

Raccoon Creek Water Trail Association Meeting Notes

Thursday October 12, 2006

Uncle Buck's Dance Barn, New Marshfield

1. Newly elected officers:

Chair: Molly Gurien

Vice Chair: Suzanne Fisher

Treasurer: Glenn Stout

Secretary: Sarah Watling

2. Kathy Schooley shared a slide show of her September trip to the Boundary Waters in Minnesota; the most heavily used Wilderness Area in the U.S.

3. The RCWTA's first fundraiser, the Paw paw Pick-n-Paddle earned \$80. The official event met at the Hope School on September 17th. Participants included visitors from Vermont, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Most of the paw paws weren't ripe for the event but the two weekends following allowed us to collect 80 pounds of fruit.

The Department of Watercraft also recognized the Paw paw Pick-n-Paddle as "Most Innovative Fundraiser" of a water trail group!

Things to consider for next year:

- Sending small groups out over the last two weekends in September.
- Establish a central drop off point and designate a 'runner' to get the paw paws to market.
- Expand the picking area along the Moonville Rail Trail and Hewett Fork.
- Seek matching funds from local businesses since we intend to have official nonprofit status.

4. Congratulations to James Massey who won the Raccoon Creek hat raffle at the Paw paw festival!

5. The Timber and Outdoor Show float was a success with 40-50 folks present for canoe demonstrations at Hocking College. Very special thanks to Ohio Outback who arranged the event.

6. ROAR Day (Rural Ohio Appalachia Revisited) at Lake Hope will be on Saturday, October 28 at Lake Hope State Park in Vinton County. The RCWTA will have canoes at the Hope School for those interested to take on short trips in the Hope School area. For an event schedule visit: <http://www.lakehopestatepark.com/ROARad1.pdf>

7. An adventure race was discussed as a fundraiser in partnership with the Moonville Rail Trail group. The possible categories: Canoeing, running, biking, and horseback riding. A saddle, paddle, and straddle race or a peddler, paddler, and packer race were thoughts. Potential collaboration with OU's Outdoor Recreation Center and Pete at the Athens' Bike Center. Lake Hope would be the back-up water site.

8. Water Trail Designation discussion:

- Take an inventory of existing put-ins and take-outs, likely spots for public use, historical markers, bridges, etc along the entire length of Raccoon Creek. Establish a

'recommended' and 'not recommended' list of put-ins for public use. Identify public parking and where NOT to park.

- A reporter from the Gallia County Tribune has plans to do a piece on the technical and water trail designation projects.
- Identify landowners and begin sharing information with them through members of the RCWTA, let's all start talking with our neighbors about this project and process. Important topics to discuss with landowners include Ohio's water use statutes and landowner liabilities of public access to the creek.
- Prepare for and schedule a public meeting with landowners to address public concerns.
- Encourage landowners to share interests in the water trail with local and county political leaders to gather support.
- A draft letter to landowners exists for mail distribution as the project progresses. *Since we only get one shot with some landowners, it's important that we make it a good one.*
- Invite landowners to go on a float with the RCWTA.
- It was suggested that the RCWTA take responsibility for activities such as garbage collection to address concerns landowners might have.
- Begin research on how other water trail groups, locally and nationally, have completed their designation process successfully. Invite speakers with similar experiences.
- This year we will focus on the Zaleski State Forest section. We need to investigate how to fulfill a 25 year maintenance requirement with Zaleski (potential collaborations with Sojourners and/or Outback).

9. Access points:

- Deadline for access points grant is April 1, 2007. Funds are not released for 2 years after award.
- Hocking River Commission is also working on an access points grant. If they are having difficulty securing a 25 year maintenance agreement, maybe this should be brought to ODNR's attention as a hindering requirement.
- There is interest from the Division of Wildlife.
- For the Crow Road section, we could use a pot of motorized access sites funds for maintenance.

10. Topics for the next meeting on November 2nd, 2006 at the Albany Library:

- What are the official designation regulations?
- What are the access points regulations?
- How much of the inventory is complete (with maps and visual aids) and how much do our members know about important sites?
- Establish groups to divide the tasks of inventories and access points grant writing.
- Deciding if we're going to identify access points before we attempt securing official designation.
- Deciding if we need money/fundraising for the designation/access points projects.