

Brooks Nature Area

Minutes

July 17, 2025

Members present: Justin Miller, Patty Hoch-Melluish, Brian Huggett, Christy Benson, Ian Campbell, Erin Skidmore, Lauren Bruggeman, and Janet Schoenmeyer

Technical advisor present: Jim Coury

- A. The minutes of the May 15, 2025 meeting were approved.
- B. The July 17, 2025 agenda was approved.
- C. Public Comments: Jim Coury shared that his daughter and some of her friends recently visited BNA and really enjoyed the park. He said that so many people in our area have expressed the same opinion and that he hopes BNA will always be here for future generations to enjoy.
- D. Park update on monies as 5/31/25: **\$33,369.74**

Expenses:

- 1. Janet Schoenmeyer, Observation deck caps: \$155.51
- 2. Darwin Gwin, mowing: \$360.00
- 3. Amazon, lock for shed: \$21.73
- 4. KalBlue, signs for Fredonia donations: \$233.34

Total: \$770.58

E. Tasks completed:

- 1. Janet Schoenmeyer reported that Scott Gearhart completed repairing the two observation deck posts and placed caps on all of the posts. The posts' appearance have really improved. However, Patty Hoch-Melluish and Janet have noticed some flaking on the one post. Janet asked Scott to look it over and to discover the cause. Scott examined it but wasn't too concerned; due to the extreme heat we've been experiencing this summer. He will continue to watch and check on its condition in late September.
- 2. Christy Benson and her family assembled the Fredonia bench. Three spots were considered for placing the bench: near the orchard, a grassy spot close to the lake and an overview spot close to the wetlands. Patty suggested each board member check out the three spots so a final decision can be made at the September meeting.
- 3. Patty ordered the Fredonia signs and will install them.
- 4. Don Jewett, with a little help from Jim and Janet Schoenmeyer, cleaned the pavilion floor and picnic table that were covered with bird droppings. He put up some makeshift items to counter any further messes, but the major mess was resolved when the hatchlings left their nests. Justin Miller suggested we place chicken wire across the rafters to prevent future problems.
- 5. Janet Schoenmeyer refinished the four pavilion picnic tables.
- 6. Janet also stained and refinished the parking lot sign board.
- 7. Patty and Janet replaced some of the signs in the park. Christy plans on replacing the white background sheet in the parking lot sign board, where one of the new posters were placed.
- 8. Ian Campbell, Jim, Lauren Bruggeman, Christy and Patty seeded clover at different times the last two months. Ian stated the native wildflower seeding was not accomplished, but plans to do so in the fall. Discussion ensued concerning creating a wildflower garden or picking a certain area where native wildflowers could be planted. We also discussed what definition of a garden we want to pursue.

Rather than seeding, buying plugs of plants or asking for plant donations from area gardeners or Marshall Area Garden Club members, were also suggested.

- 9. Justin Miller purchased a combination lock for the shed.
- F.** Lauren is still working on the work schedule. Everyone agreed two days a month will be reserved for completing tasks. Hopefully, one of the two dates will be convenient for all board members.
- G.** Everyone agreed that placing chicken wire on the pavilion rafters was a top priority. The plexiglass on the three-sided display board needs replacement. Removing the wire cages needs to begin. Ian will check “All Trails” to see if the BNA trails are on the app. Brian Huggett will check out the downed tree in the woods to see what specific work needs to be done.
- H.** Patty reported that the Marshall Community Foundation BNA account is in the works. The account will make it easier for people to give on line donations to BNA. The donations will go through the city of Marshall. There is no charge.
- I.** Patty reported that she hasn’t heard from Eckford Township regarding giving BNA any money to help with our expenses. Patty asked our thoughts on whether we should proceed and use our dwindling account for managing the invasives, since treatments cost around \$3,200. Jim Coury suggested we might need to consider using the service every other year. Brian Huggett said the bittersweet presence is the worst invasive. No decision was made.
- J.** Erin Skidmore and Ian Campbell agreed to continue as members of the BNA Working Group. Ian reminded everyone of the Kanoe the Kzoo July 26th event. Sign up information is on-line.
- K.** Next meeting, September 18, 2025 at BNA.
- L.** Adjourn
 - Recording Secretary,
 - Janet Schoenmeyer