

# West Virginia State Parks Foundation

## Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting

May 17, 2021

Foundation President Greg Bray convened the meeting at 10:05 AM at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia. Approximately 45 attendees were present. They introduced themselves and stated which park or foundation they represented.

There was a moment of silence for several active foundation personnel who had died in recent years, including Mark Abbott, Stanley Anderson, Don Andrews, Brenda Harry, and Jamie Gray.

**Secretary's Report:** The Foundation's Secretary, Samantha Norris was not present. There were no minutes to be approved because the minutes from the 2019 annual meeting were approved by mail after the 2020 meeting was cancelled due to Covid.

**Treasurer's report:** The Foundation's Treasurer, Kim McCluskey, was not present due to a sudden illness. However, a 2020 financial report was passed out and Kim sent written comments saying that all financial data has been converted to Quickbooks, the 2020 Form 990-EZ has been completed and will soon be submitted to the IRS, and the balances from the three certificates of deposit have been transferred to the Poca Valley Bank in the Charleston area.

Kim requested Foundation approval for three items:

- Allow the Executive Committee to decide about the last CD which matured in February. The money was deposited into the checking due to exceptionally low interest rates on CD's.
- Allow treasurer to do online banking for the BB&T checking account.
- Approval for a credit/debit card associated with the BB&T checking account.

There was a discussion the three requests. The consensus was that the Treasurer's function includes investing Foundation assets and that as long as they are in a federally insured account (checking, savings, CD, or money market) and

investment decisions should be made by the Treasurer.

The following motion was made: **The WVSPF Treasurer is authorized to establish and use online banking with the Foundation's checking account at BB&T bank.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The following motion was made: **The WVSPF Treasurer is authorized to obtain a credit card to be used solely for Foundation purchases and linked to the Foundation's checking account at BB&T bank.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Finally, there was a **motion to accept the 2020 financial report as presented.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### Comments by Brad Reed, Chief of Parks:

- The state has a well-deserved reputation for having high quality parks. Local foundations are critical to the Park System's success due to their dedication, sacrifice, and "ownership" in the parks they support.
- Parks provide \$200M/year to the state's economy, including providing many jobs.
- The Park System misses the leadership of Ken Caplinger and Sam England.
- The recent bonds have funded numerous projects including a new \$30M lodge and renovations to the old lodge at Cacapon, and funding for important infrastructure projects.
- The company Ace Adventures is building many activities at Pipestem to help attract young active visitors.
- A two-year pilot project has started at Cablaywingo State Forest to evaluate the impact of allowing ATVs on non-hiking trails.
- The legislature and Governor's office have been very supportive of the Park System.

- A new Board-managed Endowment Fund has been established. It will be funded from donations and oil and gas revenue, and will provide long-term support to the parks.
- Most Park System employees were kept on the payroll during the Covid closures. Many projects were completed while visitation was low. However, at least \$3M in revenue was lost and many concessionaires were hit hard.
- As the Covid restrictions progressed, the parks started seeing an increase in visitors from their local areas and cabin rentals became especially popular. Because of this fiscal year 2020 was not nearly as bad as initially feared.
- Brad complemented the Park system's superintendents and employees for their flexibility and dedication during the Covid crisis, but he also noted that hiring is currently a significant problem.

**Park System Matching Grants Program:** Travis Hayes provided a brief overview of the Don Andrews Matching Grant Program:

- Grants can provide 50% of total project cost up to a maximum grant of \$25K. A foundation can only request one matching grant per year.
- Grant requests should be submitted by foundations to Brad Reed and should be on the foundation's letterhead.
- Funding is from Park System money and projects can be anything that the park's Superintendent approves. Funding may eventually come from the Park System's new Endowment Fund, but that isn't the case now.
- The match for the grant can be in money or contracted labor. In response to a question, Brad Reed said he was unsure whether the value of volunteer labor can be used for the match. There was another question about whether volunteers can be paid for their labor and the response was that they probably cannot.
- Foundations should follow general state procurement guidelines like getting multiple bids, but there are no formal requirements.
- There was a question about whether a grant can be used as a match for another grant.

Brad Reed replied that there was no clear policy, but a grant almost certainly cannot be used to match another grant from the State.

**Political Activity by Foundations:** Ken Caplinger gave a presentation describing the DNR and IRS rules determining what educational and advocacy activities foundations can do. He passed out a handout, which is attached to these minutes, describing the rules and his concern that the DNR and IRS regulations are conflicting in some cases. He said the DNR regulations need to be simplified and made consistent with the IRS rules.

Ken mentioned three recent reasons why foundations should be allowed to educate legislators and their staffs:

1. A proposal to take all park revenue and place it in the general fund.
2. A proposal to reallocate some or all of the new Endowment Fund to other uses, such as highways.
3. A proposal to allow increased ATV use in parks.

Ken noted that such proposals are recurring problems, but that under current DNR regulations the local foundations are not allowed to explain the likely impact of such proposals on their parks.

Ken said he was willing to draft a letter requesting that the DNR limitations on local foundations be simplified and made consistent with the IRS regulations. There was a brief discussion and the consensus of the group was that the letter was a good idea. Ken said he would prepare the draft and send it to Greg Bray to review and sign as President of the statewide foundation.

Ken also suggested trying to find a West Virginia lawyer who can provide tax advice and other support to the local foundations on a pro bono basis.

**Comments by Sam England, former Chief of Parks:** Sam said he enjoyed a brief retirement, but is now the General Manager at Canaan Valley. He thanked Ken Caplinger for turning over a well-run organization with good working relationships with the legislature and Governor's office, and a competent and dedicated office and field staff. He noted that throughout the Park System nobody

says “it’s not my job” and there is a tremendous level of commitment at all levels. He also singled out the local foundations as valuable and committed stakeholders.

Sam noted that other states are looking at the West Virginia Park System to see why it works so well. There is considerable interest in the new Endowment Fund. He said there will be specific benchmarks that trigger spending from the Fund in appropriate ways once the benchmarks are reached. He also noted that as the Endowment Fund gets larger protecting it will be as difficult as establishing it.

He noted that fundraising is, of course, an important task for the local foundations, but that interacting with legislators and their staffs is also important. He suggested that all outside interaction should present a positive image even if there are internal divisions. Any issues should be resolved privately.

Following Sam’s presentation, Ken Caplinger presented Sam with a painting he had made of a seagull in flight titled “Free Flight.” Ken said the painting represented the freedom from the constraints of the Chief’s job after many years. The audience gave Sam a standing ovation.



Sam England holding the “Free Flight” painting made by Ken Caplinger and presented to Sam during the meeting.

**Presentation by Tim Kennell, President of the Virginia Association:** Ken Caplinger introduced Tim Kennell and summarized Tim’s extensive resume. Tim said the VAFP was established in 1997 and was the first statewide park group in Virginia. Their vision was to become an umbrella organization to coordinate and encourage independent “friends” groups in parks throughout the state. This includes local and regional parks, not just state parks. The stated goals of the Association include preservation, protection, and interpretation of parks systems at all levels, education, service projects, protection of resources, and obtaining and administering grants to support park projects. In its role as an umbrella organization for local park support groups the Association hosts conferences and facilitates communications among the local groups. The Association has over 4,000 members. Their website is [www.virginiaparks.org](http://www.virginiaparks.org).

Tim said the Association gives interest-free loans to support projects local groups are doing in their parks. They also allow the local groups to use the Association’s 501(c)(3) status to get tax-deductible donations that are processed through the Association.

Virginia is #42 in park funding from the legislature. Like West Virginia and many other states, Virginia’s parks are suffering from a lack of infrastructure maintenance. The Association advocated for a large state bond project to fund infrastructure work and the effort was successful. However, the Covid crisis seemed to kill the bond project, but some of it was recently reinstated.

In 2020, the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill to study options for providing long-term funding for parks. The Association is supporting the effort to implement a way to have adequate staff and funding.

Tim made a number of points about how to do advocacy within the IRS 501(c)(3) guidelines:

- Get to know your legislators. What are their interests, goals, concerns, and priorities?
- Get to know the legislator’s staff.
- Find fellow advocates and partners.
- Monitor bills as the progress and find partners with similar interest even if they are normally

not on your side. Yesterday's opponent may be today's ally.

- Work with everyone, even the opposition.
- Never lie or mislead the legislators or their staff.
- Always be professional and polite. Recognize and thank anyone who supports your position.
- Always be brief, clear, and accurate.
- Follow-up when appropriate. Be a reliable resource.
- Never provide funding to legislators or staff.
- Never use the term "lobbying" because it implies a paid person pushing an issue.

The Association provides insurance coverage for their volunteers. The details were not discussed.

The Association has a "Legislator of the year" award that is given to legislator who provides exceptional support for the parks. The award is well received and gets lots of positive publicity for the winner.

**Election:** President Bray said the Vice President position is open due to the death of Mark Abbott. He said the remaining officers have agreed to stand for reelection and asked whether anyone else is interested in running for any office. There were no volunteers. There was then a motion to reelect the current officers for another year and to have the officers look for a Vice President candidate. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The officers are:

President	Greg Bray
Vice President	open
Secretary	Samantha Norris
Treasurer	Kim McCluskey

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 PM.

### Attendees at the WVSPF Annual Meeting on May 17, 2021

(“SP” = “State Park”      “SPF” = “State Park Foundation”)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Email or Phone</b>
Sam England	Chief of Parks	samual.a.england@gmail.com
Amy Daniels	Beech Fork SPF	adaniels41908@gmail.com
Cheyenne ???	Beech Fork SPF	cheyenne30402@gmail.com
Jerrel & Cynthia Anderson	Blennerhassett Hist. Foundation.	jerrelcanderson@frontier.com
Benny F. McCune	Cedar Creek SP	benny.f/mccune@wv.gov
Cody M. Moore	Cedar Creek SPF	codybass9@gmail.com
Randy Buckner	Cedar Creek SPF	304-380-6654 rbuck77827@aol.com
Alan Collins	Coopers Rock Foundation	alan.collins@mail.wvu.edu
Adam Polinski	Coopers Rock Foundation	adanapple88@gmail.com
Jan Dzierzak	Coopers Rock State Forest	
Ken Tawney	Elk River Trail Foundation	elkrivertrail@gmai.com 304-462-8517
Michelle Marter	Elk River Trail Foundation	elkrivertrailtreasurer@gmail.com
Liz Prichard	Greenbrier River Trail Foundation	grtfinc@gmail.com
Maggie Hutchison	Greenbrier River Trail Foundation	maggie.hutchison2013@gmail.com
Doug Wiant	Holly River SP	doug.a.wiant@wv.gov
Phillip Setterlund	Holly River SPF	philsetterlund@hotmail.com
Donna Boggs	Holly River SPF	donna.l.boggs@yahoo.com
Beverly Campbell	Kanawha SP	bcam17@outlook.com
John Hughes	Kanawha SP	jlhughesjr@suddenlink.net
Bob Hoke	MSR&LHA (Cass)	bob@rhoke.net
Stephen Jones	North Bend SP	304-643-2931
Scott Windham	North Bend SPF	304-266-0329
Jonathan Summers	North Bend SPF	summers03@zoominternet.net
Greg Bray	Pricketts Fort & WVSPF	president@wvspf.org
Brennon O’sullivan	Stonewall Resort SP	304-269-0524 brennon.e.o’sullivan@wv.gov
Jay Hayes	Stonewall SPF	jay@trueband.com
Rudy Henley	Stonewall SPF	jrhendley@stonewallresort.com
Sam Morris	Tomlinson Run SP	sam.a.morris@wv.gov
Monte Pearson	Tomlinson Run SP	
Pat Miller	Tygart Lake	patrick.s.miller@wv.gov
Jenny Bobela	Tygart Lake	jennybobela@yahoo.com
Jacob Jackson	Tygart Lake SP	jacob.a.jackson@wv.gov
Tim Kennell	VA Association for Parks	timkennellvafp@gmail.com
Brett Harshbarger	Valley Falls SP Superintendent	304-367-2719 brett.w.harshbarger@wv.gov
Gene Conley	Valley Falls SPF	304-288-5374 touchstonegenewv@gmail.com
Maureen Conley	Watoga SP	maureenconleywv@gmail.com
Brad Reed	WV Parks Chief	brad.r.reed@wv.gov
Milt Gutman	WVSPF at-large member	304-281-2865

**SUMMARY OF KEN CAPLINGER'S ANALYSIS ABOUT GOVERNMENTAL OUTREACH BY WV STATE PARKS FOUNDATIONS & SPECIFICS/CLARIFICATION OF LIMITATIONS ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY 501-C-3 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS**

- Let's start with a summary of DNR/Parks policies under which individual WV State Park Foundations and the WV State Park Foundation currently are supposed to operate relative to political activities. These do not have force of law, but violation of the same could result in future lack of recognition of a particular foundation which is perhaps found acting contrary to these policies.

**1) Excerpts from the official DNR/PARKS GUIDELINES, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR WV STATE RECREATION AREA FOUNDATIONS:**

**a)** Foundations are prohibited strictly from lobbying. **Foundations can educate within the meaning of the federal laws under which they are organized, but this means education in the strict and formal sense, not efforts to lobby for funds or influence legislation.** If there is any question whatsoever of whether or not an activity is lobbying, it probably is. In such cases the activity should be stopped immediately.

**b)** All foundation activities and endeavors shall be in furtherance of the goals, purposes, endeavors and activities of the WV DNR and the state park system, and nothing it does or undertakes may conflict with or be opposed to them in any manner.

**c)** No **substantial** part of a foundation's activities shall be carrying on of propaganda, lobbying, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation. Foundation shall not participate in, or intervene in any manner, including the publishing or distribution of statements, in any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for political office. (This exact same language is reflected in the standard ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION filed with the WV Secretary of State under which all individual foundations as well as the statewide foundation are incorporated. Standard By-Laws for each foundation do NOT address this issue.)

**WHAT ARE FEDERAL IRS LOBBYING GUIDELINES?**

- Now, a general, shortened summary of **Federal IRS guidelines** governing lobbying/political activities by 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organizations. ( from official IRS website)
- 1)** In general, no organization may qualify for section 501(c)(3) status if a **substantial** part of its activities **is attempting to influence legislation** (commonly known as *lobbying*). A **501(c)(3) organization may engage in some lobbying**, but too much lobbying activity risks loss of tax-exempt status.
  - 2)** *Legislation* includes action by Congress, any state legislature, any local council, or similar governing body, with respect to acts, bills, resolutions, or similar items (such as legislative confirmation of appointive office), or by the public in referendum, ballot initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure. **Lobbying does not include actions by executive, judicial, or administrative bodies.**
  - 3)** An organization will be regarded as attempting to influence legislation if it contacts, or urges the public to contact, members or employees of a legislative body for the purpose of proposing, supporting, or opposing legislation, or if the organization advocates the adoption or rejection of legislation.

- 4) **Organizations may, however, involve themselves in certain issues of public policy without the activity being considered as lobbying.** For example, organizations may conduct educational meetings, prepare and distribute educational materials, or otherwise consider public policy issues in an educational manner without jeopardizing their tax-exempt status.
- 5) Whether an organization's attempts to influence legislation, i.e., *lobbying*, constitute a **SUBSTANTIAL** part of its overall activities is determined on the basis of all the pertinent facts and circumstances in each case. The IRS considers a variety of factors, including the time devoted (by both compensated and volunteer workers) and the expenditures devoted by the organization to the activity, when determining whether the lobbying activity is **substantial**.

### **CONCLUSIONS/ SUGGESTIONS ON MOVING FORWARD GIVEN THE INFORMATION ABOVE**

DNR/Parks policy guidelines on lobbying by park foundations are a bit contradictory. They use the words, "strictly prohibited" in one segment (but which also says that foundations can, "... educate within the meaning of the federal laws under which they are organized, but this means education in the strict and formal sense, not efforts to lobby for funds or influence legislation." In another section the policy also uses the somewhat less restrictive federal IRS reference (and also the standard language from all WV state park foundation Articles of Incorporation) that no "substantial" part of a foundation's activities will be directed toward lobbying or attempts to influence legislation. The DNR policy does not have force of law nor can it overrule IRS guidelines BUT it is important that all foundations that wish to continue to cooperate with and be officially recognized by DNR/Parks remain in adherence to DNR policy. I personally recommend to DNR, and also hope that today there might be an approved motion for the WV State Park Foundation to send DNR an official letter, requesting that DNR/Parks consider changing their foundation policy to remove the strict prohibition and instead require park foundations to follow IRS requirements. However, **if things remain the same**, here are some actions/thoughts to consider.

- The WV State Parks Foundation cannot go as far as to appoint a volunteer lobbyist, either from its Board or from an individual foundation. However, there are certain things that can still be pursued that would be within DNR/Parks policy guidelines as well as those of the IRS.
- At our last meeting in 2019 the State Foundation Board approved me as its "Governmental Liaison" representative. In theory, that enabled me to appear before and/or communicate with executive/administrative individuals or bodies to offer objective, factual responses to questions about state park issues, projects, and/or challenges; to inform officials on how the Foundation could potentially assist with such endeavors; and offer opinion as to how the public at large might react to particular initiatives.
- Although it has not occurred since 2019, it also allowed me to be invited by a staff member from a political office to attend a committee meeting and testify or explain issues around their subject of expertise. (If the result of an **invitation** this is NOT be considered lobbying in any way, shape or form under IRS guidelines).
- In theory, it also allowed me to go to a regulator's office in an attempt to influence a regulation being written that would negatively affect state parks. (**Note: regulation and not law, this removes it from the realm of lobbying**). For example, what if the National Park Service (which has joint jurisdiction and authority over certain state park lands) or LWCF administrators (who can make judgments over certain aspects of state park use due to past federal grants) were

considering decisions that would have a damaging impact on use and enjoyment of our state parks? I could have officially contacted them as a Foundation rep and been proactive in communicating with such entities in an attempt to alter the outcome.

- I could have also distributed or made available nonpartisan analysis, studies, or research to the general public, including legislators and also communicated with public officials without attempting to influence legislation (i.e. , discuss broad issues or organization's activities).
- Last but not least, we are all private, taxpaying citizens of our state. So long as one contacts their elected officials in that context; and not in connection with or through use of Foundation resources; and disclaiming any connection to the Foundation, then we all have the right of free speech and making known our personal views on park issues.

Also, remember that the thoughts and suggestions in this document are in connection with the efforts of the WV State Parks Foundation, but are also "food for thought" for individual Park foundations. Individual park foundations should follow their own course, while keeping in mind DNR/Parks policy and IRS regulations. **Let me conclude by again saying that I think the State Park Foundation should consider asking DNR to amend its Foundation political activity language to require that Foundations simply comply with the earlier mentioned IRS guidelines.**

# 2020 Reports Submitted by Local Foundations

## Blennerhassett Historical Foundation

Blennerhassett Historical Foundation, Inc. accomplished several goals in 2020 despite the Covid pandemic: Maple Shade, an 1802 frame house that resides behind the Blennerhassett Mansion, had its siding, doors and door jams repaired after they had been damaged by squirrels. The roof on the front porch was also modified to prevent drainage of rain water against the siding. We operated both the gift shops and the Island concession stand, but decided to return management of the concession stand back to the State Park beginning in 2021. We temporarily took over its management in 2015 to help the Park get it opened in time for that season. We obtained a PPP loan for the salaries involved in both businesses and it was used solely for pay and so was forgiven. The gift shop was closed for the first four months in 2021 because of covid considerations and a very poor outlook for the business. Both gift shops opened on the Park opening day of May 1.

We continued to nurture the new formal garden located behind the Mansion; it was uncovered by archaeologists in the 1980s and we reproduced it in its original form and location. It is large and circular and is divided into four pie-shaped quadrants separated by 10 foot-wide gravel walkways. The quadrants are outlined with boxwoods and the interiors sport lush lawns.

Friends, a vital committee of the Foundation, continued to supply docents and period costumes for them. The Foundation meets every other month via ZOOM, but our June annual meeting will be our first in-person meeting since 2019. Our Foundation is at full strength with 15 members and we look forward to a more normal year in 2021. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our officers and members for all their fine work and support for the Park.

## Cacapon Resort State Park Foundation

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it many challenges but never before have we seen our park serve as a respite to so many. The number of our visitors increased exponentially as people sought ways to safely leave their homes and enjoy the peace that nature has to offer. Through our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/cacaponresortstateparkfoundation>) and website (<https://www.crspf.org/>), we were able to communicate up-to-date information from our Park administrators about the safeguards and/or restrictions that were in place emphasizing that the lake, trails, and outdoor spaces were open to welcome them. During this time, in order to adhere to the Governor's guidelines, our Board initially suspended in-person meetings and then began meeting virtually. We are now back to in-person meetings and the following projects are in progress:

**Mountain Biking-Hiking Trails Project:** A member of our Board has been highly instrumental in the restoration of existing trails and the creation of new trails for all levels. Thanks to state and local funds as well as numerous grants and donations, Cacapon is in the process of completing a trail system that is causing a great deal of excitement among mountain biking/hiking enthusiasts. In addition to the skilled work of a

professional trail builder, we have been fortunate to have the service of an incredible corps of enthusiastic volunteers who have provided hundreds of hours of labor to make it all possible.

**Cacapon Bark Park:** The request for a dog park originated in the community, which was followed by a member of our County Council offering to partner with us to make it happen which was approved by our Park administration. It will become a reality in May and will be the first dog park located in a WV State Park. The pups and their owners are very excited!

**Greenstone Trail Lighting:** The Greenstone Trail is a flat .3-mile-long trail loop that has been enjoyed by those who want to be surrounded by nature without an elevation gain (families, those with limited mobility, runners, etc.). The Foundation installed lighting a number of years ago that has failed and is now being replaced so that the trail can once again be enjoyed in the evenings.

**Gazebo at the Waterfall:** Many visitors gather at the waterfall located near the entrance to the Park. Plans have been submitted, and once approved, we will place a gazebo near the waterfall for the enjoyment of our visitors for small gathering, weddings, etc.

## Camp Creek Foundation

The Camp Creek Foundation had to cancel all 2020 events because of Covid. However, we did see the completion of the rustic cabin in the Almost Heaven area of the Forest. The foundation purchased a portable sawmill which assisted in the completion of the cabin. The photo shows the completed cabin.



## Canaan Valley State Park Foundation

The Canaan Valley State Park Foundation submits the following report to West Virginia State Parks Foundation for the year 2020.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation decided to, for the most part, forego fundraising activities through the pandemic. The members of the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation decided that it would not be prudent to solicit donations when many members of the community were being forced out of work and being forced to deal with a pandemic lockdown.

In addition, the members of the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation also decided to forego ambitions for the construction of a major project and instead, use its funds to construct minor facilities like bike washing stations, trailside kiosks, and trailside shelters within the park.

One activity that the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation did sponsor this year was the Sunrise

Scramble (uphill ski race). Uphill skiing is a growing activity that is growing within the county and is being encouraged by the Canaan Valley State Park. Uphill and backcountry skiing encourages exploration of the wilderness, encourages trail use, retains social distancing, and encourages use of the State Park. The Sunrise Scramble was a remarkably successful event that did a lot to bring a positive light to the Canaan Valley State Park.

Now that the pandemic appears to be coming to closure, the Canaan Valley State Park Foundation hopes to work with the State Park to return to some minor fundraising activities. Some of these activities may include outdoor music venue sponsorship and fundraising dinners.

Any activities that take place this year will be dependent on the status of the COVID pandemic.

## Cedar Creek State Park Foundation

Cedar Creek State Park Foundation, Inc. was officially formed and recognized by the State of West Virginia as a non-profit corporation on December 16th, 2019. This first annual report covers activities from January through December of 2020. Our first year of existence has been extremely challenging because of the Covid Pandemic. Many of our board members and families have had the virus. We are deeply saddened by the death of one of our board members from this terrible virus. On February 5th, 2021, Junior Brooks passed away from complications resulting from Covid 19. Junior was an active member of the Foundation and will be missed greatly by all that knew him.

Despite these setbacks, we were able to accomplish three activities at the Park. On the Fourth of July, the Foundation sponsored a hot dog sale and Blue Grass music event. This event was put together very quickly at the last minute after the Park could reopen. Although

not a large event, it was successful and enjoyed by many. The Halloween Trunk or Treat event was held on October 24th and was very well received by hundreds of community members and campers. Many campers decorated their sites and the Foundation provided candy to all sites for distribution. Several local organizations also donated candy for the event. Overall, it was very well received, and we received lots of positive feedback. We will be doing this event again in 2021.

Our final event of the year was a Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony to honor veterans. The Park opened all sites to local businesses and churches to set up light displays. The participation from these groups was amazing and the displays were beautiful. Over a four-night period, hundreds of people drove through the Park. We have already had requests from many of last year's participants and many new ones for the upcoming

season. We expect this year to be even bigger and better than last!

Our first year was unusual and challenging to say the least, but we remain committed and determined to make the Foundation a success for the benefit of the Park and local community. It is time to hold elections for the Board of Directors. We originally had two one-year terms up for election but due to Covid health related issues and Junior's passing, we now have two one-year terms and two three-year terms up for election.

The Board consists of ten voting members and the Park Superintendent Benny McCune as a nonvoting member. It takes every one of these members to make the Foundation work and all have performed with enthusiasm throughout this crazy year. The more members we have, the more we can accomplish.

## Coopers Rock Foundation

- Cancelled annual activities due to COVID-19 pandemic: fund raisers of 25/50K race and Stump Jump race; fund raiser of sponsoring food trucks once per month at overlook parking lot (\$\$ raised by selling permits to local food trucks); Celebration of the Outdoor event in Oct.; most trail work sessions were not held this year.
- Winterfest held in February 2020 – activities included X-country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, snow sculpture zone, winter tree ID walk, paintball biathlon course, women's frying pan toss.
- On-the-ground activity was construction of 12 tent pads with volunteer labor and materials at a cost of \$2,511 to CRF. These tent pads are located in the Rhododendron Campground Loop.
- Construction of a picnic pavilion next to the day use parking lot in conjunction with the Sierra Club West Virginia Chapter.
- We are in the design phase of a disc golf course on 71 acres of what used to be DOF managed lands in conjunction with the Mountain Goats Disc Golf Club.
- Planning continues for construction of a "Coopers Rock" wooden entryway over the main road into the state forest designed to resemble an original CCC entryway. Funding has been secured (\$25K from WV DNR plus funds raised previously), design has been developed, state approvals have been granted, and a contractor has been identified. Final contract is not yet in place and still searching for trees to utilize.

## Elk River Trail Foundation

Elk River Trail Foundation, Inc. was formed as a non-profit corporation on February 26, 2020. It obtained 501(c)(3) designation in August 2020.

A 17-member Board of Directors assures a geographic perspective and representation from Sutton to Charleston – the area covered by the rail and water trails.

Established a social media presence on Facebook (over 5,100 "followers") and Instagram.

Established a website, [www.ElkRiverTrail.org](http://www.ElkRiverTrail.org).

Worked with the WVU College of Art and Design to develop a logo and applied for a trademark.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** To preserve, protect, and enhance the Elk River rail and water trails for public recreation, community health and well-being,

The Foundation is pleased to announce the following activities scheduled for 2021:

- Fall Festival - 25 September
- Trunk or Treat - 23 October
- Christmas Tree Lighting and light display held on two different weekends (10 & 11 December and 17 & 18 December).

These will become annual events, but we plan to have others as time and money will allow.

We hope to be able to accomplish some projects in the park this summer and will be working with the staff throughout the season to assist in any way we can.

conservation, ecology, education, economic development, and cultural enrichment.

### Preserving, protecting and enhancing the Elk River rail and water trails

- Acquired a 2-acre parcel of land at the Dundon Trailhead, Clay County, where Buffalo Creek flows into the Elk River, and where the Buffalo Creek & Gauley Railroad (the rails-with-trails railroad) intersects with the old B&O Railroad (being converted to the rail trail). Working with the University of Charleston MBA program to develop business plans for potential business use of the property. Applying for grants to preserve the "red house" and use it for the trailhead.
- Accepted a donation of 2.5 acres and a building at the Queen Shoals Trailhead in both Clay and Kanawha Counties. Received a \$50,000 grant from

the Dr. O. M. Harper & Ruth A. Harper Family Foundation, Inc. to begin development. Like the Dundon property, the tract provides access to both the rail trail and the river trail.

- Accepted donations of a ½-acre lot near Ivydale that borders both the trail and the river and a small lot along Elk River in the Clendenin Town limits.
- Working with West Virginia University Extension Service – Rural Tourism and WVU’s Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources Analysis Center to develop an internet-based interactive mapping program to identify trailheads, public river access sites, tourist attractions and points of interest, and recreation-related businesses. Initial version now on website.

### **Public Recreation**

- Worked with DNR to identify and install signage marking five additional public river access sites in the Wallback Wildlife Management Area in the Elkhurst area of Clay County.
- Working to place mile markers along the river so that boaters and kayakers have points of reference for their location and progress on the river.
- Planning a river clean-up event, tube float, and a trail race.

### **Economic Development**

- Participated in trail town study for the Town of Clendenin and worked with the Kanawha County Commission to obtain a WV DOT - Transportation Alternatives grant of \$187,500 to build out the trailhead and make improvements in Clendenin.
- Worked with the WVU Extension Service – Rural Tourism, to create a Trail Town Partnership Committee and adopted a Memorandum of Understanding to create a partnership with the Towns of Clay, Clendenin, Gassaway and Sutton, WVU-ES, the WV DNR, the Clay County Business Development Authority, and the Braxton County Development Authority. The partnership is dedicated to branding, marketing, and promoting economic development for a recreation economy along the Elk River trails corridor. Obtained a \$25,000 matching grant from the Benedum Foundation and pursuing additional ARC Power grant to conduct trail town studies to identify needs and opportunities for the towns and communities along the trails to benefit from a recreation economy.
- Co-sponsored and participated in two River and Outdoor Recreation educational webinar by FasterWV, an entrepreneurship program of Advantage Valley, that focused on the development of recreation economy-related businesses.

## **Forks of Coal State Natural Area Foundation**

June 2020: Received \$959,000 Abandoned Mine Lands Pilot Fund Grant for the construction and installation of the exhibits for the Claudia L. Workman Wildlife Education Center. Expected completion of the installation is mid-August 2021. The grant can only be used for purchasing the exhibits.

Held a webinar fall 2020 to present the Foundation’s progress and provide an update on construction of the wildlife education center.

Received WV Stream Partners Grant 2020 to purchase trail signs for Chimney Swift Tower and the House Coal Mines.

Received WV Stream Partners 2021 Grant to fund purchase of animal proof trash can and interpretive trail sign for roof-rock.

Received WV American Water Environmental Grant 2021 for partial funding of maintenance of aquarium in the Center.

Installed two dog waste clean-up stations made possible by donations from friends of FOC

Conducted trail beautification and clean-up projects: Pollinator field seeding and spreading of compost, construction of Chimney Swift Tower, installation of trail name signs, interpretive signs, and trail blaze markers.

Received title to the 200-acre Workman Estate property across the road (anticipated May 31, 2021.)

## **Greenbrier River Trail Foundation, Inc.**

GRTF was created and chartered June 16, 2020 to complement the existing Greenbrier River Trail Association (chartered in 1981). We are indebted to the State Parks Foundation as well as individual State Park Foundations. Many of you freely gave of your time and provided much needed and appreciated guidance as we

deliberated on the establishment of GRTF. All required Secretary of State, IRS and DNR documentation is complete. GRTF/GRTA are both 501(c)(3) organizations and share the same governance, Board structure, officers, by laws and operations. Both groups are dedicated to fostering trail health and vitality and

work closely with the WV Division of Natural Resources (DNR), which oversees regular maintenance, grant and volunteer opportunities, and annual trail events.

The GRTF Board's first meeting was in October 2020. At that meeting the Trail was formally adopted. We also made application for National Recreation Trail Designation for the GRT on October 31. We anticipate award of the designation in June by American Trails.

GRTA also purchased Little Green Light, donor management software for GRTF/GRTA use. The initial letter for GRTF donor membership was emailed February 20, 2021. To date we have raised approximately \$2,000 and currently have about 40 GRTF founding members. Our hope is to grow this database (and donor support) by keeping interested individuals informed about the Trail and much needed maintenance projects.

We anticipate moving most if not all grant applications to GRTF. Meanwhile, GRTA has several grants in process. Recent work accomplished in support of the Trail by the Greenbrier River Trail Association includes:

- Three Recreational Trails Program (Federal grants administered by WV Division of Highways)
  - Resurfacing the 78 mile Trail (\$120,000 + \$30,000 match by GRTA) In Process.
  - Development of 5.5 acre parcel at Caldwell for new Trailhead parking and picnicking (GRTA

transferred ownership to DNR State Parks)  
Purchase complete (\$112,500 + \$5,625 match);  
Development (\$121,540 + \$15,924 match) in Process

- Additional toilets and shelters (this work was completed w/o the grant; plan to re-purpose this grant for Caldwell Trailhead) (\$42,500 + \$10,600 match)
- US Forest Service: Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Title II grant, for Informational Signage (\$40,000) In Process
- New Shelter, Water Well and bathroom at Mile Marker 9.5 (2019 Hollowell Dawkins Foundation grant of \$12,000 and Marie Leist Foundation grant of \$3,000) Completed in 2020
- Completed 2020 Maintenance:
  - Cleaned hundreds of state park signs along the Trail
  - Painted all signposts, kiosks
  - Cleaned and painted most shelters and bathrooms
  - Cleaned and painted all mile markers.
- Trail Repairs at Mile Marker 7.5 and 11.8 (Lewisburg Rotary Donation of \$8,500)
- Annual: Great Greenbrier River Race (April) and Greenbrier River Trail Marathon (October)
- Instituted Better Governance Measures (Accounting Policies and Procedures)

## Holly River State Park Foundation

After a dull 2020, we are going forward... Last year was a slow year but we were able to make Apple Butter to sell. Also, members and volunteer ladies got together and made quilts to sell. The Foundation purchased a new Mule side by side, had all locks changed, and had the fallen trees cut into lumber, just to name a few projects.

We lost a very special man, Stanley "Judd" Anderson. He was our leader and formed the Foundation, and we miss him a lot. We hope this year is better.

## Kanawha State Forest Foundation

The past year has been a trying year for everyone. Kanawha State Forest has accomplished many objectives in spite of the pandemic. The park has experienced an uptick in visitors during this time. The Kanawha State Forest Foundation has used this time to make several improvements:

Completion of the Old Growth Forest driving tour for persons who are not able to hike the trail which includes kiosk to explain the old growth forest and individuals volunteering to discuss each kiosk using remote wireless headsets.

- Completion of the ADA playground for children to enjoy.

- Completion of blazing all 40 plus trails encompassing 63 miles.
- Completion of painting all shelters and tables in the park.
- Held First Walk (New Year's Day) and Osbra Eye Memorial Nature Walks with social distancing and over 100 participants per event.
- Partnering with DNR to replace all sign post within the park and to expand the signage at all trail intersections.
- Partnering with Ben Franklin Technical School to build kiosk for expanding park information on trail experience.

- Partnering with USGS to provide kiosk and technical expertise on the formation of the park and

surrounding hill structure.

## **Mountain State Railroad & Logging Historical Association (Cass Railroad)**

Covid restrictions made 2020 a relatively unproductive year for the Association. Our primary accomplishment was the creation and installation of two historical interpretative signs in the Park. They are the first of several will provide information about the Park's

buildings and history to visitors. Much of the groundwork for the sign projects was done by an AmeriCorps volunteer with the graphic design done by an Association volunteer.

## **North Bend State Park Foundation, Inc.**

North Bend State Park Foundation, Inc. continues to facilitate much needed funding, support, and labor for projects at North Bend State Park, located in Ritchie County, West Virginia.

The highlight for 2020 was the completion of an ADA compliant ramp and 150' walkway, together with ADA compliant railing, at the rear of the Lodge at North Bend State Park, linking the back of the Lodge to an existing concrete walkway. Our Foundation funded \$8,650, and the State of West Virginia provided a \$7,250 match for a total of project cost of \$15,900. This ramp and walkway replaced a 1960s vintage blacktop walkway that was severely deteriorated and unsafe. Also included in the turnkey work were provisions for rainwater drainage from the lodge itself. We had this project planned and funded for several years, but were unable to secure contractors within our budget. In the end, we were fortunate to contract with two local highly capable craft persons who did an excellent job on the project.

Our Foundation struggles to find new Board Members. Due to Covid we were not able to conduct any of our normal fundraising activities in 2020.

Past Foundation Projects:

- Construction of a sidewalk to the most popular picnic and activity shelter.
- Planting of about one hundred trees at Cokeley Campground.
- Installation of solar lighting at Cokeley boat launch.
- Purchasing materials for wooden outdoor furniture for the pool.
- New signs for all the trails within the park.
- Purchased playground equipment at multiple locations.
- Repair and extension of the Extra Mile Trail, including a wooden deck.
- Purchased software for activity booking.
- Constructed two wooden multiuse bridges on trails.
- 2018 - Assist with construction of first two miles of "Old Farm Trail".
- 2019 – Foundation, using matching funds, was responsible for the completion of the final mile of the "Old Farm Trail".
- 2020 Using matching funds – turnkey construction of an ADA compliant ramp and walkway, with railings.

## **Pricketts Fort Memorial Foundation**

Our foundation is in the middle of a \$250,000 renovation of a building in the park, which will allow the park to have a much-needed place for people to eat and to rent bikes and kayaks. With easy access to the rail to trail and the boat launching area the foundation feels this will help increase visitation to the recreational end

of the park as well as allow people to enjoy the historical programs without having to leave the park in search of dining opportunities. We are about 1/3 of the way finished and hope to be able to use this venue this season.

## **Stonewall State Park Foundation**

The Stonewall State Park Foundation ("Foundation") was incorporated in January 2008, and is organized for charitable and educational purposes. Its primary purpose is to improve programs, amenities and facilities

at Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park. Recognizing that The State of West Virginia has limited funds available to invest in improvements to State Parks. The Foundation was therefore established to attract alternative funding

for the State Park in order to assist in providing funds for various projects determined to be desirable and beneficial enhancements by the entities operating and managing the State Park on behalf of the State of West Virginia. All such enhancements must be consistent with the approved Development Agreement, and must also comply with the USACOE-approved Master Plan. A secondary goal of the Foundation is to raise funds to insure the viability and future development of the State Park by creating a sustainable legacy for future generations.

The Board of Directors of the Foundation is charged with conducting activities that generate funds to complement and further the growth of the State Park to provide recreational opportunities for a wide and

growing audience, including local, conference and transient guests.

Accomplishments in 2020 include:

- Funding \$20,000 for employee meal relief during the COVID related mandatory closure of the Resort
- Finishing a hiking -biking trail extension
- Funding acquisition and erection of flag poles at the main entry to the lodge
- Funding new security gate for the park
- Funding and installing new trail and wayfinding signage
- Continued renovation of the Fox cabin
- Assistance with application for AML grant.

## **Tomlinson Run State Park Foundation**

The Tomlinson Run State Park Foundation was for the idle for most of the year because of covid. The only event they had was the pre-1840 rendezvous and civil war encampment since it was outside and everyone could socially distance. They did do a monthly soup sale fundraiser during the winter months. The only major accomplishments for the year were running and

installing a new 400-amp electric service at the campground shelter. This electric service will allow the new food trailer to operate and it also allowed us to run 50-amp electric to 5 campsites that didn't have electric. They also worked on the newly purchased food trailer so it will be ready for the 2021 summer season.

## **Valley Falls State Park Foundation**

We had another successful summer/fall at our Park. The gift shop was able to open in June with the Foundation earning \$24,846. We had more than 650 volunteer hours over the year. Although the gift shop was new in 2019, it has a whole new look. Park employees and volunteers added slat wall shelving which allows more area for merchandise. Old shelving was painted by a volunteer to match the interior walls. Additional overhead lighting will be added in the next week. Two volunteers attended the abbreviated vendor show held in Weston at Appalachian Glass.

Marion County Master gardeners continue with the beautification of the Park with our volunteers helping. Annuals and perennials were planted with more to come this year.

A new side by side was purchased by the park foundation for use at the Park. The new Kawasaki Mule is a much-needed addition to the park. It will be mainly used for trail maintenance and in trail rescue situations if they arise.

Events at the park were limited due to COVID restrictions but visitors to the Park seemed to have increased. As restrictions were eased there were a few wedding and small groups at the shelters. Four public viewings of the saw whet owls were held. A bike race and a trail running race were still able to be held at the park.

The Foundation continues to have a Facebook page including pictures of the newly remodeled gift shop.