

# West Virginia State Parks Foundation

## Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting

April 12, 2016

*The meeting was convened at Stonewall Resort State Park, Roanoke, West Virginia at 10:00AM.*

*President Jim Michael welcomed park and foundation representatives and made introductions.*

**Secretary Report:** Samantha Norris announced that the minutes were distributed to all members prior to today's meeting. Mark Abbott **motioned that the meeting minutes be accepted**, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Treasurers Report:** Bob Hoke presented the 2015 financial report in written form. Mr. Hoke explained the restricted funds as identified in his report. He reported that Tygart Lake State Park and Chief Logan have ATMs that generate \$1 for every transaction. He reviewed restricted funds designated to specific parks. A 2011 donation was made to be used at Blackwater, Twin Falls and Tygart state parks for trails, overlooks nature centers, etc. Milton Gutman **motioned that the financial report be accepted**, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**State Parks Report:** Mr. Sam England made the following comments about the state of the park system:

- **The Round it Up Program** – this would generate funds at point of sale outlets to be used at the park where it was generated if a foundation is established at that park. If there is not a foundation, the funds will go to the WV State Park Foundation. Due to some health issues, Brad Reed has not been able to push this project as he had hoped. A logo was presented to the group for discussion and review. It has been approved by Director Fala and some parks have begun this program (Lost River, for example)
- Due to an online reservation system for picnic pavilions, ticketed programs like at Blennerhasset and the golf outlets will soon be online as well freeing some time of the employees at state parks.
- Mr. England reported that a state park foundation will be created at Canaan Valley State Park.
- Mr. England commended the work done at Blennerhasset to involve volunteers including docents with 10-15 volunteers a day. He also commended Prickett's Fort with thousands of hours given to the park a year.
- Mr. England pointed out five key points of foundations:
  1. Foundations are the collective voice to promote the betterment of the park together.
  2. Foundations can do things that the government struggles to do.
  3. Foundations are a vehicle to raise funds, encourage given and accept donations.
  4. Foundations are a mechanism to focus on idealistic programs.
  5. Foundations are the core of state park pride and ownership.
- Mr. England reported that a 4% budget cut was mandated placing a burden on parks to cut costs. It was determined that a change in the operation of wildlife management areas would resolve some of this burden. They will be changed from being managed by the parks division to now being managed by the wildlife division. All full-time employees retained their jobs. This will result in some closures of recreational outlets in these areas such as pools, picnic pavilion etc. within the management areas. He reported that the state is working almost daily to determine ways to continue to maintain the area for continued use of these area. He mentioned other ideas to

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generate revenue and control costs such as: optional entrance fees, mineral rights royalties for revenue producing development, picnic pavilions, etc.

- Mr. England added that for every \$1.00 spent by the government in the WV park systems, \$13.00 of “fresh money” or out of state/travel money, is spent by the customer. (Resource: WV Economic Impact Park Study)
- The leadership and core team in the WV state park office is well established to position the future of the system and knowledgeable of the park system’s needs.
- Forks of Coal – new property donated land and buildings to the state as a natural area. Kim McHenry will start a foundation at this property. It will not have any cost to the DNR park system. It will open on June the 4<sup>th</sup> as part of National Trails Day.

**Website:** Bob Hoke reviewed the website changes and discussed the addition of a “how to start a foundation” section on the website.

**Estate Planning:** Ken Caplinger reviewed the current list of estate planning lawyers in WV and distributed a draft letter to attorneys explaining the foundation and the bequest opportunities. An auxiliary letter will be sent to bank trust departments at a later date. Mark Abbott **motioned that the letter be accepted**, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Brochure:** Milton Gutman presented the new brochure and added that WV State Parks will help distribute them to the parks. The marketing piece was very favorably received by those in attendance.

**New Foundation Startup Fund:** Bob Hoke reported that there is a minimum of \$425 startup costs for a

new foundation which can often hinder the start of a park creating a non-profit. Mr. Hoke asked if there was something that could be done to help offset this cost. Mr. England suggested using a matching grant of \$1000 from the WVSPF and \$1000 from the WVDNR to go toward these start-up costs as they are needed. Mark Abbott **motioned that the startup fund program be accepted**, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Billboard Advertising:** Milton Gutman explained that sometimes billboards will have an empty display in between buyers. Lamar, the company that owns many of the billboards in the northern portion of the state, has offered to allow the foundation to use some of these spaces to promote parks. It typically costs close to \$2000 a month, but he is willing to give WVSPF for free. The cost of the vinyl (including design) is \$500.00 which has a shelf life of 24 months. Milton presented the idea to contact the state parks within close vicinity to an open Lamar billboard in this special offer and see if they would be interested in purchasing the board for \$500.00. Mr. England will look into the matching grant option to bring the foundation responsibility to \$250 WVDNR, \$125 WVSPF and \$125 from the local foundation. Milton will contact Lamar to determine what boards will be an option.

Foundation Reports:

- **Pricketts Fort** – Greg Bray reported they are planning: largest gate since 1996 with 17,000 visitors, KRF Antique Gun Collection from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a Wild Wild West TV Show.
- **Cass** – Bob Hoke, reported they are planning: a smooth transition to new management, over 550 members in association.

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- **Stonewall State Park Foundation** – Samantha Norris reported the DNR tv show Barnwood Builders, new website, summer concert series
- **Valley Falls** – Reported that weddings are a great source of revenue with chair rentals and concessions, restroom renovations, trail cleaning, picnic table restoration, car show
- **Camp Creek** – Pam Buckhannon reported upgrades to campground, tents, swing set area at campfire, brochures, Facebook page, lumberjack competition, VIPP picnic, fall fest
- **Holy River** – Donna Boggs reported that they are planning to: clothes dryers, dehumidifier for school, lighting projects, conference center naming, newsletter, leaf blowing, outdoor classroom, high school and college docent program
- **Cacapon State Park** – Lin Dunham reported that they are planning to: renovate the Old Inn, expand the Nature Center, and create a 5K course for the community
- **Tygart Lake State Park** – Rebecca Willis and Nicole reported they are planning: 150 children egg hunt, fall fest, hooked on fishing, apple butter festival, haunted hayride with over 700 children, 5k turkey trot, Irish Bowling, purchased an AED, doggy park, gazebo for lodge, disc golf, nature center enhancements, Nature interpretive playground area
- **Blennerhasset Island** – Mark Abbott reported renovations made to the park including: gardens, roof projects, replicating the Block House, acquisition of Harmen Blennerhasset's telescope.
- **North Bend Rails to Trails Foundation** – Mark Abbott reported: picnic tables, vault toilets, designation of the southernmost anchor of the industrial heartland trail (PA, OH, NY, MD, WV), graffiti removal

### Meeting Attendees:

Bob Hoke	Cass
Jim Michael	Cacapon State Park
Tom Ambrose	Cacapon State Park
Lin Dunham	Cacapon State Park
Dave Pruitt	Cacapon State Park
Donna Boggs	Holly River State Park
Tom Prall	Holly River State Park
Benny McCune	Holly River State Park
Pam Buchanan	Camp Creek
Jim Harry	Camp Creek
Brenda Bolar Harry	Camp Creek
Patrick Miller	Tygart Lake State Park
Nichole Streets	Tygart Lake State Park
Rebecca Willis	Tygart Lake State Park
Nettie Harper	Tygart Lake State Park
Mary Francis Densmore	Tygart Lake State Park
Mark Abbott	Blennerhasset/North Bend
Kathy Abbott	Blennerhasset/North Bend
Tom Perdue	Blennerhasset Island
Brennon O'Sullivan	Stonewall Resort
Brett Harshbarger	Valley Falls State Park
Andy Wilkins	Valley Falls State Park
Greg Bray	Pricketts Fort
Ken Caplinger	WV State Park Foundation
Milt Gutman	WV State Park Foundation
Sam England	WV DNR
Samantha Norris	Stonewall Resort

**Election of officers** – the following slate of candidates was presented:

Secretary - Samantha Norris

Treasurer - Bob Hoke

Vice Chairman - Mark Abbott

President – Jim Michael

Ken Caplinger motioned to accept the candidate slate and elect the candidates into a year term. The motion was seconded and carried.

Jim Michael and Ken Caplinger reported favorable comments about the article printed in the Wild and Wonderful WV article.

Mark Abbott added that a sizeable donation was made in the name of Diane Anderson (former

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charter member of WVSPF) to return a piece of furniture to the Blennerhassett home.

President Jim Michael encouraged members to support state park foundations and new members to join.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:40PM

Additional reports attached from Parks