

MINUTES
MRATC Club Meeting
April 13, 2022

Club Attendees:

At WCPL: Anne Maio, Gerry Davis, Sharon Trumbley, Bunny Mederios, Janet Gibbons, Beth Minnick, George Kilgore, and Frank White.

On Zoom: Doug Levin, Carol Broderson, Emily Mayo, Robert Hagen, Jim Warden, Mary Gale, and Randy Goodman.

Partners: Emily Mayo (Trail Center Supervisor), Jerry Kyle (ATC) , Jim Baum (Ridgerunner)

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Committee Chair, Gerry Davis. The hybrid meeting was conducted at Washington County Public Library and by Zoom.

The February 2022 minutes were approved as written. Motion to approve made by Sharon Trumbley and seconded by Anne Maio.

Treasurer's Report – Gloria Surber

Previous balance: \$21,454.13

(Corrected to \$21,814.36 due to PayPal contributions of 351.68, Amazon contribution of 8.38, and interest of .17. These all occurred before date of Feb meeting but I had not received the bank statement.) Expenses since February: 0; deposits since February report: \$731.01 (2 memberships by checks, 6 memberships through PayPal, interest, and memorial gifts); balance as of 4/12/22: \$22,545.37; Vanguard: \$24,664.91; Trimpi Trust: \$4,693.57; Stacey Levin Memorial: \$2,430.00 ; Will Corbin Memorial Fund: \$450.00.

Steering Committee Reports, Plans

Trails – Doug Levin:

The pit privy cabin at Wise was successfully moved over a new pit on Sun. Apr. 3rd, with the help of club members, E&H students and faculty, and a couple of passing hikers. The bog bridge project was postponed due to inclement weather; it is tentatively rescheduled for June 1 or 2. Several club members have signed up for the ATC training on Friday, April 15 in Damascus. Anyone interested in maintenance could benefit by attending. Our Ridgerunner, Jim Baum, started his seasonal work this week, extending to Labor Day. Doug suggested extending his term for at least two weeks, as late summer is a busy time. His salary of \$775 per week could be covered by the club. Jerry Kyle discussed funding options for four weeks. A motion to proceed, details to be worked out, was made by Doug, seconded by Anne Maio, and approved by vote.

Natural Resources – Carol Broderson:

The wildflower hikes began successfully on the New River Trail last Monday, April 11. Club members were joined by a couple of local birders. Sightings included many familiar ephemerals, a broad-winged hawk, and a white deer. There are several upcoming outings planned for the month of May, including Elk Garden on May 2, and a Sunday morning hike as part of the Blue Ridge Discovery Spring Rally.

Outreach - Frank White (for Heidi Dixon-White)

Heidi has been researching Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook for possible club outreach, looking at how these platforms are used by other AT clubs. She has set up a QR code for the Club website for quick scanning by visitors at event booths.

Recreational Activities - Sharon Trumbley

A wildflower hike at the Pinnacle State Park is scheduled for next Monday, April 18.

A possible summer picnic to replace the usual annual Club meeting will be covered later in this meeting.

RPC Representative - Gerry Davis

Those interested in attending the ATC Southern Partnership Meeting in Damascus, April 22-24 need to register for the event.

Privies, composting, and duff - Doug Levin and Jerry Kyle

Doug and Jerry discussed the current state of privies in our section. They are not being utilized properly, according to the Forest Service. Users are filling them with leaves, which inhibit composting and fill the bins faster than needed. To make bins last longer, pine or bark shavings and other composting materials need to be supplied and proper signage explaining their use need to be posted. Other options for privies are being studied by the Forest Service, but so far these are impractical for remote sites. The Konnarock Crew will continue assisting with privy maintenance for the present.

Letters of support to VDOT - Anne Maio

Anne discussed the need for AT pedestrian road safety at MRNRA HQ (Rte. 16) and Rte. 11, Groseclose, and the current projects to meet these needs proposed by VDOT. She made a motion that the club support these projects and volunteered to draft letters of support. This was approved by a quick show of hands.

Memorial in honor of Wil Corbin – Doug Levin, Anne Maio, Emily Mayo

The family of Wil Corbin generously offered Wil's personal axe to be part of a memorial, probably to be located in the new toolroom at the Trail Center. Emily has contacted a local craftsman who can provide an appropriate wooden plaque. Anyone wishing to support the memorial to the remarkable Mr. Corbin can send a check to the club post office box.

Trail Center events and Updates - Emily Mayo

Signup sheets were provided for assistance with popup events June 4 and July 16, as described in the weekly announcements. Volunteers were solicited for the setup and take down of booths for the ATC Southern Partnership meeting, April 22-24 and for the April 22 Friday afternoon hikes. The grand opening of the Center will be held in late August.

Trail Days Booth - Anne Maio

Sign up sheets were provided for shifts at the Trail Days Booth (at the Trail Center), Friday and Saturday, May 13-14.

Earth Day Abingdon - Anne Maio, Bunny Mederios, Frank White

Volunteers were asked to sign up for booth setup, takedown, and shifts for the MRATC booth at Earth Day, Saturday April 23, from 9AM to 1PM.

Club Social Event - Frank White, Heidi Dixon-White, Sharon Trumbley, Emily Mayo

This picnic, replacing the winter annual awards meeting (postponed due to Covid) was discussed. A decision based upon an email tally selected the Backbone Rock shelter as the location. The date, possibly in August, was discussed. Emily will find available dates and report back. A potluck with drinks and barbeque provided was discussed as the probable format.

Review of COVID protocols -- Doug Levin, Sharon Trumbley

While local cases are low currently, the uncertainty about the coming Omicron variant wave has made it difficult to completely loosen the current vaccination policy. Doug explained that for work days protecting older volunteers is more likely to increase turnout than inviting unprotected people at the present. This was discussed and the consensus was to continue the current policy and review again at the next meeting. It was noted that the ATC and MRATC policies differ.

AT VISTA 2023 at ETSU -- Anne Maio

Anne reminded the membership that volunteers will be needed to lead day-long key-swap hikes on our section for this event.

Bear cannister loaner program -- Anne Maio

Some clubs in Georgia and Vermont are using loaner cannisters now. Emily commented that MRATC might use the Damascus Trail Center as a pick up and drop off location, at least by 2023. A bear cannister vendor Bearvault will hold a raffle for a few cannisters at the upcoming Trail Days.

Visitor Use Management - Anne Maio

Anne reported on which trail section VUM reports have been submitted so far. Several are still outstanding. At present we need to have a comprehensive list of reports to proceed.

Volunteer Engagement Plan - Anne Maio and Heidi Dixon-White

Anne reported that she and Heidi have attended four webinars on engagement. They will get together and formulate a plan for MRATC by late May. Hopefully this will help the Club recruit more members.

Next Club Meeting will be Wednesday, July 13 at 7PM. This will be another hybrid meeting, live at the WCPL in Abingdon and via Zoom.

Adjournment at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Jim Warden, substitute secretary