

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for January 30th, 2016

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (chair), M. Soderberg (vice-chair), B. Breen (treasurer), S. Breen, R. Shaw, J. Burleigh, B. Weiser, D. Weiser, D. Velozo; and Park Manager Basil (*ex officio* member)

Park Manager's comments

- Seasonal staff return on or before March 21.
- A new DCNR full-time park ranger has started work; one additional ranger position is still open.
- The park will work with the PA Parks & Forests Foundation (our group's parent organization), on an assessment of park compliance with American with Disabilities Act requirements and related guidelines.

Treasurer's report

- Our current balance is approximately \$35,000 (a detailed report is available upon request). As noted in previous meeting minutes, this is a nice balance to have at the start of the year, especially considering that we bought a playground this past summer. However, a large fraction of the money on hand will be used in 2016 for the Mountain Creek Trail project.

Budget

- The Board reviewed our 2016 budget – we will have to watch cash flow due to the expected outlays for the Mountain Creek bridge (we must pay for the bridge, then seek reimbursement from our two mini-grants). Thank you to our vice-chair Mary for preparing detailed planning documents and keeping us on track for a successful year!

Merchandise

- The Board discussed our merchandise supply for 2016. Problems with certain defective clothing items shipped to us are being resolved with the manufacturer, our thanks to Bill for handling this chore.
- 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.

Friends membership

- 161 membership renewal notices or invitations were mailed this month, thanks to our Secretary Diane. (Adding a return envelope was previously discussed, but not included in the actual mailing). As in the past, both new and renewing members will receive a discount card for buying our merchandise at the park office and an oval PGF “bumper sticker.”

Mountain Creek Trail project

- As previously noted, we were successful in getting two mini-grants which must be spent in 2016: from Cumberland County Visitors Bureau for \$21,730 and from South Mountain Partnership for \$15,000.
- 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.
- We are still seeking a meeting directly with DCNR engineers and/or Parks regional office to better understand whether there is any flexibility on the type of footbridge, and what the actual installation process will be. At this time, DCNR is apparently assuming a standard-appearing girder bridge (made from lightweight materials, carried in small sections) rather than a suspension bridge design as we originally hoped for. It is not clear to us whether this choice is final.
- Bridge components can be delivered one month after placing the order with the manufacturer.
- The Board discussed certain persons who might help us coordinate trail work (other than the bridge itself). Rob Shaw on our Board will reach out to those individuals about detailing the non-bridge trail repairs as soon as weather allows. Field work is obviously impossible now due to snow and ice conditions.

State Forest trail review project

- We have been approached by consultants working with the Michaux State Forest District, to offer our comments about trail use all across the forest. A few Board members will meet with the consultants, and also participate in meeting(s) at the Forestry District office.

Iron Run half-marathon and Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk

- This year's races will be Saturday, June 11.
- The Board agreed to keep registration fees the same as last year.
- The timer crew from Big Spring School District have once again agreed to volunteer. We will donate the same \$500 as in 2015, plus cover direct expenses for one-time-use digital "chips" @ roughly \$1 per racer.
- Board chairman (and Race Director) Andre will set up racer registration via *RunReg.com* by end of February. Volunteers are also needed, and as in the past will be coordinated by the Board Secretary, Diane.

Keystone Trails Association

- The Board voted for the Friends to become a member of the KTA for \$50 annually. This allows us to share in the KTA's stockpile of tables, tents and other gear for the Iron Run, and acknowledges their anticipated assistance with the Mountain Creek Trail project. Membership does not imply full support for that organization's entire mission statement.

Fall Furnace Fest 2016 planning

- This year's festival will be October 15-16.
- Diane will talk to the previous volunteer coordinator about necessary activities for 2016's event.
- A focused planning meeting is anticipated in April.

Firewood

- Various cabin owners continue to donate local wood, often already bucked and split, for our sales at the Family Campground (a major source of Friends income). We are grateful for this ongoing support.
- We will need to schedule a splitting day at Fuller parking lot when weather allows. Tentatively we would like to have a work crew split and stack firewood on the first Saturday in March (March 27). We will post on Facebook and send an email to our distribution list when it is clear if conditions will allow this to happen. Old Man Winter may not be done with us just yet!

Update on PPF activities

- Our vice-chair (who also sits on the Board of our parent organization, the PA Parks and Forests Foundation) updated us on PPF activities:
 - A cleanup effort in a couple months, coordinated by PPF as a "Stewards of Penn's Woods" project, will be targeted at Hammonds Rocks in the Michaux State Forest on Ridge Road not too far east from our park. We will promote on Facebook and by email blast when dates are fully confirmed. This location is unfortunately a frequent target of litterbugs and graffiti vandalism, and has needed major cleanup repeatedly in past years by Scouts and other groups.
 - the PPF annual awards banquet is on May 11 at the West Shore Country Club.

Free display/sales tables at community events

- Our Friends group has received two offers to set up free tables in a couple months:
 - April 12 community event on the Army War College campus in Carlisle (this is a Tuesday, which makes it more difficult to find personnel to attend – not sure yet if certain Board members will be available)
 - April 30 "Healthy Adams County Physical Fitness Task Force" community event in Gettysburg (one or more Board members are available to staff a table for a couple hours in the afternoon).

Park schedule for 2016

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

- 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 March 12th