**Minutes**

**Friends of Morrow Mountain State Park**

**Fall/Winter Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, February 21, 2016 4:00 p.m.**

**Morrow Mountain State Park Lodge**

Following a well-attended and outstanding performance of John Denver music by artist, Mac Johnson, Chair Vanessa Mullinix called the annual Fall/Winter meeting of the Friends of Morrow Mountain State Park (FMMSP) to order at 4:00 p.m. Chair Mullinix welcomed everyone and thanked those in attendance for their ongoing support. She also expressed gratitude to park staff for their assistance in making the concert a success. Contributions from the Mac Johnson performance amounted to approximately $150.00 and several new memberships were received as well. Board members and directors present included: Chair Vanessa Mullinix, Director Janet Davis, Treasurer Tevis Smith, and Secretary Tanya Davis. Approximately eight additional members were present including park staff Ron Anundson, Jason Murvine, and new MMSP Superintendent Jeff Davidson.

Treasurer Tevis Smith followed with treasury report balances as of December, 2015 as follows:

Local Account Balance $2,288.25

Raleigh Account Balance $1,716.87

**Total $4,005.12**

It was noted that FMMSP follows the calendar year as their fiscal year, so this balance represented closing amount for fiscal year 2015.

Minutes from the August, 2015 meeting were previously posted on the FMMSP website on August 23, 2015. For those members who may not have read previous minutes, copies were distributed for review. Chair Mullinix made a motion to accept minutes as read, and this motion was seconded by Treasurer Tevis Smith. The minutes were accepted as read.

As noted in the FMMSP bylaws, elections are scheduled to take place at this meeting for officers who may be resigning their positions or rotating off the board. Tevis Smith, who has served as Treasurer of FMMSP since its reorganization, will resign his position. Chair Mullinix thanked Tevis for the wonderful job he has done and reported that Tevis had gone over and above in balancing and reporting the financial records, keeping track of all memberships, and responding to donors with thank you notes and tax documentation. Tevis will be missed in this position. Chair Mullinix made a motion to elect Janet Davis, a serving director for the past two years, for the position of Treasurer. This nomination was seconded by Lynn Suida and the motion unanimously carried. Tevis and Janet will work together to transition this position. One additional director position was noted with a nomination to replace Walt Deppe with Jack McCrae. A motion was made to accept Mr. McCrae by Chair Mullinix, and seconded by Tevis Smith. The motion unanimously carried.

The current FMMSP Webmaster, Phil W. Lowder, has expressed that he wishes to resign from his current position. Chair Mullinix expressed her deep appreciation for the outstanding job Phil has done with the FMMSP website, the Facebook page, as well as maintenance of membership files. In June, 2012, he purchased a domain (morrowmountain.org) and server space with Site5 at a combined cost of $100 per year. Phil has paid for and maintained this domain and server space for the last four years amounting to $400 total. Chair Mullinix suggested that Phil be reimbursed for the cost of maintaining this domain and server space, and motioned to reimburse Phil W. Lowder for the total costs of this. Tanya Davis seconded the motion with all members unanimously in agreement. The domain is anticipated to expire if not registered again in June, 2017 and Phil has agreed to a transition a transfer of the domain to FMMSP. Chair Mullinix will be in touch with Phil to provide him an update from this meeting. Brief discussion followed about available possibilities for replacing this most important Webmaster position.

Members were delighted to hear that Chair Mullinix accepted the Locke Craig award on behalf of the work accomplished by the organization. This award was presented at the December 1, 2015 meeting held at Haw River State Park, and represented an exceptional spirit of dedication to public service and a commitment to conservation. Other who joined Chair Mullinix at the Award Ceremony included former Park Superintendent, Greg Schneider, Ranger Ron Anundson, and FMMSP Vice-Chair, Robert Flake. During our meeting, Ron Anundson spoke of the great work achieved by FMMSP and the distinguished honor of receiving this noteworthy award and recognition.

Chair Mullinix discussed the NC Connect bond to be included on the ballot for voters on March 15, 2016. The General Assembly has consistently underfunded North Carolina’s State Parks, so it was noted this bond is very important not only for state parks, but for state infrastructure as well. North Carolina Friends of State Parks was hugely instrumental in the establishment of this bond, and FSP has asked all local Friends organizations to rally in support of this upcoming bond.

Chair Mullinix shared with members that FMMSP created a PowerPoint presentation to take on the road to any group interested. She asked members to be aware of this and if anyone needed a speaker or presenter, please notify her in an effort to help spread the word about the organization. The PP presentation provides an overview of park history, the mission of FMMSP, and includes a brief summary of the economic impact of MMSP on the Stanly County area.

Patterson Nursery has donated three native trees to be planted at the park entrance. One tree is a Dogwood, and the other two are Redbud trees. The gift is valued at $300 and Treasurer Tevis Smith will send a tax valuation of the gift to Patterson Nursery. Brief conversation was exchanged between members and Ron Anundson about getting the trees planted as soon as possible.

Chair Mullinix spoke about a community gift supported periodically by Peter Asciutto and his business called Vac & Dash. Peter contributes a percentage of his sales (Giving Tuesday) to an organization in need, and in conversation, Chair Mullinix noted that FMMSP was one of the groups identified for a potential donation by his company. FMMSP greatly appreciates continued support from Peter, and would like to invite him to a future meeting to discuss potential cooperative efforts to bring in additional runs and races. Peter has been hugely instrumental in sponsoring and promoting many runs in the region, so perhaps through his experience and expertise, and FMMSP volunteers, plans can come together to promote runs in the region and benefit all involved. Ranger Jason Murvine commented on advantages of competitive and qualifying sanctioned runs and the potential to appeal to a broad range of participants in hosting such an event.

John Young provided an update of the computer system and software purchased by FMMSP for the purpose of digitally archiving historic photos and documents. Ron Anundson spoke about a few of the stumbling blocks for this software to operate properly. John suggested that we contact the Computer Visions representative to meet with park staff for additional training. He noted that the representative charges $60 per hour for training. A motion was made by Chair Mullinix to allot $180.00 from FMMSP budget to cover a maximum of three (3) hours additional training for park staff. Derrick Davis seconded the motion and support for this was unanimous from members. Ron elaborated briefly on the stand-alone archiving system, as opposed to connecting to the current system provided by the state. He noted some consideration of installing “hot spots” in the park for visitor connectivity, but there are pros and cons to each, and lots to be reviewed and considered before moving forward.

Vice Chair, Robert Flake, was not present for the meeting, but a brief update on the Land Trust of Central North Carolina was provided by John Young. John is currently serving as a board member for the Friends of State Parks, and with great pleasure announced that Travis Morehead, a Stanly County native, has been named the new Executive Director of the Land Trust of Central North Carolina. Travis brings to this position 15 years of land use planning and experience, and will serve Stanly County and a surrounding nine-county region. There is much enthusiasm for future cooperative efforts and achievements to further enhance and preserve valuable natural resources of this region.

Several new FMMSP projects and programs were presented by Chair Mullinix for membership discussion. One of the new projects discussed was an effort to update the photos currently displayed in the MMSP lodge. Only one of the photos shown now is actually taken at Morrow Mountain. Local photographer, David Hearne, has taken some spectacular photos of the park, so if he is willing to share, his photos could be enlarged and mounted to replace the current photos. There are five presently displayed (4 vertical and 1 horizontal), so with everyone in support, Vanessa will contact David Hearne and research costs for replacing those now displayed. The one horizontal photo over the fireplace could be larger than the one that is there now.

Janet Davis reported on the first Zumbathon fundraiser to be held at 10:00 a.m. in the MMSP Lodge on Saturday, March 12, 2016. Janet noted 10 instructors, along with students, will be attending from surrounding regions. For many of these participants, it will be their first time to visit the park. Therefore, in an effort to regionally promote MMSP, Janet asked that park literature be available for those attending. Janet asked to begin setting up in the lodge on the evening of Friday, March 11, 2016. She also is in the process of acquiring donations of bottled water and door prizes to be raffled to participants throughout the day. Zumbathon fundraisers have become quite popular, and Janet is hopeful that this will be a success for FMMSP.

Unfortunately, Morrow Mountain has had its share of damage due to storms over the last several years. The latest flooding in early January 2016, produced major damage to the fishing pier located near the boat landing. This pier is used extensively by park visitors, so everyone feels it is important to secure funding to reconstruct the pier. Ron Anundson spoke about the construction of the pier approximately nine years ago. That construction was completed through materials donated through Progress Energy, and inmate labor. Ron is hopeful that while monies are not available at this time for reconstruction, future budgets will allow for rebuilding the pier. As a side note, Ron mentioned the frequently used island in front the MMSP boathouse is now submerged underwater, with little left but photos. Additionally, Ron briefly mentioned Old Fashioned Day to be held in November, and again, asked for thoughts and suggestions about how to enhance and expand that event with new vendors and demonstrations from days past.

John Young presented information about Stanly County’s 175th Anniversary Celebration. Monthly events in celebration of the anniversary are being planned, and Morrow Mountain State park will be part of this anniversary celebration during the Month of May. On Saturday, May 14, 2016, the Kron House will be opened to the general public from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Joyce Lambert, a local historian with extensive knowledge regarding the Kron family, will be available for a brief presentation for guests that day. No registration is necessary to attend this event. Additional plans are underway for a morning and afternoon trail hike to include a hike and information on the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) Camp located on the mountain. John suggested it may be a good day for FMMSP to sell drinks, etc. as a small fundraiser for FMMSP.

Chair Mullinix encouraged any interested to consider the purchase of a Friends of State Parks License Plate when renewing. For each FSP license plate sold, a total of $20 is provided to Friends of State Parks. As FMMSP have received much grant support from FSP, funds from the sale of the license plates do provide significant financial support to FSP, ultimately supporting all of North Carolina’s state parks.

One of the last under takings for discussion was the proposal to expand our current Adopt-a-Highway program to include Morrow Mountain Road. She expressed disappointment over the trash and debris often present in that area, and suggested speaking to Ken Knight about expanding this effort.

There are still dreams of renovating the old CCC barracks currently in disrepair at MMSP. Park officials noted while it would be quite an advantage to have functional barracks again, there is lots involved in restoring them and bringing them to code. While park staff and FMMSP members would ultimately like to see this accomplished, it will obviously take a huge amount of resources and planning in order for this to occur. For now, we will keep dreaming and hoping for this project to one day become a reality.

Dates for FMMSP 2016 meetings were discussed, but no specific dates were set forward for additional meetings. This was tabled for later discussion. Member comments continued about how to better secure corporate contributions and grant opportunities to support costly projects such as the barrack reconstruction. These conversations are certainly ongoing.

With no further business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Davis, Secretary

Friends of Morrow Mountain State Park