

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for November 12th, 2017

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (chair), M. Soderberg (vice-chair), J. Burleigh (treasurer), S. Dodd, R. Shaw, D. Weiser *arrived half an hour late due to other obligations*; guest Jen Brehm (chair of Friends of Kings Gap)

● Manager's comments

- Thanks for a successful Fall Furnace Fest. Updated estimate of attendance includes ~7915 people at Fuller parking entrance (using DCNR standard multiplier of 2.5 people/vehicle) plus est. >500 at other portals, so call it "8,500" for 2017 event. That's broadly consistent with the volunteer clicker count.
- Opening of new bathroom in the group campground is pending, hope to have it early next year
- Work on new family campground entrance (adding to the existing exit onto Bendersville Rd) is expected next year; Friends have budgeted to assist with paying for this project.

● Chair/Vice-Chair comments

- We again supported Halloween activities at the campground including gifts for costume and best campsite contest winners – Josh and Andre helped as judges.
- Board discussed possible new Board members, and others who are especially interested in our group. Chair and Vice-Chair will have a detailed discussion directly with one possible new Board member.
- PPF Friends Retreat was canceled due to low attendance
- PPF annual report and conflict of interest statements due in January. Board signed their CoI forms.
- Reminders about Extra Give next week; also Penns Woods Take a Hike event – Rob and Andre to lead
- Introduction of Jen, new Chair for the *Friends of Kings Gap*. We hope to collaborate on future events such as a hike on Buck Ridge Trail between the two parks, and can share ideas and resources.
- Is Board OK with same Iron Run timer as 2017, at cost of ~\$900? Need to schedule ASAP. Yes vote.
- New pests/diseases to watch for in region: Spotted Lanternfly, and Chronic Wasting Disease in deer

● Treasurer

- Balance \$78,038 [full report available upon request]. We made approximately \$10,000 on firewood sales, a record amount, and \$10,500 from this year's Fall Furnace Fest.

● Merchandise

- More magnets arrived with other animals – we now have five styles, selling for \$5 each. It seems that a selection of items at a low price point can sell well: people want some little/inexpensive reminders of their visit to our park.
- Pre-printed envelopes for public sales use seem to be working well.
- 100 Purple Lizard maps of the Michaux S.F. arriving soon: will sell for \$15 (which is pre-printed on the maps) for a profit to Friends of a little over \$7 after sales tax. We have a paid advert in each map.
- Board agreed to continue the annual embroidered patch series. Based on an excellent suggestion from a friend of the Friends, the theme for 2018 can be "Hiking along Mountain Creek" which technically covers several trails within our park. We can use a photo of people walking across the new trail bridge, maybe taken during upcoming First Day Hike. Andre will as usual create a design for Board approval.

● Firewood

- Honor system at campground sales shed seems to be working well.
- As suggested by Park Manager, solar-powered motion-detector lighting was installed in the sales shed. Andre will also install a small solar-powered fan to promote faster drying of the wood inside.
- We must continue to split & stack as much as we can, to get ahead of demand in 2018 camping season.
- When needed, it is cost-effective to buy pre-split cords though we make much less than using vol labor.
- Maintenance Dept. will bring us more logs when trees are dropped for safety, or by storms.
- Special bulk sale to the Mid-Atlantic Hammock Hangers Assoc. resulted in \$400 in October (less than the \$500 usually sold in the past, but they didn't buy quite as much wood). Their twice-a-year events in our park result in easy sales for us, and seem to be a good deal for both sides of the arrangement.

- Social Media and other advertising/branding
 - Rob will draft a new edition of the quarterly newsletter
- First Day Hike, January 1, 2018 @ 1 PM
 - Rob will lead the hike from Fuller Lake Bath House along Biker-Hiker to Mountain Creek Trail, at far end turn onto Old Railroad Bed Road, and return via Biker-Hiker. Total distance 4 miles.
 - Mary will bake cookies, and Andre will arrange cider/hot chocolate/coffee.
 - Park EE Lea put posters on kiosks before she left for the season. Our event is on the DCNR calendar.
 - DCNR Secretary Dunn cannot attend but we're very happy to have Deputy Secretary Norbeck instead
- Fall Fest after-action review and thoughts for 2018
 - Brief discussion of Saturday shuttle bus at our event. Ridership remains low (only 38 people in 2017) but was increased vs. prior Fests. Shuttle driver pointed out that for some disabled festival guests, the shuttle is the only practical way for them to get to the far end of the event. Board agreed to again hire a shuttle in 2018; Andre will call bus company (need to confirm ASAP). Expected cost \$350.
 - Board otherwise deferred after-action review of Fall Furnace Fest 2017 until our next regular meeting due to time constraints this afternoon.
- Projects for 2018? List is similar to items mentioned in prior meetings: not discussed in detail at this meeting
 1. Fix old furnace stack brickwork at rear -- draft "Request for Bids" pending. Seek Louis Appell grant? Crumbling bricks are in part historic representing an 1883 heating mechanism for iron making, and an eyesore not to mention a potential hazard to visitors who ignore the signs and fence. Park Manager would also like to install a better fence in that area.
 - Park Manager had preliminary discussion with a DNCR engineer
 2. TRAIL WORK incl. new "Campground Connector Trail" next to Bendersville Road – Park Manager proposes we pay for a well-developed gravel path not just a rough trail. Ideally, this trail would meet a new foot bridge parallel to Bendersville Road so that campers and hikers do not have to walk on the narrow automobile bridge as they do now. Campground Connector could be started by vols, but full gravel path and a new bridge would best be done by professionals.
 3. New foot bridge (possibly suspension) from Koppenhaver Trail across Mtn Creek to Biker-Hiker
 - Review at DNCR Regional pending – Park Manager & Maintenance Director have location in mind
 4. Remove vegetation from 1934 Girl Scout pool to allow public recognition/historical interpretation

Next Board Meeting? *We typically next meet in late January or early February.
Will schedule by email once we see how snow-bound we become!*