

FRIENDS of the MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: March 12, 2018

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

Friends Attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice President; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Lydia Haynes; Palmer Haynes; Tom Pedretti; Kevin Swenson, DNR Trail and Park Manager; Brad Bates, DNR Ranger and Assistant Trail Manager; Barb Schmidt, DuMont Schmidt

Annual Report

The group discussed liquid and non liquid assets. Bill motioned, Dave seconded, and it passed unanimously that we donate the mower to the DNR. The mower therefore would not be considered an asset for the FMRT.

Minutes

Bill motioned that the minutes be accepted. Dave seconded to accept the February 2018 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report shows that we have \$18,121 in the FMRT checking account. Expenditures this month include: web hosting fee, chain saw repair, and the Ridgeway utility bill. Tamlyn wants us to pay for the web hosting through a credit or debit card. Bill will get a debit card through Farmers Bank in Mt. Horeb. We sold some trail passes last month. Dave motioned to accept the financial report, Palmer seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

Additions to this meeting's agenda

DuMont wanted to add a discussion of trail conditions in the Blue Mounds area to the agenda.

Regional Friends Meeting

Bill will be attending the Regional Friends of the Wisconsin State Park System Meeting on Wednesday and Jerry on Thursday.

DNR Topics

Interpretive panels - Brad has been working on interpretive panels for Riley deck and will send out pdfs of drafts. There are 6 panels and Brad treated them as pairs with 3 topics having 2 panels each. The three topics include: 1. Frogs and toads of the Sugar River (these panels will be linked to a DNR webpage on frogs and toads via interactive QR codes and allow the user to hear frog and toad vocalizations); 2. Trail to Road and Back to Trail again (these panels include a timeline of the trail's use from footpath to today's recreational trail) 3. Journey to the Sea (these panels talk about the watershed the trail passes through). There was a discussion of where topics 2. and 3. QR codes could link to. Suggestions include having the watershed panels link to the Sugar River watershed group website and the Trail to Recreational and Back to Trail QR code link to the Historical Society or to a map.

Trail guide- the DNR would like to put QR codes on sign posts along the trail. These QR codes would link you to points of interest in the trail guide. Kevin plans to recreate the trail guide digitally and use the QR codes posted on the trail to link to the Trail Guide on the FMRT website. Brad needs a copy of the trail guide and Jerry has a copy that can be recreated digitally.

MRT has been selected to have a digital kiosk. The kiosk can be used to buy trail passes, park passes (daily, annual), allow for payment via credit card, and will print a receipt. The first kiosk will be located at the Verona trail head in summer and moved to Blue Mounds in the fall to accommodate park skiers. The kiosks are solar powered and have no cash inside. It will be installed by Memorial Day and will be security bolted to the concrete.

Projects on the trail include:

- Work in Verona by the PB park and ride is moving forward.
- Verona School project will begin this year resulting in the trail shut down for at least a week.
- The Duluth trading company construction site is still impacting the trail in Mt Horeb.
- In Ridgeway the trail will be shut down for a month due to new exit ramps.
- The Mt Horeb bridge painting was rebid and awarded, and painting will take place this summer.
- Finks will work on 2017 storm damage to the trail west of Blue Mounds.

-Kevin got lots of positive feedback about the plowing of the trail from Verona to Capital City trail.

Brad has worked on the model train he donated, He repaired the locomotive and repainted it green and gold. Brad would like to make a display table for the train set. We will decide at the next meeting where to put the table. One suggestion was in the corner of the back room.

-It is the snow mobile clubs responsibility to take down the fence around the depot.

-Brad would like to add for next month's agenda having Bill talk about the The Regional Friends of the Wisconsin State Park System Meeting.

Trail Conditions in Blue Mounds

DuMont wants to discuss a section of the trail near Red Wolf and the new concrete bridges in Blue Mounds. There is lots of activity on the trail here and the sides of the trail have lots of ragweed, trashy looking willow trees, garlic mustard, and burdock. Brad said that the DNR typically does normal maintenance of trail annually, including mowing on the side of trail, trimming problem limbs on the side of trail, and, where there are noxious weeds, the DNR uses a tractor with a boom and selects (usually in the fall) sections of the trail to clear. Volunteers, including businesses, villages, adopt a trail groups, and private citizens can clean up a section of the trail. Reseeding can only include native plants. Brad pointed out that it is hard to decide when to cut out invasive species because native plants that are flowering at the time could also be eliminated.

ATC Power Line

An ATC updated map and has a preferred route which runs along highway 18-151 and affects the trail corridor from Governor Dodge going east all the way to Mt. Horeb. The route then cuts through the north east end of Mt Horeb. The ATC announced that they intended to move up their application date to mid-April although they won't have all necessary documentation until August. Opposition groups think that this not a real application (without all the documentation) but is intended to make the public think that the application has already been submitted and it will therefore be useless for people to continue opposing the trail.

Calendar

-Lydia has the Calendar to post in the kiosks and online. Jerry would like to add the Feb 12 annual meeting (so people know we had it).

- This spring the Hyde mill and Hyde black smith shop will be open and the school would like to bring kids to the depot.. Wed, May 16, is the day for setup (they will be setting up teepees and more.). Students from the Dodgeville school system would like to visit the depot May 18th (Jerry requested that we not put this on the calendar yet). Bill, Palmer, and maybe Dave will be there to help. The kids really liked the caboose last time.

-Meg is still willing to take people out on the trail. If people contact her she will make arrangements to meet with them. Lydia and Palmer will sub for Meg if necessary.

Work Day

The next work day is March 24th and continues the vista clearing east of Sletto to Highway P. Friends should meet at 9:00 on highway P. Palmer wants to add a fall workday to the schedule.

Bike Rodeo

Sarah has contacted Mt Horeb Scoot Troop #62 to see if we can help with the Bike Rodeo, an annual event that teaches bike safety to children. Participates are provided with free bike helmets. Dave motioned that we authorize \$250 to put toward helmets for the rodeo, Bill seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously to authorize up to \$250 for helmets for the bike rodeo in Mt. Horeb. Sarah will take the lead on this.

File purging

Jerry and Bill will take a day to clear out the files in the depot.

Next Meeting

Dave motioned and Lydia seconded to move the meeting to the depot in April. April and May will be depot clean up days so show up early if you can to work. The next meeting will be 6:00 pm, April 9, 2018 at the Ridgeway Depot. Bill will have the water turned on at the depot.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary