

Minutes - FRIENDS of MILITARY RIDGE TRAIL Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: February 13, 2023

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

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice-President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Lydia Haynes; Adam Maus; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR; Karyn Windmoeller; Bruce Pauli

Minutes

It was motioned and seconded to accept the January 9, 2023 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

The financial report showed an end of January 2023 checking account balance of \$42,616.08.

DNR Report

The meeting with the State and City of Verona went well. They are moving towards paving the trail from old PB to the High School. The project is 4 years out. The paved section will be paid, maintained, and owned by the state.

The DNR is still meeting with MMSD for the stretch between PD and Fitchburg.

The DNR finished up the easement with the MH utility company for the trail crossing near Hwy 78 and ID (they will have to bring the utility lines over for a new substation that is being built). ATC will also want an easement. They are working with another owner of that parcel because he wants in on that easement as well.

There were a couple days of the trail being open to snow mobiles and were no incidents. Ridgeway had a classic snow mobile show which included a ride on the trail.

The DNR approved the Barneveld Park concept plan. This will not have much impact on the trail corridor. Barneveld got grants from the DNR for this.

While doing the fall mowing Brad noticed a farm with lots of dead ash trees removed, stumps and all - they turned out to be on the state trail. This landowner is an arborist and is interested in removing dead ash trees on the trail at his own expense to use for personal use for firewood. He has all the equipment needed to do a good job. The DNR wrote a Forest Products Permit, and he is okayed to do the work at no cost to the DNR. The trees become a hazard soon after they die so need to be removed quickly.

2023 Stewardship Grant

This request appears to have been approved. Military Ridge Trail information kiosks in MH and by the depot were approved. We requested money for 2 signs, by the quarry (Rodney) and the depot (Jerry). Total project cost is \$1,450 so we may be putting in a little more than our share. The cash match is \$365 and the in-kind match is \$360. The Stewardship grant is \$725.

MMSD

Adam reviewed info from the public information sharing session for Pump 17 (MMSD), held Thursday, 2/16/2023. There were originally 4 different routes (one potentially crossed the trail in a few places). They will build a detour on the trail when they shut down sections so they won't have to close the trail. Adam is attending the meetings.

Caboose Window Repair/Replacement

Bruce said Mike Larson would be doing the window replacement in the wintertime as a winter project. Bruce is now not sure if he will be doing it at all. Jerry and Bill think he is going to do it and he (Mike) has a key to the caboose. Bruce will follow up with an email to Mike and ask that he try and get it done before spring.

Various Issues

We discussed the fan/ventilation issues and animals entering through the ventilation portals in the building. This could be a new project for this year

Someone from the Madison school district wants to tour the Hyde Blacksmith shop.

Iowa County may be digging up main streets in towns in 2026.

Website

Adam and Bill renewed the Weebly hosting account for 2 years

Adam met with Justin Gleicher (he works on FBMSPP website) and discussed online membership forms. They found a service through Friends of Devil's Lake State Park to use as a service for an online membership database. FBMSPP does charge to be a member (we think), but the online service they use does not require members be charged. Adam will do more research into this. Bill suggested a longer discussion at a future meeting. There are lots of services out there. Bill is concerned about a fee base service and the payment schedule: more members, larger the fees. Adam was not sure of the fee for the service FBMSPP uses but thinks it is: 0-50 is free, 50-300 members is \$35/month. If we were to charge, the big question is what do members get for the charge. Do we want a way that people can donate? For many years donations went towards the depot. Bill felt that designating a project each year generated more donations.

Facebook

We started out with 15 Facebook followers and now have 37. We need something on the page for people to follow. Bruce thought maybe we could list where trail passes are sold. He felt we need more pictures to attract more followers. He suggested advertising the scavenger hunt on Facebook page and posting pictures. Jerry thought we should do it for the monthly open houses at the depot, maybe the library event at the depot (if Carol Murphy wants to), tours of the trail by Meg Skinner, etc. Jerry would like Meg Skinner to do a tour of the trail for only FMRT members. Bruce suggested putting a list of trail projects on the page (ex, painting kiosks) for organizations looking for community service projects. To do work on the trail you need to fill out online forms. This would be good for tracking trail volunteers.

Bruce needs a list of trail pass sellers for the facebook page. We don't want to promote the groups selling the passes (just name, address and phone number).

Melba Phillips

Bill would like to recognize the passing of Melba Phillips from Ridgeway. She was a huge help to FMRT during the depot renovation, donated many items to the depot, and was a wonderful person.

Bricks

Bill will send out an email with new prices of bricks for members to choose from and people can vote by mail. The brick price is the same as before but shipping is an issue since the place is located near Racine. It is hard to pinpoint what the shipping costs may be (shipping for one brick is \$20 and goes down with the more bricks shipped)). Jerry is willing to go down and pick them up at intervals. Others would be willing also. Bill thought we should group the orders and have them shipped at regular intervals. Currently we make money on each brick. Bill wants to opt for the company putting epoxy coating over the brick which will fill in the indent with the lettering and keep it forever visible (the indent for the lettering will not fill in with sand and mud). This needs to be decided by next month. Bruce suggested bricks to honor volunteers.

Overlook in Riley

Bill noted that the overlook outside of Riley needs work and would be a good project for the group.

Trail Passes

We should start promoting trail passes now. All groups selling the trail passes will not have them until the 3rd week of March (some of the big sellers already have them). This should give us time to put new postings in the kiosks in April about trail pass vendors.

Next Meeting

The next FMRT meeting will be March 13, 2023 at the Blue Mounds Friends Shelter. The meeting will start at at 5:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Castello, Secretary