

# Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

*Minutes for March 31, 2019*

Board in attendance:

*A. Weltman (Chair), M. Soderberg (Vice-Chair), J. Burleigh (Treasurer), D. Velozo (Secretary), R. Shaw, D. Weiser; M. Kutzmonich (Park Manager, ex officio)*

## ● Park Manager's comments

- Manager updated Board on our park's personnel complement – process is moving forward to replace our Environmental Educator. The park is also hiring lifeguards for Fuller Beach.
- Woodsy Owl free camping/volunteer weekend for 2019 is popular: all campsites are booked already.
- “EZ Dock” kayak system at Laurel Lake is awaiting installation by Maintenance, expected soon.

## ● Chair/Vice-Chair comments

- PPF annual “chapter retreat” was March 16 – three Board members attended this very useful meeting. Afterwards, we visited a nearby hiking bridge almost identical to what we installed here in 2016 – the bridge in Buchanan State Forest is from the same company but 5 feet longer than ours. Their bridge was hit by a tree and knocked downstream, but was saved by the attached cable; it was then lifted by a crane and after \$6000 in repairs replaced on same footers – demonstrating a concept that we hope never needs to be applied to our own bridge! Nonetheless we do have an attached cable.
- PPF annual banquet is May 8. All Friends Board members are invited. FoPGF Chair and Vice-Chair will sponsor a table.
- South Mountain Partnership is hosting a “Science Summit” on April 11 @ Norlo Park; Friends Chair will attend. See <https://centerforlanduse.org/smrc-ss> for background.
- Friends Chair will give a free public lecture on local charcoal-making, on Tuesday April 16 @ 7 PM in the large auditorium at Dickinson College in Carlisle.
- The annual Ironmaster's Challenge foot races are Sunday April 28. As in the past, the Friends will support the all-day water station at Laurel Lake boat ramps. Additional volunteers are welcome.
- South Mountain Partnership's regular Spring partners' breakfast meeting is May 3 in Biglerville. Friends Vice-Chair may be able to attend.
- The annual Adams County “Walk With Me” public event has been reformatted/rescheduled for 2019 – it will be on Memorial Day May 27 @ 8-10 AM in Gettysburg, concurrent with a 5k race. Friends Chair will set up an informational/sales table; additional help is welcome.
- Chair attended two preliminary meetings this year to form the “Friends of Michaux S.F.” We look forward to creation of this new partner literally “next door” to our State Park and other parks in the Michaux State Forest (Kings Gap, Caledonia, and Mont Alto -- all with their own Friends groups).
- We purchased an electric golf cart for \$1000 from retiring campground hosts; it has a new battery and vinyl rain cover and is “lightly used.” Board voted to install a new rear seat/cargo deck for \$289, which can be readily installed by Board members. This is a good deal for us overall. The cart will be useful to future Campground Hosts plus directly helpful to Friends during our annual special events especially Fall Fest. We have been dependent on borrowing golf carts until now which could be unreliable and present logistical complications.
- As in the past, Friends purchased non-ethanol gasoline for Maintenance to use in chainsaws or other equipment with rubber gaskets that can be damaged by fuel additives. This year we got 20 gallons for \$63.80 total.
- Vice-Chair proposed a free informal lending library for the Family Campground. A rodent-proof cabinet is now installed in our firewood sales shed and stocked with free novels and other relevant books. This is similar to a little library informally established in the Mansion for hikers. The library is open to campers any time the shed's main doors (opposite the “hen box” honor sales area) are open for firewood sales.
- Board discussed bringing Van Wagner back to our park this summer, as a follow-up to his interesting musical/historical act in our park last Fall which was sponsored by DCNR. This time, Friends would directly pay his expected \$450 fee. Chair will communicate with Van to see if calendars will mesh.
- A.T. Museum and Ironmaster's Mansion hostel have both opened for the season.

- Treasurer

- Balance \$83,391 [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.
- Chair proposed a \$250 formal limit on unapproved necessary expenses – concept is similar to rules by other non-profits and government entities he is familiar with. This idea was sparked by Chair buying on his own initiative \$182 of supplies necessary for a volunteer trail work day before today’s Board meeting. We’ve never had a problem, but it seems proper to establish a limit beyond which the Board ought to approve unusual expenses if not already part of the budget. Vote unanimous to set \$250 limit.

- Budget

- Previously updated for 2019 and approved by Board. As noted above, a significant fraction of our high bank balance is already earmarked in our budget for specific pending projects.
- Manager asked Friends for \$1080 for pine trees to be planted during Earth Day, and \$500 for mulch. Board voted unanimously to add these items to this year’s budget. Manager will arrange for invoices.

- Leadership Cumberland

- Friends were recently approached by a local training program <https://www.leadershipcumberland.org/> for possible placement of student observers with our Board starting in the Fall, as well as potential “Community Engagement Projects” in which students could help us with marketing plans or other activities. After discussion Board agreed to further consideration of these no-cost offers; Chair to discuss further with program leadership.

- Hiking Bridge to connect Koppenhaver Trail and Mountain Creek Trail

- Friends Vice-Chair is spearheading the effort to obtain a formal proposal from external professional engineers, 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 all engineering work handled by outside engineers would vastly speed up the whole process. After an initial company we contacted failed to move forward with a full proposal despite an on-site meeting, Friends and Park Manager met on Feb. 5 with a second local engineering firm. Their preliminary proposal for a 60-foot pre-fabricated bridge and associated work on the stream bank, was just received. For cost reasons, the bridge will need to be a truss design, not a suspension style as we originally sought. A follow-up meeting can hopefully be arranged soon to adjust their proposal to our needs. The entire project will likely be on the order of \$100,000 or more. We hope to be able to apply in coming months for a substantial grant for this bridge.

- Other Trail Issues

- Late season rain atop poorly draining ground has taken a toll on several park trails: most notably two adjoining area of Creek Trail closest to its trailhead on Bendersville Rd (across from Organized Group Tenting Area). With help from Maintenance, drainage in this problematic area has been improved but more work is needed. Friends Chair investigated a long walkway made from thick rough-hewn wooden boards as recently installed by DCNR Forestry on the blue trail near Michaux Road; for now we may not need a long walkway of this type, but we will monitor the situation through the summer.
- Other special problem areas are on Mountain Creek Trail. A call for volunteers on Saturday morning March 30 attracted only a few people but with considerable effort we nonetheless accomplished major improvements in 3½ hours. A second public volunteer effort will be called for April 14 @ 2 PM.

- Iron Run 2019 on June 8

- Brief discussion re: half-marathon & 5k. Usual planning is in progress for our 9<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser races. We will order more pint glasses; new oval stickers are pending delivery; other gifts for runners can be drawn from existing supplies including less-often-sold regular merchandise.

- Fall Furnace Fest on weekend of October 19-20, 2019

- Board briefly discussed coordinating a raffle or similar “Small Game of Chance” which requires administrative oversight and approval from both Park Manager and PPF, but presents fewer logistical

hassles during Fall Fest than does a Silent Auction (which we will discontinue). Board Treasurer and Secretary will consider specific options and report back to the full Board.

- We will seek to maximize contributions from corporate and other sponsors.

- Earth Day on April 27 & Woodsy Owl on May 18

- As usual, Friends will support our State Park by supplying grilled items & drinks for pot-luck lunches, and can help with organizing activities if needed. If enough public volunteer appear, there is plenty to do on park trails in addition to any other projects planned by the Park Manager such as planting trees.

- Merchandise

- “Coast to Coast: Collecting America’s Story” [www.c2sites.us](http://www.c2sites.us) promotion and sales items (postcard & coaster packet with local photos) were previously approved. New postcard/coaster plastic packets are now on sale in the Park Office merchandise area for \$2.
- Chair proposed a new sales item: an academic book on the local iron industry that includes material on our own furnace. Board approved 4 books @ \$24 each, to be sold at the \$40 price established by the author. While this is relatively expensive, this specialty book has been selling well at the Cumberland County Historical Society’s shop in Carlisle.
- New embroidered patch for 2019 “Black Bears” has arrived, sold as usual for \$5 each. The sewn final product showing an unretouched photo of a bear walking past the park office looks very nice.
- A new reverse-color PGF oval sticker (white letters on black background) is pending from the artist.
- Our merchandise sales area in the front of the Park Office is very crowded. Board discussed possible options to rearrange for better visibility, including wall-mounted holders for newsletters, pamphlets and sales envelopes. New display glass cabinets are expensive, but if a wider used one became available it should be considered. Current glass cabinet is 4 feet wide; we can fit up to 6 feet. We could also replace the wood bookcase in the corner if a suitable cabinet were found.

- Social Media and other advertising/branding

- Friends latest newsletter for Winter/Spring 2019 is finished and was posted online and on kiosks, and emailed to our membership list.

- Firewood

- Penn State Mont Alto “forestry club” student volunteers came to help with chainsawing and splitting twice in recent weeks; Vice-Chair has arranged other volunteer efforts. Thanks to everyone who is helping with this service to campers, plus firewood sales generate considerable income for the Friends. In addition, as needed and when available we will continue to buy seasoned split wood to keep our campground sales shed full of dry wood.

### Major Friends-Supported Events in 2019

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