

March 25, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes

7:00pm – Montour Preserve Environmental Education Center, 374 Preserve Rd, Danville, PA 17821

MEETING ATTENDEES

MARC BOARD MEMBERS

Dr. Kendra Boell, Dr. John Bulger, Frank Dombroski, Tyler Dombroski, Kevin Herritt, Commissioner Dan Hartman, Mike Mills, Kyle Postupack and Dr. Dan Rogers (by phone)

MARC STAFF

Bob Stoudt

PUBLIC

Dave Decoteau, Grace Fitzgerald, Matt Gelbaugh, Connie Scheunemann and Keith Spencer

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm by Chairman Mills.

OFFICER REPORTS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Mills welcomed new Board members Kyle Postupack and Dr. John Bulger.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Tyler Dombroski provided a brief review of the restated 2018 year-end report, noting that the report was being restated because of new information received from the Central Susquehanna Community Foundation regarding the account balances in MARC's pass-through fund and Montour Preserve pass-through fund.

Motion to approve the restated 2018 Statement of Financial Position: Frank Dombroski

Second: Dr. Kendra Boell

Motion passed unanimously

Treasurer Dombroski provided a brief review of the January 31, 2019 Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Activities reports. Treasurer Dombroski noted that the line item for DCNR Montour Preserve under Ordinary Income/Expenses was incorrect by \$12.93. The value should be \$7,547.56 instead of \$7,560.49. The error has been brought to the attention of Susan Shultz Accounting for correction.

Motion to approve the January 31, 2019 Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Activities reports with the correction as noted: Kevin Herritt

Second: Commissioner Dan Hartman

Motion passed unanimously

Treasurer Dombroski provided a brief review of the February 28, 2019 Statement of Financial Position and Statement of Financial Activities reports. Treasurer Dombroski noted that he and Stoudt had noted several questions or possible errors in the reports and recommended no action on the reports until questions had been resolved. The report was tabled for reconsideration after possible edits at MARC's next meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

In the absence of Secretary Johns, Chairman Mills noted the minutes of MARC's January 28, 2019 meeting as distributed to Board members. No concerns or edits were noted.

Motion to approve the January 28, 2019 meeting minutes as presented: Dr. Kendra Boell

Second: Frank Dombroski

Motion passed unanimously

PARTNER REPORTS

WASHINGTONVILLE BOROUGH

Mayor Tyler Dombroski reported on the recent activities of the Washingtonville Community Beautification Committee. Mayor Dombroski reported that a Kindness Rock Garden and other new features will be added to the Borough's DeLong Park on Saturday, April 27, from 1pm – 3pm. Food and other special activities are planned. Those interested in learning more are encouraged to visit the Borough of Washingtonville's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/washingtonvillepa/>.

DANVILLE BOROUGH

Councilman Kevin Herritt noted that the Land/Facility Use Memorandum of Understanding between MARC and the Borough of Danville regarding the Borough Farm is expired and in need of renewal. This item will be discussed under the Director's report.

RIVERSIDE BOROUGH

Kyle Postupack had no new updates to report.

MONTOUR COUNTY

Commissioner Dan Hartman had no new updates to report.

DANVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

No representatives present – no report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Connie Scheunemann addressed the Board regarding the proposed 2019 'Girls' ROC Mountain Bike Camp', for girls in grades 5 – 8, to be held at the Hess Recreation Area and Hopewell Park in June. The camp had been supported by the Central Susquehanna Hammers Interscholastic Mountain Bike Team in 2018, but scheduling challenges prevent that from happening this year. Ms. Scheunemann requested the support of MARC to enable the event in 2019 with the understanding that it will be done at no cost to MARC and with the use of liability waivers to be provided by MARC. Stoudt reported that he had discussed the proposal with Ms. Scheunemann and believed it to be in MARC's best interests to support the event as presented.

More information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/girlsrocmtb/>

Motion to approve the 2019 'Girls' ROC Mountain Bike Camp', at no cost to MARC and with the use of liability waivers to be provided by MARC: Tyler Dombroski

Second: Kevin Herritt

Motion passed unanimously

Dave Decoteau reported that an organizational meeting of the Central Susquehanna Hammers Interscholastic Mountain Bike Team is scheduled for April 2 at 6:30pm in the Danville Area High School. More information is available at <https://www.hammersmtb.com/>

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Report provided in meeting agenda packet. Stoudt reported that the Montour Preserve pancake breakfast fundraiser held on March 9 had been extremely well-attended and would likely result in a donation to MARC of at least \$2,500, significantly exceeding the results of the previous year's event. Stoudt thanked Beam and the PA Master Naturalist program volunteers and staff for their significant support.

MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN'S REPORT

Report provided in meeting agenda packet. Stoudt reported that Piatt continues to do his best to keep the Bobcat utility vehicle in operation until a replacement can be secured.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Stoudt noted several highlights of the Director's report as provided in the meeting agenda packet, including:

- MARC anticipates receipt of \$100,000 in DCED grant funding for the Montour Preserve in coming weeks, likely before April 15.
- MARC has received \$5,000 in Act 13 (Marcellus Legacy Fund) grant funding from Montour County. Stoudt thanked Montour County for its continued support.
- Danville Borough Street Department crew members have repaired the potholes and cleared several culverts along the Hess Recreation Area access road. Stoudt thanked them for their significant support.
- No new subsidence has been observed along the Robbins Trail at the Hess Recreation Area. Stoudt continues to monitor the site.

MONTOUR COUNTY AUDITORS' REPORT

Stoudt reported that the Montour County Auditors had completed their audit of MARC's 2018 books and found no issues. A copy of the auditors' report is provided in the meeting agenda packet.

HUMDINGER TRAIL RACES UPDATE / DANVILLE BOROUGH FARM LAND/FACILITY USE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Stoudt reported on the results of the 2018 Humdinger Trail Races, reporting a net loss to MARC of approximately \$400 to \$500. The race was less profitable than hoped for several reasons, including low attendance and high costs to repair pig barn damages after recent break-ins and thefts. Stoudt noted that the Land/Facility Use Memorandum of Understanding between MARC and the Borough of Danville regarding the Borough Farm and pig barn is expired and in need of renewal. If MARC wishes to use the pig barn and Borough Farm again for the race in 2020, it will need to work with the Borough of Danville to update the agreement.

Board members discussed the viability of the 2020 Humdinger Trail Races and the merits of continuing to use the pig barn facility. Dr. Kendra Boell recommended MARC consider adding a ‘virtual race’ option to the event. Concerns were raised regarding the profitability of the race, liability concerns at the pig barn and possible conflicting uses of the Borough Farm lands, but most agreed that MARC should try at least one more time to make the Humdinger Trail Races profitable and work with the Borough of Danville to update the agreement.

*Motion to conduct the Humdinger Trail Races in 2020, with changes as might be deemed appropriate to make the event profitable; Stoudt to contact Danville Borough staff to update the Danville Borough Farm Land/Facility Use Memorandum of Understanding for approval at an upcoming meeting: Tyler Dombroski
Second: Frank Dombroski
Motion approved unanimously*

COSTARS MEMBERSHIP

Stoudt reported that MARC had been approved for admission to the PA Dept. of General Services’ COSTARS program for purchases through the Commonwealth’s pre-bid program. The program will allow MARC to make certain purchases without the necessity of a formal bidding process (since the items in the program have already been bid for the Commonwealth contract), but MARC may choose to still bid purchases as it deems prudent.

DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE / DCED MONTOUR PRESERVE GRANT / 2019 MARC BUDGET UPDATE

Stoudt reported upon the guidance provided by MARC’s Development Advisory Committee as presented in the meeting agenda packet. Stoudt noted that the Committee’s recommendations had implications for the DCED Montour Preserve grant and MARC’s 2019 budget update.

Stoudt called attention to the minutes of the committee’s March 19, 2019 meeting as presented in the meeting agenda packet. Stoudt read the following from the document:

Meeting attendees expressed concerns regarding the \$100,000 in DCED grant funding that MARC has secured for the purchase of a utility tractor, HVAC system replacement and Montour Preserve visitors’ center roof repair. If MARC may be unable to continue the operation of the Montour Preserve beyond 2020, it is likely inappropriate for MARC to spend these grant funds. Meeting attendees suggested that MARC delay the expenditure of these funds until it is reasonably certain that it will continue to operate the Montour Preserve beyond 2020 or has a plan in place to generate the funds required for such operations.

After much discussion, most attendees recommended Stoudt pursue a three-fold funding strategy to secure \$200,000 in annual funding for the long-term success of MARC and the Montour Preserve (for however long Talen Energy or its successors might be willing to continue the lease of the site). The three funding sources to be developed would be:

- 1. An endowed fund with an initial balance of not less than \$1.5 million. This would generate approximately \$60,000 in annual funding to MARC and would eventually increase as the fund’s balance continued to grow.*
- 2. New funding from MARC’s member entities in an amount of not less than \$65,000. This would demonstrate to other potential funding partners that MARC’s member entities are committed to the long-term success of the organization. It is likely that such funding would need to come mostly from Montour County, but it is encouraged that all MARC member entities make some contribution to demonstrate their support.*

3. Donations from regional health care organizations, businesses and individuals in an amount of at least \$65,000. This would likely include contributions from supporting organizations such as the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist program (likely through fundraisers such as the pancake breakfast) and perhaps through the creation of a 'Friends of MARC' organization.

Stoudt reported that he and Piatt have investigated several models of tractors and are ready to recommend the purchase of a utility tractor through the COSTARS program. Stoudt further reported that MARC's staff and Chairman Mills have compiled the information necessary to prepare bid documents for the Montour Preserve HVAC system replacement and will have the bid packet ready for MARC's April meeting. Finally, Stoudt reported that he, Piatt and Chairman Mills had further investigated the repairs necessary for the Montour Preserve roof and will contact several regional contractors to investigate possible costs to determine whether the project will need to be put out to bid.

Stoudt provided an update on MARC's budget, calling attention to Montour Preserve income, Humdinger Trail Races accounting and options to prorate certain expenses in the Admin/Insurance category and concluded that MARC currently faces a deficit of \$27,751.54 that will have to be made up before year's end. Stoudt provided a detailed accounting of MARC's insurance costs since 2010 and discussed the budget implications. Stoudt will investigate cost savings that might be realized by prorating portions of the Admin/Insurance costs to the Montour Preserve and will have recommendation for MARC's mid-year budget review, probably at the June meeting.

Having updated attendees on the findings of the Development Advisory Committee, the status of the DCED grant and MARC's 2019 year-to-date budget, Stoudt asked Board members for guidance in moving forward with DCED grant purchases and fundraising for MARC's general operations and the Montour Preserve.

Board members had a lengthy discussion of the Development Advisory Committee's recommendations and related topics. Most Board members shared the concerns expressed in the Development Advisory Committee's meeting minutes, particularly regarding the difficulties presented by the Montour Preserve lease agreements and the subsequent fundraising challenges. Board members were of differing opinions regarding MARC's ability to implement the three-fold fundraising strategy as proposed. Most acknowledged that each part of the strategy will be extremely difficult to accomplish, but none could recommend a more viable strategy. Some felt that MARC's past performance and limited fundraising success to date suggest the likely failure of any new fundraising strategy. Others were more cautiously optimistic, but none felt that success was guaranteed. Several felt strongly that a demonstration of financial support by MARC's member entities would be essential to enabling MARC to generate the endowed funding and other support being considered. Dave Decoteau (former MARC Director) reminded the group that the problems under discussion are not new and have troubled the organization since its founding in 2005.

After lengthy continued discussion, the Development Advisory Committee's recommendations and DCED grant purchases were tabled for future discussion. Stoudt will reconvene the Development Advisory Committee for another meeting before MARC's regularly scheduled April meeting and will have the tractor purchase, HVAC system replacement bid documents and visitors' center roof repair information ready for possible action at the April meeting if so desired by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business to conduct.

NEW BUSINESS

2020 HUMDINGER TRAIL RACES

Discussed and acted upon during Director's report.

2019 MONTOUR PRESERVE USDA WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Stoudt presented the proposed 2019 agreement as provided in the meeting agenda packet. Stoudt noted that the total cost of \$4,062.99 as noted in the agreement was a 'not to exceed' cost. MARC's actual cost will likely be less, but it cannot be known at this time. For reference, MARC's 2018 contract agreement 'not to exceed' cost was \$4,060.13, but MARC's actual cost was \$2,077.96. Stoudt recommended the approval of the agreement to allow for the control of Canada Goose populations so that they do not become a health and visitor safety concern, particularly in the Heron Cove Picnic Area.

Motion to approve the 2019 Montour Preserve USDA Wildlife Management Agreement as presented in the meeting agenda packet: Dr. Kendra Boell

Second: Kevin Herritt

Motion passed unanimously

GIRLS' MOUNTAIN BIKE CAMP

Discussed and acted upon during public comment.

OTHER ITEMS

No other items for discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm by Chairman Mills.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Stoudt
MARC Director, Acting Secretary

MARC's next meeting is scheduled for April 29, 2019.