

FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: March 20, 2017

Meeting Location: Grandstay Hotel, 175 Lillehammer Lane, Mt. Horeb

Friends Attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Keith Sincox, Vice President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Lydia Haynes; Palmer Haynes; Dave Pearson; Tom Pedretti; Brad Bates; DNR Assistant Trail Manager

The originally scheduled March 13, 2017 meeting was cancelled and rescheduled due to bad weather and road conditions.

Minutes: Bill motioned and Lydia seconded to accept the minutes with the following corrections suggested by Jerry: Cletus did not give him any brush clearing equipment and the word "trail" appears twice the discussion of the snow mobile trail in Blue Mounds State Park.

Financial Report: Bill reported the checking balance is \$17,131, and the bank balance is \$17,177. Bill signed the FMRT up to be part of the state friends group. We will be billed next month for this. Lydia asked for group members to give her feedback on the utility of the financial reports. Sarah motioned and Keith seconded to accept the financial reports. The motion was passed unanimously.

We got approval for the DNR stewardship grant to fund the rebuilding of the Barneveld kiosk. FMRT is paying half the cost of the kiosk, the grant is paying the other half. The work is scheduled to be done sometime in mid May. We do want a concrete slab under it. The total amount for the kiosk is over \$6000 which includes the cost of the concrete slab.

Agenda Additions:

-Send any spring and summer photos of the trail to Lydia to refresh the website.

-Brad wants to donate an HO gauge train with a double loop track and a winter village display. It is currently on a 4X8 piece of plywood but he would not bring that. HO trains are small and Dave thought it might be too delicate for kids to play with. Bill suggested putting it in the depot and seeing how it works out. Bill motioned and Lydia seconded that we accept it. The motion passed unanimously.

-Meg Skinner will be willing to take groups out for naturalist walks. Meg would like some help in the Riley area clearing invasive species (especially wild parsnip) and overseeding with native prairie plants. Kevin has talked to Meg about the project and given her the green light. Meg has been gathering the seeds. Lydia moved and Bill seconded that we put it on our to-do list to schedule time to work on Megs's project.

DNR topics by Kevin:

-Kevin notified Jerry of the availability of a grant targeted for beautification (flowers and trees) around a prominent spot on the trail. This led to a discussion of the flower beds around the depot on 2nd Street in Mt Horeb. Tom thought after talking to Laurel Gindle that the village did not want any work done on these flower beds. Bill suggested that Duluth and the Food Emporium might want to put some money into the area around the 2nd street comfort station due to their proximity. Palmer moved and Dave seconded that we apply for the grant to be used around the 2nd street comfort station. Lydia thought that maybe Bill, Tom, and Palmer could sit down and talk to Laurel about the flower beds to see if we could move forward with renovating the beds.

- Kevin is preparing information to send to the group detailing the work that the the DNR trail crew has been doing. They are going over every foot of the trail, cutting, and chipping downed trees to spruce things up. They are also taking down dead trees that are along the trail.
- The trail along the Sugar River wetlands (by Epic) has been deeply grooved by vehicles from state employees working on the trail. Kevin and Brad found the culprit and the trail is being repaired.
- The high winds of March have blown lots of trash onto the trail and surrounding area. We will put something on the website encouraging people to pick up trash when they walk the trail.
- The approximately 100 foot long Fitchrona bridge has cracked boards that create a trail hazard. The bridge may be a city of Fitchburg bridge. Ownership (thus repair obligations) of the bridge are being investigated. The cost of reducking the bridge is roughly \$25,000.
- The Duluth headquarters building plan may necessitate moving the trail closer to the small prairie planting to the east of the sitting circle by the troll (across from the 2nd street comfort station).
- No tree planting date has been set. Brad will ask Kevin to send dates and times to Jerry. Planting was tentatively scheduled for Arbor Day (April 28th). We may approach the Key Club in Dodgeville to enlist help with the planting.

2017 MRT Calendar of Events: Lydia will be adding the following date/events to the website calendar

- April 10 4pm Depot cleanup and Potluck
- April 10 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot
- Late April - date TDA -tree planting along the trail
- May 8 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot
- June 3 & 4 Free Fun Weekend: All state parks entrance fees are waived
- June 4 12-3 pm Railroad Depot Museum and Caboose open to the public
- June 10 12-3 Iowa County Dairy Days - Depot Museum open to the public
- June 11 noon Ice Cream Social Benefit at Mt. Horeb 2nd Street Trailhead
- June 12 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot
- June 17 Horribly Hilly- FMRT volunteer
- July 2 12-3 pm Railroad Depot Museum and Caboose open to the public
- July 10 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot
- August 6 12-3 pm Railroad Depot Museum and Caboose open to the public
- August 14 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot
- September 3 12-3 pm Railroad Depot Museum and Caboose open to the public
- September 11 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot
- October 1 12-3 pm Railroad Depot Museum and Caboose open to the public
- October 9 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot weather permitting
- November 13 6pm FMRT Board meeting - Ridgeway depot

Comments from FMRT members on the events:

- encourage people (on the events page)to help maintain the trail by picking up trash
- those wanting to help with tree planting should call the friends number
- Horribly Hilly - Bill will list some numbers for people to call if they are interested in volunteering
- Note on the event page that guided trail hikes, led by Meg Skinner, are available by appointment. Those wanting to schedule a walk should email her

Lydia will send a draft out with the dates/events for our review and will also send the URL for the website when she sends the draft to everyone.

American Transmission Co. (ATC) Power Lines expansion update - Dave Pearson reported the following: If the Cardinal-Hickory Creek line is approved it will follow 18-151and therefore greatly impact the trail. The

chairperson of the public service commission has stated (in the context of a discussion about the need to invest in solar power) that there is no demand for more energy. Data shows that the energy demand in the Midwest is flat due to conservation, wind energy, and solar power. Those who will benefit from the construction of the line will be the developers who are guaranteed a 10.2 % return on their investment. We need to get the word out for people to call their legislators to oppose this. Dave will draft some language and send it to Lydia for posting on the website, letting concerned people know who they can contact about this issue and how they can voice their opposition.

Ridgeway Depot

Bill encouraged FMRT members to think about the future of the ridgeway depot. Will we keep it, how will we continue to staff it on “open to the public” days, how will we maintain it? Palmer suggested contacting the Iowa historical society to gauge their interest.

Commemorative Bricks

Bill ordered and paid for commemorative bricks for: One for Jack Loud (who championed sports for seniors) to be placed wherever the Loud family chooses; and one for Cletus and Jane Schwoerer, longterm FMRT members who have moved out of the area. Dave motioned that we approve paying for the bricks (\$60) , Palmer seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

Dave motioned we adjourn the meeting, Keith seconded it, the motion passed unanimously.

Next month’s meeting will be April 10, 2017 at the Riley Depot. This will be the annual clean up the Depot meeting and people should get there at 4:00. There will also be a pot luck so bring a dish to pass.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary