

Five Year Planning Committee Minutes 11/01/2023

Present: Bill Marshall, Beth Bernard, Steve Broderick, Lori Brant, Lynne Warren

Staffing:

The 83 is not enough campaign was able to gain one operation supervisor and 15 full-time maintainers. However, the positions don't have any allocated funds. The legislature will have to figure it out.

Director:

Lori is fighting for 3 full-time education/director position for Goodwin, Kellogg Environmental Center, and Meigs Point Nature Center. The friends can be of assistance in working with these organizations to develop a targeted campaign to help make this a reality.

Currently, Connecticut Parks are the 4th least resourced in the United States. Due to being under-resourced, most parks are not monitored for visitor ship. It would be helpful to know how many people are visiting Goodwin since it is not monitored. Finding a way to encourage people to share visitation to show just how many people use the Center and Forest would be helpful in any campaign.

Volunteers

We need to find creative ways to recruit volunteers and encourage more engagement Currently using the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs as feeder groups. Lynne is creating a database of volunteer projects for groups, sorted by age and seasons. Beth is the point person for these volunteers.

Docent Program

We'd like to reinstate the docent program and have volunteers who could welcome visitors to the Center from Memorial Day through Veteran's Day. Due to potential security issues, we would want two docents on schedule.

Lynne asked Lori if it would be possible to have volunteers open/use the small museum when a DEEP staff wasn't available to create a welcoming point. Lori responded that she is working with Wanda Torres , from the "adopt a park" program to develop a statewide volunteer training program. Lori will explore a site-specific request for state-trained volunteers to be able to open buildings without DEEP staff present.

Volunteer Workdays

Getting big workdays on the calendar can be a way to engage groups of volunteers, particularly from Universities, who have expressed an interest in helping. For college students, the best time would be at the beginning of April - after spring break but before exams. The same could be done in early fall. Having a list of potential projects would be helpful so that we can respond more quickly.

Volunteer Recognition

We want to recognize volunteers for their efforts. This year, we will be doing so on November 30th.

Membership

Having social events and educational opportunities may help retain and build membership. Developing committees to come up with planning will help with division of duties.

501c3

The state does not require us to become our own 501c3. So the committee recommends remaining under the CFPA umbrella. We will need to wait until CFPA has hired a new executive director and see if they want to continue their Professional Services Agreement with DEEP in regards to the Goodwin Conservation Center.

Long Range:

Boathouse - is this worth pursuing given that the lake is only usable during the early spring and late fall when vegetation is dormant? There are no plans to dredge as the lilies currently prevent phragmites from taking over.

Education Center:

Will look for opportunities to fund an educational building across the street (and staff?). Lori recommended we talk with Kellogg to see what their friends' group has done and what their aspirations are.

Action Items:

- Have a few members meet with representatives from Meigs, Kellogg, and Dinosaur state parks to work on an action plan to help find educational directors for each of our sites.
- Get a more accurate count of visitors to Goodwin to show how many people use it.
- Work on our volunteer program by offering docent training, planning major workdays (with rain dates), and maintaining contact with groups who regularly ask what they can do.
- Plan at least two social events/year for members only and one open house.
- Form committees to plan events, educational opportunities, etc.