

MINUTES

**GRAHAM CREEK NATURE PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD
GRAHAM CREEK INTERPRETIVE CENTER
23030 WOLF CREEK DRIVE
FOLEY, ALABAMA 36535
CONFERENCE ROOM
APRIL 13, 2017
5:30 P.M.**

MEETING

Call to Order/Roll Call

Chairman Zana Price called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. Members present: Homer Singleton, Tim Closson, and Tommy Patterson. Absent: Phillip Hinesley, Gregg Knight and Chad Watkins. Others present: Leslie Gahagan, Jackie McGonigal and Recording Secretary, Brenda Shambo.

MINUTES

Approve Minutes of January 5, 2017

Tommy Patterson made a motion to approve the January 5, 2017 minutes and Homer Singleton seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

Educational and Event Programs:

Leslie asked us to look at the Park Events Calendar so that the Committee can see what all is going on at the Preserve. Several events are scheduled for April and May, we even have some paying events such as weddings, and rentals in the Pavilion. People are getting more and more use of the Park, so we are busy! Jackie discussed the Camps that are scheduled, 2 Explorer Camps and only 1 Pioneer Camp, due to lack of attendance from last year. Next year to get more involvement from the older kids, we will keep the environmental education element but will add some adventure style camps, such as low ropes course, team building and leadership, survival and wilderness training, fishing and kayaking. It's important to get the kids out on the water and in the watershed so that they can learn and gain appreciation for what the preserve has to offer. Several Field Trips are scheduled, the June calendar is full, with the schools doing the summer programs, they are looking for free places to take the kids, and the Preserve is completely booked and will have to start turning people away. Volunteers are needed, there is just not enough staff to accommodate so many kids on these field trips, and parents expect at least 1 Counselor with 4 to 5 kids, some parents have even stayed and helped out. Volunteers need to have knowledge about the preserve, so we are reaching out to the Friends of the Preserve.

Also, for the older kids we are going to do more Archery Classes, Cody Casalina is to come out and give them some one on one training in disc golf, plus giving them their own discs.

Trail Trots have been well attended, again volunteers are needed that are familiar with the Preserve that will come out on a regular basis and help with those field trips. Tommy asked Jackie if she was getting any feedback or support from the Friends of the Preserve, she said that Donna is working with the Trail Map to make like a Treasure Map for the younger kids to locate native plants and trees. They have also donated supplies for the Field Trips and Camps.

Service Projects:

Jackie has been working with the Boy Scouts not only for their Eagle Scout Programs but with other Service Projects. The Eagle Scout candidates are planning or implementing projects including nice directional signs for the trails, Arbor for the Walkway, Possum Enclosure, Wildlife Habitat and another is planning to build a triple swing for the Memorial Walk.

Trail Maps:

Zana printed the Trail Maps for the Preserve, they are great and were so badly needed by the snow birds and even disc golfers, some were walking in circles to find all the baskets. Several Board Members commented on how well the maps looked. Jackie worked hard getting the 3 Main Trails to be exact, they are color coded and easy to read. This was a Community Mapping Project and staff worked with GIS and several community members on this project. Each year the board would like to see the map updated with the new trails and items that have been added to the Preserve. Leslie said that next financial year they would like to have Rack Cards made up for the Waterways, to give to people going out on the water, this would give them directions and distances to paddle to Wolf Creek and the Bays. Disc Golf Map with the Pads and Baskets for both courses were just completed, which was requested by several citizens.

Venture Magazine:

Leslie gives us a copy to read, we made these to email out to our mailing list, and we've received lots of good feedback. The email list comes from our Sign-In Book, Web Site Page, Facebook, and then people sharing the information. We started out writing a Newsletter and Jackie writes articles like a Science Teacher, so we came up with this idea. We want to get these out before our big events in the spring and fall. All the staff writes articles so we have put this together ourselves.

Citizens have requested more articles about our events, we want to do one on the Boy Scouts and all their projects they have done for the Preserve, if any of you have ideas on articles please let us know.

DISC Golf Courses:

Leslie and Jackie pointed out areas on the map showing us the locations of the 2 Disc Golf Courses, the 1st one is the Prairie which is the beginner course, and then the 2nd is the Pro Course which is 18 holes. The Pro Course has gone through some changes and holes renumbered, due to the Philomene Homes Road is now complete and the Creek Crossing.

Last month Tim and the Casalina Family brought out a couple of 4 time world champions to play on a Wednesday afternoon, we had 105 competitors who paid \$40 to play and meet these fellow Disc Golfers. We have these two amazing courses and to get this kind of support was great. In November, 2017 we hope to have 200 plus participants, they will need 3 courses to play, so they will play on our 2 courses and then they will have to go to Glen Lakes and play with temporary baskets for the 3rd course.

Leslie shows us an area of 80 acres on the map that is a nightmare with poachers, no fencing, wetlands, and it's restricted due to access problems. The plan for this land was for a Mountain Bikers Trail and the trail is there, but there is not enough traffic to keep the vegetation under control. So we got with the Mountain Bikers about making a tight loopy 18 hole disc golf course in there to get some foot traffic to help sustain it. We will need to create a small gravel parking lot for about 10 to 15 vehicles, on this end by Russian Road for access. In a couple of months they will start construction on 2 15 X 30 Pavilions, an Insurance Agency is constructing them to test out some shingles for wear and tear. It's good for us because this will give us two places that we can use as shelters from the weather.

In another area there is an old carport that we can use as a shelter as well with a little work. Leslie stated that she thinks this would be a good fit for this area. I will have to go to Council for additional money for the new disc course, we will have to buy the baskets, and cement pads. Between the Disc Golfers and Mountain Bikers, they have already committed to building the course.

Homer made a motion that Leslie go to Council for the additional money to build the new Disc Golf Course on this land. Tommy seconded and it passed unanimously.

Now we have to come up with a name for this area, we have The Preserve, The Prairie, The Pro Course, some of the Board said what about The Back 80, or The Wilderness Course.

Organized Camp Outs:

Leslie said they've had multiple requests for Camp Outs, but Jackie doesn't have much luck with the weather, they have all been rained out. What about planning to have quarterly campouts? Several thought that may be too much, so let's say maybe twice a year, we would ask them to sign-up and pay a nominal fee. Jackie said she would like to hold them in conjunction with the Wilderness 1st Aid Weekend, try to get Nelson with the Fire Department to come out and train people in Basic 1st Aid and CPR Certifications in an outdoor

environment. Let's think about scheduling in December and we would use the Boy Scout area where the fire pit is located, not up front.

Other Business:

Leslie and Jackie both discussed that they had received some negative feedback on the web-site and on Facebook about Graham Creek not sponsoring a Gopher Tortoise Day on April 10th, they replied back to the individual and said they would plan to do something next year, did they have any ideas, no response back.

Leslie was excited to share that after we got that big rain last month that the 8 pipes that were put in at the Creek Crossing worked and the road didn't flood out.

Next Meeting Date – Will be on Thursday, August 10, 2017 at 5:30 p.m.

VISITOR COMMENTS

There were no visitor comments.

ADJOURN

Tim Closson made a motion to adjourn and Tommy Patterson seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously. Hearing no further comments the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Brenda W. Shambo
Recording Secretary