

## July 21, 2021 Prairie Smoke meeting minutes

Attendees: Ryan Kemmerick, Ed Pfannkoch, Susan Powers, Barb Nigon, Walt Nigon

Secretary's report: Board members received the last meeting minutes by email, no discussion.

Treasurer report: All outstanding checks have been cashed. Treasurer's report was accepted.

PS Board ongoing text scams: Ed has filed a report with the FBI. Board members are reminded to be suspicious of ANY emails or texts claiming to be from Ed or any Board member containing fake return email addresses and requesting gift cards or other unusual requests. If in doubt, call the person who supposedly sent it and discuss in person! Please forward any such texts to Ed and he will continue to collect copies should the FBI act on the complaint. Barb offered to make some inquiries through Federal contacts to see if there are any other options to stop these scam messages.

The Board made and passed a motion to remove all personal email addresses from the PS website to avoid any other groups initiating similar scam requests.

### Fall activities:

#### Burn class

- Barb has received about 16 inquiries regarding burn classes from PS members.
- With the level of interest we have seen, we may need to hold 2 classes. An email will be sent ASAP to all PS members that will include info on proposed burn class dates with a request to respond with preferred date if interested in attending.
- Proposed burn class dates at Chester Woods (Thursday Sept. 9 and Wednesday Sept 15) pending approval from Tom Eckdahl who will teach the classes.
- Barb will supply water and cookies for the meeting courtesy of Prairie Smoke.

#### Annual picnic

- The Board made and passed a motion to plan for a fall picnic at Chester Woods on Sunday Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup> depending on any unforeseen Covid-19 restrictions. This announcement will be included in the email to PS members.
- PS will supply entrée (TBD- pulled pork, barbeque, precooked brats were suggested), water, plates, plastic utensils, napkins. Members will be asked to bring a pot luck dish to share.
- The Board thought it was a good idea to have an informal seed exchange at the picnic. Members will be encouraged to bring seeds collected from their private plantings to share with others at the picnic. PS will provide small envelopes (provided previously by Chuck) for members to take seeds home.
- We would like to have the PS display board updated and available for the fall picnic if possible. Susan and Barb will work to provide updated pictures in digital format to Ruthann.

#### Fall ditch cleanup

- PS members are invited to participate in the fall ditch cleanup scheduled for Thursday Oct 7, 5-6pm followed by pizza at Walt and Barb's house. The spring ditch cleanup had a good turnout and offered a much-needed opportunity for members to socialize after the Covid restrictions.

### PS member activities:

- New PS members with newly purchased property in Elgin have invited the PS Board to walk through their property and discuss suggestions for converting the former pasture/wetland to native plantings. Ed, Susan and Walt will do the walk-through Thursday July 22.
- Another PS member with property near St. Charles plans to do a burn in the spring. Ed has looked at the field which seems ideal for observers who wish to watch and learn about burns. The landowners have expressed interest in allowing PS members to observe next year.

- Walt Nigon and Don Johnson spent considerable time and effort to clean and maintain all burn equipment and the trailer in which it is stored. Thanks Walt and Don! This is an opportunity for members to help in the future.
- Susan suggested that communicating these opportunities to members can help build interest and involvement in PS. By including this type information on the PS website we may also reach out to potential new members looking for an active organization. Board members were in agreement.

#### Outreach efforts:

- We currently have 6 Board members and are hoping to add additional members interested in contributing ideas regarding the organization. This will be communicated through the upcoming member email and at the fall picnic.
- 4-H donation- The issue was raised that the size of the annual donation is small (\$20) and we should consider increasing it. Board members were in general agreement but during discussions it was not clear that increasing this specific donation was appropriate. Should we inquire with 4-H if there is another donation category we could contribute to? Discussion tabled.
- The topic of updated signage (banner, posters, brochures etc) was discussed. The Rochester library is now open and this may be an opportunity to bring them more brochures. We do not know the status of an updated banner. Discussion tabled.
- Thompson Mill Park status- Ryan agreed to stop and check the status of the site PS cleaned up last fall. He will also inquire whether Prairie Enthusiasts still considers this their site for maintenance, signage, etc. If no other organization claims responsibility for this site PS will consider “officially” accepting responsibility and updating signage.

#### Webpages:

- Board email addresses to be removed from the site.
- Donate button has been removed after the confusion and delay in funds sent through this link. Discussion was tabled regarding whether it should be restored since it ended up working.
- We should try to keep the Member activities section updated as opportunities arise.

#### **Non-agenda items:**

Signs: There has been no recent discussion of designs and costs for new signs. Ed may have a contact at a sign company and will check to see if they do these type signs.

Burn equipment storage: The facility we use for storage has agreed to keep the equipment year-round instead of limited months with no increase in cost. That is excellent news.

Meeting adjourned

Notes taken by Walt Nigon