

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for March 12th, 2016

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

Visitor: A. Snyder.

Park Manager's comments

- The park's Environmental Educator is back; other seasonal staff return before end of the month.
- The first event of the season, a "Hound Hike" for dogs and their people, is Monday, March 21.

Time of future Board meetings

- We discussed moving meetings from 10 AM to 9 AM. This might be possible during the Summer, but not as convenient in Winter. Some members drive long distances to participate. We will consider time of each meeting on a case-by-case basis in the future.

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.
- DCNR work on required permits from DEP is in progress.
- DCNR sent us blueprints for installation of a standard-appearing girder bridge (made from lightweight materials, carried in small sections). The Board discussed a company in Philadelphia which offers a "kit" bridge commonly found in other PA state parks and state forests – DCNR's engineers assume we will use that source for the bridge. Mary will check with our 2 grant agencies about requirements for a bid process.
- Actual bridge installation will likely occur in the Fall when conditions are best along the stream banks. Installation will require pre-cast footers, as well as geotextiles and stones for the stream banks; the park can assist with ordering these materials and paying for them.
- The Board again discussed reaching out to certain persons who will help us coordinate trail work (other than the bridge itself). Rob will reach out to an individual who is very experienced in trail work, and has seen the trail already, to set up a detailed review now that trail conditions have improved. Once we decide what needs to be done in detail, it will be discussed with the park in terms of coordinating with Earth Day and other volunteer efforts. The park may be able to supply some tools and materials for trail re-routes and crossing wet areas/swales.

Treasurer's report

- Our current balance is approximately \$36,700 (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. We will have to "front" the money to buy the bridge then be reimbursed by the two grants, so we need to have a large balance on hand into the summer.
- Income in January was approx. \$520, and in February approx. \$1900. Income in February included a bunch of new or renewed memberships and related donations.

Merchandise

- The Board discussed the annual embroidered patches series and examined some draft designs prepared by Andre. The Board voted for a "boating at Laurel Lake" theme – everyone should review any photos they have personally in case there's one that better than the draft design. It would be ideal to finalize the design and submit to the manufacturing company in the next week or two at most. We should order 300 patches as in the past.

Friends membership

- As noted under Treasurer's report, membership mailing seems to have been a success.

Earth Day (April 23)

- We will once again host a pot-luck lunch with grilled items for volunteers.
- Rendezvous and cooking will be at the Brickyard Pavilion this year, because the Stack Pavilion has been reserved by the Mid-Atlantic Hammock Hangers Association (MAHHA). It will be a busy weekend around the park with the Earth day volunteer event Saturday, the Mansion races on Sunday with setup on Saturday, and the large MAHHA gathering in the group campground all weekend and around the stack area etc.
- Andre will meet the park Environmental Educator to discuss volunteers helping with the Mountain Creek Trail project. One issue will be transporting vols from the Brickyard to the Laurel Lake area and back.

Woodsy Owl volunteer weekend/free camping (May 13-14-15)

- We will once again host a lunch with grilled items for Woodsy Owl volunteers on Saturday May 14.

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

- Online registration is set up and we have a few folks already registered. www.runReg.com/6245 for the half-marathon, www.RunReg.com/6246 for the 5k.
- Deadline to order shirts is May 18. This year will be dark green with white lettering.
- Volunteers are needed (email pinegrovefriends@gmail.com; coordinated by Board Secretary, Diane).
- Race planning is in full swing and going well. Nice maps for both races are now on our website. Special paperwork process required by DCNR has been started, and insurance requested from PPF.
- Advertising is arranged including blast email to last year's racers, mention on our Facebook page, local newspaper online event calendars, runner websites, and fliers and posters for running stores in the area.
- We need to continue seeking donations including food gift cards from local supermarkets to help with checkpoints and registration breakfast. Donna has been working on this. We already received a \$100 gift card from Wegmans, and Utz will supply bags of chips. Appalachian Running Company will again be our title sponsor and we expect gift cards from them for race winners.
- A race planning meeting will be April 17.

Buck Ridge Burn races (April 10)

- This annual event at the park does not directly support a non-profit cause, but they do ask registering racers to consider a donation to our Friends group, and to the State Forest for trail work tools. Last year we received a total of \$115 in donations after the race. This year it is notable that their registration website aggressively mentions donations, so we'll see what we get this time around.

Mansion fundraiser races (April 24)

- Just like last year, the Friends sent \$1000 to support the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy's mission at the Ironmaster's Mansion.
- Also, as a group we will staff a water table at Laurel Lake boat ramp all day, and assist as needed with other duties such as road crossing near that table.
- Mansion planning meeting will be April 17.

Fall Furnace Fest 2016 (October 15-16)

- Event planning meeting will be April 17.
- The Board briefly discussed improving audio during the festival including the Hairy Hand at Fuller beach, as well as a way to allow announcements to be heard at the stack area which is almost half a mile from the lifeguard shack at Fuller where the microphone and audio equipment are located. Josh will check with local radio clubs for ideas: they may be able to set up a repeater station at the stack area. We also discussed the problem of lifeguard shack audio electrical equipment suffering from humidity all year long and not working well.

AT Museum cleanup morning (March 19)

- Volunteers are needed, see the museum's website to sign up online. There will be snacks.

PA Parks & Forests Foundation update

- A new program “Stewards of Penns Woods” will start with special cleanup activities at Hammonds Rocks: litter on April 16, and graffiti on May 21. 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. Volunteer sign up should be done on the newly redesigned PPF website.
- PPF annual awards banquet at the West Shore Country Club is May 11. Mary paid for a table in the name of the Friends; Andre is helping with half of the cost.

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 scheduled a splitting session at Fuller parking lot for Sunday March 20 @ 11 AM, weather permitting. Despite a forecast of rain and snow, it’s unlikely to be severe and we will probably go ahead – announcement to be made on Facebook a few days beforehand.

Free display/sales tables at community events

- Our group has received two offers to set up free tables:
 - Tuesday April 12 community event on the Army War College campus in Carlisle (it appears that at least a couple Board members will be available).
 - Saturday April 30 “Healthy Adams County Physical Fitness Task Force” community event in Gettysburg (at least one Board member is available to staff a table for a couple hours in the afternoon, but more would be preferable – two others will check their calendars).

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.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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) |
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NEXT BOARD MEETING is scheduled for May 7th