

Friends of Seven Bends State Park

Open Meeting Minutes Saturday, December 4, 2021 Lupton Road Picnic Pavilion, SBSP Lunch provided



Facilitated by Juli Bowers, Virginia Master Naturalist

“The focus of Friends of Seven Bends State Park is to support and advocate for the educational and recreational use of the Park for all.”

General E-mail Address: fsbsp@fnfsr.org and Website: www.fnfsr.org/fsbsp

Contact information:

FSBSP: Megan Church, Chair (mchurch5002@gmail.com)

FNFSR: David Brotman, Executive Director (david.brotman@fnfsr.org, 540-252-9545)

Julia Sargent, Volunteer Coordinator (julia.sargent@fnfsr.org, 443-223-7199)

SBSP: Tom Stevens, Chief Ranger (thomas.stevens@dcr.virginia.gov, 540-335-0476)

1. Welcome by Juli Bowers

- a. Introductions: Attendees introduced themselves to entire gathering; new SBC members were introduced to entire gathering by Juli.
- b. Intentions and Goals for open FSBSP meetings:
 - Informational
 - Time for attendees to ask questions/give suggestions. Attendees are encouraged to email contacts listed above if they are not comfortable speaking during the meeting.
 - Inspire active involvement in Park activities.
 - Set dates for future winter open meetings - Decision to move standing date from the first Wednesday, bi-monthly, due to dark nights and cold weather, to the second Saturday was agreed upon by consensus. The decision to hold the meeting on the second Saturday was made to allow Chief Ranger Tom Stevens to be in attendance. Also, the suggestion was made that each meeting follow a planned workday at the Park.

2. Updates

- a. SBSP Updates (Megan Church, Wesley Drummonds)
 - Public meeting regarding the Master Plan for the Park: The Master Plan Meeting for SBSP has been scheduled for Wednesday, Dec 15, at 6:30pm, via zoom. The Master Plan is the long-range plan for infrastructure, amenities, roads *within* the Park, funding, and staffing. Roads leading to the access bridges will not be part of this discussion. Public feedback is requested via the chatbox, during and after the meeting, by email comments to bill.conkle@dcr.virginia.gov, or by written comments to DCR in Richmond. A link to register for this meeting will be placed on the FSBSP website and facebook page.
 - Volunteer hours need to be logged into the State system: There still exists a need to determine the best method to facilitate this process; a volunteer is needed to be a hotline resource for anyone having difficulties. Logging hours is beneficial to the Park regarding programs, facilities and finances.
 - Bass Bight Trail renovations: The trail work is to be completed by February or March. The trail is being finished similar to Gokotta Trail with stone dust topping, and will be ADA accessible. Completion of the observation pads will occur at a later date.

- Scary Stories (rescheduled from Oct 30 to Nov 2 due to high water): A workday was held on Oct 16 to clear brush from around the fire pit and to renovate the area around the fire pit. Benches were installed around the fire pit at a later date by Park staff. The event included pumpkin painting, roasting hot dogs and marshmallows, and scary stories by Warren Halvorson.
- PlaySpace: The Rotary Club held a workday on Nov 13th to install additional features, including an outdoor classroom. The Park is now searching for a general contractor to assist in the installation of some of the larger features at each bend of the river, ie the Woodstock Tower.
- Inclement weather: Be mindful of weather conditions and refer to the SBSP website (not the Park facebook page) for possible road closures.

b. FNFSR Updates (Julia)

- Filibuster Distillery, Maurertown, was fined as part of a settlement for illegal toxic dumping into a tributary of the North Fork. The portion of the settlement received by FNFSR will be used for education and river monitoring.
- Autumn lecture series, the overarching theme of which is "The State of the River", is winding down to the last lecture. This lecture is scheduled Dec 16th at 6pm via zoom. John Crockett of the Shenandoah Valley Regional Water Supply Plan will present "Northern Shenandoah Valley Water Supply Plant". The lecture series presentations are all on the FNFSR YouTube channel.

3. Continuing Business

- a. Chronolog update: Linda Walcroft has taken over management of the pictures uploaded to the Chronolog website. The story about FSBSP has been written and is under review; after review, it will be forwarded to Linda for posting on the Chronolog website. This story will be frequently updated.
- b. Benches sub-committee report: Cecelia Latham reported that donations toward benches have been received. The sub-committee is discussing different styles of benches. The SBC wants to fundraise specific to benches. The Walker's Club, see section 4.d below, is a program being planned to begin in early spring, specifically to raise funds to support the construction of future benches. The backed-bench on River Bend Rise Trail was built by an Eagle Scout who is in the process of developing plans for that style bench; Matt Kowalski volunteered to construct several of this style. A cost estimate will be determined once the plans are complete.
- c. Monarch Waystation: Joan Chapman reported that she and Megan Church planted Common Milkweed rhizomes in an area near the LOVE sign. She harvested pods from Common Milkweed found on the trail edge near the Camp Lupton cemetery that they also distributed the pods in the designated area. Cecelia Latham donated Butterfly Milkweed pods and seeds that Megan disbursed. The area will need to have boundaries delineated for maintenance purposes. Come springtime, once the milkweeds sprout, FSBSP can request certification of the habitat from the Monarch Waystation Program. Volunteers are being sought to help maintain the area - weeding, mulching, etc.

4. Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities and Workdays

- a. SBC is changing membership in the very near future. The Committee is seeking additional members.
- b. Volunteers are asked to promote FSBSP and the SBSP by sharing our social media on facebook and instagram.

- c. WIN (Women in Nature) program (Megan Church) is planned for Saturday afternoons for six consecutive weeks, April 16, 2022 thru May 21, 2022. Each week will focus on a different activity. These activities are planned for women 21 years of age and older and will include kayaking, nature art, outdoor cooking, fly fishing... This will be an FSBSP limited fundraiser, each session will charge \$5 and the fees collected will be used to fund similar activities of this nature in the future.
- d. Walkers' Club: Susan Collins has volunteered to lead this endeavor. Joan Chapman previously communicated with Kyla Sine, Director of Rehab Services at Valley Health, and was informed that the VH organization does not partner with other organizations in promoting programs such as the Walker's Club. Ms Sine suggested the SBC contact the Director at SMH Fitness Center, Erin Kalbach, in Woodstock. The Fitness Center could help advertise the program to its members. These members might be interested in joining the walkers and/or volunteering to assist with the recordkeeping needed to document participation in this program.

5. Upcoming Events and Programs

DECEMBER

12th: Forest Therapy – hosted by SBSP - 2pm-4pm – canoe launch at Lupton Road entrance

16th: NSV Regional Commission presents: Northern Shenandoah Valley Water Supply Plan – hosted by FNFSR - 6pm-7pm via Zoom

18th: Full Moon Forest Therapy – hosted by SBSP - 4pm-6pm – Lupton Road picnic shelter

JANUARY

1st: First Day Hike – hosted by SBSP – 9am-12noon – Lupton Road entrance

FEBRUARY

12th: Workday at the Park – hosted by FSBSP - 9am-12pm.

12th: FSBSP Public Meeting - hosted by FSBSP - 12pm-1pm - location dependent on work site location

DURING THE WINTER MONTHS...

SBSP is planning a winter program approximately every other week. Check dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/seven-bends website for details and registration as information is posted.

Jan 29 – Forest Therapy

Feb 5 - DWR "I Talon You" Raptor Program

Feb 26 – Forest Therapy

March 12 – Wilderness Survival/Animal Tracking with Wayne and Ryan

April 9 to May 21 – WIN program

April 23 – Earth Day

May 2 - Fire Day Program

May 21 – National Kids to Parks Day

June 4 – CBD/National Trails Day

June 15 – State Park Birthday

June 18 – VSP History and Culture Day

July 9 – Kayaking

Aug 10 – Smores Day

Sept 10 – Kayaking

Sept 10 – Girl Scout Weekend

Sept 25 – National Public Lands Day

- 6. The next FSBSP public meeting is scheduled for Feb 12, 2022, 12:00-1:00pm, at the Hollingsworth entrance. Bring your own lunch - hot drinks, water, and snacks will be provided.