

Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

Minutes for January 20, 2019

Board in attendance:

A. Weltman (Chair), M. Soderberg (Vice-Chair), J. Burleigh (Treasurer), R. Shaw; B. Weiser, D. Weiser, C. Hunt (partial attendance); M. Kutzmonich (Park Manager, *ex officio*)

● Park Manager's comments

- Manager updated the Board on our park's personnel complement for 2019
- Our park's Environmental Educator, Lea, is moving to a full-time position with DCNR central office in Harrisburg. We wish her well and expect to communicate with her on relevant projects in the future.
- Woodsy Owl free camping/volunteer weekend for 2019 is popular: all campsites are booked already.

● Chair/Vice-Chair comments

- PPF annual report is due by the end of January; chair, vice-chair and treasurer are working on it.
- PPF annual "chapter retreats" are March 16 in Fulton County and April 13 in Sullivan County. All Friends Board members are invited.
- PPF annual banquet is May 8. All Friends Board members are invited.
- Chair and vice-chair will attend the South Mountain Partnership annual breakfast meeting closing out the year 2018 on February 1 in Chambersburg.
- Chair attended a preliminary meeting on January 30 to form a new "Friends of Michaux S.F."
- "Bells of Peace" bell-ringing ceremony on November 11, 2018 at the brick chapel was successful.
- Additional corkboard at the General Store purchased by Friends was installed late last year and helps with more orderly information posting/sharing in this over-crowded public display area.
- We have an opportunity to purchase an electric golf cart from retiring campground hosts; our Board agreed to the proposed \$1000 price if our direct inspection of this cart is satisfactory. The cart will be helpful for CG hosts and also can be used by the Friends elsewhere in the park during special events such as Fall Fest. It has a new battery and has been only "lightly used."
- "EZ Dock" kayak system at Laurel Lake was purchased as described in prior meeting. We are now awaiting installation by Maintenance, expected when weather allows this Spring.
- Vice-Chair proposes a free informal lending library for the Family Campground. A rodent-proof cabinet could be installed at the firewood sales shed, and stocked with free novels. This is similar to a little library informally already established in the Mansion for hikers. We will look around for donated books and a suitable cabinet.

● Treasurer

- Balance \$85,539 [full report is available upon request]. Although our bank balance is high right now, and 2019 income is expected as usual, several big projects are pending and in our budget estimates.

● Budget

- Updated for 2019 and approved by Board. As noted above, a significant fraction of our balance is already earmarked for pending projects.

● Hiking Bridge to connect Koppenhaver Trail and Mountain Creek Trail

- Manager continues working with DCNR Regional re: administrative issues to install a new hiking bridge (hopefully a suspension style) to connect Koppenhaver Trail to western trailhead of Mountain Creek Trail. DCNR will handle all permits. Best path forward would be for the Friends to obtain a formal design including a professional engineer's approval stamp, since DCNR's own Bureau of Facilities Design & Construction is very busy statewide. FD&C still needs to sign off on the proposal but having the engineering work already done would vastly speed up the whole process. Friends and Manager are having a meeting with a second local engineering firm soon to solicit a proposal and seek specific plans. At best, including time to seek grant funding, we might install a bridge in 2020.

- Other Trail Issues
 - Weather including late season rain atop poorly draining frozen ground, has taken a toll on several park trails: most notably two sections of Creek Trail closest to its trailhead on Bendersville Rd (across from Organized Group Tenting Area). We will need to schedule several volunteer trail workdays as soon as conditions allow, hopefully in early March. Some areas, such as start of Creek Trail and a couple sections of Mountain Creek Trail east from our 2016 bridge, will need creative solutions to persistent standing water. Chair proposes investigating the thick rough-hewn wooden boards used by Bureau of Forestry for their walkways through wet areas on Sunset Rocks Blue Trail near Camp Michaux; he will contact the DCNR ranger responsible for that project to find out where those boards came from/cost. A similar arrangement may be useful for some of problem areas in our park.
- Iron Run 2019
 - Brief discussion re: half-marathon & 5k on June 8. We need to request the usual insurance coverage for this event (and for Fall Fest) – vice chair will request via PPF.
 - Chair proposed that 2019 shirts be some version of “burgundy red” this year – Board agreed.
- Van Wagner return in 2019?
 - After last year’s National Public Lands Day, a special arrangement was made by DCNR for Pennsylvania musician and storyteller Van Wagner to play his folk songs about early local industry. This successful event in 2018 leads to the question of bringing Mr. Wagner back to our park in 2019. Unlike last September, this time the Friends would be in charge and would have to pay his fee (possibly \$450). Chair will establish initial contact with him to ask about his availability.
- Review of Fall Furnace Fest 2018 and plans for 2019
 - Board discussed several aspects of Fall Fest. Notable changes envisioned for 2019:
 - Move all formal festival activities out of the Furnace Stack area and instead use Brickyard.
 - Discontinue the Silent Auction due to the huge amount of volunteer work it requires, which must be considered relative to \$2000 income. Instead we will look into coordinating a raffle or similar “Small Game of Chance” which requires administrative oversight, but fewer logistics during Fall Fest
 - We will seek to maximize contributions from corporate and other sponsors.
- Merchandise
 - Board previously agreed to enlist in “Coast to Coast collecting America’s story” website and associated sales items (postcard & coaster with local photos) – see www.c2sites.us. Chair already selected appropriate photos and asked our Board for input on a “motto” to put on the sale items (“Making Iron – Key to the American Industrial Revolution.”). The postcard/coaster combined plastic packets will be available in a couple months. Friends will pay 75 cents each, and sell for \$2.
 - A new item, polar fleece headbands available in three colors, have been selling well.
- Social Media and other advertising/branding
 - Time for another Friends newsletter!
- Firewood
 - We expect Penn State Mont Alto “forestry club” student volunteers will again come to Fuller Field to help us with chainsawing. We will also seek to buy more seasoned wood to pre-fill our sales shed.

Major Friends-Supported Events in 2019

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Earth Day: April 27 ▪ Ironmaster’s Challenge – Mansion Race (Friends @ Laurel water station): April 28 ▪ Woodsy Owl vol day: May 18 ▪ Iron Run half-marathon & 5k: June 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Public Lands Day: September 28 ▪ Hike in Penns Woods: October 5 ▪ Fall Furnace Fest: weekend of October 19-20 ▪ Halloween in Campground: October 26 ▪ First Day Hike 2020: January 1, of course!
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Next Board Meeting in March, date TBA