

MEETING MINUTES OF PRAIRIE TRAILS CLUB INC.

Intersection of Erie Trail and Starke County Road 700 East
Monterey, Indiana

May 26, 2022

MEMBERS

Linda Byer
Paul Byer
Carolla Heilstedt
Kathy Lucas
Steve Lucas
Anita McMillin
Brian McMillin
Rhonda Milner
Sharon Smead
Peg Stalbrink
Nancy Staresina
Rick Staresina
Rich Vallicelli
Larry Wickert

Bob Albert, Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum Liaison
Brent Drinkut, DNR Outdoor Indiana
Camryn Kopka, Starke County Parks Superintendent
Arlene Staresina

Call to Order by President and Introductions of Attendees

Carolla Heilstedt, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club Inc. ("PTC") on May 26, 2022 at the the Erie Trail and Starke County Road 700 East, Monterey, Indiana at 5:38 pm, CDT (6:38 pm, EDT). Persons attending introduced themselves.

DNR Photo Shoot for Hoosier Club Feature in Outdoor Indiana

Steve Lucas introduced Brent Drinkut from the Department of Natural Resources. He



said Brent is the Photo Editor for *Outdoor Indiana* and will take an image of members and friends in attendance for publication as part of an article in the magazine's Hoosier Club feature. Brent said that his guess was the article could appear in this year's September/October issue.

Outdoor Indiana debuted in 1934 and is published by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources six times a year. A subscription can be obtained through the Indiana State Park Store at <https://stores.innsgifts.com>

Review and Approval of Membership Minutes of April 28, 2022

Rhonda Milner moved to approve the draft minutes of the April 28, 2022 membership meeting without amendment. Larry Wickert seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Update on Fiscal Reconciliation of NLT-01-07

During the April meeting, the membership agreed to pursue acquisition and placement of two trail counters with DNR funds remaining in the NLT-01-07 grant following completion of the 2.1 mile southeast extension of the Erie Trail. Kathy had reported in April that the cost of two counters and their delivery would approximate the \$2,269.74 unexpended.

During the May meeting, Kathy said she ordered two counters from Canadian firm TRAFx Research Ltd. following a quote, including shipping and handling, of \$1,960. TRAFx very recently informed her the counters have been shipped. The Order Confirmation for the quote described the system package as including 2 TRAFx Infrared Trail Counters, 1 TRAFx Dock, 1 TRAFx DataNet Plan, 2 cables, 1 TRAFx User Manual, 1 TRAFx Disc, and premium level technical support for five years.

Steve reflected that purchase of the two counters was made possible because the hard work and dedication of members allowed the PTC to meet its grant obligations on time and under budget. The counters are derived from the DNR's funding. Originally, it was thought the PTC would have to refund the unexpended funding to the State of Indiana, but the DNR allowed us to make these purchases. Early in the grant cycle, DNR officials said they would like trail projects to include counters. About \$300 remains from the grant, and he suggested it be used to purchase batteries and other incidentals, chosen by the members, to seek functionality and a level of protection from theft. Linda Byer noted that theft of field recorders is a serious problem.

Review and Approval of Treasurer's Report with Restricted and Unrestricted Funds

Kathy distributed written copies of the Treasurer's Report as follows:



**Treasurer's Report
May 26, 2022
Monterey, Indiana**

FIRST FARMERS BANK & TRUST (FFBT)

Balance forward from 4/28/22		\$55,040.45
<u>INCOME</u>		
05/19/22	Deposit <i>(Donations for use of Lucas lakehouse)</i>	\$150.00
05/23/22	PayPal Transfer - Memberships <i>(McDonald, Staresina, Milausnic, McFarland)</i>	142.80
05/25/22	New Memberships Susie & Barry Matzat	<u>50.00</u>
Total Income		\$342.80
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
05/17/22	Check #1115 to Linda Byer <i>(Native species barrier at Bartee Ditch bridge)</i>	\$84.00
03/17/22	Check #1116 to Precept Partners <i>(Website changes and updates)</i>	<u>187.50</u>
Total Expenses		\$271.50
ENDING FFBT BALANCE AS OF 5/26/22		\$55,111.75

Kathy reflected that the "Lucas lakehouse" donations were voluntary contributions by guests, for use of the Lucas house at Bass Lake, in an amount the guests selected. The PayPal transfer was for deposits made in recent months for new memberships and for renewals. The Matzat membership was received at the North Judson cafeteria during an exhibit of PTC activities (aimed primarily at students), and it included an expression of interest by Susie Matzat to volunteer for the PTC.

The reimbursement to Linda Byer was only a small portion of the expenses she and Paul incurred in driving to and from Hendricks County to purchase nannyberry plants, to form a barrier at the Bartee Ditch bridge, as required by the DNR under the NLT 01-07 grant. The payment made to Precept Partners was to help update our website, including a new Homepage banner directed to the PTC hosted Bass Lake Festival 5K Run/ 3K Walk.

Kathy circulated a report of restricted and unrestricted grants. She added that she also had brought a printed check register, which Rhonda Milner reviewed briefly just prior to the meeting, and other members were welcome to review.

RESTRICTED/UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

RESTRICTED FUNDS

Luminous Fund Grant #2 (2018)	Signs Bass Lake (UR Here)	1,418.54	
Luminous Fund Grant #4 (2020)	Northwest Trail Extension	5,000.00	
Luminous Fund Grant #5 (2021)	NW Extension or Operations	5,000.00	
Hardesty Memorial Grant (2018)	Wayfinding/historic signage	4,205.10	
Lucas Lakehouse Guest Donation	Future Vision/Website	662.50	(rec.150/ paid webmaster 187.50)
DNR NLT-01-07 Grant	NLT-01-07	2,269.74	
Mitchel-Kane Charitable Fund	Northwest Trail Extension	6,000.00	
Stalbrink Donation	Scholarship or most needed	100.00	
Blais/Vlaming Bench	For trailhead at 450/210	350.00	
McMillin Bench	For trailhead at 450/210	350.00	
Maintenance Fund (mower sale)	For general maintenance	4,000.00	
VFW Grant	For "Trail Improvements"	5,000.00	
Hardesty Memorial Grant	For Trail Maintenance	3,500.00	

\$37,855.88

FIRST FARMERS BANK & TRUST	TOTAL IN BANK	\$55,111.75
	— RESTRICTED FUNDS	<u>\$37,855.88</u>
	= UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	\$17,255.87

Carolla asked if there were questions or comments. There were none.

Rhonda moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report and Restricted and Unrestricted Funds Report as presented. Anita McMillin seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Preparations for July 30 Bass Lake 5K Run/3K Walk

Brian said he and Anita were preparing for the PTC’s hosting of the Bass Lake 5K Run/3K Walk as part of the Bass Lake Festival. He said there were a lot of moving parts, but the effort seemed to be on track. Brian added, that with Russ and Diane Blais, he and Anita had reviewed an application form that is now accessible through the PTC’s Homepage.

Carolla asked if there would be a new timer this year. Anita responded that there would. Brian added the application emphasizes, in bold pink lettering, that the new chip timer will be T&H Timing.

Report by Starke County Parks and Recreation Superintendent

Camryn Kopka said she is excited by her recent appointment as Starke County Parks and Recreation Superintendent. There is a lot happening with Memorial Day coming up, and the shift from private to local government management poses additional challenges. She said she is looking forward to the development of partnering opportunities with the PTC.

Kathy reflected that she and Steve, as well as Brian and Anita, have volunteered to help Cam at the Bass Lake Beach in the next few days. She hoped others might be able to help as well.

Carolla welcomed Camryn and said the PTC is looking forward to working with her and the Starke County Parks and Recreation Board.

Report of Approvals of the Starke County Parks and the North Judson Parks and Recreation 5-Year Plans

Steve thanked Cam and Andrew Rowe, respectively, for providing the PTC with electronic copies of the Starke County Parks and Recreation Plan and of the North Judson Parks and Recreation Plan. He said both plans recognize the importance of the Erie Trail and PTC to outdoor recreation. Both open possibilities for collaborative efforts with the PTC.

Steve said the files for the two plans are large and could pose technical problems if they were attached to the minutes and emailed. But he said he would be happy to provide any member with a copy of either or both plans on request. Larry suggested the respective plans should also be available through the websites of Starke County and North Judson.

Report of Maintenance Workgroup

Consistent with his expressed intentions in the April meeting, Paul placed asphalt (cold patch) to fill cracks in the trail adjacent to Fell Ditch on May 25.



He reported on the deterioration of the Fell Ditch bridge deck and said he could not fully ascertain the condition of timbers beneath the deck until it was removed. Paul was asked the cost for repairing the bridge deck and he suggested getting a quote from a contractor.

Kathy reflected that the PTC has funding dedicated to trail maintenance and suggested this might be a good application of the funding. Paul said any contractors familiar to him were already booked. Carolla said she would ask Larry Mann Construction for a quote.

Preliminary Report of Planned Maintenance in Trail Corridor by NIPSCO and by Buckeye Pipeline

NIPSCO

On May 4, Bob Albert alerted the PTC that Michelle Edelen of Arbormetrics, contractor for NIPSCO, had contacted the Hoosier Valley Railroad Museum. Steve thanked Bob for bringing us into the loop. Arbormetrics plans to treat vegetation with herbicide in the Erie Trail Corridor between US Highway 35 and County Road 600 East. Edelen said that Arbormetrics will call or email Steve before doing the work so he can alert PTC officers and board members. She indicated work will be performed either on foot or by light-weight vehicles on rubber wheels to protect the trail surface.

BUCKEYE PIPELINE

On May 17, four representatives of Buckeye Pipeline joined Kathy and Steve to discuss, and view first-hand, this summer's work areas along the Erie Trail. The Buckeye team was led by Jana Olthoff, Right-of-Way and Real Estate Specialist.

There are numerous pipeline segments that will be addressed. The one drawing the greatest attention—both because earth moving will be required and because access is challenging—is on the south side of the trail about midway between County Road 200 East and County Road 300 East.

The discussion emphasized the need to keep trail users informed. Buckeye's contractor said it would place warning signs at active work locations. The group also discussed protecting the integrity of the trail, and the possibility, that in a few instances, Buckeye may help support our efforts to control invasive species. Buckeye left Google Earth aerials to help better understand particular sites. Steve suggested the Maintenance Committee might wish to discuss project specifics.

Informal Review of HVRM Activities (and Mammoth Solar)

Bob Albert reported that the Federal Railroad Administration has approved the training of selected HVRM volunteers to operate the "little steam engine". He is hopeful that steam engine rides will be scheduled in the near future. Bob expressed enthusiasm for the growing number of young people now volunteering for HVRM functions.

Bob said there are plans to bury cables beneath the Erie Trail and in proximity to the Buckeye Pipeline. Larry said he would contact people at Mammoth Solar to help assure they understand the width of the corridor (at least 100 feet) is what can be affected, and not merely the ten-foot wide asphalt.

Celebration of National Trails Day on June 4

The membership revisited the subject of how to celebrate National Trails Day. This year a number of competing events seem to make a large gathering impractical, either as a group workday or as a managed bike ride.

Kathy and Steve offered an informal cookout coupled with a brief walk or bike ride that would start at their home. They live in a log home along the Erie Trail at 6555 South 100

West and about three miles west of the North Judson Trailhead. Brian urged that the cookout be informal with participants bringing what they wish to eat. The group agreed with Brian. Steve said he and Kathy would have beverages and cook something simple on the grill—such as hotdogs. The emphasis would be on celebrating the success of the Erie Trail and all trails.

Different concepts were suggested as to the timing of the celebration and the brief walk or ride. Eating could either precede or follow exercise. In general terms, a two or three hour slot between 11:00 am and 6:00 pm would be anticipated. There was no time period that worked for everyone. Carolla recommended Steve include, with the draft minutes, a request to members as to their time availability and sequence preferences. Steve and Kathy would then select timing and sequencing and inform the membership by email.

Discussion of Email Notices of Meetings and Draft Minutes

During the open discussion segment of the meeting, Steve said he has recently received questions about the growing service list for notices of meetings, draft minutes, and other matters which can arise. A few concerns have been raised about the public nature of the distribution of visible email addresses. One option would be to have the notices made by blind copies, but this approach has disadvantages as well. As noted by Kathy, some filters will interpret blind copies as spam. Carolla suggested the PTC might have a policy to provide that persons can receive blind copy emails “on request”. This topic will be placed on the June agenda.

Next Membership Meeting

The next membership meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 22, 2022 at 5:30 pm, CDT (6:30 pm, EDT) in the BLPOA Community Center, 6996 South SR 10, Bass Lake (Knox).

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m., CDT (7:42 p.m., EDT).