

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting

March 16, 2009

President Jim Michael called the Annual Meeting of the West Virginia State Parks Foundation to order at 10:15 AM at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, WV. The 20 attendees introduced themselves and said what Park they represent. Foundation officers present were President James Michael and Treasurer Robert Hoke.

Secretary's Report: Bob Hoke summarized the minutes taken by Dianne Anderson at the 2008 Annual Meeting, which had distributed by mail. There was a **motion to accept the minutes as presented.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report: Bob Hoke passed out copies of the 2008 Treasurer's report. He noted that the Foundation has no debts, but that the General Operating Fund only has about \$5,900 in it. He observed that the Foundation has no significant source of income other than donations and those usually are to support a specific park or project, not fund general Foundation activities. There was a **motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Recognition of Dianne Anderson's service: There was a **motion to thank Dianne Anderson for her many years of outstanding service to the Foundation and wish her well in the future.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Executive Director: Jim Michael said the contract with Executive Director Cordie Hudkins, and the money to pay him, ran out in 2007. Cordie proposed an extension of the contract pending obtaining funds, but the Foundation's officers didn't want to make that commitment since there was no projected source of significant funds. He said the group needs to discuss the future of the Foundation later in the meeting. There was a motion to not extend the Executive Director contract, but after some discussion the consensus was that no motion was needed. It died for a lack of a second.

Friends of Parks: Jim Michael said the "Friends of Parks," which was formed by Cordie Hudkins in 2008, is currently on hold until the future direction of the Foundation is clarified. There was a discussion about whether the Friends should be officially disbanded. Ken Caplinger suggested sending them a letter saying that the Foundation is reevaluating its goals and direction and we will contact them when the Foundation's future direction is more clear.

Park System Update: Ken Caplinger, Chief of the Parks and Recreation Section of the WVDNR, made the following comments:

- The Foundation hasn't worked as well as originally hoped, but he still feels it serves a valid function, especially for parks without their own foundations.
- The low response from the Foundation's bulk mailing that went to about 3,000 VIPP members in 2007 was probably because many of those folks are retired and have limited discretionary income.
- The Park system budget has been relatively good recently and extra funding was made available in the last couple years. Major projects are in progress or planned at Chief Logan, Blackwater, and Cacapon. The goal is to make the parks profitable or break even, and to create jobs and boost the local economies. The Governor has said that all park projects need to make economic sense
- There was \$12M in extra funding in 2008. \$1.8M of that is going to purchase playground equipment for parks.
- The budget for major repairs and equipment has been increased by about \$1M to 2.8M per year and this is a significant improvement.
- The DNR is looking for private sector partners to redevelop Canaan Valley, which needs major lodge and facilities upgrades. The total cost may be as much as \$35M, but if the park is developed properly it should be profitable. He hopes the state, not a private contractor, will operate the park after it is redeveloped.
- The park system must strike a balance between increasing revenue and protecting the park's natural and historic assets.
- 2008 was the best revenue year for the park system with \$21M in income. However, costs increased about as much as income. 2009 looks like it will be a good year, but expenses are likely to increase with inflation.
- High gas prices and the recession seem to have helped park revenue, perhaps because people are interested in staying relatively close to home.
- There is some bad news: there may be a 2% budget cut in 2010 so the parks system may lose about \$600K in funding. Also, the recession may start hurting attendance soon and there may have to be some park closures in the future. The statewide and local foundations will become a larger factor in supporting the parks, and their help may be needed to educate legislators about the need for parks.
- Overall, things are good now, but there are significant challenges pending.

- The programming series has been defunded and any future funding is unclear.
- The \$7,500 matching grant program has been funded at \$35-40K for 2009.

Stonewall Jackson Presentation: Jay Hayes gave a report on the recently formed Stonewall Jackson Foundation. A company, Progressivity, was hired to do the initial paperwork and the Foundation was formed in January, 2008. The company charged \$6-7K, but the paperwork was done properly and got the Foundation off on a sound footing. Their request for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is pending. Early fund raising was difficult, but some wealthy people put up some matching grants and a total of \$130K was raised to fund trail work. Other major projects are being planned. One challenge is filling their Board with members having different skill levels and areas of interest.

North Bend State Park Foundation report: Steve Worden said the Foundation was formed in 2007 by a core group of people with an interest in the Park. There were eleven initial board members and each pays an annual \$150 membership fee. They used a consultant, Foundation Group of Nashville, TN, to do their initial paperwork. The cost was \$2.2K and everything was done via the Internet. The bylaws were approved in May, 2008 and their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status is now in place. The Foundation’s initial fund-raising dinner went well and they have completed their first project. Steve said one concern they have is the need for insurance and Ken Caplinger said he would look at what Doug Baker had done about insurance before he retired.

Insurance: There was a discussion of how the DNR or the Foundation might provide liability and/or directors and officers (D&O) insurance for the local foundations. It was noted that the Foundation currently offers no real benefits to its member foundations. Someone said that Nationwide provides a \$1M D&O liability policy for \$568. There were no details about the coverage. Someone asked whether a foundation that gets food from a park vendor would be covered under the vendor’s policy if there were problems with the food and the consensus was that they would. There was a **motion to ask Ken Caplinger to look into the feasibility of the DNR providing blanket D&O insurance for local foundations through the State Board of Risk.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Election of Officers: Stan Anderson was the Chair of the nominating Committee. He presented the following slate of officers:

President	Jim Michael (Cacapon)
Vice President	Dan Hopkins (Little Beaver)
Secretary	Melissa May (Pricketts Fort)
Treasurer	Bob Hoke (MSR&LHA)

There was a **motion to approve the Election Committee report as presented.** It was seconded and passed. Jim Michael solicited additional nominations, but there were none. There was a **motion to elect the proposed slate by acclamation.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Discussion of Goals and Objectives: There was a discussion about what the statewide foundation should be doing, both for the Park system in general and for the local foundations. The biggest issue was the need for insurance, but other things mentioned included getting grants for projects and providing an interchange of ideas. Ken Caplinger said that it might be worthwhile to get an outside consultant, such as Progressivity, to look at the Foundation and make recommendations for changes to improve its effectiveness. The group agreed that such a study would be worthwhile. There was a **motion to encourage Ken Caplinger to have Progressivity look at the goals and functions of the Foundation and make recommendations for improving its effectiveness.** The motion was seconded and passed.

Member Foundation Reports

Cacapon: The Park is doing very well and the Foundation is very active with several projects ongoing, including installing new grills, a trail cleaning day, a Labor Day homecoming event with about 1,000 attendees, and an annual dance. Work on refurbishing an old inn storage area for carriage storage has been completed. Hotel/motel tax money is a significant funding source. They are trying to get younger Board members.

Valley Falls: They are currently inactive but are being revived. The Park is increasing in popularity and now has about 75 weddings each year.

Pricketts Fort: The Foundation is under contract to operate the historic portion of the Park. 65% of the visitors are from out of state. The Park is popular with school groups and they are starting to go to the schools with their programs (although that takes additional money). The facilities were recently upgraded following a fire and a new blacksmith shop has opened.

Tygart Lake: The Park’s foundation is small, but active. They recently purchased a picnic shelter and a power washer. Concrete benches are being donated by benefactors. A grant to construct an ADA nature trail has been approved and construction will start soon. There was a trail ride last fall and there will be another one in May. Another new picnic shelter is being built. A goal is to again have swimming in the lake or a pool because the old swimming area is deteriorated and unsafe.

MSR&LHA (Cass): The Association purchased a diesel locomotive for the Park. Work is continuing on

restoring a derelict locomotive for operational service. The Association has accepted the donation of the Cass Community Center and plans to donate it to the Park after roof repairs are completed. Two special excursions for train enthusiasts are planned in 2009. The historic interpretation program in the Park is largely an Association responsibility and is running very well. The Association has donated over \$2.5M in cash, material, and labor to the Park over the last 20 years.

Holly River: The Foundation has moved a historic school building and saved a lot of money by using volunteer labor. A program to encourage donation of benches has been so successful that they are going to terminate it. The Park received a national award for one of its trails that was constructed using a Park matching grant. A new handicap trail was recently completed. The ballpark was renovated in partnership with other organizations and the county government.

Future meeting: There was a **motion to hold a general membership meeting in September, with the date and location to be determined.** The motion was seconded and passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 PM.

Meeting Attendees:

James Michael (Cacapon) (President)
 Bob Hoke (MSR&LHA) [Treasurer]
 Amelia Anderson (Holly River)
 Stanley Anderson (Holly River)
 Joe Gonzalez (MSR&LHA)
 Dave Caplinger (Cass)
 Stephen Worden (North Bend SP)
 Dan Hopkins (Little Beaver)
 Sam England (Stonewall)
 Ron Fawcett (Valley Falls)
 David Myers (Valley Falls)
 Melissa May (Pricketts Fort)
 Sue Coole (Tygart Lake)
 Mike Elsey (Tygart Lake)
 Dave Lombardo (DNR Parks, Charleston)
 Clisby Jennelle IV (DNR Parks, Charleston)
 Ken Caplinger (DNR Parks, Charleston)
 Lin Dunham (Cacapon)
 Stephen Jones (North Bend SP)
 Thomas Ambrose (Cacapon)

Robert B. Hoke, Acting Secretary