

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

**BLPOA Community Center
6996 South S.R. 10
Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana**

December 6, 2018

MEMBERS

Diane Blais
Russell Blais
Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Arlene Noble
Sharon Smead
Peggy Stalbrink
Rich Stalbrink
Rick Vlaming

GUESTS

Bob Albert, HVRM Liaison

Call to Order by Vice President

Rhonda Milner, Vice President, called to order a membership meeting of the Prairie Trails Club Inc. ("PTC") at 6:06 pm, CST (7:06 pm, EST) on December 6, 2018 in the Bass Lake Property Owners Association Community Center, Bass Lake, Indiana.

Approval of October 30, 2018 Minutes

Steve Lucas suggested that the draft minutes be amended to correct clerical errors and to add the following paragraph to the "Report on October 16 Workday at Signal Bungalow":

Steve thanked Bob for sharing with Yancy a postcard depicting a C&O Railroad stop for promotion of Lena Park in the early 20th Century. The Erie Lackawanna Railroad also passed through Lena Park and images of the postcard will be used at an interpretative sign along the Erie Trail. Bob responded saying, "You're very welcome. What good is a picture if nobody sees it?"

Steve added that the C&O Railroad passed through the southern half of an addition that formed what was promoted as the new town of Lena Park. The Erie Lackawanna Railroad passed through the northern edge.

Paul Byer moved to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2018 meeting with the changes Steve suggested. Russell Blais seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy Lucas circulated a written copy of the Treasurer's Report. Steve suggested that the report be later updated through the year's end. Following is an updated version through December 31, 2018:

1) First Farmers Bank & Trust (FFBT)

Balance forward from 10/30/18 **\$ 18,192.17**

INCOME

10/31/18 Deposit		
<i>Buckeye Partnership (Bruce's match)</i>	600.00	
10/31/18 Deposit		
<i>Naylor Pipe (Russ, Naylor Board Member)</i>	400.00	
12/10/18 Deposit		
<i>Arlene & Al Noble (Bench + \$25 donation)</i>	375.00	
12/12/18 Deposit		
<i>Mitchel-Kane Charitable Fund (donation)</i>	2,000.00	
12/18/18 Deposit		
<i>Rich & Peggy Stalbrink (Bench)</i>	350.00	
12/18/18 Deposit		
<i>Steve & Kathy Lucas (Bench)</i>	350.00	
INCOME THROUGH 12/31/18	4,075.00	

EXPENSES-

11/13/18 Check #1020		
<i>OTES: "You are Here" signs</i>	-350.00	
11/14/18 Check #1019		
<i>Bruce reimbursement: bridge-work supplies</i>	-82.18	

11/21/18 Check #1023		
	<i>Precept Partners.: Web w QR to new signs</i>	-175.00
11/29/18 Check #1024 (+ 500 lbs. plastic lids)		
	<i>Green Tree Recycling: five benches</i>	-825.00
12/11/18 Check #1022		-360.00
	OTES for USBR35/ADT signs on trail	
12/11/18 Check #1025		-313.92
	TCS plank bridge signs & 8-ft posts	
12/17/18 Check #1027		-34.60
	P. Byer cement reimbursement to set sign posts	
12/31/18 Check #1028		
	TCS for additional discounted posts	-105.00
	EXPENSES THROUGH 12/31/18.	-2,245.70
	<i>Total Transactions</i>	<i>\$1,829.30</i>

Ending FFBT balance as of 12/31/18 **\$20,021.47**

2) Northern Indiana Community Foundation (NICF) **3,929.84**

Total of 2 accounts: \$23,951.51

Kathy also provided an update effective December 6, 2018 on PTC Restricted Funds and Unrestricted Funds. With further updates to December 31, 2018, Restricted Funds are these:

Luminous Fund Grant 1	Signage on S13, a Bass Lake Connector	386.56 (100 OTES; 50 Prec. signQR; 40 OTES; TCS discounted posts)
Luminous Fund Grant 2	Signage on S13 incl. "You are Here"	5,000.00
Hardesty Memorial Grant	Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage	8,627.28 (250 OTES; & 125 Prec. signQR; 320 OTES; 265.68 OTES; 34.60 P Byer))
Wine Timers Donation	K. Wittig Memorial Bench	0.00 (COMPLETED: bench & plaque installed)
K&S Lucas Donation	K. Wittig Memorial Bench/Landscaping	100.00
Jain Trucking	"Funds go towards picnic tables"	100.00
KVREMC	Bike racks	1000.00 [SCILL Check #1026 pending 1000.00]
A & A Noble [new]	Noble Bench	350.00
R & P Stalbrink [new]	Stalbrink Bench	350.00
S & K Lucas [new].	Lucas Bench	350.00
	RESTRICTED TOTAL	16,263.84

<i>SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS</i>	<i>SUBTOTAL</i>	<i>RESTRICTED</i>	<i>UNRESTRICTED</i>
FFBT	20,021.47	16,263.84	3,757.63
NICF	3,929.84		3,929.84
	TOTAL	16,263.84	7,687.47

Diane Blais moved to approve the Treasurer's Report including update of restricted and unrestricted funds. Peggy Stalbrink seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Grant Applications Submitted in November

Kathy reported upon grant applications she completed for the PTC in November:

- (1) On November 7 she sent a grant application to the Luminous Fund seeking \$5,000 as a potential match for Governor Eric Holcomb's Next Level Connections Program (the "NLCP") to advance trail expansion and connectivity.
- (2) On November 8 she completed an online grant application to the Indiana Greenways Foundation Board seeking \$5,000 as a potential match for the NLCP.
- (3) On November 25 she completed an online grant application to America Walks. This program supports projects to create healthy, active and engaged places to live, work and play. With the email she sought \$1,500 to fund science and education elements of a grant sought from Kankakee Valley REMC. Earlier this year, the utility awarded the PTC a grant for the construction and placement of bike racks but did not approve a funding request for trails, kiosks and nature kits.

Sharon Smead asked what would happen if an award is made by the Luminous Fund or the Greenways Foundation but PTC's effort with the NLCP fails. Kathy responded the PTC would request the grantor to approve a change of purpose.

Russ asked about funding for a bike repair station. Steve responded the PTC did not achieve consensus on funding for this purpose during the October 30 meeting and asked that Kathy use her discretion in developing grant applications. The applications were due in November before the PTC was scheduled to meet again. The only grant that seemed a possible fit for a bike repair station was one from the Greenways Foundation. Even in this instance, the amount of funding required and the grantor's mission made approval of an NLCP match seem more likely. But he urged that a bike repair station should remain in the discussion for a future grant application.

Linda Byer said grant funding is available through the "Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society"—to be renamed on January 1 the "Indiana Native Plant Society" (or "INPS"). According to the INPS website, the organization funds two grant programs, each with its own emphasis, application process and timelines. Letha's Youth Outdoors Fund seeks to bond children with nature by supporting travel to natural areas with guidance by knowledgeable leaders. Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis. The INPS Biodiversity grants support research, demonstration gardens, and land management or conservation. The submission deadline for this grant is October 1, and the results are announced in early November.

Election of Three Members to Board of Directors

Steve said the PTC's Board of Directors are elected in the membership's final meeting of the calendar year. Four Board members are elected in odd years and three in even years. Each board member serves for a term of two years. Carolla Heilstadt, Sharon Smead, Peggy Bohac and Steve were elected in 2017. Bruce Fingerhut, Karen Wittig and Donna Osborne were elected in 2016 and their terms are set to expire.

Steve said Bruce informed him he wishes to stand for reelection. Diane Blais expressed a willingness to serve and his understanding is that Peggy Stalbrink may also be willing. He asked Peggy if that was so and she responded it was. Steve then nominated Bruce, Diane and Peggy for the Board of Directors. He said any other PTC member could also be placed in nomination or could express an interest in serving. No other was nominated or volunteered to serve.

Anita McMillin moved the nominations be closed and that Bruce Fingerhut, Diane Blais and Peggy Stalbrink be elected to the Board of Directors. Arlene Noble seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Report of Evansville Trip for Lids-to-Benches Initiative

On November 28, Russ and Rick Vlaming drove Rick's van, loaded with more than 500 pounds of lids, to Green Tree Plastics in Evansville. Steve and Kathy joined them at Green Tree Plastics in the afternoon. The journey was in support of the ABC Partnership Program to exchange recycled lids for benches with participation of school children. On July 14, youth from the "Bass Lake Beach Brigade" sorted and weighed lids collected in Starke County and otherwise by our members and supporters. *PTC Minutes (July 25, 2018)*.

Russ said that on delivery of the lids to Green Tree Plastics, "we learned that a few of our lids no longer qualified" for the ABC Partnership Program. By hand, Green Tree Plastics staff and the four of us from the PTC removed mostly nonprescription medicine bottles with resin identification code (1). Only resin identification codes (2), (4) and (5) qualify. He said the experience underlines the importance of careful sorting before any future lids-to-benches initiative with Green Tree Plastics. In the end, though, "we had more than enough lids to qualify for the weight needed" for the five green benches the PTC had purchased.

Russ and Rick returned to Bass Lake with four of the benches. The fifth would not fit in Rick's van, so Steve and Kathy brought it back to their Bass Lake cottage.

Arlene Noble had said during our October meeting that she would sponsor a bench to be placed at the northwest quadrant of C.R. 300 East and the Erie Trail. She brought a \$375 check to the December meeting to reserve one of the new benches. \$350 was for the reservation and \$25 a donation. Arlene asked that this bench contain a plaque stating "For the Love of the Trail". Three other groups expressed the intent to forward \$350 to reserve a bench: (1) Rich and Peggy; (2) Sharon on behalf of the Marshall County Horse Association; and (3) Steve and Kathy for the intended interpretative site at Lena Park. The fifth bench brought from Evansville on November 28 is yet unsponsored.

Kathy thanked Rick for supplying his van and Russ and him for making the long round trip to Evansville and back. She also expressed her appreciation to Sharon for offering her vehicle for the trip.

Report on Sign Placement by Starke County Highway Department

Steve said in October the Starke County Highway Department had begun repairing and replacing trail signs at county road intersections. These activities were funded by the Hardesty Memorial Endowment and the Luminous Foundation. With Starke County Commissioners approval, the Highway Department included sign and post purchases as part of its comprehensive signage bidding process, obtained utility clearances, and also performed installation.

Highway Superintendent Rik Ritzler assigned Louis Summerfield to this signage project. To better identify sign placement locations, Louis and Steve toured intersections and county share-the-road connectors approved by the Starke County Commissioners. The intersection sign repairs and replacements are completed. Additional signage has been placed at some intersections to cause improved consistency and safety. An example is at the intersection of C.R. 100 West where single warning signage is now augmented to double warning signage consistent with other intersections. New signs typically are also larger than those replaced, and they meet new INDOT “reflectorization” standards.

Below facing east is the crossing on C.R. 800 South, a location where trail signage was formerly degraded. Posts had part or all safety information missing, and some posts were bent. The site has been remediated. In the foreground of the image below is an original bicycle sign which now includes a 100-foot warning sign on a vertical post. In the background at trail’s edge is a new sign.



The next image is a close-up of the sign depicted in the background of the prior image. The new sign is larger than what was placed when the Erie Trail was constructed and also meets new reflectorization standards. The improved new sign was placed closest to the intersection—as Louis Summerfield quipped “where the action is”.



The Highway Department is beginning to place Share-the-Road signs on the Connectors. The signs apply the new reflectorization standards. Below is the image of a sign taken on the portion of Range Road designated as Connector S-9.



Update on You are Here Signage

Yancy Lucas designed “you-are-here” signs for placement at seven locations on the Erie Trail and Connector S-11. Each shows a unique reference for the site where it is to be placed, but the signs are otherwise identical. The signs include a new QR Code that links directly to a new “Maps” category on the PTC’s website. The Maps category is at <https://www.prairietrailsclub.org/maps> The website includes a map similar to the you-are-here signs (but without the “you-are-here” reference) and a second map with broader geographic coverage in Starke County including the American Discovery Trail and US Bike Route 35. Both online maps are easily printed.

Generous grants from the Hardesty Memorial Endowment and the Luminous Fund made this initiative possible. Signs were printed by OTES in North Judson.

Steve brought one “you-are-here” sign to the meeting. Using her cell phone, Kathy demonstrated nearly instantaneous QR Code connectivity to the new Maps category on the PTC website. Rick volunteered to use the you-are-here sign as a template for framing and erection of each of these seven signs.

Update on Concepts to Develop the Signal Bungalow Site

In August, the PTC made the signal bungalow east of C.R. 200 East a contingent fourth priority for the development of informational signage. *PTC Minutes (August 21, 2018)*. Bruce later day-lighted the site. His efforts were augmented during the PTC’s October 16 workday. Bob Albert, HVRM Liaison, said interpretive signage for the site was a good idea. He suggested the site would be a good location for a bicycle repair station. He said HVRM documentation was not as good on the Erie Lackawanna Railroad as on other local rails, but he would research the subject. *PTC Minutes (October 30, 2018)*.

Bob reported in December that his research was productive. The signal bungalow was the control point located at mile 192.7 for the switch between single rail and double rail traffic. To the west there were two rails and to the east a single rail. Trains could pass through the switch at 70 miles per hour. He referenced a photocopy of *Powerful Diesels Ended at Huntington Pusher Service* (February 9, 2003), pages 10 and 11:

...AD [Aldine], the end of the single track district, is reached at 192.97; here there is a No. 24 turnout, and speeds up to 70 [p. 11] miles an hour are permitted through the switch. Now the rich farmlands give place to woods on both sides of the tracks. At MP 194 Aldine is reached, and at MP 198 a long siding beside the westward track begins, this is the first sign of approach to North Judson.

Bob added that “MP” is an abbreviation for “Mile Posts”. Distances on the former Erie Lackawanna were measured in miles from Marion, Ohio. The Aldine depot was located at mile 193.9. He reiterated that the signal bungalow site would be a good location for a bike repair station.

Request for Input on Proposed Sign for Norwayne Field, North Judson

Bob previously identified need for a sign in downtown North Judson directing visitors to the Erie Trail. In November 2017 the PTC received conceptual approval from the North Judson Town Council and its Parks and Recreation Board for such a sign. *PTC Minutes (February 28, 2018)*.

The PTC collaborated with Andrew Rowe, North Judson Clerk-Treasurer, to determine the positioning of directional signs through the town. Signage focused primarily on the American Discovery Trail and US Bike Route 35 was developed by the PTC and erected through North Judson by municipal employees on August 9. *PTC Minutes (August 21, 2018)*.

Subject to final approval by the Town Council, a single larger sign was planned for the west side of Main Street, adjacent to Norwayne Field and readily visible from the S.R. 10 and S.R. 39 south intersection. The Clerk-Treasurer said he believed two sizes of signs should be prepared for consideration by the Town Council. This concept was shared with Amanda Brewer at OTES. She designed a proof with two alternate designs as set forth below:



Copies of the proof were distributed during the meeting. Steve said a horizontal sign had been suggested rather than the vertical sign anticipated by the two alternatives, but this suggestion was made before inclusion of the third (Erie Trail) sign was incorporated and now seems awkward. The final decision would be made by the North Judson Town Council, but PTC guidance was sought before tendering a proof to Andrew. Following the Clerk-Treasurer's review and instructions, the matter would be tendered to the Town Council (with models for two different sized signs) for final action.

During the meeting a consensus was achieved that both OTES designs were effective and attractive. Sharon said she believed the vertical positioning of the three images, in the proof on the right, was the better balanced. Russ agreed and suggested a person's visual progression would be from top to bottom. Rhonda wondered whether the ADT logo might be placed above the Indiana USBR 35 logo since the ADT was the senior cross-country route and an inspiration for the Erie Trail. The PTC then recommended the image on the right be advanced to the Clerk Treasurer, but with the understanding the North Judson Town Council would make the final decision.

Report from Trail Extension Workgroup

Steve and Kathy reported briefly on informal discussions with DNR officials regarding the NLCP discussed earlier in the meeting. Based partly on a DNR suggestion, they will contact the Northern Indiana Community Foundation. State of Indiana action on the NLCP, which would warrant participation by workgroup members, was thought likely to take place in the near future.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for the BLPOA Community Center, 6996 South SR 10, Knox (Bass Lake), Indiana on Thursday, March 14, 2019 at 6:00 pm, CDT.

Closing Remarks by Vice President and Adjournment

Rhonda reflected on an exciting and successful year for the PTC and its service to the Erie Trail and affiliated trails. She said new members have brought new energy to our club and have shared with generosity their varied skill sets. "I think we've accomplished more this year than in any since the trail was opened." Rhonda thanked our members and our supporters for their commitments and wished all the best in 2019. The meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm, CST (8:29 pm, EST) and was followed by a welcomed Holiday feast that included wonderful homemade snacks.