

FOW MINUTES OF MEETING

July 21, 2008

Present: Bill B.(President), Alma M. (Secretary), Steve G. (Park Supervisor), Sandy C. (Membership), Jim R. (Historian), Steve C. (Vice-President), Jim D., Colby A. (Eagle Scout), Dan B. (Eagle Scout), Brian (Colby's dad), Don (Scoutmaster), Jane G., Wendy A. (Baystate Trail Riders), Albert A. (Baystate Trail Riders), Robert H., Andy M., Carl C., Carol H.

Present: 18

1) Opening Remarks

Bill B. (President) mentioned that several officers would be absent due to vacations, and gave the webmaster report. Statistics are down, but this isn't an indication of visitors, since users go directly to the page they want. Vicki suggested that to make our site more attractive we should update and spiff up some of the pages, with better text and photos. Please send her photos. She wants more info. on the hiking trails, what makes them interesting, what sights/sounds hikers could encounter, as well as photos and descriptions of the new rail bed rails. She also suggested horseback, boating and fishing pages, as well as more photos of the Scout project. She suggested some types of loops for users based on usage needs. She needs volunteers to help her develop content for these pages.

Jim D. wants to know who the admin and contacts on the website are, and Bill said the admin website address should go to the webmaster and the contact e-mail should be either himself or someone else. Jim also said that the e-mails sent to Sandy are being returned as undeliverable and wondered how many people have not been able to get through to FOW through these non-working addresses. These will be looked at by Sandy and Bill.

Sandy said he thinks Vicky's idea of having recommended loops could be put on a map, which Blue Hills notes with colored dots giving different routes. Steve G. said DCR limits him by number of colors but other ways to mark the trails could be helpful, such as posting them by trail numbers. Steve also said that people would expect trail markers for each one; however, if we posted information on the website with a description as well as the numbers on the trails we could get some interesting loops. Beginner hiker, some types of small loops, half day hikes around the park, etc. Steve G. said he could do it with some other people, and Jane volunteered to help since she's also interested.

Sandy suggested having a questionnaire for people who use the park, listing areas of interest and/or concern. Steve G. said that campers get this type of input, but we don't get it from day use because the park doesn't charge for day use. Steve said the online responses for these questionnaires are the best, and he wants to stay with a paperless questionnaire.

Jim D. said that campers come to the Visitor Center to get maps, and they usually ask him if he works here. He said most of the people want to know if he speaks French or German. Bill asked Jim to give examples of some of the questions he has gotten from visitors. Some are:

- can I hike with kids in strollers
- I want an easy/aggressive hiking trail
- where to go for a picnic
- how far is the reservoir from the Visitor Center
- where is the copy machine
- can you fish in Holly Pond
- can canoes/kayaks be used in ponds or reservoirs
- is swimming allowed, if not, where can one go swimming
- do we have local maps
- where to buy firewood
- do we have an ice machine
- where to rent bikes
- bike repair issues
- fishing licenses
- how to sign up for hunting
- where is the recreation center with a game room, and video
- info. on Duxbury beach
- Wompy decals and stickers
- who is Mason A. Foley
- first aid kits
- why is the flag at half staff
- copies of FOW newsletter
- bathrooms and showers info.
- what are horses doing in the park
- why is there only one sidewalk handicap ramp
- how far to Nantasket Beach
- how safe is Mount Blue Spring water
- do we have open bunkers
- park passport details of the program (it's a little booklet where one can put stamps of various parks, there are 12. The person has to look at the book and put a stamp in it. When they get 5 stamps, they send it in to Carver headquarters and get a t-shirt.)
- how to rent various rooms on the property
- interpreter program questions
- how to get horses to ride on in the park
- rail trail questions
- can road bikes be ridden on the rail trail
- why can't the contact person at the park answer simple questions about the park
- where's the peace garden
- where's k5 (the campground)

- where's the campground check in
- how did the park get its name
- where to go for coffee?

Bill said we definitely need to keep this informational program going. Jane said she doesn't know the answers, but if these questions were put down in some sort of training manual with the answers she wouldn't mind looking through them for the answers and volunteering her time to sit at the Visitor Center. Steve G. said it's been about 18 years since we've had a full time worker in the Visitor Center, and thinks it's a great idea to have Jim there answering questions. He's there 10-2 pm on Sat. and Sun., and Jane said she'll come to observe and learn. He puts a small flag out when he's there, and that tells people someone is in the building.

Bill suggested that if anyone is interested that they come down on this Saturday to see how Jim works and decide if they'd like to help with the program. He wants to draft a note telling others we're looking for volunteers for this program. Bill asked Jim to put the answers to these questions on the website in a FAQ section, as well as handouts for the Visitor Center. Jim said he doesn't feel there's a need for a Friends person if the interpreter is working in the Visitor Center, however, Steve said the person is only here for a short time, will be doing programs and won't be available for another 6 months.

Jim also said that people don't know the history of the park and wanted to know if we could put copies of our FOW newsletter in the Center for handouts to visitors. Steve said that our regional interpreter, who is now a year round person, has made a commitment to work with Jim and others to enlarge photos for the wall and create information for visitors in the Center. He has money for the program and will work on it this winter.

Bill asked Jim R. if we could get copies of the newsletter to hand out, and he said he could take a PDF file to a printer and make extra copies. Jim D. said we could make about 50 of them. It was suggested we just give out the current issue. Steve G. suggested we keep back issues in a binder for anyone interested. Jim R. would be willing to print out extra copies, and Bill said FOW could pay for them. Steve asked if the website has back issues, and Bill said they do but not all of them are there.

2) Scout Project

Colby and Dan discussed the project, known as The Peace Garden. They got the idea from Andy M. who gave them a list of different FOW generated activities to do at the bunker. Along with Dan's older brother Tim, they broke these ideas into different projects and did a sign, garden, benches, handicap ramp, and painting with some donations. Altogether they worked for almost 700 hours and 2 years. Their Eagle Boards are on Wed., which will complete the process. They thanked Jim R. and Steve G. for their help.

Jim R. suggested having an opening ceremony with the military. Their scoutmaster, Don, agreed and said they have some money available that could be used for this. They currently have a scout putting a fence around the top to make it safer for visitors. Alma

suggested putting some before and after photos on our website to show the amount of work they have done. Don said that their website www.Troop4480.org has some photos already posted. Bill suggested they put their photos onto that site and we put a link to it on our website.

Don is open to suggestions on a ceremony, keeping in mind that Colby and Dan are heading off to college in August. It could be done during Thanksgiving break or during Spring vacation. Jim R. has some local Navy seamen that might be interested, as well as a retired Marine general and an admiral. Don suggested having a grand opening for the public and then a future one for the military. Bill suggested they invite everyone who supported the project, businesses and contractors, as well as the press. Jim D. made a motion to have the date the weekend before Labor Day. Bill suggested having a quick committee formed to hammer out the details. Andy M. suggested Veteran's Day, especially since the students will be off from school and it would honor the veterans. Alma suggested the Saturday before Veteran's Day, since the boys would probably not be able to get off school that Tuesday. Thus, the date would be Saturday, November 8th, rain or shine.

The committee to plan this day consists of Don Benza, Jim Rose, and Andy Mills. Bill made a motion that we make the scouts honorary members of FOW for their work, which passed unanimously. They were congratulated for their fine work.

3) 501c3 application

Bill reported that we are officially a 501c3 organization, which allows tax deductible contributions as well as being able to apply for larger grants. He wishes Eric were here so he could give him a pat on the back for his hard work.

Don mentioned that Entergy Plymouth Nuclear Plant offers environmental grants, to be completed by the end of April, for 501c3 organizations. They give up to \$50,000, with \$5,000-\$10,000 being the average grant. He offered to be our liaison to the program.

4) FOW t-shirts

Robert said that Malcolm has the t-shirts and they are done. Bill wants him to come to the next meeting to start the process of selling/distributing them, and wants him to send FOW the bill. Andy asked if we have stickers, but ours are for those who become members. He suggested having Wompatuck decals for sale. Bill wants to know how to change the Wompatuck passport stamp into a sticker, and Steve G. will find out if headquarters has a digital file of it. Bill suggested we make a motion that FOW spend money to make Wompatuck stickers to sell in the Visitor Center using the park passport logo. Alma asked if this would be a legal issue since it's a state park, but Steve G. said it's being done at several other state parks by their Friends groups, so we could also do the same. Bill suggested looking into the cost of refrigerator magnets and keychain fobs with this logo, and Robert will do the legwork on this.

5) Membership report

Sandy reported we currently have 58 members which include families, however, we only have about 13 or 14 renewals. It's been suggested Sandy send out another e-mail notice to members. Alma suggested that a regular mailing, as well as an e-mail mailing, may generate a more favorable response.

Jim R. suggested having an annual FOW get together, like a cookout. Steve C. said that Eric suggested having a cookout for the trail watch group in August so maybe that would be a good time to start a FOW tradition. He said this would be the last year for NEMBAfest, so it wouldn't be too much of a conflict. Bill said that it would be too confusing to have a training session and a cookout at the same time, and Steve C. agreed.

6) Trail Watch Initiative

Bill mentioned that the Blue Hills has had a trail watch volunteer organization for over 10 years. They bike the trails with a uniform and act as docents and park greeters to all they see on the trails. They answer questions and are the eyes and ears of the reservation staff by also reporting dump sites, tree falls, party sites, fires, etc. Steve G. suggested we have something similar here at Wompatuck, and we'll officially get going next month. The group will be called Trail Watch Wompatuck.

A small group will be out on the trails, making this a friendly place to help with issues. They will all have cell phones and will also fill out a report form for major issues. Bill said Blue Hills had a bad reputation of dumping and bad activities in the woods, but have improved because of the Trail Watch's eyes and ears. The Trail Watch members are not enforcement people, but having them present and in uniform makes Blue Hills a better place.

Wompatuck doesn't have these types of problems, but want to be a welcoming place to as many people as possible, and getting people throughout the park can help to achieve this and get information back to Steve and his staff such as downed signs, trees, etc. A training session will take place with Blue Hills Trail Watch volunteers and our people. A small group will be trained and will man the park for a year. If it goes well, the program will be expanded to the general membership. Steve G. said having people on bikes, identified by uniform, will help people feel comfortable talking to a stranger about issues. The uniform will say DCR and Wompatuck Trail Watch. Steve G. said you don't have to be a Trail Watch person to file an incident report. These forms will be made available on the website when the Trail Watch group gets up and running. Sandy suggested putting the emergency number onto the Wompatuck maps but Steve G. said the best number to call is 911.

7) Landmine Classic Discussion

Bill reported that the Landmine Classic has been our yearly money maker. It will have a similar format with a competitive bike event on Sunday, September 7th and a recreational one on Saturday, with the race courses also being used on Saturday. Eric and Kevin will be at the next meeting, and the Landmine Classic will be the primary discussion. Last Friday, he and several others built a connector trail and another one is needed near the

campground so bikers don't have to go into the campground and loop out again. These connectors are just for the event, and will disappear afterwards.

The New England Mountain Bike Patrol will be here both days to bike the course and take care of any injuries that may occur. We do not yet have a firm commitment for food and concession vendors. There will be an extensive concession/display area, and FOW should have a presence there. Jim D. said there's a problem with seeing the map of the course on our website. It seems that the site doesn't exist or the map hasn't been put up yet, but there is information about it on the site.

Alma mentioned that she's a member of the L Street Running Club, one of the largest running clubs in Boston. Thursday was the club's 21st annual 5 mile road race, with 1300 racing bags filled with goodies and race forms given to the runners. She asked Eric to make up Landmine Classic postcards advertising the race, and these were put into the runner's bags as an advertisement for runners in the New England area who ran the race and will be training for biathlons or duathlons.

8) Equestrian Issues

Albert and Wendy discussed having a horse ride at Wompatuck at the end of October. They usually ride on the regularly marked bridle trails. However, last year when they took a group out riding, they had to ride on 2 miles of roads to get to a certain part of the park which was hard on the horses. Thus, they want to use a certain trail to get to that part of the park, but the bridges aren't strong enough for horses. They looked at 2 different sites, with the smaller one being an 8 foot bridge between N30 and N31. The bridge is too narrow for horses and the exits are hazardous. Albert and Wendy want to relocate the bridge at that crossing, which their horse group could fund, but will need some manpower to do this before their October event.

Bill said we could put in the footings on our August 24th trail maintenance date, as it will just go next to the bridge and will not remove the existing bridge which is one of the Landmine Classic race course bridges. The remainder will be completed at our October maintenance day.

Bill asked if there's been any feedback from the equestrian community about the bridle path, but Albert and Wendy haven't heard any information.

9) New Business

- Carl suggested that FOW make their presence known at the Hingham Fourth of July parade. Bill said we could have people with FOW t-shirts, uniformed rangers, bikers and Eagle scouts marching in the parade. This will be discussed between now and early spring, and set as a goal for the group.
- Steve G. introduced Carol Hermon, who has been a volunteer host for years from Sunday to Tuesday at the campground. She stays at the campground in a motor home for these days and picks up litter, and puts out some fires. Bill said we could have some information on the volunteer Host program on our website.

We haven't had a lot of campers come to our meetings, so Bill asked her to let us know of camping "wish lists." Carol plans to give him an alphabetical list. Some suggestions included having some type of store, a weekend welcome wagon with coffee and doughnuts, and an ice cream truck. Steve G. said we used to have these types of vendors, but they don't make enough money from campers. He said that maybe next Spring FOW could ask DCR to open these up to bidding again to see who we can get. Steve C. said Wompatuck is not too big of a draw for families because it doesn't offer swimming or a playground.

Carol wondered if the campground could have a pavilion with a fire pit and electrical outlets. Steve G. said the state puts up pavilions all the time. Carol will come to the next meeting to discuss more of these issues.

10) Old Business

- Steve noted that another Eagle Scout project has been completed. A bridge was completed in the low area of the park near the Burbank Boulder. In addition, the Hingham police have received another grant to be in the park and patrol it on their bicycles.
- Jim D. made a contact for a 10 foot deep container box to be used for tools. We have to put in a foundation, it's lockable, and will be watertight. They will deliver it and put it wherever Steve G. suggests.
- Steve G. mentioned a few meetings ago that the MBTA gave money to DCR to complete the Rail bed. MBTA took it back when DCR didn't do it, and it's nearly completed. The final surface is the last to be completed. There's a bit of erosion control on the sides that needs to be done, but it's looking great and the MBTA part of it looks fine. DCR has still not demolished the buildings in the annex, so the rail bed leads to a chain link fence. It was suggested that we contact a local paper to take a photo of the brand new path that now ends at a chain link fence. Steve G. said it's paved on the MBTA Cohasset side of the 3A path leaving the train station.

Our next meeting is scheduled for August 18th.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Submitted by

Alma Ramos-McDermott
Secretary