**FRIENDS OF MORROW MOUNTAIN STATE PARK**

**MINUTES**

**Sunday, February 22, 2015 2:15 p.m.**

**Morrow Mountain State Park Lodge**

Following coffee and dessert, the board meeting of the Friends of Morrow Mountain State Park was called to order by Chair Mullinix at 2:15 p.m. on Sunday, February 22, 2015. Present at the meeting were: Vanessa Mullinix, Tevis Smith, Ron Anundson, Greg Schneider, Janet Davis, Derrick Davis, Laura Krug, Robert Flake, Ken Knight, and Tanya Davis.

The agenda and previous minutes were distributed to members. Tevis Smith made a motion to accept November 16, 2014 minutes as read, and a second motion to accept as read was made by Chair Mullinix.

Tevis Smith, Treasurer, presented the financial report. At the end of January, 2015, the local account held a balance of $3,588.85. With a few contributions coming in during the month of February, to date, the local account balance is **$3761.85.**

The state account held a balance of $4641.00 before contributions were added from the recent Run the Trails event. Following a deposit of funds from the run, the state account to date has a balance of **$5541.12.** Tevis mentioned a $10 discrepancy between his records and the state records, and has spoken with Jim Richardson to identify the discrepancy.

The purchase of the computer for MMSP was discussed. The purchase of computer and software for the park has been on the table for some time now, and Ron Anundson and John Young are about ready to make the purchase for digitally archiving historic documents and photos for the park. ALCOA Foundation contributed $1,000 toward the purchase of the computer, and the FMMSP board formerly approved an additional $1,000 toward the purchase. A $500 donation was received by an individual with a request to earmark the contribution for historical documentation purposes. The $500 contribution will be used in the purchase of the new computer and software. Following some discussion, Ron Anundson estimated the entire purchase for hardware, and software (Past Perfect and Mapping) to be around $3.000 total. A motion by the board to add an additional $500 for the purchase was approved by Tanya Davis requesting a motion to approve, followed by Janet Davis seconding the motion.

Recordkeeping for rolling memberships was discussed by Tevis Smith as well. Tevis Smith and Phil Lowder are currently utilizing Microsoft Access to create a database which would allow for monthly notifications to members as their annual membership fees are due. Phil Lowder suggested a PayPal account be established for FMMSP to allow for online membership renewals. All members present felt this would be advantageous for PayPal to be available on the website. Tevis Smith and Phil Lowder will continue to work on the MS Access Database and the establishment of the PayPal account. Ron Anundson noted that the creation of a lifetime membership for FMMSP may be a good idea. This is noted for further discussion to develop guidelines for lifetime membership.

Committee Reports were next on the agenda. Chair Mullinix discussed an article distributed to members from John Young regarding the work that had taken place at MMSP in the mid 1930’s by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC’s.) There was brief discussion about placing this article on the FMMSP website, but permissions and copyright clearance may need to be established prior to posting the article.

Ken Knight, who chairs the Hiking and Trails Committee, spoke about the success of the Geology Hike led by Professor Steve Teeter. Approximately 25 individuals turned out for that hike. Ken also led a group of approximately 60 individuals on a First Day Trail Hike. Ken noted he has been working with Uwharrie Hikers and other organizations to promote all hikes in the region. The First Day Hikes also receive promotion from the Friends of State Parks, so the publicity brought participants from surrounding cities such as Charlotte, Lexington, Concord, and Asheboro. Ron Anundson would like to offer a couple hikes in the park specifically geared to family participation and Ken agreed this would be good to get entire families involved in hiking the park. A Lilly home site tour was conducted for a group of 10 individuals, but was intentionally kept small because of logistics of getting the group to the site. Ken would like to add to his email list the names of individuals who would be interested in receiving notifications for hiking schedules and updates.

Janet Davis spoke about the recent Run the Trails event and how well attended (even with poor weather conditions) and well organized the event had been. This was a positive event as a fundraiser for FMMSP, and also served as a good promotion for our group. Chair Mullinix thanked Janet for her hard work and efforts to obtain volunteers and make the project a success.

Chair Mullinix discussed items from the Marketing and Promotions Committee. Fundraising is needed to complete renovation on the second entrance wall. Noting that the wall is longer than the one previously restored, the cost is anticipated to increase with this project. She would like to create a PowerPoint presentation on behalf of FMMSP to “take on the road” to educate citizens about various projects and the economic impact of MMSP on Stanly County. This PowerPoint presentation would also include information on the proposed 1085 acre tract of land scheduled be gifted to MMSP, and the positive impact of receiving this acreage for future generations. Superintendent Schneider suggested including information in the PowerPoint presentation from the Economic Impact Study that was completed for MMSP. A sub-committee was formed to work on the PowerPoint presentation and included the following: Vanessa Mullinix, Robert Flake, Tanya Davis, and Laura Krug. They have their first meeting planned for Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 11:30 a.m. at the Treehouse Restaurant in Badin, NC. The anticipated completion date for the presentation is March 22, 2015.

This committee also should consider developing a folder of information to present to potential donors and local industry personnel. The response to requests for donations for completion of the first wall restoration project was very positive, so the group is hoping that the same support will follow for the second entrance wall restoration project.

Vice Chair Robert Flake presented a report on the proposed CCC Barrack Restoration project. Officials at Altria (former Philip Morris USA) have been contacted by Vice Chair Flake to solicit funding in amount of $50,000 for restoring the barracks at MMSP. These barracks, once used by college professors and students studying ecology, geology, and other valuable and unique features of the park, have been unusable and in dire need of repair for some time now. The restoration of the barracks would also allow park officials to house and utilize volunteer labor to assist in the park. Vice Chair Flake said he felt very positive about the funding request, and had received email notification that his contact plans to meet with the company’s Community Affairs Division and will be back in touch as soon as possible.

Chair Mullinix recently attended the Friends of State Parks Conference and was excited that land acquisition is a focus for the state group as the Centennial for state and national parks will include a year-long celebration in 2016. Attendance in North Carolina’s state parks has increased substantially in recent years. In 1987, approximately 7.6 million people visited NC State Parks. This year, nearly 14.2 million people visited NC State Parks. As future generations are increasingly focused on affordable outdoor activities, an anticipated 87% increase in state park attendance is anticipated from what is was 25 years ago. Park officials noted that a substantial increase in MMSP attendance was evident as well. Ron Anundson remarked that 6-7 years ago, the park was seldom filled, but the mountaintop and the lake areas are often to full capacity now. Many visitors to MMSP are from surrounding counties, again, creating a positive economic impact on the dollars they bring to this area.

A current topographical map of MMSP was viewed by the members, and the proposed 1085 acre tract of land to be gifted by ALCOA was included on the map as well. Chair Mullinix suggested that perhaps a letter created on behalf of FMMSP, in conjunction with North Carolina Friends of State Parks, be drafted to state lawmakers to demonstrate support and advocate that the pending lawsuit between ALCOA and the State of North Carolina be resolved in favor of MMSP receiving the gifted property. Superintendent Greg Schneider remarked that the 1085 acre gift would be extremely positive for MMSP, but that other planning and funding would need to take place as well for increased staffing and park personnel needs.

In addition to the proposed 1085 acre gift pending from ALCOA, Vice Chair Flake and Superintendent Schneider discussed the February 10, 2015 meeting with several entities including North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation Land Protection Specialists, The Land Trust for Central North Carolina, and the FMMSP Executive Committee. The goal of the meeting was to review the land acquisition/protection plan for MMSP. In reviewing the topographical map, Vice Chair Flake pointed out tracts of available property surrounding the southern boundary of the park that could be critical in the protection of the original resource. Individuals from the entities responded positively and noted that the tracts could be considered in planning for future land acquisitions. The next quarterly meeting for the NC Conservation Trust is to take place mid-March, so Vice Chair Flake plans to be in contact with representatives from the entities prior to their meeting.

As the meeting was coming to a close, Chair Mullinix asked for additional remarks or suggestions. Ken Knight discussed that he would like to implement the Adopt a Highway program for FMMSP. With many of the organization’s members living along Valley Drive, Ken felt this would generate good participation with the membership, and would allow additional recognition of the group with signage. DOT provides bags, gloves, and vests for those wishing to participate in the program. Ken plans to follow-up with DOT to get this established.

A report on the deer transport from MMSP to the Qualla Boundary Reservation of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians was discussed by Ken Knight and Superintendent Schneider. Multi-agencies were included in this transport to ensure that the animals were well cared for and adequately transitioned during and after the transport. All agreed this was a huge success.

As activities for the coming year were discussed, Chair Mullinix suggested we consider a canoe race for the coming year. Ron Anundson noted that a special presentation on Native American Culture is currently being planned for May 9, 2015. Ron would also like for everyone to be thinking about new activities for Old Fashioned Day scheduled for Sunday, November 8, 2015. He feels that over time, the event has included much of the same. This year he would like to make the event more kid-friendly by including various activities for them. In doing so, he noted that volunteers would be needed to help with the activities. As planning occurs, Ron will let the FMMSP members know what is needed in terms of volunteers, etc. for that event. While details are still underway, the annual Halloween event will also take place at MMSP this October.

With no further business or discussion, Chair Mullinix adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Davis, Secretary

Friends of Morrow Mountain State Park