

# Friends of Pine Grove Furnace Board Meeting

*Minutes for May 18, 2019*

Board in attendance:

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

## ● Park Manager's comments

- Manager updated Board on our park's personnel complement – a new Environmental Educator is expected to start soon. The park is still seeking to hire enough lifeguards for Fuller Beach.
- Installation by Maintenance of the “EZ Dock” kayak system at Laurel Lake is in progress, held up by a missing part that the kit manufacturer will send... as well as by persistent bad weather.
- Bears have been repeatedly raiding park dumpsters (as well as residential toters all across the South Mountain: this is the worst it's been in the two decades that Friends Chair has lived in the area). Bear populations are high. Local garbage companies are not prepared with routine anti-bear dumpsters, the way that other parts of PA are. Manager and Friends discussed potential to purchase our own anti-bear dumpsters, but it will not be easy, fast or inexpensive.

## ● Chair/Vice-Chair comments

- Chairman's public history tour schedule is set for this summer and posted on park kiosks.
- Friends Vice-Chair purchased hanging flower baskets for Park Office and Mansion porches as in the past, \$177 cost. They definitely make the park look nicer.
- PPF annual banquet was a couple weeks ago. Great opportunity for networking.
- PPF moved its headquarters office to a new site further east in Camp Hill, on Lisburn Road.
- South Mountain Partnership “Science Summit” one month ago will hopefully lead to useful new collaborations between residents, academia, and government: see <https://centerforlanduse.org/smrc-ss>.
- Chair and Treasurer will set up a simple promotions and sales table at the annual Healthy Adams County “Walk With Me” which now includes a free public 5k on Memorial Day in Gettysburg.
- Chair continues to attend meetings to form the new “Friends of Michaux S.F.” as an interested ally and observer. We look forward to creation of this new partner literally “next door” to our State Park plus others inside the Michaux S.F. (Kings Gap, Caledonia, and Mont Alto – each with a Friends group).
- Free informal lending library in our Campground firewood sales shed is ready for use by campers whenever the shed doors are open. Campground Hosts should try to open those doors as much as possible, to encourage use of the library, reduce need to restock wood into the “hen boxes” (by allowing firewood purchasers to pick their own pieces), and increase airflow to enhance wood drying.
- Musician-historian Van Wagner will return to our park on Sunday August 25 @ 1 PM, as a follow-up to his event in our park last Fall. Friends will pay his \$450 fee for a free public performance.
- A.T. Museum now open daily for the peak of hiking and tourism season.

## ● Treasurer

- Balance \$83,454 not including very recent sales and donations [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

- Previously updated for 2019 and approved by Board.

## ● Hiking Bridge to connect Koppenhaver Trail and Mountain Creek Trail

- Friends Vice-Chair is spearheading the effort. We discussed moving forward with paid external professional engineers, since DCNR's own Bureau of Facilities Design & Construction is very busy statewide. FD&C will still need to sign off but having all engineering work handled by outside engineers will vastly speed up the whole process. Their proposal for a 60-foot pre-fabricated bridge and associated work on the stream bank, is on the order of \$134,000 including installation and permits. We will seek a 75% grant from CAEDC/CVVB. Vote unanimous to proceed.

- Other hiking and trail issues
  - Late season rain atop poorly draining ground has taken a toll on several park trails: most notably on Creek Trail closest to its trailhead on Bendersville Rd (across from Group Campground). With help from Maintenance, drainage in this problematic area has been improved but more work is in progress, with volunteer support from Friends. A (temporary?) reroute now runs parallel to the flooded section.
  - A moonlight hike in the Laurel Lake area will be led by Rob on June 15 @ 7 PM. Chair will handle the newly required Special Activity Agreement paperwork with our park.
- Iron Run 2019 on June 8
  - Usual planning is in progress for our 9<sup>th</sup> annual half-marathon & 5k fundraiser races. Most supplies and gifts (such as maps, pint glasses and new “13.4” stickers) are in hand, as are this year’s shirts (burgundy red with white lettering). Volunteers are organized. Our gratitude to our sponsors, especially to Purple Lizard maps who agreed to be title sponsor for the second year in a row. We have a total of around 170 pre-registrants (online registration is still open through June 3). All we need now is a high # of same-day registrants and some dry weather – the extended forecast is good, finally.
- Fall Furnace Fest on weekend of October 19-20, 2019
  - Board again 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 after the Iron Run races.
  - We will seek to maximize contributions from corporate and other sponsors.
- Earth Day on April 27 & Woodsy Owl on May 18
  - Friends Board meeting was held just after the Woodsy Owl volunteer morning. Both Earth Day a few weeks ago and today’s Woodsy Owl were successful in contributing to the park’s appearance and improving local vegetation – lots of barberry bit the dust, so to speak! Some trailwork was performed, and more trees planted. We supported the enthusiastic volunteers by supplying grilled items & drinks for pot-luck lunches at both events.
- 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) as previously approved are now on sale in the Office merchandise area for \$2.
  - New academic book on the local iron industry that includes material on our furnace is also on sale.
  - New embroidered patch for 2019 “Black Bears” has arrived, as usual \$5 each. The sewn final patch 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 also on sale.
  - Vice-chair worked with park staff to rearrange our merchandise sales area in the front of the Park Office. Handouts and sales envelopes are now in wall-mounted brackets which considerably improved the situation. Nonetheless space is tight.
- Social Media and other advertising/branding
  - Friends new Spring 2019 newsletter was posted online and on kiosks, and emailed to our membership list. Thanks to Rob for creating such a nice-looking newsletter.
- Firewood
  - Sales from our shed are a little sluggish, probably due to rainy weather. Even when the campground is full, it’s hard to light a match in a downpour! Bulk sale to the Mid-Atlantic Hammock Hangers Association’s “Spring Hang” was also smaller than usual.
  - A new crew of volunteer sawyers and splitters has been helping at our Fuller work area, they are much appreciated.

- Old map

- Park Manager found an original 1844 map that had been more or less “lost” in the our park’s historical collection after incomplete preservation efforts by a previous Manager in the mid-1980s. The map shows deeds boundaries for the Pine Grove Iron Works Estate area to 1762, the earliest European involvement in this area. The old map is deteriorating badly. Chair proposed taking it to a professional framer to be placed behind anti-UV glass. Despite large size (43 inches by 29 inches) framing will cost only \$280. Vote unanimous.
- When returned from framer, we can discuss putting the artifact on temporary display in the Visitor’s Center in the Park Office, and perhaps Chair can give a lecture about what it shows. However, it ideally should be kept away from direct sunlight as much as possible. Crystal, a professional photographer, kindly volunteered to take high-resolution photographs of the original for future academic use; moreover we *might* be able to print that photo at full size for longterm display instead of the delicate original map.

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#### **Upcoming Major Friends-Supported Events**

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- **Iron Run half-marathon & 5k: June 8**
- **Moonlight Hike near Laurel Lake: June 15**
- **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!**

***Next Board Meeting: late August or early September, date TBD***