

MINUTES

MRATC First Quarter Meeting

April 12, 2023

Club Attendees: Carol Broderson, Gerry Davis, Robert Hagen, Doug Levin, Anne Maio, Sharon Trumbley, Jim Warden, Frank White, Heidi Dixon-White, George Kilgore, Julie Kroll, Rachel Dwyer, Gloria Surber, Anne Maio, Pat Hensley

Partners: Emily Mayo, ATC, Jerry Kyle, ATC, Greg Ritson, ATC, Julie Kroll, Town of Damascus

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Sharon Trumbley. The meeting was conducted in-person and via Zoom.

The January 2023 minutes were approved with one correction: Outreach – *Heidi* will be checking in to T-shirts. Motion to approve made by Doug Levin and seconded by Robert Hagen.

Treasurer's Report – Gloria Surber

Previous balance: \$16,059.67.

Total expenses since last report: \$810.62

- K-VA-T - \$125.31, \$312.75
- Frank White (RPC) - \$309.56
- USPO - \$63.00

Total deposits since last report: \$929.27

- Memberships: \$340.00
- CAF: \$238.86
- Network for Good - \$30.00
- Randy Goodman Memorial Gifts - \$320
- 1Q Interest - \$0.41

Ending balance as of April 12, 2023: \$16,178.32,

Other funds:

- Vanguard - \$26,081.64 (as of April 11, 2023)
- Trimpi fund - \$1,194.05 (as of March 22, 2023)
- Stacy Levin Memorial Fund - \$1530.00 (\$3780)
- ATC contribution – 0 (\$5,000)
- Kammer gift - \$378.72 (\$1,000)
- Corbin gift - \$695.51 (\$900)

As follow up to the discussion at the January 2023 Board meeting regarding moving some of the Trimpi funds to CDs, Doug Levin reported that he and Gloria Surber have worked to complete the Vanguard paperwork required to allow the Club to purchase CDs through Vanguard. Once activated, signature approval for the revised Vanguard account is granted to Doug and Gloria by the MRATC Board. Doug will

submit the completed forms, MRATC Certificate of Incorporation, and any additional required documentation to Vanguard.

Updates:

Trails – Doug Levin:

Ridge Runner Jim Baum started his 2023 season last week. He has checked the entire section and reported the facilities and trail are in good shape. Club members interested in receiving Jim's weekly reports should let Doug know.

Pine Mountain & Fox Creek areas have been surveyed and a list of outstanding items will be reviewed by Konnarock for the upcoming 4-week season.

Doug confirmed that there will be no Hard Core project during Trail Days 2023. The Club will revisit interest for 2024 at a later date.

Doug indicated that he has seen success in extending the invitation to serve as Trail Monitor (rather than participate on a work crew) to prospective volunteers. This seems a less intimidating approach to getting new folks involved and in some cases has also led to participation on work crews. This would be good to keep in mind during tabling and other outreach opportunities.

The faded map in the kiosk in Grayson Highlands is being replaced.

Natural Resources – Carol Broderson:

The *Intro to Rare Plant Monitoring* hike is scheduled for May 11. Carol and Sharon will be leading a wildflower hike on May 13 in conjunction with the Spring Naturalist Rally. BRDC has a grant for a narrative on rare plants which Carol has been working on and will make available to those who are interested.

Outreach – Heidi Dixon-White:

Two upcoming tabling events: Earth Day, April 22, Abingdon. Heidi and Frank will staff the club booth from 9-1:00. Others are welcome to stop by to help, if interested and available.

Trail Days. May 19-20th – The Club booth will be located at the Trail Center, Friday and Saturday (8:30-5). We will need to fill 2 hr shifts with a least 1-2 members each. Please sign up if you are available. Emily indicated that a variety of activities are planned for the Trail Center over the course of the weekend.

T-shirts – Trailhead Designs (Damascus) has the art work from the Club's 2020 order on file. If there is interest, additional shirts can be ordered (no minimum) for \$14 (short sleeve) and \$17 (long sleeve). There does appear to be some interest in offering shirts for purchase using the previous art work. Depending on interest, we may consider new art for a future printing. Trailhead Designs indicated they could assist with design (cost ~\$100). Heidi will check sizing and color options and relay to members with order details in an upcoming email communication.

Increase in Instagram followers and FB members of ~30 each for the 1Q.

Recreational Activities – Sharon Trumbley

Several hikes with ~6 participants each were held over the first quarter. The flowers are blooming and there are many hikes on the calendar for 2Q!

RPC – Gerry Davis

The RPC meeting started with a hike to Max Patch as a good example of impact and steps being taken to manage it, restore native plants, and improve trails. The local club uses Trail Ambassadors, individuals who spend time in high-use areas to talk with/educate users. Gerry suggested this might be a good volunteer role/fit for some MRATC members.

A number of topics were covered over the course of the weekend including: Visitor Use Management, improving the Konnarock site and base camp, privies (converting all pits to moldering), bear canister use, sawyer training (new curriculum next year), Vol Service Agreement (gives permission for volunteers to be out doing work on the trail), Hazard Trees, new fencing in the Whitetop area (Buzzard Rock and Elk Garden), Hillsborough and Bluemont VA Trail Community designation, pack goats on the AT, and AT Vista in August 2023 at ETSU. The Fall Partnership Meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2023, location TBD.

Other topics:

Leave No Trace – Anne

Anne reported the program (today) was very well done. One notable take-away was to increase posted LNT communications in locations where people linger, e.g. restrooms, kiosks. Friday programming will focus on youth participation. Saturday community engagement will focus on VA Creeper and AT clean-up. MRATC will address the trail and campsites between Straight Branch and Taylor's Valley. Members are encouraged to participate if available, meeting at 8:30 at the Trail Center and finishing up by 12:30.

Campsite inventory, Risk tree assessment, Konnarock, Misc. – Jerry Kyle

Jim Baum and Jerry will be working in the high country to conduct campsite assessments (identify campsite locations, grade impact, and monitor the inventory over time). Interested Club members are welcome to participate.

Risk tree assessment at gathering areas (i.e., locations where individuals gather for 15 min or more) is funded by the NPS and the Mt. Rogers area is targeted. Club members are encouraged to watch for problem trees and relay pics (marked Urgent if high risk) to Doug for future assessment.

The Fox Creek bridge will be replaced, Comer's Creek will not.

Jerry reviewed the Konnarock 2023 Schedule:

- May 19 – 24 and May 27 – Jun 1 – Camp at Pine Mtn and work the trail from Scales.
- July 21 – 26 and July 29 – Aug 3 – Rhododendron Gap area.
- The Club will consider hosting the end of season potluck, possibly Aug 3 (conflicts with AT VISTA) or another day during the final week.
- Club members are always welcome to join the crew for a day/part of a day.

Elk Garden and Fox Creek parking improvements are funded. Will also try to improve Mt Rogers parking on Konnarock Rd. Signing of all road crossings up to highway 71 should be completed soon.

Club Training - Greg Ritson, ATC

Greg is available to facilitate a workshop for the Club. Possible topics include Essential Trail Maintenance and Field Leadership. Doug will query members for additional interests (drainage, etc.) through the Sunday email. Greg needs to firm up his schedule for the year soon and has tentatively scheduled MRATC for July 29th. He does still have other dates available later in the year.

Club Archives – Anne

The Club’s archives have been transferred to the Washington County Historical Society.

AT Vista - Anne

MRATC will lead two sessions of two hikes (Damascus and Channels), pending interest from VISTA participants.

VSA - Anne

US Forest Service VSA has been rewritten and signed off. APPA VSA is in progress.

Silent Auction – Doug

Bidding on Cathy Walker’s X-stiches of native wildflowers will end the Monday following Trail Days.

Randy Goodman’s memorial – Anne

The memorial window box has been funded. Work on procurement and installation is proceeding.

3Q meeting is scheduled for July 12, 7:00 pm. Location TBD.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Anne Maio, MRATC Admin. Asst.

Date