Friends of Military Ridge Trail Monthly Meeting
Meeting Date: July 13th, 2026
Meeting Location: Ridgeway Depot, Ridgeway, WI

Friends attending: Jerry Wilson, President; Dave Pearson, Vice President; Bill Kalscheur, Treasurer; Adam Maus, Secretary; Kevin Swenson, DNR; Brad Bates, DNR; Bruce Paull; John Helmenstine; Paul Hutchins

Highlights

- Thank you to the volunteers who helped at the refreshment station in Black Earth for the Horribly Hilly Hundreds bike ride on June 13th!
- DNR has been fielding a lot of complaints about soft sandy patches on the trail, bridge issues, and other trail hazards. They are trying to do everything they can to keep the trail safe and accessible.
- The DNR Warden service is getting complaints from the police department in Verona about eBikes and eScooters on the trail, particularly around high speeds.
- Paul has been working to get matching boards and paint to replace some of the siding on the Depot.

Minutes
Bill motioned that the June minutes sent out on June 11th be approved, Dave seconded it, and it passed unanimously.

Financial Reports
Bill sent out the financial report on July 1st. The financial report showed a balance of $49,253.74 in the Farmer's Savings Bank as of June 30th. The Zeffy account had $1,262.00. Kate's report on July 8th matched Bill's.

We paid the DNR for trail passes, received trail pass money from vendors, and received money for volunteering at the Horribly Hilly Hundreds.

We received 1 donation since our last meeting from Onno and Stefanie Brouwer. Thank you!

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

DNR Topics
DNR has been fielding a lot more complaints about soft sandy patches on the trail, bridge issues, and other trail hazards. They are trying to do everything they can to keep the trail safe and accessible. They are down a staff person this year because they can't find qualified people, so it is less of a money issue. Additionally, the problems are weather related. The storms are bringing high winds and dumping a lot of rain in a short amount of

time which affects the trail and brings down trees. The storm on 6/17 brought down over 200 trees alone. However, they are happy to report that they finally got the first mowing in but are behind on their normal maintenance because of all the issues.

Kevin asked Jerry to submit final reimbursement for the interpretative panels project so they can close out the project.

Mt. Horeb will begin construction near First Street on the roadway. This shouldn't impact the trail but, if it does, there will be small detours.

The DNR and City of Fitchburg came to an agreement on the Fitchrona Rd. project so the project will start moving forward again. This project involves updating the road and bike lanes on Fitchrona Rd. There shouldn't be much of an impact to the actual trail.

City of Verona is a little behind on their paving project. They had planned to update two bridges this Fall but this has been pushed back to 2027. They will be installing a culvert by Franklin St. this year though.

City of Verona is using a Forestry grant to do a tree survey on the trail so they can clear out some of the hazard trees ahead of the paving project. DNR would prefer to keep the hardwoods and remove the invasives. After clearing out the trees the City will have a replanting plan.

The DNR Warden service is getting complaints from the police department in Verona about eBikes and eScooters on the trail, particularly around high speeds. Right now, there are no laws established for speed limits on electronic vehicles however DNR is hoping to have some regulations soon including a possible 15mph speed limit.

The Bridge Replacement project is moving along in the Verona/Riley area. The plans are still with Engineering and Architecting and we should know more in Fall.

The Mt. Horeb Rest Station repairs will start in August. The building will be shut down and a few parking lot spots will be used as a construction staging area. They will have portable toilets for trail users.

Riley-Klevenville parking lot plans are complete. They will go out for bid in November. DNR is hoping to start in March 2027 and finish in Fall 2027.

Kevin is in contact with person that wants to donate half an acre of land by Hwy PD and Paulson Rd. with Sugar River shoreline access. DNR is researching the land.

Wayfinder Sign Project
Jerry and Kevin are going to talk about the project during the week of July 20th.

Detours
The Epic detour is in place where they are building the bridge (near Mile Marker 7). The contractors will open the trail back up in December, January, February, and then shut it down in Spring.

Repairs to Depot and Caboose
Paul pulled some boards off the depot and had Home Depot do a color match. He shared a sample at the meeting. He brought a board to Brunsell so they can come up a price for the cost to duplicate it. They said the wood is cedar. Paul is willing to paint the west side when it is a bit cooler. He thinks that two 8-foot lengths should handle some of the rotten parts. He suggested getting a 5-gallon bucket of paint and a gallon of primer for bare wood.

The Friends found a file about the paint used in the Depot but have not yet found the 3-ring binder with the siding specifications.

Memoriam for Cletus Schwoerer
Bill contacted Jane Schwoerer to see if she had an idea for a memorial for Cletus but hasn't heard yet. He suggested that we put up a plaque in the Depot with a picture of him. The group thought that was a good idea.

In addition to the Cletus plaque, we talked about plaque celebrating our long-standing members and board.

Anonymous Donation Project
Bill put together a letter for the donors, and we will use the money for the Wayfinder project. When we spend the money, we'll contact them with more details.

2027 Ridgeway Main Street/HHH Project and Historical Sites
We aren't sure if we'll been able to meet at the Ridgeway Depot in 2027 because of the construction on Ridgeway's Main Street. We'll decide after we get more information.

Bruce shared that they brought up historical sites at the last public works for Ridgeway. There are two churches, a few houses, and a hotel on the list.

Website/Facebook
Bruce has seen a big uptick in the number of the followers. Many people are engaged with our posts. No major updates to the website, just some updates to the events, construction, and minutes.

Paint
Bill picked up a gallon of dark brown paint from Blue Mound State Park that Jerry wants for the bench at Verona. Jerry will follow up with Bill.

Miscellaneous

- Volunteers at Horribly Hill Hundreds are invited to a Thank You dinner at Brix Cider in Mt. Horeb. If you haven't gotten the email, please contact us.
- Bruce let us know that Dodgeville Public Library has appreciated using the Depot space and will try to schedule more dates in 2027.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be August 10th at the Ridgeway Depot in Ridgeway, WI at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Adam Maus
Secretary