

# Board Meeting — Friends of Pine Grove Furnace State Park

February 12, 2011 at the Iron Master's Mansion

**In attendance:** Mary Caldarelli (Chair), William Breen (Treasurer), Jason Zimmerman (Park Manager), Sue Breen, Debby Burd, Jack Burd, Debra Rosevear, Brett Weiser, Donna Weiser, Andre Weltman.

- Pine Grove Furnace was voted “**Park of the Year**” by our parent organization, the PA Parks and Forests Foundation! The PPF annual awards banquet will be May 3 at the Harrisburg Country Club. It was noted that attendance by Board members would be a positive reflection on the group.

- **National Get Outdoors Day** is June 11.

An “Iron Run” half-marathon (approved at the last Board meeting) starting at 8 AM June 11 was on the agenda, but organizers Mark Colucci and Sheena Perry could not attend today's meeting. Although the race proposal was reviewed and a draft flier was passed around the table, detailed discussion was tabled due to Mark and Sheena's absence. Permits from the Michaux State Forest district require a 60-day lead time, and we also need to obtain \$300,000 worth of liability insurance. Debby Burd said that half-marathons are specialty events and may or may not draw a large crowd; perhaps a shorter race could also be incorporated into the event. Brett noted that the American Diabetes Association's annual “Tour de Cure” biking event is June 11-12, and perhaps our Get Outdoors Day foot race will be synergistic with the Tour de Cure.

Various activities can be held at the Park on June 11 in the afternoon, including food vendors (but not necessarily overlapping the food usually sold by the Park concessionaires); bird box building for children; and family-oriented hiking or guided tours, perhaps including Camp Michaux which of course is outside the Park. David Smith often gives Camp Michaux tours for the county Historical Society and could be asked to assist.

Brett Weiser and Bill Breen will investigate sources and costs for liability insurance for running event and forward information to the Board. Brett Weiser will contact Tim Roden, coordinator of the Tour de Cure, about possible publicity for the Iron Run and putting word out to Tour de Cure participants about the run and camping at the park. Mark Colucci needs to send information for FaceBook and Website posting.

- **Earth Day** is April 23. As was done last year, the public will be asked to volunteer to assist with various support and maintenance activities at the Park to get ready for the summer season. One activity that was briefly discussed is building a bridge along the Koppenhaver Trail.

- **Recycling container:** Based on a previous email poll, Friends group money was used to purchase one commercial-grade recycling container which will be placed at the entrance to Fuller Lake. A sign will be added to note the support of the Friends group.

- **South Mountain Partnership mini-grant:** Mary asked if she should move forward to write and submit a “mini-grant” application to the South Mountain Partnership. The minimum request is \$2,500, but can be up to \$40,000. The deadline for the next application cycle is July 30 [see <http://southmountaingrant.blogspot.com>]. A matching amount must be found by the submitter — however, this can be from multiple sources and can include the dollar equivalent of volunteer labor and donated supplies. Board members discussed a few groups that might offer support, and the substantial equivalent value of donated labor. A sample successful application is available in the form of David Smith's effort for Camp Michaux, which was approved during the last grant cycle.

Mary proposed three specific ideas for a grant application from the Friends group:

(1) Development of a **historical trail** and markers within the Park, continuing along Old Shippensburg Road up to Camp Michaux. This would replace an outdated self-guided tour brochure created by the Park many years ago, and perhaps extend a fledgling effort several years ago by Andre and other local residents/township Supervisors that resulted in the photo installation (in a vandalism-resistant case) outside the Paymaster Cabin across from the camp store;

(2) Educational activities relating to **watershed preservation**, including sponsoring local school group visits. Jason noted that he himself is certified as a watershed trainer;

(3) **Invasive plant species** control and native plant landscaping. This might include educational efforts with local school groups, bringing in a professional to assist with planning, and volunteer work to remove invasive plants. Jason noted that some work has already been done by the Park/DCNR to identify plant types of concern and specific areas most in need of control/elimination efforts, for example along the AT corridor through the Park.

The Board discussed these options for a mini-grant application and agreed that while all are worthy, option (3) relating to invasive species was a reasonable first choice. The other options might be submitted for mini-grants in future years.

Brett will attempt to find a reasonable monetary equivalent for volunteer hours and send it to the group.

- Our **website** is now available at <http://www.pinegrovefriends.org>.

- Our **Facebook** page is active and being maintained by Deb Rosevear. Adding linked Facebook “friends” such as the AT Museum were discussed. Many people have submitted photos to the Facebook page.

- **Additional comments from Mary:**

During Labor Day weekend, various area organizations will be coordinating with the annual “South Mountain Festival.” Plans for 2011 are still very preliminary. Participants are expected to include other area State Parks and Strawberry Hill Nature Preserve in Adams County. We should consider whether Pine Grove Furnace might participate in some way in this regional event when more details are available.

- **Additional comments from Jason:**

**Gavin Smith**, Park Naturalist, has left Pine Grove Furnace to be a Park Manager in his own right elsewhere. Two other staff members at the Park have moved on to other employment in the State Park system. Replacements are pending due to budgetary issues. It is unclear how many replacement personnel, if any, will be made available.

The **Iron Master’s Mansion**, now run by the Central Pennsylvania Conservancy, is expected to provide multiple uses to the area beyond serving as a hiker hostel. When not in use for educational activities, rented for weddings, etc., meeting space for the Friends group will be available. The formal grand opening of the renovated building is expected to be in May.

The **AT Museum** is planning a “Hall of Fame” to honor hikers, to be unveiled at their “Trail Festival” June 17-19.

The annual **Iron Cross bicycle race**, October 8-9, is moving from Camp Thompson to the park.

The **Fall Furnace Fest** is scheduled for October 14-16. Jason has already received one request for a vendor table for 2011! Mary Calderelli proposed different method of soliciting vendors this year, starting with a simpler “Query” flyer in March to possible vendors. Interested vendors would then receive the full

information packet when they request it. This approach was approved the Board. The Board briefly discussed the vendor fee, which was \$50 for the full weekend at last year's Fest. A few vendors were allowed at the last minute to pay only \$25 for one day in 2010, but it was observed that this adds complexity and probably should not be allowed at the 2011 event. Vendor feedback from last year was positive overall.

**Other fundraising ideas:**

We need to encourage Friends memberships -- including Board members who have not yet paid dues. Only 17 people in total have sent in membership dues so far. It will be necessary to keep track of who is a paying member for purposes of email group lists, versus those people who have expressed interest in the Friends group but are not dues-paying members. Secretary Diane Velozo (not in attendance today) should maintain the paid membership list. Mary will send out a membership reminder email to the Friends group email list.

**Firewood sales to campers:** there is a considerable amount of split wood left over from the preparation for the 2010 Fall Furnace Fest. Jason suggested a work day to bundle it together for later sales by the campground host, only during times when the Park store is not open and selling wood -- we do not want to be in direct competition. There was brief discussion of the amount of wood per bundle *versus* a reasonable purchase price; no specific decision was reached. A work day will be scheduled and distributed by email. [UPDATE: in emails after the meeting, Jason proposed March 12: "I'm looking for 4 or 5 volunteers to help bundle and stack firewood...weather permitting, we'd like to do in on Saturday, March 12 at 9 a.m. and it should only take a few hours. Interested volunteers should contact me directly."]

At present, money from **merchandise sales** (such as fleece sweatshirts and T-shirts) at the Park office goes into the DCNR general fund rather than staying at the Park. Although a new clothing order for the Park was recently placed, Jason expects to scale down sales in the future. Alternatively, this is an activity that could be fronted by the Friends group in terms of the initial investment to obtain merchandise, which would continue to be ordered and sold by Park staff. In this way, money from future sales would be available through the Friends group for use at the Park itself. The Board discussed doing this in the future depending on available funds. According to Jason, the next merchandise order will not occur until this fall, allowing time to determine available funds to take over purchasing of merchandise for 2012.

**• Comments from Board members:**

Mary Calderelli said she will send out a general update to the group email list.

Bill Breen stated that he intends to apply for a debit card for the Friends bank account.

Andre Weltman described a meeting held in January at the old stone barn wall at Camp Michaux by the Michaux District Forester and his staff and the PA Historical and Museum Commission. DCNR will install a split rail fence and warning signs around the crumbling stone wall this spring as a safety barrier. It remains unclear whether it is possible to save or restore the wall.

The **next Board meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 pm.** Location will be weather dependent — either at the Mansion or an outside park pavilion.

A public meeting for all Friends members will be scheduled for early Summer, date to be determined.

**Correction/Update from Mary concerning member meeting:**

There will be less formal general membership meeting held at 3:00 on April 23<sup>rd</sup> after the Earth Day activities have ended.

“The members meeting scheduled for after Earth Day that a (sic) mentioned in my email will be informal and primarily for signing up volunteers for Get Outdoors Day and the Iron Run. I don't see a need for all of the board to attend so if you have prior commitments - no worries. When we have our April board meeting we can figure out a date for a more formal meeting this summer, possibly a picnic/potluck event if someone is willing to organize the event.”

The meeting ran from 1:00 to 2:35 PM.

After the meeting adjourned, various attendees joined Jason in an informal tour of the Mansion including a planned upstairs meeting room, and the old attic.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andre Weltman with assistance from Brett Weiser