

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for August 26th, 2017

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (chair), M. Soderberg (vice-chair), J. Burleigh, S. Dodd, R. Shaw, D. Velozo (secretary), B. Weiser, D. Weiser; M. Kutzmonich (Park Manager, *ex officio*)

● Park Manager's comments

- thanks to the Board for supporting educational programming by purchasing camping gear: these types of activities are very popular with the public
- bear-proof garbage dumpsters are pending – many parks need them, and a large order is being arranged by centralized State contract
- our park will switch to “single stream” recycling bins, to make it easier for visitors and for staff who collect items from the bins
- as Bureau-wide policy in all PA State Parks, no “painted rocks” are allowed – goal to “keep it natural”
- another policy for all parks: no explicit political activity including no Confederate flags
- changes to Family Campground exit are still pending, but are expected later this season (widening the current exit and changing into both an entrance & exit, in addition to existing entrance further south on Bendersville Road) – estimated \$9000 cost to Friends to support this work is unchanged
- other updates were given to the Board on staffing including front office clerk, and Park Rangers

● Chair/Vice-Chair's comments

- our park was mentioned in *New York Post*, via June photo of naked hikers in front of General Store
- KTA race, Sept 9 in York County (as a group we won't be able to support a checkpoint, but Rob will attend as a volunteer and provide flyers for Fall Fest; Andre will create a “save the date” insert for our 2018 Iron Run)
- Franklin County Gov't Wellness Day, Oct 3 in Chambersburg (Josh and possibly Mary might attend)
- PPF Friends Retreat – Nov 3 & 4 in Laurel Hill State Park
- PPF will be included for 1st time in State Employee Combined Appeal (SECA) campaign
- Iron Run timer: Board agree to confirm same crew for 2018 Iron Run; cost will be higher, \$820 in 2017 vs. \$900 estimated next year, but they were very professional and saved us a lot of headaches.
- Iron Run volunteers: Diane reported 162 hours to DCNR (not including hours by Friends leadership)
- everyone should enter their vol hours into DCNR's volunteer database by mid-September

● Treasurer's report (sent to Andre by email to share with Board)

- \$69,005 including Metro card

● Budget update

- in addition to current balance, we received the final \$1700 to close out the trail bridge grant
- even with other expenditures, estimates of expected income for remainder of 2017 suggest that we'll still begin next year with approximately \$70,000 in the bank! well done by all – a lot of effort!

● EE programming: Family Camping

- equipment estimated cost \$2209 vs originally \$2755
- also expect a request for food, same as Friends did in past
- Board reviewed the vote process and discussed issues; vote not unanimous which is perfectly normal for a democratic organization; no Board members present today changed previous votes sent by email to accommodate short schedule to approve and purchase supplies before the Sept. 8 weekend activity

- Merchandise

- supplies should be adequate for Fall Fest and remainder of year
- Park Manager has been asking us for a simplified pricing scheme and easy-to-use pre-printed sales envelopes for the public – it is not acceptable to have front office staff constantly making small change, and per DCNR policy they should not be handling sales money at all; Mary is working to revise the pricing scheme – Board discussed and agreed upon various specific changed prices to create easy cash breakpoints (generally, at \$5 increments); on some items we will not make as much money, on others we make a little more profit – and overall we will vastly simplify sales, as required by our Manager
- possible new item later this year: Purple Lizard Company’s map of Michaux SF @ their pre-printed \$15 sale price (we would be able to get a bulk order from company for \$7.20 each) – Board agreed to order 100 maps when available, expected later this year; these are popular items which sell well for other PA state parks & forests; these maps are created in conjunction with local DCNR staff
- PPF is printing the official statewide park calendars (in the past, DCNR printed); cost to Friends will be \$5.75 each, and we will sell for \$10

- Firewood

- Park Manager has been asking us for an honor system for firewood sales when Campground Hosts are not available as is done in all other state parks; overall the public has come to expect us to have wood for sale and are very unhappy when shed is closed; when Hosts not present, park staff such as Rangers are being requested to come open the shed for sales which is not a good use of their time
- Board discussed possible approaches to allow for honor sales; simplest option used by many other parks as shown on a photo displayed by Mary and preferred by our Manager, will be “hen boxes” (square wooden grid framework) built inside one end of the campground shed, with a solid metal payment box – Andre will send separate email to Board soon with a proposal, and will make it happen ASAP to satisfy this request from our Manager
- shed at Fuller parking now has splitter; thanks to Bill for coordinating/finishing shed including an easy ramp for the very heavy splitter to roll up
- Mid-Atlantic Hammock Hangers Assoc, weekend of Oct 13-15: as in the past, Board agreed to supply this large group with a load of wood for a bulk fee

- Facebook, website, newsletter

- Summer 2017 newsletter done thanks to Rob – in office, campground firewood kiosk, at Mansion and General Store; but no room on most park kiosks due to advertising for Fall Fest and other events
- Facebook remains very active especially posts on animals, such as recent black bear sightings

- National Public Lands Day (9 AM on September 30)

- note this date coincides with PPF “graffiti busters” project in Michaux SF at Buzzards Rocks
- Friends will as usual support a grilled lunch to supplement “pot luck” dishes by volunteers
- Diane will approach Giant for gift card support for this event; Andre will send a form letter to her

- Fall Fest 2017 (Oct 21-22)

- preliminary planning meeting was held earlier this month between Friends and park staff
- shuttle bus confirmed
- continue to seek/invite special educational or historical activities
- volunteer coordination by Diane
- Board discussed natural growth of our event, year over year, and agreed to eliminate paid advertising as not really needed – in fact, we have so much attendance we don’t want the event to grow any further! but we will continue free advertising such as online community calendars and trifold brochures, etc.
- automobile traffic flow into around Fuller Field parking will change, per Manager and Rangers
- focused Fest planning meeting scheduled for September 17th @ 11 AM

- Upcoming projects

- Andre is working with our Manager to draft a formal “request for bids” document for skilled masons to repair historic brickwork at base of and adjoining the old furnace stack; this is an adjunct to the work one at the top of the stack three years ago, and is needed to preserve this structure for future generations; no idea how much it might cost, will let the Board know and vote on proceeding once we have a rough idea; a 50-50 grant is available for this specific purpose from “Louis J. Appell Jr. Preservation Fund for Central Pennsylvania”
- Manager reviewed site of possible suspension bridge across Mountain Creek –may be able to install bridge between Biker-Hiker and Koppenhaver upstream from end of drive-able road, thus accomplishing our goal to link Koppenhaver with Mountain Creek Trail; further planning is pending discussion among DCNR administration

Key dates for remainder of 2017

- National Public Lands Day – Saturday Sept 30
- Fall Fest – Oct 21-22 (3rd full weekend of October)

Next Board Meeting

*We typically meet in early November once we catch our breath after Fall Furnace Fest; **date to be determined***