

Minutes from Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve meeting on 3.29.17

Attendees: Floyd Bagwell, Jr., Stephen Bayer, Beth Bye, David Copp, Gene Ellis, Eric Hammerling, Robin Kriesberg, David Mann, Chris Norwood, Lewis Rawles, Vikki Reski, Beth Schiro, Christopher Shepard.

The group reviewed and made comments on the Draft Statement of Purpose for the Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve. There was a good discussion about whether or not to specifically include the 4-H Center at Auerfarm in the Statement of Purpose, and the group generally agreed that although 4-H is an obvious and willing partner, the Statement of Purpose was written to be as inclusive as possible for any additional partners. The Statement of Purpose has been updated accordingly as of March 30th.

The group also agreed that the best name for the Friends would be the “Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve” (FASR). It was noted that both “Scenic” and “Reserve” speak to specific elements that make the property extra special, and that Friends of Auerfarm State Park Scenic Reserve would be too much of a mouthful.

There was a hearty discussion about both the infrastructure needs and community events at Auerfarm Scenic Reserve. Below is a list of Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve priorities to be shared with DEEP as a standalone document.

Infrastructure Priorities for Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve

- Removal of Residential Buildings.
- Signage at the Scenic Reserve/Online Information about the Scenic Reserve
- Parking Options (the 4-H Center at Auerfarm is providing some parking at the bottom of the hill and has received funding support to improve the road to 4-H. There may be some drainage issues to discuss with DEEP to protect the integrity of the road).
- Structural Assessment of Apple Barn building which sustained recent storm damage and is currently an eyesore and potential liability hazard for people coming to visit either the Scenic Reserve or the 4-H Education Center at Auerfarm.
- Youth camping.
- Exploration of trail routes.
- Ecological survey of natural resource assets at the Scenic Reserve (perhaps with ECSU, CCSU, UConn, or other partner).

Community Events

- **CT Trails Day Walk** on either Saturday, June 3rd or Sunday, June 4th (Eric will contact Kevin Gough/Paula Jones to make sure this is on track to happen again)
- Boy Scout Programs such as “Meadows & Feathers” (the Scouts would likely really enjoy counting bobolinks and other birds at the Scenic Reserve). Other Scout programs could be scheduled throughout the year.
- A kite-flying event in the Fall that might be paired with another activity such as an Art-related activity such as a plein air painting workshop.

- Educational Apple/Apple pruning event in the Fall. Perfect joint program with 4-H Education Center and perhaps apple expert(s) from UConn.

Meeting attendees were also invited to attend **Friends of Connecticut State Parks Day on Wednesday, April 5th between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.** where 15-20 of the “Friends of Park” groups will be displaying information about their efforts and advocating for Park funding and a constitutional amendment to protect public lands. The event will take place in the concourse between the Legislative Office Building and the State Capitol in Hartford.

Eric Hammerling extended the invitation to participants to join him at CFPA’s Board Meeting, where he will present the possibility of the Friends of Auerfarm Scenic Reserve to be under the fiscal sponsorship of CFPA at this stage. The Board Meeting will be on April 12th at 4:00 at the State Library. Since that invitation was made, one volunteer has agreed to speak to CFPA’s Board on behalf of the group. This would allow the Friends to receive tax deductible donations and grants to support events and other activities of the group.