

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting

March 31, 2017

The meeting was convened at Stonewall Resort State Park, Roanoke, WV at 10:15 AM. 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 2016 financial report in written form. Mr. Hoke explained that we are in good shape financially. He announced that he received a \$178K DEP grant for Pipestem to make environmentally sustainable upgrades. Ken Caplinger **motioned that the financial report be accepted**, the motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Officer Selection: Justin from Camp Creek, Lin Dunham from Cacapon, and James from Tygart Lake were appointed as the nominating committee. Bob asked that if anyone is interested in working with the foundation in the future to please see him to determine if it's a good fit at lunchtime. The slate of candidates will be announced at the end of today's meeting.

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

- **Legislative Update**— because of the hard work of our DNR State Park Superintendents the statewide 2% budget cut was not imposed on our parks. Governor Jim Justice has publically announced his support of state parks and their role in the future of our state. Please continue to emphasize the importance of parks to your legislatures.

- **Economic Significance and Impact of WV State Parks and Forests:** \$160-190M economic impact annually because of the existence of state parks. It emphasizes the value of hiking programs, employing young high school and college students who will have a deep affinity for WV, and outdoor education.
- **Chief's Challenge:** Hiking program created to encourage people to hike 100 hours a year with 10 hours being with a naturalist. Currently 900 people signed up for the event.
- **Challenges:** Funding – \$3M more needed annually to help with the maintenance of state parks. Diversity – our workforce needs to represent our communities. A focus will be placed on hiring and recruiting. Access – facilities need to be open and available to everyone. Strides have been made through the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **WV State Park Matching Grant Program:** Winners Announced.
- **Mineral Right Leasing:** We have a desire to invest the money from these royalties into picnic shelters, cabins, water and sewer plant upgrades.

The Round it Up Program: Brad Reed reported that over the past year, \$10,000 has been generated through this program at participating parks. A harder push for this program this season.

Pipestem DEP Grant Update: Paul Redford. First, he emphasized the importance of a unified brand with reemphasis on quality and service. He also reported that as many WV made products will be placed in the parks from soaps, coffee, mattresses, artwork, etc. The new project at Pipestem is a pilot project to help alleviate the operational costs of running the Resort totaling \$187,000 by improving energy efficiency and reducing trash disposal costs. This three phase project will be finished in 2018. This

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting

March 31, 2017

will result in a million dollar reduction in state subsidy.

Electric Car Charging Station: \$49,000 grant received from the WV Dept of Energy to install one charging station at every state park lodge. Tesla asked to participate by providing three additional stations at no cost along with a subsidy for installation to create 35 car charging stations across the state of WV. Electronic vehicles will alert that a charging station is available when passing a lodging state park. WV is now the leader in the nation to have the entire state park lodging system having charging stations.

State Budget Readiness: Ken Caplinger presented a document that *could* be presented if State Parks were faced with budget cuts. This document outline a proposed 4% sales tax on outdoor camping related products sold within the state to directly benefit state park operations, maintenance and improvement. If presented, this proposal will be suggested in a legally ethical manor within the limitations of a 501c3 organization. It was recommended that consideration be given to merchandiser's reaction. It was also suggested that more precise data be derived prior to presenting to state legislatures. It was suggested that consideration be given on a tax imposed on licensing and registration of trailers, campers, and RV's to account for those items purchased outside the state. The document will be attached to the minutes. A motion was made by Milton Gutman that further consideration and analysis be given on this drafted document while going to legislatures to seek continued support for parks. This will be kept for "down the road" if it were needed.

Foundation Reports:

- **Blennerhasset Island** – Mark Abbott reported renovations made to the park including and other updates: sewer system, Harmen

Blennerhasset's telescope purchase, and radio upgrades. Also had annual candlelight dinner.

- **Cacapon State Park** – Lin Dunham reported that they are planning to: plant trees, Ole Inn restoration, Nature Center addition, 5k cross country course
- **Canaan Valley** – Cass Shockley reported that this is the first year for the organization. They are in the beginning stages of planning and fund raising.
- **Camp Creek** – Pam Buckhannon reported updates on events and updates VIPP picnic, fall festival, pathfinder's group tree walk, upgrades to campgrounds, birdhouse paintings, tree planting, Active WV collaboration, Rotary micro flush contribution, and establishment of 501c3 status
- **Cass** – Bob Hoke, reported that the railroad operator no longer allows groups to charter the train so the Association has lost a major source of income from its Cass Railfan Weekend. They are continuing to work with the Park despite not being involved with the railroad operations at all.
- **Holy River** – Donna Boggs reported that they are planning to: new board members added, lumber for woodsheds, docent program, kiddy pool, road bowling weekend, Clee House renovations, addition of horse stalls, photo contest
- **Kanawha State Forest** – Bill reported the following progress and projects: new park headquarters from the old pool service building to include nature center, gift shop and museum, bathroom structures, horse barn renovation, cleaning of fishing pond, volunteer workshops, naturalist walks, summer concerts in the park
- **North Bend Rails to Trails Foundation** – Mark Abbott reported: partnership with national rails to trails conservancy, restoration of depot station in Salem and new transportation offering to riders of the trail.

West Virginia State Parks Foundation

Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting

March 31, 2017

- **Pricketts Fort** – Greg Bray reported: great attendance in 2016 to the park, new audio tour in 2016-2017 calendar expansion, program to encourage African American population visitors, additions to the museum.
- **Stonewall State Park Foundation** – Samantha Norris reported on the value of internships, resort renovations, and a joint fundraising event with WVU's Rifle Team.
- **Tygart Lake State Park** – gave reports of annual events at the lake.
- **Valley Falls** – WVU ads, events, Facebook
- **Watoga** – events

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

Milton suggested having a fall networking and information sharing session later this year.

Bob Hoke suggested submitting the annual park updates to Samantha Norris to collect a "newsletter" on all the park updates.

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

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

Bob Hoke will add the financials and minutes to the website.

Bob motioned that Ken and Milton will create some considerations and evaluations for an executive director for the WV State Park Foundation.

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

Secretary - Samantha Norris

Treasurer - Bob Hoke

Vice Chairman - Mark Abbott

President – Jim Michael

Lin motioned that these candidates be reappointed as officers for the 2017-2018 year.

Mark Abbott motioned that remaining (nominal funds) designated to Watters Smith Park and Laurel Lakes WMA be transferred into the Endowment fund as Laurel Lakes is no longer under the operation of WV DNR Parks and Recreation division and Watters Smith only has \$2 in its account. All in favor motion carried.

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

Attached: state park's foundation reports as provided.

Local Foundation Reports

Blennerhassett Historical Foundation Report -2016

Last year was a very busy year for the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation and their sub-committee, the Friends of Blennerhassett.

One of the big challenges we faced before opening day in 2016 was the situation with the radios and communication gear for the island. Not only were some of our old radios now obsolete, many of them simply no longer functioned.

Superintendent Miles Evenson realized there would not be enough time for state purchasing to acquire the new radios and communication gear; so, he turned to the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation. Within a very short time, between the City of Parkersburg, the West Virginia DNR State Park Foundation, Parkersburg Area Community Foundation and the Blennerhassett Foundation, funds were put in place and all the necessary radios and communication gear were purchased just in time for opening day.

Then, just as another successful season was coming to a close, the park staff encountered a significant problem with the sewage system at the Necessary House.

What the park staff was told was that the 30 something year-old sewage system was failing and would likely not make it through another season. The work could not be done while the island was open; therefore, there was a very short window of opportunity to install the new system before winter set in last year. Again, the Blennerhassett Historical Foundation stepped in and paid the \$15,000 to replace the septic system. \$14,000 of that cost was raised through the Parkersburg Area

Community Foundation and a major donation to the Foundation from Chemours the successor to DuPont. The island tourist season ended in October and within a few weeks in November, the sewage system was completed.

And, finally, the Friends of Blennerhassett hit a home run with the purchase of Harmon Blennerhassett's telescope which is now on display on the first floor of the museum. For years, the location of the telescope was completely unknown until it showed up – where else – on the Internet in 2005! We must first thank Miles Evenson for his efforts to persuade Dr. Ray Swick to not give up and continue to try and purchase the telescope from the history museum in Buffalo, New York. Dr. Swick worked with Rosemary Alonzo, the Friends treasurer, to lay the groundwork for the final purchase and delivery of the telescope to its rightful home at Blennerhassett Museum.

And, so we close the books on 2016. It was a great year with excellent events – the Lecture Series, Quilt Show, Candlelight, and special programs by our park staff. We racked up a total of more than 13,000 volunteer hours last year. And, I would like to introduce our 2016 Volunteer of the Year – Tom Perdue. Last year he logged 722 volunteer hours!

2017 has already started and a little more than a month from now we will be traveling back in time to our beloved Blennerhassett Island.

Camp Creek State Park Foundation Report

In 2016 we hosted 4 Big Special Events

1. Timber Sports Competition & Ramp Feast in April, this kicked off the tourist season early for Camp Creek and saw huge profits for the foundation. We will again be sponsoring this event April 29th and expect even larger crowds based on phone calls.
2. VIPP picnic in August
3. Fall Festival in September
4. Pathfinders Group (high school age young adults with mild disabilities)

We have completed all upgrades to Camp Creek's modern campground. Mashfork campground now has 8 full hook up sites, 9 electric & water sites and 9 electric only sites and an electric overflow site. We started the upgrades 5 years ago when we had 7 electric & water sites and 19 electric only.

Also on holiday weekends we sponsored bird house painting and at Fall Festival had pumpkin painting and crafts.

We have participated in trail work, approximately 35 miles, tree planting in forest and assisted in painting and cleaning projects

Kanawha State Forest Foundation (KSFF)

Annual Report
March 31, 2017

1. The swimming pool has been permanently closed. The large building which had housed the concessions and bath house is being renovated and converted to a new Forest HQ building. This will include office and meeting space, a nature center, museum, and gift shop/trading post for a revenue stream. There will be kitchen for use in public events. There has been steady progress in construction and a grand opening is planned for fall.
2. Construction is ready to begin on a new restroom building at the head of Dunlop Hollow in preparation for relocating the group campground to this area. Forest staff will dig the footers and the structure will be built with volunteer labor mainly from local trade union members..
3. There are plans to refurbish the old horse barn to allow overnight stabling and camping for equestrians. A grant application has been submitted for money to repair the roof.
4. There are plans to install a disc golf course in KSF. The consultants will be investigating possible sites in collaboration with a master naturalist to minimize environmental impact.
5. The long overdue dredging of the fishing pond has begun but has been in a winter delay. A coal company which had been operating a mine adjacent to the Forest boundary is doing the work as a condition of their permit. They have promised to resume the project when a location is found to deposit the remaining sediment and sludge from the pond.
6. Volunteer naturalist Sara Miller has started leading a weekly bird walk following a rotation of four different trail networks. The activity is called "Birding by the Sun" and is intended to observe the changes in number, distribution, behavior, and features of birds during the different seasons.

KSFF Projects and Activities

1. The Foundation has purchased and ordered a cast bronze plaque in recognition of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Forest facilities constructed by them which were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. The plaque will be mounted on a boulder and prominently displayed near the new HQ building.
 2. KSFF will be covering the cost of all block for the Dunlop Hollow restroom project with dedicated funds
 3. The Spotted Salamander Trail which was originally developed especially for visually impaired and disabled individuals has been recently upgraded and improved with mainly volunteer labor. The parking lot was repaved, cracks and uneven patches in the ¼ mile loop trail were fixed, guide ropes and interpretive signs were installed (with braille signs to come at a later date).
 4. Monthly volunteer work projects under the direction of Forest staff have been organized and will include activities such as campground preparation, trail maintenance, shelter painting, and general clean-up.
 4. Regular annual public events include Spring and Fall Wildflower/Nature walks, a winter nature walk, and a summer concert featuring the Kanawha Valley Community Band in recognition of West Virginia Day,.
 5. There is an ongoing effort to improve and extend the reach of our web site (ksff.org) and Foundation Facebook page
- Submitted by:
Bill Hall, Chairman, KSFF

North Bend Rails-To-Trails Foundation, Inc.

The North Bend Rails-To-Trails Foundation has joined in a partnership with the national Rails to Trails Conservancy to develop the Parkersburg to Pittsburgh rail trail system as part of the Industrial Heartland Trail – a 1,400 mile system of trails in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio.

Currently our efforts are focused on closing various connection gaps in the trail system. For instance, about two miles need to be acquired and readied to add to the existing North Bend Rail Trail in Wood County near Parkersburg, WV. On the eastern end of the trail, there are about four miles that need to be added to the North

Bend Rail Trail in Harrison County near Clarksburg, WV.

Although the one million dollar federal grant to repair the trail in Doddridge and Harrison Counties did not start in 2016, the project is scheduled to start in earnest this year. Last year, the Foundation was awarded another \$100,000 to continue this valuable restoration work on the trail.

One of our success stories involved the historical Salem Depot in downtown Salem, West Virginia. Several years ago, a suspicious fire nearly destroyed the eastern end of the Depot and actually burned off part of the roof. In a cooperative venture between the Rail Trail Foundation and the Salem Chamber of Commerce, more than \$80,000 was raised to begin construction on restoring the roof of the structure. Because of its non-profit status, donors could make a donation to the project through the Rail Trail Foundation. If the donors qualified, they would get an IRS donation letter making them eligible to get credit on their tax return for those who itemize their deductions.

Last fall, a contract was awarded to a company known for its historic restoration work. The roof of the Salem Depot has now been restored. Now, additional

donations and funding will be sought to restore the interior of the structure in the next phase of the project.

The North Bend Rails-To-Trails Foundation continues its support for the maintenance crew of the trail. Due to shortfalls in funding, the Foundation has assisted North Bend Rail Trail State Park with purchases of stone and culvert for the trail. We also just completed the purchase of 20 new gates to replace damaged or out-of-date gates to be used when the million-dollar grant project starts. The gates were purchased at a fraction of the cost compared to what they would cost if replaced by the grant funding.

Future projects already approved include the addition of two more “comfort stations” on the trail. Once they are placed, the trail will have five rest stops at various locations. In addition, a grant has been submitted to purchase a dump trailer for the trail crew to use to deliver stone along the trail. This dump trailer will permanently replace a dump truck that had to be retired more than a year ago.

And one final note, a shuttle service called Quest at North Bend State Park now offers a way for bikers and hikers to ride or hike the trail to any destination and get return transportation to North Bend State Park – a welcome addition to our trail.

Stonewall State Park Foundation 2016 Annual Report:

- Held two very successful fundraising events (Culinary Classic Silent Auction and Annual Golf Tournament)
- Hosted eight summer community events with numerous corporate sponsors
 - Rush Run Challenge
 - Nature Odyssey Camp
 - Three outdoor concerts
 - Mountain Heritage and Wine Festival
 - Classic Car Show
 - Cardboard Boat Race
- Expanded the Christmas light display at Stonewall
- Hosted three interns from WV Wesleyan and WVU
- Created a completely new website www.stonewallstateparkfoundation.org
- Gave nearly \$1900 and many boxes of supplies to our sister state park, Greenbrier State Forest for flood relief
- Expanded the Lakeside Nature Trail with collaboration from the Professional Trail Builders Association and The DOH Recreation Trails Program
- Welcomed over 300 children for field trips to the Wildlife Conservation Exhibit in May and June
- Completed the roof on the Fox Cabin through private donations and grants
- Created a Passive Park on the lake’s edge in the new cottage area
- Raised nearly \$2800 with the help of St. Matthew United Methodist Church, community members and Stonewall employees to purchase new shoes and socks for 147 students at Roanoke Elementary School with money left to make a \$650 cash donation to the school!

In total, we raised nearly \$120,000 through grants, donations and corporate sponsorships!

Valley Falls State Park Foundation Report to WVSPF

By: Sharon Burik, President, VFSPF

2016 INCOME :
- Chair Rentals for weddings

- Vending trailer selling souvenirs and snacks (second year)
- Individual donations

2016 PROJECTS:

- Purchased a four seater golf cart for park use to transport elderly and handicapped visitors and wedding parties to falls area and gazebo
- Purchased steps and additional shelving for vending trailer
- Purchased shelving for office/garage area
- Paid to transport a park building from the entrance area of the park to the service area, Building will be used to house maintenance equipment in the warmer months
- A foundation member donated a small storage building which is being used to store chairs that are rented for weddings.

2016 VOLUNTEER HOURS:

Vending trailer was open 8 hours per weekend from April 30-October 30, approximately 450 volunteer hours.

PUBLIC RELATIONS:

WVU made a national ad for the Mountaineers at Valley Falls State Park

Created a Facebook page, Valley Falls State Park Foundation

PARK EVENTS:

Car show, kayak event, mountain bike race, strongman event, tiny owl banding

2017 PROJECTS:

The Foundation is in the process of deciding which projects to fund We are in the process of purchasing a defibrillator for the Park. The chair rental and vending trailer continue. The concession trailer will be opening in May 2017

Sharon Burik, President

Kathy Keefover, Vice President

Diane Oliva, Secretary/Treasurer

Brett Harshbarger, Park Superintendent

Watoga State Park Foundation

The Watoga State Park Foundation is making Annual Reports available electronically at www.watogafoundation.org, with additional links to ongoing reports at three Facebook pages:

www.facebook.com/Watoga-State-Park-Foundation

www.facebook.com/HikeWatoga

www.facebook.com/WatogaTrailRaces

In 2015, we incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, put in over 1000 hours monitoring and maintaining trails in cooperation with park staff, reached out to the local community, and planned events to help the park.

In 2016, trail work continued at the same pace. With over 40 miles of trails, we were still playing catch up after super storm Sandy and the derecho. Two of our board members are trail runners. One, the chairman of our Trails Committee, runs 5 days a week and covers all the trails in a 2 week period. Group work days take place once a week on average. Much individual work is done too, and we can mobilize to meet pressing needs, as when we moved ½ mile of trail in two days to skirt a rare plant.

To raise money and bring new guests to the Park, we hosted 118 runners at the Watoga State Park Mountain Trail Challenge – 5K and Half Marathon races in August. It didn't quite break even financially (-\$152) but we count it a success in bringing runners and spectators to Watoga. The winner's FB post is typical of the feedback we received:

"I can't even begin to say enough about this event, the volunteers, & the entire crew who had a part in making this event happen, absolutely unbelievable down to the last detail. Watoga State Park is an extraordinary jewel & having a half marathon & 5K to highlight some of its appeal doesn't even begin to show all that this area has to offer."

Necessarily, a large part of a new organization's first year or so involves planning for the coming years. For us that has involved building ties to other community organizations and developing a good working relationship with the park staff. In each area we could not have been more fortunate. The many and varied activities that will go into our 2017 report will bear witness to that. It would be a mistake to conclude from the foregoing that all we do is trail work and trail races. With a lot of different projects comes the need to prioritize, and agreement on our number one need has been unanimous both within our board and in the wider community. We must make the swimming pool a money-maker for Watoga, and we can do so by heating that famously frigid water and installing a water slide. The foundation has pledged to purchase solar panels, an insulating pool blanket, and the water slide. We received \$4000 from the county commission and have raised a similar amount from individual donations and raffle tickets, but this is about half what we need to have the pool ready for this summer's guests.