

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: November 14, 2022

Meeting Location: Blue Mounds Park Friend's Shelter, Blue Mounds Park, WI

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Lydia Haynes; Adam Maus; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR; Rodney Albers; Tom Pedretti; Bruce Paull; Randy Paske, Vice President, Friends of Wisconsin State Parks

Hero Award Presentation

Randy Paske, Vice President of the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks, presented the Hero Award to Bill Kalscheur. There are 51 Friends Groups in the state of Wisconsin (3700 people involved in volunteer work which enhances the state parks). The Hero award is given annually by the WI DNR. Bill was recognized for his longterm, continuous hard work which makes the FMRT group such a success.

Agenda Addition

The group decided to discuss trail surface conditions in January. The group should read Mark's email before the next meeting and be prepared to discuss the group's intentions related to this. Jerry will resend Mark's email to the group.

Minutes

Dave motioned and Lydia seconded to accept the October 2022 meeting minutes with the corrections pointed out (changing "depot windows" to "caboose windows") by Jerry. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of October 2022 balance of \$41,974.75. 2023 trail passes will be out shortly, and most vendors are paid up for 2022. We made about \$11,000 this year from trail passes. REI pass sales were way up this year but other vendors were down a little bit. The new REI person handling trail pass sales is not very knowledgeable about the trail pass program so we will see if trail passes via REI continue to be high in 2023.. Payments for landscaping to Kittleson and Spirit are due. Spirit has completed their part of the project and has been paid but Kittleson has not completed their part of the landscaping work so their check has yet to be sent. Kevin will let us know when Kittleson is done. Dave motioned to accept this report, Lydia seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

DNR Report

Dodgeville received the bike repair stand and it will not be installed this year in all likelihood.

Ridgeway has a plan to update their park. They applied for and received a DNR Community Grant. Work will mostly be improvements to the parking lot.

Barneveld also received a DNR Community Grant and wants to do improvements to their community park. Kevin is meeting with them about the specifics of the grant.

DNR crew mowed from Blue Mounds to Mount Horeb and back and then the mower broke down. They will be mowing again in December. The snow mobile trail around Blue Mounds is still in litigation. There is a stay by the judge.

The DNR and Verona have exchanged draft documents for the construction and maintenance of the asphalt path between PB and past the school. The acceptance of it depends on parking availability for snowmobilers, and more. (The paved section will be closed to snowmobilers).

At the annual snow mobile club meeting DNR give annual contracts to groups for trail grooming (packing the snow down and other small things). Kevin proposed to the group that next year the FMRT get involved in the meeting (maybe provide the food). The State allocates \$300 per mile to the DNR for trail used by the snowmobilers. The money comes from trail passes and other funds. The DNR pays up to \$200 to the snow mobile clubs for grooming the trails and keeps at least \$100. If it is a bad snow year and not much snow, the DNR keeps more. DNR does use some snow mobile funds to repair the bridges. They hope to use some of this funding to buy a grader. MRT works with 4 clubs, 3 are paid to groom trails.

Starting next Monday, a new employee, Jona King, will fill the Blue Mounds State Park ranger position, and will be focused on the trail and trail issues.

Jerry asked if snow mobile clubs are going to put up fence at the depot. Kevin and Brad said they would put up a barricade to keep snow mobiles off the depot brick ramp.

Kevin asked for an extension on the Knowles Nelson incentive grant close out report since Kittleson is not done with the landscaping.

Knowles Nelson Stewardship Grant

The Knowles Stewardship grant application will be submitted by Kevin on time. The grant is for two educational panels, one at quarry near Town Hall Road, and one at Depot. We are asking for \$1,400-\$1,500 for the whole project (this includes frames and panels).

Depot Fan

Jerry left the vent fan circuit breaker on when he closed the depot. The plumber turned everything off. When Jerry went back and flipped the breaker he didn't think the fan turned on. (The fan is needed to keep the floor from buckling). The circuit breaker in question is labeled "Vent". Bruce will check to see if the fan is running. Jerry also left on the circuit breaker for the light pole (this is still on).

Caboose Window Repair

Bruce talked to Mike and Mike thought he was supposed to be doing the caboose window repair in the winter when his work dies down. He said he will do it this winter. There was discussion about putting more temporary plastic on the windows until Mike can get to it. Bruce will talk to Mike. Dave emphasized that the caboose needs to be locked correctly.

Website

Adam removed the brick form and has updated the group picture. Daryl Hinz, a Friends member, sends updates about the trail to "Travel Wisconsin". Adam put a link to this site on the page. He also put a link to the Dane Co Parks page which indicates when snowmobilers can use the trail. Adam will put an article about Bill's Hero Award on the website.

Facebook

DNR will have a webinar on Friends' websites and Facebook pages. Bruce has been posting pictures on Facebook. He suggested posting something about businesses that sell trail passes. This could promote the sale of trail passes as well as the businesses that sell them.

Hyde Days

Schools who have kids attending the depot tour and Hyde Blacksmith shop are very interested in having two groups instead of one (4 groups total, two on each day).

Free Bikes 4 Kids

Bill motioned that we again donate to this group (at least \$1,000), Dave seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously for a \$1,000 donation.

Next Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be January 12, 2023 at the Blue Mounds Friends Shelter. The meeting will start at 5:30. If weather is bad we could zoom. Dave volunteered to set up the meeting if it is a zoom meeting. Jerry will make the call when he sends out the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary