

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL

Meeting Date: November 11, 2019

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

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Lydia Haynes; Dave Pearson, Vice President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Sarah Castello, Secretary; Linda McMeen; DuMont Schmidt; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR

The meeting was proceeded by a potluck.

Minutes

Bill motioned and Dave seconded to accept the October 2019 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of October balance of \$26,981.10 in the FMRT checking account. Dan's plumbing is charging us \$161 to shut down the water, blow the water out of the pipes, and put antifreeze in the toilet at the Ridgeway Depot. We discussed not using him next year. We will put this on the agenda next March and explore other options. Trail pass sales were higher than last year for a record high of 3249 trail passes. REI was a great promoter of the passes. Erik bike shops also sold lots. Daily passes continued to slide (188 for this year). Sarah motioned to accept the report as presented, Bill seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

Additions to this meetings agenda

None

DNR Topics

DNR staff have been brushing and chipping (with the new chipper) between Paulson and White Crossing Road. They have just started ditch mowing the entire trail.

The Verona High School project is moving forward. Soft closures will be started. Project staff requested that the trail be closed between mid December thru January. The DNR denied this request.

Completion of the Duluth project is weather dependent.

DNR still needs the updated proof on insurance from the Friends.

Jerry handed in the Knowles Stewardship proposal. Jerry wants to know if we need a bank statement to prove we have the request funds. The bid that Jerry has is not signed by either party. Kevin thought that a signed bid was not needed, just a cost estimation.

Bill asked where the new Ridgeway kiosk is going to be located. The DNR has to decide on this.

Kevin signed a contract with Gresmier to continue the voluntary plowing of the trail between Verona and the trail head to the east.

Kevin is working with DNR real estate on a new Ridgeway land use agreement for the volleyball courts and the bathrooms. He will also have them submit proof of insurance to cover all the events they are having.

This Wednesday is the meeting with four snow mobile clubs at Blue Mounds Friends Shelter. All FMRT members are welcome. They will discuss contracts, the new master plan, what worked, what didn't work, etc. The DNR will ask them to do the snow fencing at the depot.

The Blue Mounds Master Plan work is ongoing. You can access it from the DNR website and the website takes you through each alternative. You can then submit your preferences.

There is a bridge located by the side of the trail near the intersection with PD that is partly on DNR property. DNR asked the landowners to take this out. The request went to water management because the landowner is putting a bridge across a navigable waterway. The landowner contacted the warden after DNR cut part of the bridge. The landowner said he had a DNR permit for the bridge. He misrepresented the landownership lines on the application and he really did not own the property on both sides of the bridge, so the bridge permit is probably not valid. The bridge doesn't meet code and is a liability to the department. The issue of having it removed is being investigated.

The new Fitchburg trailhead sign is made and ready to install. The concrete pad, which is partially done, is almost ready to go (delayed because of the snow). Now the project might be pushed into spring due to the early snow. The sign, bench and bike stand are done.

The Betlack bench has two location options. Sharon Betlack preferred: the view of the man made pond first, and the oak view second. Kevin is concerned about bedrock close to the oaks. Kevin thinks the bench would be easiest to maintain near the road and the oaks (near Highway P). The DNR uses a standard bench. The Friends voted to put in up to \$500. The bench costs about \$1200.

Friends need to know if the Ridgeway kiosk will be under ADA obligations and, if it is, we might need to get the bid changed.

Photography

Bill and Dave went to the Discover Wisconsin filming at the Ridgeway Depot. Dave was interviewed inside the depot. The background was the mural. The piece will be aired in April. Biking was filmed by drones.

Trail safety

Upgrades to trail safety have been added to the Dane County budget for 2020 including marking the pavement and adding a flashing beacon that can be activated by those crossing PD. Friends expressed concern about people stopping abruptly when seeing the flashing beacon because cars are traveling on PD at such a high speed.

Sarah had some ideas for wording on trail safety/etiquette signs and plans to send out the sign language to Friends for comments and suggestions. Brad said that signs should not have language such as "danger" or "warning" as these words may imply danger not addressed by the state. Jerry would like the wording "Sponsored by Friends of Military Ridge Trail" at the bottom of each sign to help promote the Friends group. Kevin recommended that we go with better quality signs.

ATC

Dave did not have any new ATC news.

The next meeting is 6:00 pm, Monday, January 13, 2020 at the Blue Mound State Park Friend Shelter.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary