

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for August 20th, 2016

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (chair), M. Soderberg (vice-chair), B. Breen (treasurer), D. Velozo (secretary); S. Breen, S. Dodd, R. Shaw, B. Weiser, D. Weiser, and guest A. Snyder.

Park comments

- The new manager is expected to arrive in mid-September. DCNR has not made an official announcement yet, but we know that the park manager has been selected.
- Pine Grove Furnace is now a “Million Dollar Park” meaning that the annual budget reached that level. This indicates recognition by DCNR of how busy our park is, despite its small size.
- The number of public attendees at park programs and lectures – such as those offered by our Environmental Educator, and by Friends chairman as local historian – are consistently higher this summer than in the past.
- A new bathroom will be constructed at the Organized Group Campground. The old building, unpleasant in appearance and odor, and which moreover blocks the entrance to Brickyard Trail, will then be removed.

Treasurer's report

- Our current balance is \$31,170 (a detailed report is available upon request). This is down sharply from our peak of just over \$49,000, as payment was made for half the new footbridge. Grant reimbursement paperwork will now be submitted so our balance will grow again.
- Income so far this year includes \$4,300 from firewood sales.
- Multiple memorial donations have been received in memory of local cabin owners. We are grateful that their memories will be honored by donations to improve the park and support programming.

Merchandise

- New hat designs have arrived, including mesh backs and camo style.
- Other new items include walking sticks “medallions” and PPF orange bandanas with a PA state park map.
- Bill and Sue plan a sales & information table at Fuller Beach [done, on Saturday of Labor Day weekend.]

Firewood

- We will once again sell bulk firewood to the Mid-Atlantic Hammock Hangers Association when they next hold a park event on the weekend of October 7. This arrangement has been convenient for the MAHHA group and lucrative for us.
- 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.

Social media and advertising

- The Friend's Facebook page is very active. Special thanks to Mary and to park EE Lea for keeping content updated: having an “active” page contributes greatly to its success. In many ways Facebook has become the public face of the park, and comments are received that pertain to both the Friends and to DCNR – we forward messages as necessary to our park partners.
- We will maintain our website www.PineGroveFriends.org which has become a supporting mechanism for material on Facebook, including website attachments such as various brochures and race maps; plus the website remains a resource for non-Facebookers.

Mountain Creek Trail project

- Trail work continues: we are at the point that this trail project is essentially done except for installation of the 55-foot bridge across Mountain Creek, and then minor trail re-routes to the ends of the bridge. Special-interest groups such as hiking/trail associations and the Michaux Forest Association have been contributing volunteer hours and we greatly appreciate their time, which is being logged a component of the two grants.
- We should clarify with DCNR that once it is installed, ownership of the new bridge will be legally transferred to the Commonwealth, and that all insurance and other responsibilities belong to them.
- Bridge foundation work by park Maintenance staff is expected to occur during the last two weeks of October, then we'll need a huge volunteer effort to install the bridge itself. [All bridge components except concrete “seats” to hold up the bridge at each end, were delivered in the first week of September.] If bad weather or other unforeseen problems arise, all work may have to be pushed back to June 2017. If that occurs, we will need special extensions from the two grant agencies but do not expect that to be a problem.
- DCNR permits and engineering drawings are all in good order and signed by the DCNR district engineer.

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

- The races were extremely successful with our highest attendance ever: 168 registrants for the half-marathon, and 112 for the 5k (actual number of racers June 11 was fewer, due to pre-registration no-shows).
- We may need to limit the number of entrants in 2017.
- The event raised \$6805 (net) for the Friends.
- 31 dedicated volunteers on race day made it all possible.

National Public Lands Day (Sept 24)

- Volunteer tasks will be selected by the park.
- As usual we will hold a pot-luck lunch for volunteers, and Friends will supply grilled items.

Fall Furnace Fest 2016 (October 15-16)

- Planning continues. A special nuts-and-bolts planning meeting will be held on September 17.
- The Board discussed various Fest activities and tasks, including ordering more wax for candlemaking and more orange volunteer shirts. Both orders will be large enough to carry us through the next several years of this annual event.
- Silent auction donations are needed.
- Volunteers are still needed, but we're doing OK and should have enough people signed up. Thanks to Diane for taking on the complex task of coordinating vols.

PA Parks & Forests Foundation -- graffiti

- PPF's "Stewards of Penn's Woods" program continued its very successful work to remove more graffiti from Hammonds Rocks. The before-and-after photos are astonishing. Volunteers came from the Friends Board, local universities, and local residents.

Franklin County Gov't Employee Health and Wellness Fair (October 28, 10 AM – 2 PM)

- We have been offered a free table at this event. We can possibly do it: one Board member is available for sure (Steve) and another is possible (Andre or Bill).

- 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 in November, actual date not yet scheduled.