

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

**Rest Park and Trail Head  
Indiana S.R. 10 and Starke County Road 250W  
North Judson, IN**

July 11, 2016

**MEMBER ATTENDEES**

Linda Byer  
Paul Byer  
Susan DeSantis  
Bruce Fingerhut  
Kathleen Lucas  
Steve Lucas  
Anita McMillin  
Brian McMillin  
Greg Wittig  
Karen Wittig

**Call to Order**

Bruce Fingerhut, President, called to order a meeting of the Prairie Trails Club (the PTC) at 6:36 p.m., CDT on July 11, 2016 at the Rest Park.

**Approval of Minutes**

Susan DeSantis moved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 18, 2016 without amendment. Linda Byer seconded the motion. On a voice vote the motion carried.

**Mint Festival Booth Report**

Kathy Lucas thanked Brian and Anita McMillin for following her on Saturday at noon in providing coverage for PTC booth at the Mint Festival. She thanked Linda and Paul Byer for providing coverage on the following Sunday (Father's Day). New members were added at the booth. T-shirts were sold and numerous copies of the NJ Erie Trail map and the state Greenways Foundation trail map were distributed. Members of the public expressed interest and support for the trail, including several offering their written support.

**Membership Notifications**

Kathy said she would send out membership notifications within the next two weeks. She

said she was unsure whether membership was on an individual or family basis. Several members reflected that the PTC decided early there would be individual membership only. The members agreed this process should continue.

### Starke County Economic Development Foundation

Kathy outlined a new initiative by the Starke County Economic Development Foundation to provide support for the concept of quality of place (QOP). A trend in the United States is for more young people to choose residence based largely on local amenities. The Foundation wants to highlight and enhance attractive amenities in Starke County. A subcommittee of the Foundation's QOP initiative is directed to the Bass Lake community, including desires expressed for better recognition and connectivity for Bass Lake residents to the NJ-Erie trail. Kathy said she and Steve Lucas joined subcommittee discussions in June. Bruce Fingerhut and the McMillins then also joined the subcommittee for the July 7 meeting.

Steve said three possibilities of emphasis for trail development were offered in discussions by the QOP subcommittee. These were being shared with PTC members to gain an understanding of the level of support for and any misgivings about them:

- (1) Explore the possibility Mark Bailey might be willing to authorize and support a trailhead on or near his complex's parking lot at the intersection of SR 10 and Starke County Range Road. The trailhead would include signage to direct cyclists and pedestrians along Range Road to the NJ Erie Trail. Signage directing persons to Bailey's Discount Center would also be placed at the intersection of the trail and Range Road.
- (2) Seek funding for extending the trail east on the former Erie right-of-way (now under ownership of the HVRM) to CR 600 East. A prerequisite would be approval from the HVRM. A funding estimate has been obtained for compacted aggregate. At a greater expense the extension could be made with asphalt. This extension would be supported by signage for cyclists and pedestrians to take CR 600E north to State Road 10 near the former Bass Lake State Beach.
- (3) Determine the feasibility of developing a share-the-road signed access from the intersection of the NJ Erie trail and CR 800 South. A person would travel eastward from the trail for a short distance and then north on CR 450 East to its intersection with CR 210 on the south end of Bass Lake.

Susie expressed concerns for weeds growing through compacted aggregate as well as the inferiority of aggregate to asphalt for users. Steve responded that funding would likely be a major issue in choosing between aggregate and asphalt. But asphalt need not be dismissed as a possibility if funding and HVRM approval could be achieved.

Linda said she believed the highest priority should be for the implementation of possibility (2).

There was a consensus that the advancement which might be accomplished relatively quickly was possibility (1). This possibility required someone to approach Mark Bailey, and Bruce said he was willing.

After further discussion the majority agreed to endorse conceptually all three possibilities. They are not mutually dependent and can be pursued simultaneously. Implementation of possibility (2) should be considered the highest priority although also the greatest challenge.

### Horse Trail

Bruce introduced Sharon Smead who expressed interest in having a new emphasis on maintenance of the horse trail. She said she believed there were members of the horseback riding community who might assist.

Bruce said the horse trail was designed along the south border of the paved portion of the trail from CR 100 West eastward to the former site of Bass Station (along US 35). A challenge is that the best facility for parking vehicles and trailers with horses is here at the Rest Park. But this site is more than a mile-and-a-half from CR 100 West. Still there might be ways to mitigate the challenge.

Sharon said she planned to review the trail and consider the possibilities. The members welcomed her comments and invited her to return, either at a meeting or for informal discussion on an individual basis.

### Designation of Kankakee River

Steve reported on the US Department of Interior's designation of the Kankakee River as a National Water Trail. He said the designation was reported on the front page of the July 6 *Post-Tribune*. The current temporary route of the American Discovery Trail crosses the Kankakee River at US 421. The fledgling USBR 35 crosses the Kankakee River at English Lake. He said both of these connections may present future partnering possibilities for the PTC.

### Lifetime PTC Membership

Bruce asked whether the PTC should take up Susie's request to establish a lifetime PTC membership. The item was not on the agenda, so the members agreed the item should be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

### Next Meeting

The members agreed the next meeting should be set for August 9, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. If available the meeting would be held at the library in North Judson.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m., CDT.