

Meeting Minutes for Friends of Potato Creek State Park

Date and time: 2/20/07, 7:00 PM

Location: Nature Center

Attendees:

Corey and Brooke Rieman

Tim Cordell

Kathy Serrat

Brian and Anna Krueger and Family

Brian Miller

Ralph Campion

Mark Daily

Linda and Gene Matzat

Kay and Dave Laney

Dave and Bobbie Dosman

Jan Shupert-Arick

Bill Arick

Jaci Bell

John and Julia Hostetler

Linda Trimboli

Jim Rahilly

Randy Neuman

John Richardson

Minutes:

Brian called the meeting to order. There are 3 membership renewals and 5 new members. We had 42 members for last year in total. The 2007 membership contest ends on March 20th. Elections will be held during the next meeting on March 20th. A sign up sheet is available in the back if anyone is interested in holding any office.

Linda Matzat introduced our speaker, Linda Byer, she is with the State of Indiana. She became an assistant property manager in 193 and a Biologist in 2003. Linda is our District Wildlife Biologist. She is located at Kankakee Fish and Wildlife area. She will speak to us this evening about habitat management.

Linda explained that Potato Creek has evolved from farmland and has developed into a better place for wildlife and a people friendly park.

Her job is helping private land owners with wildlife issues. It may be a problem or it may be enhancing the property to attract wildlife. All wildlife has 4 basic needs:

1. Food
2. Water
3. Shelter
4. Space

All of these must be present in the animal's home range.

Steps to developing a plan:

1. What animal species are you interested in attracting?
2. Learn the habitat needs for the chosen species.
3. Evaluate the current habitat on your property and current vegetation composition.
4. Create a habitat development plan.

In the installation and evaluation phase, years 1 and 2 are critical. Maintenance must be implemented and succession must be managed. The area must be kept open otherwise the entire area becomes trees. All trees are not good. Here are some means to maintaining openness:

1. Prescribed fire-a good plan can be used effectively.
2. Strip disking (40%-70% bare soil, evenly distributed).
3. Strip spraying-lots of pros and cons, this could be done when prescribed fire or strip disking is not an option.
4. Inter-seeding of legumes-used in conjunction with disk or strip spraying to prepare soil for seed application.
5. Brush cutter, and all other mechanical means, i.e., loppers, brush hog, chainsaw..etc.
6. Timber removal/removal.

Infrequent management means greater disturbance and higher operating costs.

Linda warns us not to bite off more than we can chew. Some guidelines are:

1. Do ¼ to 1/3 of the acreage per year.
2. On smaller areas, do ½ of the area.

Some backyard food sources Linda discussed are:

1. Artificial feeders.
2. Plant mast producing shrubs-these are great food sources.
3. Wild flower plantings.

Some backyard water sources Linda discussed are:

1. Bird waterers.
2. Water gardens.

Backyard shelters:

1. Brush piles.
2. Shrubs.

Backyard space enhancement is best done tapering on a soft edge.

Where to get assistance:

1. State DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife and Forestry
2. Federal help-USDA, FSA and NCRS, USFWS

3. Conservation organizations like:
 - a. Audubon Society
 - b. National Wildlife Federation
 - c. Quail Unlimited
 - d. National Wild Turkey Federation
 - e. Pheasants Forever

4. See attached file for Linda's handout explaining other areas of assistance.

Federal and State programs do offer cost sharing assistance. That information is also included on the handout.

Linda handed out her business cards for herself and for Steve Winicker, who is the District Forester. That contact information is also on the handout.

Presentation ends.

Business meeting:

- Next month, NIMBA (Northern Indiana Mountain Bike Association) will speak on the progress of the new mountain bike trail at Potato Creek.
- The meeting minutes were read and there is a correction in the financials for the month. The minutes should read:
 - 128.71 was amount paid for insurance
 - 22.00 was amount paid for checks at the bank
 - That leaves a balance of 150.71.
 - 210.00 income for new memberships and donations
 - New Balance is 824.76
- For the 2007 membership contest, Jan has 2 points, John has 4 and Ralph has 6.
- Renewals are due 4/1/07. Memberships paid after 10/06 will be applied as 2007 dues.
- The last newsletter was mailed the last part of January. If you did not receive one by email, please notify Mark Daily at mrdaily@hughes.net.
- Special events for coming months are:
 - March-NIMBA speaker
 - April-subject related to Earth Day
 - May-Dave Laney-beekeepers
 - June-Gardening

Fundraising

- Plant sale may be an opportunity for us.
- John has filled out 2 grant applications, one is the Environmental Challenge Fund and the other is the Indiana Lakes Management Society. These projects are for bank stabilization and matching funds are required for both.

Next meeting is 3/20/07 at 7:00 PM in the Nature Center. Please bring a snack to share.
Check out our website at: www.friendsofpotatocreek.org.

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Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.