

FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: January 8, 2018

Meeting Location: Blue Mounds Park Shelter, Blue Mounds, WI

Friends Attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Lydia Haynes; Palmer Haynes; Tom Pedretti,; Dave Pearson; Brad Bates, DNR Ranger; Kevin Swenson, DNR Trail Manager; Linda McMeen

Minutes

Bill motioned and Lydia seconded to accept the November 2017 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed we have \$18,274.98 in the FMRT checking account. Bill supplied a printout that showed a condensed version of debits and credits for the Friends in 2017. We pulled in 64,839 and spent 63,321 in 2017. Most of the income comes from trail passes. We have \$19,065 in the Fidelity account with a gain of \$6,565. Tamlyn Akins submitted a bill for the FMRT website domain name payment which will be paid in 2018. Palmer stated that the donation box at the depot is at their home. He will put it back in the depot in the spring. Dave motioned that we accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by Sarah. The motion passed unanimously.

Possible March meeting Agenda Item

Can we use the Friends to try and sell trail passes along the trail as Trail Tenders did in the past?

Additions to this meeting's agenda

Dave has information on the ATC power line opposition.

DNR Topics

Road work on old PB is back on the schedule. The roadwork will mean that the trail will be closed in this area and traffic rerouted through the park and ride.

The black top area of the trail, between the PB park-and-ride and the Cannon Ball Trail, has been plowed by a volunteer with an ATV. The DNR is not closing the gate on the trail

The snow mobile club Ridgeway Riders, after a reminder from Brad, stated that they put up the snow fence around the depot. Brad hasn't checked on this yet.

Kevin ordered trees for spring planting in 2018. He ordered \$500 worth of white spruce and the DNR plans to plant them in the area near Mt. Horeb that was heavily mowed (between the bridge and Waltz Park). When they mature they will improve the neighborhood by dampening the sound from snowmobilers. They need to be planted in about a 12 inch hole. They will use an auger to drill the holes. The DNR will plant them or else we can get volunteers. Kevin thought it would be hard to say how big they would get as it depends on the soil, how close bedrock is, moisture, etc. He chose the spruce because they are more aggressive and hopefully will compete with the buckthorn. He also wants to plant Indian grass and blue stem in front of the spruce.

The caboose doors (at the depot) are rotten. The DNR is trying to rebuild them.

Kevin asked about the signs along the trail that refer to an interpretive guide book developed by the Friends. Originally, the DNR's position, after the interpretive guidebook was developed, was that they did not want these signs along the trail because too many signs deterred from the "naturalness" of the trail. Kevin would like a copy of the guide book to revisit the idea and maybe modernize the trail guide book (a phone app, a swipe option, something linked to our website). We will need to check the text of the guide to see if points of interest are still there (ex. stands of unique vegetation). This may be a project for the future.

Not many stewardship grants were submitted to the DNR so we were able to ask for more money. The new grant request now includes signage for Riley and the higher priced maps. We will get a bid for the map and

sign prices after we find out how much money we get through the stewardship grant. Then we can see how many maps we can purchase.

The Ridgeway highway project is still progressing.

There is no new information on the Duluth Trading Company incursions into the trail in downtown Mt. Horeb.

Verona is building a new high school near 18/151 (on the west side of Verona) which will impinge on the trail.

The new site design includes a 70 foot box culvert which will go over the trail and several bicycle grade intersections. Contractors are requesting a 30 day closure of the trail during the summer of 2018. Due to liability issues the DNR is not going to suggest a re-route but will ask the contractor to suggest a re-route. The total building project will include getting rid of two bridges (both replaced by box culverts) and will result in the high school for a trail neighbor.

Brad said that during a trail bridge inspection they saw a covey of bobwhite just off the trail.

ATC Power Line

Dave reported that the ATC opposition group wants to do a media blitz, starting February 2nd, to bring attention to the proposed power line. The group needs to raise money to do the media blitz. Dave asked if the FMRT could give money to support this media blitz. Jerry suggested that we might need legal advice. Can the FMRT give money to this group or is this a political issue? Bill felt it was not a political issue. Kevin thought Jerry should contact the liaisons for the DNR friends groups or contact the state wide chapter of the Friends to determine what we can do. Depending on the allowability, Palmer motioned that we donate \$100 to the blitz cause, Bill seconded it. The motion passed unanimously. A rally is planned by the opposition group for January 26 in Iowa County to encourage opposition to the trail. Bill asked if the final route has been published. The answer is no.

Etching framing

The locomotive picture, donated by the Iowa County Historical Society and transported to the Friends meeting by Melva Philips, is now framed. Linda brought it to the meeting to show the group.

Work Day

The work day was well attended. Friends suggested that our next work day could include clearing the other side of the trail (between Sletto Road and County P on the south side of the trail). The big sprayers owned by the Friends did not work. The little hand held sprayers did work and were easier to use. Tom Meyer is looking into more sprayers. DuMont Smith, a friend of Lydia and Palmers, was a welcome and hard-working addition to the group. He regularly chain saws with the Friends of Donald Park.

Long term trail plan and maintenance

Brad will write up something to put on the website to explain why the DNR is cutting back trees on the sides of the trail. The text will explain the DNR's long term plan for trail maintenance. Friends will review/edit the text and post it on the website. This text can be referred to by Friends when people express concern about the cutting done along the trail.

Chain saw certification

Rich Castello needs to complete and return to the DNR several forms and file copies of his chain saw and first aid certification with the DNR.

Annual Meeting

Our next meeting (February), is our annual meeting and will be held at the Blue Mounds Park Shelter. All the officers currently with positions are willing to keep serving. Dave Pearson agreed to fill the role of vice president. This is a potluck. We will advertise in the papers that this is our annual meeting and will include the monthly meeting.

March 13 (this is a Tuesday) the building (Blue Mounds Shelter) will be used for the District Friends meeting. The DNR people were not sure who could attend.

The next meeting is 6:00 pm, Monday, February 12, 2018 at the Blue Mounds Park Shelter.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary