

Friends of Seven Bends State Park
Public Meeting Minutes
February 3, 2021
Facilitated by Juli Bowers

1) Welcome and Introductions

The meeting commenced at 5:30 pm, via zoom. Juli introducing herself to the group. She retired as an accountant at Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC) and attained her VA Master Naturalist certification 3 years ago. The Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (FNFSR) staff was introduced by David, the members of the Seven Bends Committee (SBC) were introduced, and Wesley Drummond, Maintenance Ranger at the Park, was also introduced.

2) Updates and Catch-Up of 2020 Happenings

a) FNFSR-FSBSP relationship and structure was explained by David Brotman. The Seven Bends Committee is an extension of the FNFSR Board of Directors. The SBC is the decision making/operational committee of Friends of Seven Bends State Park (FSBSP). FSBSP is a program of FNFSR.

b) Park Update (Tom Stevens and Veronica Flick)

- Seven Bends State Park (SBSP) is a satellite park of the Shenandoah River State Park (SRSP). Veronica Flick is the Park manager of both SRSP and SBSP.
- A soft opening of FSBSP occurred in April 2020, covid having wiped out the formal opening. SBSP is the 39th State Park in Virginia. Between April and Dec 2020, SBSP has had over 70,000 visitors (this being a scientific algorithm based on traffic count, employee activity, visits to both entrances, and average number of persons in each vehicle). A tentative date of May 1, 2021, has been whispered for a park dedication, this being the anniversary of the 2020 scheduled opening.
- The Park is still under state guidance of a 10 person max in all gatherings, including outdoor settings.
- There are several projects underway at the Park, including:
 - River's Way Natural Playground. Ground breaking will take place in Feb 2021.
 - Riverside trail upgrades, funded through grant monies from the DuPont settlement, have been planned to make them ADA compliant/accessible and to create observation/fishing platforms. There has been extensive volunteer assistance with trail maintenance throughout 2020.
 - Riverside cleanups, wire removal, and trail maintenance on a regular basis, involving small groups of volunteers has occurred throughout 2020 and throughout the Park.
- The state volunteer registration system has been overhauled by DCR. Registering on an individual basis is required to volunteer at the Park and is important for tracking volunteer hours at the Park – the hours help with funding of the Park and its staff, and with community support. Volunteer participation is covered under DCR liability insurance in case of accident, and is therefore important to the volunteers themselves.
- The North Fork Conservation Corps, geared towards youth 14-17, had teenagers involved in service work that alternated weekly with recreational/educational activities. This program will

be extended during the 2021 spring with two additional programs, and again in summer with one additional program.

- The Smithsonian Project, reaching out for host sites for practicum or intern students (George Mason students), had those students look at the agricultural contract at the Park. Researching agricultural practices and best management practices, the students developed protocol that has been incorporated into the contracts.

c) FSBSP Update (Juli)

- The SBC was formed on March 30, 2020; its purpose is to provide oversight and direction to FSBSP.
- Launch Seven Bends was the initial endeavor – planning for the Park’s formal opening.
- Facebook and Instagram accounts have been established. VColunteers active on social media are encouraged to “like” and “share” posts.
- A logo contest was held. Debra Cooper designed the new FSBSP logo.
- The FNFSR Board of Directors recognized the SBC as a standing committee of FNFSR with a change to the FNFSR Bylaws, and approved a concise statement for FSBSP’s use on social media.
- Lynne Crumpacker designed a rack card that is now being used by FSBSP for promotion and has been distributed to several locations, including the kiosks at both Park entrances.
- Two volunteer workdays – invasive removal - were held during Oct and Nov, 2020.
- An interest survey was emailed to all volunteers. At that time, only seven responses were received, but the SBC is still interested in volunteers’ expertise and interest.
- The Shenandoah County Board has given its approval to continue the quest to have an 8-mile stretch of the North Fork designated as a scenic river.
- Kasey Lichliter was instrumental in the building and installation of a bluebird trail at the Park. Volunteers were trained in the monitoring process last spring, but monitoring was cancelled by covid. Monitoring will begin in March of 2021.
- Blake Trump, a Woodstock resident and Eagle Scout, established two picnic pads that are in shaded areas of the Park.
- Shenandoah Chapter of Virginia Master Naturalists (VMN) planted native pollinator gardens around the LOVE sign at the Lupton Road entrance.
- Planning is in the works to develop mountain-bike trails.
- Significant donations to FSBSP:
 - Muse Vineyard art show, coordinated by Ellen Fairchild-Flugel -- \$1300.
 - Garden Club of Virginia - \$12,00 dedicated to the River’s Way project.
 - Woodstock Lions Club, with matching funds from Lions Club of Virginia \$6,000 dedicated to the River’s Way project.

3) Upcoming Events

a) Valentine’s Day LOVE Sign Photo-Op

Volunteers will be at the Park on Feb 14, from 11-3 pm, to take photos for those visitors requesting photos, and will post photos to facebook for download. FSBSP and Virginia State Park stickers, brochures, “I love Virginia State Park” backpacks, and parking passes will be available - free – while the supplies last. A donation container will be available for those wishing to donate toward the free swag.

b) Trail Maintenance Volunteer Day (March or April) dates have not yet been set - tentative for second weekend in March. An email registration will be sent out to the FSBSP volunteer list.

- c) Earth Day - Sat. April 24 - theme this year is "Restore Our Earth". Workday format will host two sessions, 9-noon and 1-4. FSBSP has been asked to coordinate/host this event and is in need of volunteers. An email request will be sent out to the FSBSP volunteer list.
 - d) Seven Bends Family Adventure Race by Rev3Endurance Race Co. – Sat. July 10 -- is a 12 mile course to run, bike, and paddle thru Woodstock and SBSP. Rev3 partners with organizations to host smaller races, very family oriented, with components geared to kids and families. Volunteers needed...more to come in the future.
- 4) Other Volunteer Opportunities
- a) Social Media – previously discussed
 - b) Education Programs
 - FNFSR has started planning summer camps and is looking for more volunteers. Camps are scheduled for June 14 to June 25.
 - Meeting participant suggestions include:
 - The apiary at the park is a teaching apiary maintained by the Shenandoah Beekeepers.
 - NFCC will be cleaning Camp Lupton, which has areas that would be well suited for campfire cooking classes.
 - The Woodstock Mosaic, in partnership with VECCA, is creating mosaics that symbolize and portray the river. Planned mosaics include the LOVE sign and the River's Way Playground, and are to be 3' x 8'. They will be put up on the outside of Woodstock Café.
 - Develop Camp Lupton history and interpretive signage, and the Woodstock reservoir interpretive signage.
 - Other suggested volunteer opportunities, as leader or participant, include bird walks, photography, nature hikes, spring wildflower hikes, tree identification, campfire cooking, history of the Park, ie Camp Lupton, farming, reservoirs, past residents.
 - c) Other Areas of Volunteer Interest and Expertise - previously discussed
- 5) Update on Launch Seven Bends, Park Dedication, and River's Way Natural Play Area and Outdoor Classroom – previously discussed
- 6) Fundraising Ideas – consensus to discuss further at next meeting.
- Weekly Walkers Club for walkers, runners, walkers using walkers, walkers with strollers or children; sponsor walkers with donations; dress up your dog on a special day and sponsor a dog; sponsor by the mile or by the hour.
 - Keep fundraising very specific as to purpose of the funds raised.
 - The bench topic has come up more than anything else. Fundraise for a bench at a time. Memorial benches with name plates. Decorate/paint benches and auction off.
 - "Walk to Sit".
- 7) Brainstorm FSBSP Projects/Events/Activities
Is Leadership Shenandoah County still active? If so, how can we connect with this group?
- 8) Meeting adjourned at 7:05pm.