

Friends of Military Ridge Trail Monthly Meeting

Meeting Date: February 9th, 2026

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

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Adam Maus, Secretary; Bruce Paul; John Helmenstine; Paul Hutchins

Highlights

- We are working on our events calendar for 2026. If you know of any events on the trail, send them our way and we can add them to the calendar.
- We received a Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant for new maps and replacement signage in the kiosks!

Minutes

Bill motioned that the January minutes sent out on January 18th, 2026 be approved, Paul seconded it, and it passed unanimously.

Financial Reports

Bill sent out the financial report on February 2nd, 2026. The financial report showed a balance of \$66,524.24 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of January 30th. The Zeffy account had \$577 with \$250 to show up on the February report. Kate's report on February 8th matched Bill's. Fidelity is up \$1,400 this year. This past month we paid for our Post Office box and organization registration with Department of Financial Institutions among normal utilities.

Dave Pearson already sold \$1,100 in trail passes! Way to go Dave!

We still don't have an answer on the question from last month about unrestricted net assets in Kate's report. We may have to talk to CPA.

This past month 3 new members joined and there were also 4 donations. Thank you to Clelia Becker and Tom Piper who donated in honor of Ned Kessinich. Thank you also to Jay Gunderson and Jay Huemmer for your donations.

Adam motioned to accept the financial report. The motion was seconded by John and passed unanimously.

DNR Topics

Kevin and Brad were unavailable for the meeting so we don't have any updates to share.

Repairs to Caboose and Depot

Bruce shared an overview of repair project as well as some pictures of the Caboose and Depot damage with the group. He is going to go to the Ridgeway Village board meeting on February 10th in hopes of finding local Ridgeway groups to support the project. Bruce would like to use Zeffy and Facebook to let people know about the donation campaign.

We don't have a contractor or bids yet. However, Rock Church Construction helped with Depot repairs quite a few years ago. Bill said they are still in business and that they are doing a project with the DNR so we could connect with them to see if they can help us on the repairs.

As for immediate Depot maintenance, Bruce didn't hear the fan running on February 8th when he was there, but he also didn't see any floor buckling (a sign of moisture). We haven't heard from the DNR about whether the light pole lamp is working.

Calendar

We discussed updates to the calendar and aim to have a close-to-final draft at the March meeting. We plan to have it ready by our April meeting at the Depot.

John will have the Depot open the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Sundays starting May until early October.

Bruce talked to the Dodgeville Library and is waiting to hear back about whether they will have a pop-up in the Depot storeroom. He also talked to Folklore Village and is waiting to hear back about whether they want to use the Depot.

Ridgeway has its Independence Day celebration on Saturday June 27th so Bruce will have the Depot open that day

Adam would like to do a field trip to get members involved and will contact Meg Skinner about a guided nature hike. He will also contact other organizations to see if they could do a birding and/or native plant hike.

We anticipate being open for Santa at the Depot but aren't sure when that will be yet.

Adam will work on updates to the calendar and share them with the group.

Membership Form Updates

Adam would like to update the Zeffy membership and paper membership forms. He suggested that we condense the language for the volunteer questions to one yes/no question.

Other suggestions from the group included updating the language for the donations, adding a QR code to direct people to the form online, and adding something to the donation form to let people sign up to be members.

Adam will draft the updates and share them with the group.

Website and Facebook

No major updates but our Facebook announcement about receiving the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant received some comments.

Bill recommended that we make the brick form easier to navigate to on the website. Adam will work on this.

Grants

We received approval for our Knowles-Nelson Stewardship grant application for new maps and replacement signage in the kiosks! We will start the project after we get the official letter sometime in February.

Jerry and Kevin are going to try to connect about putting in a request for the Federal Trail Program Grant by March 1st.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be March 9th, 2026 at the Blue Mound State Park Friends Shelter in Blue Mounds, WI at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Maus
Secretary