

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

**BLPOA Community Center
6996 South SR 10
Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana**

August 22, 2017

MEMBERS

Kenneth Bailey
Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Russell Blais
Bruce Fingerhut
Carolla Heilstedt
Kathleen Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Deb Mix
Donna Osborne
Sharon Smear
Karen Wittig

GUESTS

Bob Albert
Rick Anderson

Call to Order

Bruce Fingerhut, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club (“PTC”) at 6:02 p.m., CDT on August 22, 2017 in the Bass Lake Property Owners Association (“BLPOA”) Community Center, Bass Lake, Indiana. He expressed appreciation to BLPOA member Russ Blais for scheduling and causing the physical set-up of the meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Carolla Heilstedt moved to approve without amendment the minutes of the meeting held on July 11, 2017. Paul Byer seconded the motion. On a voice vote the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy Lucas circulated a written Treasurer’s Report. She said since she was attending a meeting of the Starke County Park Board held concurrently with the July 11 PTC meeting

and unable to attend, she was including both July and August information in the current report. Kathy said the \$500 Buckeye Pipeline donation was made possible by Bruce's very generous support through two lifetime memberships. Her report with clarifications is summarized as follows:

1. The First National Bank of Monterey - July

Ending balance 6/30/2017	\$5,311.00
Deposit 7/10/2017 (Greenways Foundation reimbursement grant to Kathy for 501(c)(3) application which she then donated to the PTC)	275.00
Disbursements	
Precept Partners (PTC website)	(125.00)
The Market (Color Run "thank you" ad)	(44.63)
B. Fingerhut (herbicide for trail maintenance)	(923.83)
Ending balance 7/31/2017	\$4,492.58

The First National Bank of Monterey - August

Deposits 8/14/2017	
Buckeye Pipeline	500.00
Four \$25 annual membership dues	100.00
Ending balance 8/22/2017	\$5,092.58

2. PayPal (No change since July 14, 2017) \$103.34

3. Northern Indiana Community Foundation \$5,286.65

PTC Total: \$10,482.57

Kathy reflected the inclusion of information from PayPal has been challenging and asked whether its continued use was warranted. Bruce responded that he understood her frustration and that she needed to be able to "see what's there" more easily. He and Carolla said they would work with Kathy to sync passwords and make PayPal review more easily accessible.

PTC Membership Renewals

Kathy reminded the members that August is the month for membership renewals. She reflected the 5K Color Walk/Run on June 3 (National Trails Day) generated welcomed new members, and asking persons who joined the PTC just a couple of months before annual memberships expire seems harsh and a bit unfair. "We're really trying to encourage new membership."

Bruce suggested informing persons who joined after a date shortly before the renewal date have their membership extended through July 31, 2018. He asked that Kathy apply a reasonable approach that considers the importance of National Trails Day and those members who joined this spring as a result of the 5K Color Walk/Run. Kathy then said, that within this framework, reminder communications would go out for persons who have not yet renewed.

PTC Membership List

Kathy noted she has received several requests within the PTC for names of members. The information can be helpful to cooperative efforts, as well as for outreach to potential new members. But, in at least a couple of instances, members have expressed concerns about personal information being generally accessible.

Linda Byer reflected that PTC email notices of meetings and events are not typically sent through blind copies (sometimes referred to as “bcs”). As a result everyone on the list can already identify the email address of others on the list. Steve responded that Linda was making a good point, and no one has complained about the sharing of addresses which results from PTC email notices. This process is not exactly the same as sharing a list of member names. An email address often does not provide the addressee’s name. Also, not all PTC members are on the email list.

Bruce suggested the PTC clarify that it will not sell to others the names and addresses of members. He recommended the PTC policy be that member names cannot be sold but can be shared unless a member specifically requests otherwise. The membership agreed.

Bruce added that when approved the meeting minutes would help communicate the PTC position with respect to membership lists. Membership recruitment and renewals should be consistent with this position.

Review of July 15 BLPOA-PTC Trail Ride

Steve Lucas said 31 bicyclists participated in the BLPOA-PTC trail ride. Participation was more than what was anticipated even a few days before the event. At stops along the way, he spoke to PTC challenges and opportunities in supporting the HVRM with trail maintenance and development. At CR 800S and the the Erie Trail, the group divided with most going west to Bailey’s Discount Center, but Kathy led east to discuss opportunities at Bass Station.

Russ and Rick Anderson, BLPOA President, were among the participants. They described an accident which occurred at the intersection of Range Road and SR 10. The unfortunate event resulted in personal injury to a bicyclist. The importance of operator caution and good signage were underscored. Without minimizing the accident, Russ said he thought the event was informative and a “good social function” which has since inspired a weekly community bike ride around Bass Lake. Rick agreed and said he “really liked” the July 15 bike ride.

Report from Maintenance Committee

Bruce said the Maintenance Committee obtained an estimate for asphalt maintenance on trail trouble spots which includes grinding and a one-and-one-half inch resurface. The estimate was in the amount of \$10,000. He said the Maintenance Committee is “just getting started” and would seek additional estimates.

Steve spoke to the bump over a cottonwood root west of and near CR 125E in Aldine, one of three locations identified as priorities during the July meeting. He suggested removal of the cottonwood seemed critical to resolution and that asphalt repair in this location

might be a relatively minor fix. He asked if the membership had the expertise and equipment to remove the tree or whether we needed to employ a contractor.

Paul responded he believed he had the equipment to remove the cottonwood but needed to go onsite to determine feasibility. Bruce agreed to accompany Paul onsite. Bob Albert, HVRM Liaison, said he believed the tree would be best taken down in pieces so that it does not fall on the trail and cause further damage. Donna recommended that the PTC contract with a professional arborist.

Russ and Carolla said they had thoughts of local tree-removal outfits that may perform tree removal without cost or at a reduced cost in support of the HVRM and PTC as non-profits. They offered to make contacts and share the responses with Bruce.

Kenny Bailey said he had in mind a particular arborist who he thought might assist. Bruce said we need someone to help us “safely get the cottonwood on the ground”. Members can then cut it into smaller pieces and provide for relocation.

The membership expressed enthusiasm for an effort by Kenny to contact an arborist that would remove the cottonwood on terms supportive of our trail maintenance efforts. If Kenny’s effort proves unsuccessful, Russ and Carolla were asked to make their contacts and share the results with Bruce.

Report from BIC Committee Meetings and Consideration of Following Committee Recommendations

Steve said the organizational meeting of the committee, which was formed by the PTC Board of Directors to consider branding and related issues such as signage and continuity, was held on July 25, 2017. Members in attendance were Bruce, Kathy, Carolla, Russ, Rhonda Milner, Yancy Lucas and Steve.

Steve said the minutes of what is being called the “BIC Committee” were distributed to membership in the same email as the current meeting notice and agenda. Action items from the organizational meeting were shared with Board members for comments, and there were none. Action items are now being presented by the BIC Committee to the membership for review and consideration as to PTC approval. He outlined briefly parts (A) and (B) of the action items. These were as follows and thought to be mostly structural or procedural and probably unlikely to generate great interest:

(A) Organization and Committee Name

During its June 14, 2017 meeting, the PTC’s Board of Directors agreed to form a committee to address branding and related issues of continuity. A committee role would be to address the opportunities and challenges of placing improvements along the trail. Any PTC member could volunteer to participate. Those who volunteered [attended the initial committee meeting]. Bruce reported to the membership on formation of the committee at the July 11 meeting and indicated the organizational meeting would be later in July.

During the July 11 membership meeting it was agreed the first order of business was to choose a committee name. The first action was to name it the “Branding, Identity and Continuity Committee” to be abbreviated as the “BIC Committee”.

(B) Finalization of BIC Committee Decisions

Actions of the BIC Committee would be distributed through minutes or another written document to the Board of Directors with an opportunity for review. If the Board does not seek placement on its agenda, actions of the BIC Committee would be presented to the membership for consideration and PTC finalization. Of course, many PTC actions would need approval by other entities before implementation.

The membership did not seek clarification or offer comments regarding parts (A) and (B). Steve then turned to other members of the BIC Committee and asked them to assist with explaining recommendations in parts (C) and (D):

(C) Naming the Trail and Connectors

The non-motorized trail between North Judson and Bass Station (intersection with US 35) is called [by names including] the North Judson Erie Trail, NJ Erie Trail, Erie Lackawanna Trail, Erie Trail and North Judson Trail. The PTC cannot mandate an official name for the trail but should use and encourage use of a consistent naming system for signage, maps and publications.

The Committee determined to apply “Erie Trail (North Judson Section)” for the existing trail from North Judson to Bass Station. The name “Erie Trail (Bass Lake Section)” would apply [to the proposed extension] from US 35 east to the Starke County Line. The name “Erie Trail (Monterey Section)” would apply in Pulaski County through the existing trail in the Town of Monterey. “Erie Trail” would be the overarching term with a Section identified only when the context warrants.

Starke County Route 1 through Starke County Route 20 were identified as the regular designations for share-the-road connectors to the Erie Trail. Odd numbers would be applied to connectors that are predominantly north-and-south. Even numbers would be applied to connectors that are predominantly east-and-west. Exceptions were made for the American Discovery Trail and US Bike Route 35. For these exceptions Route numbers are unneeded and would not apply.

Four share-the-road Routes have been approved by the Starke County Commissioners. These would be numbered as follows:

Range Road	Starke County Route 9 (S9)
Starke County 200 E toward Pulaski County	Starke County Route 11 (S11)
Starke County 800 S and 450 E to CR 210	Starke County Route 13 (S13)
Starke County 800 S and 600 E to SR 10	Starke County Route 15 (S15)

(D) Logos for Erie Trail, Share-the-Road Connectors, the American Discovery Trail and US Bike Route 35

For the Erie Trail, the golden wings depicted in some existing signage (mostly west of CR 100 W) would serve as the standard logo. This logo could include the name “Erie Trail” with or without the Section designation or could stand alone. For share-the-road connectors the wayfinding signs would be green and white and modeled after the format used by Pulaski County for its Route 1 to the extent feasible. Signage applicable to the American Discovery Trail and US Bike Route 35 would use the logos approved by the organizations managing those routes. If those routes have more than one approved logo the general preference would be to use the least complex and most readily visible version.

Carolla said the committee favored simplicity with naming the trail and signage on the trail. This point was emphasized by Russ. Carolla indicated the recommendation is that “Erie Trail” be used universally. For mapping, trail work or other limited functions, we might sometimes find it helpful to identify Sections. The term “North Judson Section” would apply in Starke County west of US 35. For the proposed extension in Starke County east of US 35, the term “Bass Lake Section” would apply. East of the Starke County Line, the term “Monterey Section” would apply.

Bruce showed images of an old Erie train engine and signage already used in the North Judson Section and the Monterey Section using golden wings and a dark background. A

simplified version with gold lettering and wings on a black background are proposed for signage in a configuration showing the words “Erie Trail”. This design would honor the historic railroad usage and at the same time communicate clearly the modern trail usage. Where applicable subordinate signage would identify USBR35 and the American Discovery Trail.

A map was presented to the members that identifies four share-the-road bicycle routes the Starke County Commissioners have approved. The routes were marked with numbers using the BIC Committee’s recommended system as set forth the third paragraph of part (C). Carolla has begun a process with Google to help determine where signage is needed to link share-the-road routes and the Erie Trail. Kathy added that the BIC Committee would be seeking grants for funding and cost-share opportunities to provide signage. Starke County Park Board Chair and new PTC member, Deb Mix, agreed to assist. Working with Starke County Highway Superintendent Rik Ritzler, the committee anticipates making the S13 connection from Bass Lake to CR 800S (also serving as USBR35) and the Erie Trail a priority.

The BIC Committee at a brief meeting earlier today discussed the need for signage through North Judson on USBR35. The committee anticipates conferring with the North Judson Town Board regarding needs and opportunities. Bob recommended the PTC also talk to North Judson officials about the possibility of signage near the intersection of SR 10 and SR 39 to direct the public to the Erie Trail. He said visiting trail users sometimes find their way to the HVRM offices to seek directions.

Steve said in an email received earlier this week, PTC member Laurie Simmons wrote of the need for more visible signage at the trailhead on US 35. Linda said she has spoken with an INDOT representative who indicated the agency would not object to signage there as long as it did not encroach on the right-of-way. Bruce suggested a sign might be placed on the east side of US 35 pointing northwest in the direction of the trailhead. If the membership approves parts (C) and (D), the BIC Committee will pursue these initiatives.

Members were asked whether there were questions or thoughts for modification of the BIC Committee recommendations in parts (C) and (D). There were none. The members then approved these recommendations.

Review of New Indiana USBR35 Map

Copies were distributed of a new draft USBR35 map received for Indiana earlier this month. The American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials, with help from Indiana Trails and the Adventure Cycling Association, approved the route in 2015. The homepage for the Indiana effort is IndianaUSBR35.com. Included on the website is information about the Indiana counties through which USBR35 passes, including Starke County. Kathy will email to Indiana organizers in Hamilton County later in the week our PTC concurrence with the map and a brief overview of the Starke County route.

Update on Lids for Benches Project

Carolla has graciously offered to drive her truck to Evansville to deliver collected lids and to pick up two benches for use at trail sites in Starke County. The BIC Committee would review and make recommendations to the PTC Board of Directors and the membership for the placement of these benches and regarding the design of future benches. Kathy said

that through the “ABC Promise Program”, Green Tree Plastics in Evansville provides a more favorable cost for benches, tables and similar improvements constructed from 100% recycled materials. The delivery of lids and the receipt of benches are scheduled to take place simultaneously in Evansville on September 12.

Scheduling Next Meeting

The membership agreed to schedule the next PTC meeting in the North Judson-Wayne Township Public Library at 6:00 p.m., CDT, on Wednesday, September 27, 2017.

Adjournment

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