

PINEY RUN RECREATION AND CONSERVATION COUNCIL

30 Martz Road
Sykesville MD 21784



Find us on Facebook: Friends of Piney Run Park & Nature Center

MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, May 17, 2023

ATTENDEES

Claude Hoerner	Colleen Winters	Valli Adams	Bev Husman
Linda Coyne	Erin Heinrich	Emily White (C)	Pauline Cottrell
Renee Schoff	Rita Jacobs	Kelly Biggs	John Cottrell
Jeff Schoff	Lynn Graham	Jon Biggs	
Bud Henkel	Bev Husman	Diane Henkel	

(C) - Non-voting County employee

Colleen called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

No changes were offered to the March 15, 2023 meeting minutes. **Bud** motioned for their acceptance, and the minutes were approved by the members as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT (Renee)

The report for the period 3/14/23 through 5/15/23 was provided to all members prior to the meeting, and **Renee** highlighted the following items:

- Thirty-three people attended the Spring Fever Coffee House at the end of March, and we netted \$391.
- One basket weaving class was held in April, and one more is scheduled for this month. It appears the classes will generate more income than expected this year.

- The biggest expense was for the new beaver exhibit. The taxidermy charge was \$800, but half of that amount was donated by Recreation Council member **Harold Jackson**.
- A small amount was spent on Nature Center items: mini-blinds for the meeting room, a new hose, and supplies to repair the outside patio.

PARK OPERATIONS (Emily)

Staffing Changes

- **Patrick Carney**, the new Naturalist, will be starting on May 25. He is a graduate of the university of Delaware and is coming from a nature center in New Jersey.
- **Emily** has been promoted and will be leaving the park for a new position in Westminster with the County. Current park ranger **Dylan** will replace her.
- Park ranger **Mika** has moved from part-time to full-time, and several current park assistants have applied for her vacated part-time position.

Nature Center Wildlife Changes

- The barred owl Lorraine passed away from old age.
- The Nature Center acquired a 14-year old female terrapin from Stevenson University. She previously lived with fish, and a limited number of fish will be slowly introduced into the tank.
- A kestrel will be coming soon. It is currently at Hashawa, recovering from surgery.
- There are two captive-raised mallard ducklings temporarily in the Nature Center. Visitors are enjoying them immensely, but a decision about how long they will stay needs to be made.

Interest in the County's Sasquatch Saturday program to be held in the park on June 24 is running high.

ABC Care donated a gaga pit to the park, which is open to everyone. Visitors can bring their own balls, but they are also available to rent at the gatehouse for \$5. Basketballs, footballs, and pickle ball equipment are also available.

A group of park patrons has put down temporary pickle ball lines on the tennis court and is bringing their own nets to play. The tennis courts will be resurfaced and changed to pickle ball courts in the fall.

The pachysandra planted around the gatehouse late last year has been replaced with a variety of native plants which will be tended by park assistants in the gatehouse. The pachysandra was failing due to sun and soil conditions as well as the use of weed-preventing fabric.

Pavilion 2 will be renovated after labor day and made ADA accessible. In the next year or two, a new pavilion will be constructed next to it to replace Pavilion 3, which will be torn down. The original plan was to renovate Pavilion 3, but it can not be made ADA accessible because of the ground slope at the current location, so it was decided to build a new Pavilion 3 near Pavilion 2.

Fourteen field trips were scheduled for April and May, and the volunteers have been amazingly helpful. Registration for fall field trips begins August 1.

Birthday parties remain very popular, usually with one to two each weekend.

To date, 13 kayak trips are scheduled through October. This number includes a few partnership paddles with the Partnership for a Healthier Carroll County.

The boathouse is very well staffed, so much so that it has been opened weekday afternoons since May 1 and all day on the weekends. Beginning Memorial Day weekend, the boathouse will be open from 7:00 AM until an hour before sunset daily.

Colleen reported that **Jeff Degitz**, the head of Recreation and Parks, will be retiring in July after 44 years of working for the County.

FRIENDS OF CARROLL RECREATION AND PARKS (Colleen)

Nominations are due August 28 to Recreation and Parks for this year's Hall of Fame award and Volunteer of the Year. Hall of Fame candidates must have 20 years of experience. If anyone has any suggested nominees, please let us know.

NATURE CENTER OPERATIONS (Renee)

A volunteer worked with **Renee** to assess the repairs required to the Council's kayaks in the Yak Shack, and determined that 10 of our 13 kayaks require some repair work. None of the repairs are major, totaling around \$900, and the volunteer will do the work without charge, once the parts have been purchased. Sufficient funding is available in the current year's budget.

Park maintenance has been making repairs to the Nature Center's patio. It's replacement is being sought in the County's six-year budget, but because it has deteriorated to an almost unsafe condition, the decision was made for the Council to fund repair work now.

Upcoming Events:

- Perennial Swap – May 23, 1:00 to 3:00 PM – This is an opportunity to drop off or acquire free plantings as well as receive free advice from one of several master gardeners who usually attend.
- Basket Weaving Class – May 24 – Thirteen people are signed up.
- Sasquatch Saturday – June 24 – The council will have a bake table set up.
- Slate Paint Class – September 23 – Thought is being given to making this a “Sip and Paint,” where participants can bring wine, but a final decision has not been made.
- The idea of holding another Coffee House is being discussed by a sub-committee formed to develop new events.

OLD BUSINESS

The Council's two scholarships were awarded to **Allison Leimkuhler** and **Ashlynn Kidwell**, both from Century High School. **Colleen** will present the scholarships at the school's graduation ceremony on June 6, and she thanked **Jeff** and **Erin** for reviewing the applications this year.

Renee said the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) covering the Council revenue the County collects for us, was signed and is effective July 1, 2023. As

discussed at our previous meeting, it impacts the amount of money we will receive in the future. The new FY 2024 Budget notes the change.

Renee said **Gina** reported that one of the participants in the current Master Naturalist class is willing to research what is needed to build an osprey platform in the lake.

NEW BUSINESS

Renee reported that the Council has partnered with a yoga instructor who is holding a weekly class in the yurt on a trial basis. Our only obligation is to advertise the event on our Facebook page, and in return, the instructor will donate \$2 to the council for each student in the class.

Renee provided an overview of the proposed FY 2024 budget which was provided to all members for review prior to the meeting. She highlighted the fact that with the new MOU, we are only reimbursed 80% of the money collected by the County through the RecDesk registration system. Most budget line items are close to the amounts decided on in the current FY 2023 budget. **Jeff** motioned to approve the FY 2024 budget, **Bud** seconded the motion, and the members approved the budget as submitted.

Fall Fest will be held on October 14. The first planning meeting will be on Wednesday, June 21 at 6:30 PM.

Colleen asked the members if we should cancel the July council meeting, which is typically done. There were no objections to doing so, so our next general membership meeting will be held on September 20. Meanwhile, Fall Fest planning meetings will be held as needed.

Colleen adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

The next general membership meeting of the Piney Run Recreation and Conservation Council will be Wednesday, September 20, 2023 at 6:30 PM.