are welcome.
- Friends will support a grilled lunch for volunteers as we do every year.

Other notable dates and events

- **Family Campground:** open for the season (as of March 28th).
- **Appalachian Trail Museum:** open with weekend hours (as of March 29th).
- **Ironmaster's Mansion outside work day:** tentatively set for April 6th.
- **Fuller and Laurel Lakes:** will open for swimming on May 1st.
- **Army Heritage Days:** still haven't heard from the Army whether they'll allow us to sell small items (hats, shirts, patches). Either way, Friends will run a display table on Saturday May 17th with historical information about Pine Grove Furnace, providing visibility to our group and may lead to new members.

A special note of thanks to the Ironmaster's Mansion innkeepers for letting us meet in the Mansion this time.

NEXT BOARD MEETING is scheduled for May 10th.