

**MEETING MINUTES OF
PRAIRIE TRAILS CLUB INC.**

**North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library
208 Keller Avenue
North Judson, Indiana**

September 27, 2017

MEMBERS

Peggy Bohak
Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Bruce Fingerhut
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Donna Osborne
Sharon Smead
Peggy Stalbrink
Richard Stalbrink
Rick Vlaming

Call to Order

Bruce Fingerhut, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club (“PTC”) at 6:00 p.m., CDT (7:00 p.m., EDT) on September 27, 2017 in the North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library, North Judson, Indiana.

Approval of August 22 Minutes

Steve Lucas noted technical modifications were made to the first paragraph addressing the July 15 bicycle ride with the Bass Lake Property Owners Association, most notably to the effect that Bass Station is “east” rather than “west” of the intersection of the Erie Trail and CR 800 South. Kathy Lucas moved to approve minutes of the meeting held on August 22, 2017 with these technical modifications. Peggy Bohac seconded the motion. On a voice vote the motion carried.

Moving Starke County Forward

The Prairie Trails League, a coalition of PTC members and supporters developed by Donna Osborne, participated in the summer’s health-based run-walk-bike competition by Moving Starke County Forward. The Prairie Trails League placed first in the competition with 17,643 miles. Donna placed first in the individual category after riding an amazing 2,060

miles on her bicycle. Kathy brought a cake and sign to congratulate Donna and the Prairie Trails League for their awards.

Donna thanked Kathy and added that Nancy Dembowski, Moving Starke County Forward President, issued five \$50 gift certificates from the Wellness Center. Donna suggested one \$50 certificate be distributed to five worthy individual participants among the Prairie Trails League. The PTC membership agreed.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy circulated a written copy of the Treasurer's Report. She said the donation from Gurrado/Winters was made following use of the Lucas's cottage at Bass Lake. The report follows with technical adjustments based on updates subsequent to preparation, including the Stalbrinks' memberships and donations:

1. The First National Bank of Monterey

Beginning balance 8/31/2017	\$ 5,142.58
Deposit 9/11/2017 (Membership: A. Nolan)	25.00
(Bench: S. Bortell)	250.00
(Gift: Gurrado/Winters)	400.00
Disbursements	
Green Tree Recycling (for benches)	(310.00)
D. Osborne (for gift to arborists)	<u>(100.00)</u>
Ending balance 9/30/2017	\$ 5,407.58

2. PayPal

Beginning balance 8/22/2017	\$ 103.34
(Membership & Gift: R.&P. Stalbrink)	<u>125.00</u>
Ending balance 9/27/2017	\$ 228.34

3. Northern Indiana Community Foundation

PTC Total: \$ 10,992.57

PTC Membership List Distribution

Kathy distributed a PTC membership list as anticipated in the August meeting minutes. The list included names of current members without personal information. A member may elect to have his or her name excluded from the list upon written request to the PTC. This list and later membership lists may be used for recruitment and renewals but cannot be sold.

Update on Lids-to-Benches Project

Kathy reported that the exchange of lids for two trail benches, through the "ABC Promise Program" of Green Tree Plastics, took place as scheduled in Evansville on September 12. She again thanked Carolla Heilstedt for the invaluable use of her Chevrolet Silverado to deliver the lids and bring back the benches. The lids filled the truck, and a smaller vehi-

cle could not have carried both benches. “Our belief was that a little more than 400 pounds of lids had been collected through the PTC members and partners, and the excess could then be ‘banked’ toward a future bench.” Green Tree Plastics determined the lids weighed only 395 pounds, although there was no penalty for the small shortage.

The BIC Committee inspected the benches during its September 19 meeting. Members said the benches are hefty but not theft proof. During the committee meeting, Bruce outlined possible approaches to affix the benches and reduce the likelihood of theft or vandalism.

The BIC Committee reviewed donations for and locations of the two benches. Scott Bortell donated \$250 for placement of one bench near his home at the intersection of the Erie Trail and CR 400 East. In addition to the bench, he seeks a plaque that references the donation and modest landscaping similar to what was provided for the bench donated by Susan DeSantis at Aldine. The CR 400E site would also be evaluated for a wayfinding sign. Kathy said Scott would be invited to join us for an onsite discussion of placement specifics.

The second bench was slated for placement at Lena Park near Steve and Kathy’s trailside home. Comparable or greater funding than at CR 400E would be provided for the Lena Park location from sources outside PTC assets. Landscaping similar to that at the CR 400E site would be provided, along with wayfinding signage. Signage to interpret Lena Park history was also being developed for the vicinity of the second bench.

Kathy said the PTC has received a few lids since completing the September 12 exchange. She asked whether there was interest in continuing the collection process to seek a third bench.

Donna said Scott Kubush of the Peaceable Primate Sanctuary has expressed interest in contributing in purchasing a bench. Steve responded this could also be accomplished through the ABC Promise Program. A quicker alternative would be to purchase the bench from Green Tree Plastics without participating in the program. The PTC then would lose the cost savings and opportunity to communicate with a local youth group about benefits of recycling.

Report of September BIC Committee Meeting and Luminous Fund Grant Application

Steve reminded members that minutes of the September 19 BIC Committee meeting were distributed to them by email. In addition to the discussion of the Lids-to-Benches Project outlined in the previous topic, the committee evaluated signage needs with an emphasis on the S13 Connector.

During the committee meeting, Kathy recommended seeking a grant from the Luminous Fund to help implement a pilot signage project along the S13 Connector from the Erie Trail to the south side of Bass Lake. The grant request would include signage at CR 210, along S13 (CR 450 East), and at the connection with the Erie Trail which also involves a short segment of CR 800 South. Kathy said September 30 was the deadline for the grant application, so the PTC needed to move quickly.

During the PTC meeting, Kathy said she was not trained for or experienced with making grant applications and would gladly pass along application responsibility to another willing member. No one else volunteered during the meeting to prepare the application.

During the BIC Committee meeting, Russ Blais underlined the merit of improvements at the triangle formed by S13 and CR 210, particularly in light of road construction on CR 210 northwest of the intersection. He noted the presence of a billboard at the triangle, which receives minimal use, and wondered whether it could support trail needs. Russ volunteered to contact the billboard company to see what arrangements might be made. Members agreed that in addition to wayfinding signage, there should be a serious effort to develop interpretative signage of Bass Lake history and a good trailhead. Russ said he was a member of the Starke County Historical Society Board of Directors and would research what imagery might be available for inclusion in interpretative signage.

Bruce said he has had early discussions about replacement signs with the gold-and-black feathered logo used historically by the Erie Lackawanna Railway. The discussions suggest metal signs would be less expensive than previously expected. The signs would be used mostly along the Erie Trail, but there would probably also be a need to guide users to the Erie Trail from connectors. A version of the Pulaski County green-and-white share-the-road signs would be used for S13 and other connectors.

Report of Maintenance Committee and Aldine Cottonwood Removal

Paul and Linda Byer reported they have completed mowing on the Erie Trail to west of the intersection with Range Road. Steve had mowed and weeded west to CR 100W. Bruce and Warren Burke have mowed to the SR 10 rest park.

Paul said he and Linda have also had good success using a tractor to pull honeysuckle up from the roots and then to apply treatment. Honeysuckle grows quickly but has shallow roots.

Linda said the joint work day between the Marshall County Horse Association and the PTC held this year on May 6, which focused on honeysuckle removal on the south side of the Erie Trail just west of CR 300 East, has shown good results. Sharon Smead said she would try to repeat a similar workday next May.

Donna described removal on August 31 of the cottonwood that buckled asphalt at Aldine. Work was performed without fee by Greg and Garrett Trusty of Stormy's Tree Service, LLC. As reflected previously in the Treasurer's Report, they were given gift certificates to express our thanks for their generosity.

Linda said she and Paul chemically treated the stump on the same day. She believes the tops of the cottonwood are within the Erie right-of-way and not on land of an adjacent owner.

Discussion of Possible HVRM Lease to Starke County

As liaison to the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum, Linda reported she and Paul attended a recent HVRM meeting. She said the litigation involving use of the railway northwest of North Judson has been resolved, and the North Judson Town Council agreed to continue its contract with the current operator.

Linda said her perspective is trail usage east of Bogus Run was not a priority interest with HVRM membership. Her understanding was the HVRM was unable to make contact with Starke County concerning a possible lease arrangement.

Donna responded that she had spoken recently with HVRM's attorney, Todd Wallsmith, and Wallsmith indicated a willingness to work on a "volunteer basis" with the HVRM about leasing possibilities. Wallsmith identified a date he was available for an appointment with the client. Donna passed this information to HVRM President, Corey Bennett, but she was not aware whether Bennett contacted Wallsmith. Linda and Donna agreed to followed up to help determine the current status of any discussions.

Scheduling Work Day for October 13, 2017

Paul urged that a work day be scheduled to continue honeysuckle control efforts near CR 300 East. He said he would lend a tractor to pull honeysuckle up from the roots and allow more effective chemical treatments. Traditionally, PTC work days are set for Saturdays. In this instance Friday morning was selected with the hope it would be less disruptive to growing public use of the Erie Trail, particularly in the afternoons and on weekends. The Work Day was set to begin on October 13 at 9:00 a.m., CDT.

Scheduling Next Meeting for November 29, 2017

The membership agreed to schedule the next PTC meeting in the North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library at 6:00 p.m., CST, on Wednesday, November 29, 2017.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m., CDT.