

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting
Minutes for November 21st, 2015

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (chair), M. Soderberg (vice-chair), B. Breen (treasurer), S. Breen, R. Shaw, J. Burleigh, S. Dodd.

New Board members

- We voted to accept Steve Dodd and Josh Burleigh onto the Board. Welcome!

Park Manager's comments (via Andre)

- Our park won "Best in the Valley" for 2016, from the Cumberland Valley Visitor's Bureau.
- New Park Manager Joe Basil will arrive at the end of November. [He could not attend as he did not arrive at his new assignment until one week after our meeting, but had already been in email communication with Friends leadership.]

Treasurer's report

- Our current balance is approximately \$35,000 (a detailed report is available upon request). This is a nice balance to have at the end of the year, especially considering that we bought a playground this summer. However, a large fraction of the money on hand will be used in 2016 for the Mountain Creek Trail project.
- Firewood sales at the campground were especially brisk, with an income of \$8,400 in 2015.

Membership

- We will mail out a membership renewal invitation with return envelopes to improve response rate.

Newsletter, Website and Facebook

- The first two editions of the Friends newsletter have been well received and provide a useful way to communicate our activities and park news, especially in the off-season. We will try for 4 editions annually.
- Our new Board member Josh has been proactive and speedy in taking over as Webmaster.
- Facebook is also very successful, thank you to Mary our vice-chair for taking on this important task.

Mountain Creek Trail project

- Cumberland County Visitors Bureau grant is now official: we were awarded \$21,730
- At the time of the Board meeting, still no word from South Mountain Partnership about the 2nd grant. [We learned in December that we were in fact successful in getting a \$15,000 grant.]
- These two grants complement each other in terms of "matching funds," but must be accompanied by use of Friends' own money as well as volunteer hours "monetized" using a standard formula. We should carefully track all volunteer activity on this project.
- Next task is to settle on a bridge design and order the components. The new Park Manager will arrange a meeting with DCNR engineers shortly after the holidays. The folks at DCNR have begun work on permits.

Long Term Planning

- The chairman asked the Board to consider where we go after (1) completion of the Mountain Creek Trail project in 2016 and (2) presumably a 3rd playground (at Laurel Lake) in 2017 if our new Manager agrees.
- Projects to consider in the long term include: a second hiking bridge (to link Koppenhaver Trail with Mountain Creek Trail); work on other hiking trails (such as a new short trail to create a safe route off the road for campers to reach the furnace/store area); a pavilion at the group campground; handicap access for fishing and boating at Laurel Lake; helping the Ironmaster's Mansion with improved signage and better furniture; repairs or additions to historical markers across the park.

Merchandise

- We still need a good design for an orange shirt with Hairy Hand/Pumpkin cartoon, to sell at Fall Fest.
- We will continue the annual embroidered patches series. Andre will draft ideas for the 2016 patch.
- Slag pendants sold extremely well at Fall Furnace Fest. We will work with park office staff to sell this jewelry as a regular item in the front office area, keeping in mind they are delicate and must be closely watched. Andre will build a wheeled frame for the office display case to make it easier to remove the jewelry display boxes for closer examination & sale when requested.

Firewood

- We should “get ahead of the curve” in splitting wood so it can dry over the winter, and so we can have lots of wood ready for filling the campground shed. We are very lucky to have campground hosts who help the Friends and the park by selling wood throughout the camping season. The substantial amount of work by volunteers to maintain our supply, especially by Bill and Sue Breen, is noted.

Iron Run half-marathon and Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk (June 11)

- The Board discussed registration prices – we decided to leave unchanged for 2016.
- We will seek to pre-position an ambulance at the park for the first time for this event. A medical emergency earlier this year at an event in Adams County was a reminder that as our race grows in size, we should be ready for problems in our rural location with potentially long response times.

Fall Furnace Fest (October 15-16)

- We need to find a volunteer coordinator who can fill Margie Schmidt’s shoes in 2016 (she will be unable to be primary coordinator this year). It is a major task and requires someone willing to put in the hours before and during the festival. Some ideas were discussed.
- The Board discussed vendor prices – we have to leave them unchanged for 2016 as early signup forms have already been given to 2015 vendors. We should review pricing at other events in the region, recognizing that Fall Fest has become a very successful and attractive event, and reconsider our prices for 2017.

Park Schedule

- Below is the schedule of major Friends and volunteer events in 2016. We anticipate that much of the activity on volunteer days will be related to the Mountain Creek Trail project, in addition to other special work days arranged with supporting organizations such as hiking groups and Michaux Forest Association.

MAJOR EVENTS at Pine Grove Furnace in 2016

- Earth Day, with potluck lunch for volunteers: **Saturday April 23**
- Woodsy Owl with free weekend camping for Saturday volunteers:
weekend of May 13-14-15 (potluck lunch: **Saturday May 14**)
- Iron Run half-marathon & Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk:
Saturday June 11 (2nd Saturday of month)
- National Public Lands Day, with potluck lunch for volunteers:
Saturday September 24
- Fall Furnace Fest: **October 15-16** (3rd weekend of month)

NEXT BOARD MEETING is scheduled for January 23rd