

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for March 25th, 2018

Board in attendance: A. Weltman (Chair), M. Soderberg (Vice-Chair), J. Burleigh (Treasurer), D. Velozo (Secretary), C. Hunt, R. Shaw; M. Kutzmonich (*ex officio* Park Manager)

● Park Manager's comments

- Updates on seasonal staff getting ready for the full season – campgrounds & Mansion are opening at the end of this month (next weekend) despite remnants of heavy snow still on the ground!
- New bathroom in group campground is finalized, and will be open for the camping season even though one of the four bathroom units is temporarily not available due to a minor entryway issue.
- By directive from DCNR/Harrisburg, our park must maintain its own Facebook page in addition to the shared public page co-managed with the Friends. We can help our park's educator (EE) keep the new official park Facebook page active by offering cross-posted appropriate material, especially in the off-season when the EE is not at work.
- Manager continues working with DCNR Regional for approval of a new hiking bridge to connect Koppenhaver to Mountain Creek Tr. Await guidance from Bureau of Facility Design & Construction.
- Brief discussion of brick repairs at base of old furnace stack – one mason proposed a \$25,000 fix, more expensive than expected, which included addressing water infiltration at the rear of the area. Manager will discuss further with Regional office.
- Proposal to install an accessible kayak dock at Laurel Lake, to stabilize kayaks for visitors with limited mobility getting in and out of their vessels. A company used by other PA State Parks, EZ Dock in NJ, has suitable kits. There may be money from DCNR to make the project fully ADA-compatible which is how these docks are set up at other parks such as Beltzville. Board is enthusiastic about this idea, and has budgeted \$5500 – however money needed from Friends may be less if other money can be used: it seems there may be additional ADA-dedicated funds from DCNR at the Regional level. In addition, Vice-chair is exploring options for a grant.

● Chair/Vice-Chair comments

- Board accepts with regret the resignation of Steve Dodd, due to his other time commitments. We appreciate his contributions, and look forward to seeing him around the park in the future.
- PPF Retreats: brief discussion of lessons learned during the eastern and western retreats. Friends groups in PA vary in how they conduct their volunteer activities, and how much money they have!
- PPF annual banquet is Wednesday May 9. Chair and Vice-Chair will sponsor a table on behalf of our group; partners at Mansion and AT Museum, and Board members, are invited to join us.
- CPC/Ironmaster's Mansion new private "guest suite" is now open. Mansion held an "open house" the day prior to our Board meeting to promote it, with our Chair in attendance in historical costume.
- Discussion of appropriate formal mechanism for our non-profit to donate money to another non-profit within our State Park. This was discussed during one of the PPF retreats: it is consistent with our group's mission statement to support the Mansion as a partner & important park asset for the public to enjoy, and there are no barriers to doing this using invoices to process and track payments.
- Friends will again staff the Mansion's fundraiser race water station at Laurel Lake Boat Ramp on Sunday April 29. Our Chair is available; other participants are needed for this full-day event.
- PPF requested our help staffing a "Field & Stream non-profit day" table on Saturday April 14 on the West Shore. Chair is available for the morning, and Treasurer is available for the afternoon.
- Annual "Walk With Me" Adams County wellness event in Gettysburg is Saturday May 5. Chair and perhaps other Board members will again attend to meet Franklin Countians, promote our park and group, and maybe sell a few items.
- Franklin County government's Wellness Coordinator requested a presentation promoting our park; if State Park staff are not available, our Vice-Chair can handle this in July for National Picnic Month.
- Discussion continues with Mansion and Park Manager re: proposal for memorial donations made to the Friends group to be explicitly targeted to specific projects at the Mansion, as opposed to our current approach of adding these types of donated funds to our general Friends operations.

- Treasurer

- Balance \$78,700 + \$500 on Metro card [full report is available upon request]. This does not include some very recently received donations. We are doing well at raising money; let's spend it on many worthwhile projects and activities around our park!

- Budget

- Brief review of specific 2018 line-items. New lock system with zones for all buildings to simplify staff access will be more expensive, closer to \$13,000 vs. \$10,000. Current budget assumes we are building another trail bridge this year, but as a practical matter that may not need to be paid in full (if we get grants) and may not happen until much later in 2018 or even into 2019. Meanwhile, we can readily afford the kayak project at Laurel Lake, and a video display in the Visitor's Center museum (in the park office) to play a loop of *Donald Duck Makes Iron* and other appropriate educational materials.
- We are budgeted to continue to support EE outdoor programming such as camping, and to buy grillables for the usual pot-luck lunches after volunteer mornings such as Earth Day.

- Membership

- We will hold a dedicated session at the end of the annual Earth Day volunteer morning + lunch on Saturday April 21 to promote Friends groups here and elsewhere, and discuss ways that volunteers can help improve the outdoor experience for all visitors.
- Annual mailing with reminder for renewals did not end up using a new postcard format but this may be done next year. Memberships are rolling in, often with donations on top of the minimal member fee.
- Michaux Forest Association's next newsletter deadline is in a couple weeks; our regular Friends group column, written by our Vice-Chair, can promote Earth Day on Saturday April 21 and the Friends added session afterwards. Park Manager writes a column for the park from DCNR perspective, and our Chair writes a column for Cooke Township in his volunteer role with the Twp Planning Committee.

- Merchandise

- Pre-printed envelopes for public sales use in the park office continue to be working well.
- Purple Lizard's new maps of Michaux S.F. are selling briskly and will be useful as Iron Run prizes. We should purchase more maps to be well-stocked for the summer season. Also, our park partners at the Ironmaster's Mansion asked if we could facilitate obtaining maps for their own fundraiser races; Board agreed to order enough extras for them, and we will sell the maps to the Mansion at our wholesale cost from Purple Lizard.
- Annual embroidered patch for 2018 "Hiking Along Mountain Creek" has arrived and looks great.

- Social Media and other advertising/branding

- Thanks to Board member Rob for handling the quarterly newsletter.
- As noted above, our park must maintain its own Facebook page; we can assist by offering cross-posted content from the Friends page. Thanks to our Vice-Chair for handling our very active page, assisted by the Chair and by park EE from time to time.
- www.PineGroveFriends.org would benefit from updated photos; Webmaster can get off Facebook, also our gratitude to Board member and professional photographer Crystal for offering images too. We'll use Google Analytics to monitor activity. Thanks to our Treasurer for also being Webmaster!

- Iron Run 2018

- Formal DCNR event approval paperwork for both park and forest has been completed.
- Our usual "title sponsor" is not able to do so this year. Vice-Chair is seeking an alternative sponsors such as a different local running store. Other sponsorships are also needed – thanks to Board member Donna for spear-heading these annual requests.
- 144 pint glasses as basic racer awards have arrived.
- Acting upon a suggestion from our timer last year and from race participants and supporters, we will give a free "participation award" to young racers in 2018. We have ordered adequate "rescue whistles" ("not a toy!") for all registered Iron Run and Charcoal Challenge participants aged less than 20 years.

- Fall Furnace Fest planning

- Board discussed alternative activities for the furnace stack area, since we are almost certainly not going to get pedal karts there again. Chair is exploring a Native American educational group from the Pittsburgh area that may be able to attend our festival, for a fee. They will sell jewelry while conducting public programs including storytelling and playing flute music, and activities for children.
- More clothing donations are needed for the busy scarecrow-making activity.
- With resignation of our usual MC announcer and Hairy Hand actor, a replacement is needed (Steve is not available during Fall Fest 2018).

- Firewood

- A large group of 11 Mont Alto Penn State forestry students + two faculty volunteered for four hours on May 17 and energetically cut & split logs that Park Maintenance provided. We are now well stocked in our campground sales shed as the season is about to begin, but additional splitting is needed as always.
- Chair ordered new air filters and hydraulic fluid filters for the Friends' 27-ton splitter, a tool that has been an excellent investment and should be maintained regularly. He will install them soon.

Major Events in 2018

Earth Day and Friends Membership meeting, Saturday April 21

Woodsy Owl, weekend of May 19 Saturday = volunteer morning + Friends potluck lunch

Iron Run half-marathon & Charcoal Challenge 5k run/walk, Saturday June 9

National Public Lands Day, Saturday September 29

Fall Furnace Fest, weekend of October 20-21

Next Board Meeting: May 19 @ 2 PM
(after Woodsy Owl volunteer morning + lunch)