

Brooks Nature Area Minutes

May 21, 2026

Members present: Justin Miller, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Camron Nelson, Parks Maintenance Supervisor, Patty-Hoch Melliush, Erin Skidmore, Brian Huggett and Janet Schoenmeyer

Members missing: Lauren Bruggeman, Ian Campbell and Christy Benson

Technical advisor present: Jim Coury

BNA volunteer workers present: Don Jewett and Jeff Crone

A. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the March 19, 2026 regular meeting were approved.

B. Agenda approval: The May 21, 2026 agenda was approved.

C. Public Comments: Guests: Diane Graves, Dhurrie Parker and Dave Fhaner

1. Diane Graves presented the BNA map that was certified in 2006 as the official park map. She is planning to speak to Mayor Wolfersberger concerning the park's boundaries and was requesting confirmation from the BNA Working Group that she had the correct information. Diane is a Stuart Lake resident and is very concerned about the negative effects of the proposed data center.

2. Dhurrie Parker passed out a decibel chart that illustrates the negative effects of noise and light pollution that data centers produce on birds.

3. Dave Fhaner stated that he would like to know whether members of the LDFA have investigated Alterra's track record on being environmentally responsible with their other data centers. Dave also stated that he believes that there are three ways he thinks the data center will fail: the city's sound ordinance will not meet requirements, EGLE will rule that the data center will be harmful to the BNA park and its fen or Alterra will back out of the agreement.

4. Don Jewett added that he understands that the city of Marshall is short on water and electricity, which could hinder operation of the data center.

D. Treasurer's Report: Patty Hoch-Melliush reported park funds totaling \$31,094.67 as of 3/19/26. She distributed a spread sheet of donors and the monetary amount that was gifted from 3/25/25 to 3/14/26.

Janet Schoenmeyer displayed the BNA mugs that her daughter, Sarah Mulally purchased for the amount of 72 mugs for \$360. BNA will receive the profit from the mugs which are being sold for \$10 each. Three have been sold at present.

E. Justin Miller reported that the April 23 prairie burn was successful. The cost was \$2,175. He stated that Blue Heron Ministries did an excellent job and also informed him about a grant opportunity offered by a company called Cold River Storage. The grant requires a one-to-one funding match. A management plan for invasive species removal and prairie burns must be submitted by July 1. Patty Hoch-Melliush offered to contact the company for the application form, and Erin Skidmore agreed to assist her.

F. Erin reported that the World Migratory Bird Day Event on May 9, was successful. Seth Chapman (Birds with Seth) who led the early morning bird tour was very engaging and informative. The 17 participants were very happy with his presentation. About 24 adults and 4 children attended the wonderful afternoon one hour bird presentation led by Dr. Dale Kennedy and Doug White under the BNA pavilion. Goodie bags were given to the children that included a picture of a bird to color, a search for the bird activity, a BNA pencil, stickers and a birdfeeder

with a baggie of sunflower seeds. Christy Benson purchased the BNA pencils and 24 birdfeeders. Christy also served lemonade that she purchased. Each speaker was given \$100 for their presentation. The Working Group approved Janet Schoenmeyer's request to approach Marshall District Library's Director, Angela Semifero, to ask if her staff could use the remaining bags in any of the library's summer reading programs.

\$300 remains in the budget for any additional 20-year Anniversary events. An October Open House is planned.

Dave Fhaner suggested a plein air event sometime this year, as another way to draw attention to BNA.

G. Patty sent the letter to the Marshall City Council that everyone on the BNA Working Group Board approved of, stating our environmental concerns about the proposed data center that is planning to be built close to the city park. She also plans on sending the letter to the LDFA after retooling some of the verbiage. Patty stated that additional species data is needed. She suggested that the eBird check list would be an effective tool for all of us to use for that goal.

H. Erin reminded everyone to go to the BNA Facebook page for any news or additions of BNA photos.

Patty reported on an event that is taking place Saturday, June 6 from 11-2pm. named TrailBlaze Family Adventure Day at Kimball Pines Park. BNA is welcome to set up an informational table at the event. Group members interested in volunteering may attend that day. BNA brochures and other informational materials would be helpful to distribute.

I. Justin Miller stated that replacement of the cracked Plexiglas and faded posters on the three-sided sign near the trail entrance remains on the agenda.

Camron Nelson will address the issue of birds roosting in the pavilion eaves.

Janet Schoenmeyer described two downed trees that she and her husband, Jim removed from the Woodland Trail.

Patty Hoch-Melluish reported that invasive species management continues to be a significant need, and the grant opportunity discussed earlier would greatly assist with funding the project.

J. Jim Coury brought bags of clover seed and invited members to spread seed along the trails between now and the first two weeks of June. He suggested that participants leave reports in the shed or email the group regarding the areas they covered.

Jim also stated that he has trees ready to be planted in the south woods and suggested tree planting as a future work project. He will heel in the trees if the work is not completed within the next few weeks. Jim also agreed to remove the cages near the shed.

K. Lauren Bruggeman was not present to discuss enlisting community volunteers for BNA work days.

L. Brian Huggett stated that he recently used audio loggers to record some of the frogs and bats that reside in BNA.

M. Adjourn

Recording Secretary,
Janet Schoenmeyer