

Brooks Nature Area

Minutes

May 15, 2025

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

Technical advisor present: Jim Coury

- A. The minutes of the March 20, 2025 meeting were approved.
- B. The May 15, 2025 agenda was approved.
- C. Public Comments: None
- D. Park update on monies as 12/31/2024: **\$30,200.20**
- E. Patty Hoch-Melluish reported that she and Janet Schoenmeyer, Jim Coury and Ian Campbell attended the Eckford Township Board meeting on April 21. Patty gave a short presentation on a list of BNA needs that included observation deck repairs, a clover spreader, 5 loppers, wildflower seeds, invasive species treatments and a trail counter. Patty has not received a response from Eckford as of this date.
- F. Patty is waiting for quotes for signage from Kal Blue for the items that Fredonia Township gifted BNA. The bench that Fredonia gifted BNA needs to be assembled. Brian Huggett said that members of the Working Group could assemble it. Justin Miller stated that he would email Patty when the bench has been moved to the BNA shed, for easy access.
- G. Patty reviewed the list of maintenance projects that the BNA Working Group observed during their April 29, walk through the park:
 - a) A wire needs to be installed at the north end of the parking lot that can be dropped for access for driving to the other lot. Justin Miller will address the need.
 - b) A combination lock key holder is needed for the shed. Janet Schoenmeyer found two combination locks on Amazon that sounded promising. Justin will follow up in purchasing one of the locks.
 - c) An outside spigot for water is needed. Justin stated that he thought that there could be a hook up from the BNA bathroom. He will research the possibility.
 - d) An electric outlet for the pavilion is needed. Justin stated that he would acquire some quotes. A monthly fee might be required for usage.
 - e) The tri-display board is in poor condition. The Plexi glass needs to be replaced. New informational material is needed. Possible subjects are the history of BNA and tick information for visitors. Patty will research some possible informational posters.
 - f) Everyone agreed that the trails need to be mowed to their original width. Inform Darwin Gwin. (Justin)
 - g) Jim Coury agreed that some of the cages can be removed from the mature trees. He requested that any of the cages that are in still good condition to be returned to him. Jim suggested that anyone approaching this job needs to select the healthiest tree and then cut or remove the other trees that are in the cage. Heavy wire cutters will be needed.
 - h) Any honeysuckle found in the park needs to be removed.
 - i) Mowing the wide swath to the Purple Martin house needs to be discontinued. Inform Darwin Gwin. (Justin)

- j) The cool season grass area should be mowed periodically. Inform Darwin Gwin. (Justin)
 - k) The willows and other shrubs in select areas along the lakeshore need to be cut. This would be a good group project. Justin knows a church group that might be interested in working on the project. He will pass the information on to them to ask if they are interested in working on it.
 - l) The pines at the east end of the prairie near the observation deck need to be removed. Justin stated that this is a low priority at present. Brian Huggett thought they may die due to the burn so we can wait and see.
 - m) The observation deck posts need to be repaired. Scott Gearhart agreed to complete the job. Janet bought the 31 caps needed at Menards and is Scott's contact person.
 - n) Ian Campbell plans to map out the BNA trails for the "All Trails" app.
 - o) A downed tree on the Lakeshore Loop near the vernal pool needs to be removed.
 - p) The pavilion picnic tables need refinishing. Janet will head up the project when the weather is conducive.
- H.** Lauren Bruggeman is setting up a work schedule. All present agreed that 2 volunteer days a month should be sufficient. Patty suggested looking at the management plan to check if all areas of interest are being covered. Lauren will email the schedule when it is complete.
- I.** Patty spoke of her meeting with Program Director, Shannon Tiernan, concerning opening an account for BNA with the Marshall Community Foundation. Everyone present agreed that this would be a good idea. Justin stated that the city will need to sign off on the account.
- J.** Brian has not had an opportunity yet to assemble a tracking record of prescribed burns. Jim Coury stated that the field west of the field that was recently burned will need to be burned in 2026. Justin is currently tracking the burn schedule.
- K.** Erin Skidmore continues to try to contact Cheryl Vosburg, to gain access to the BNA Facebook page, so that a Working Group member can start posting BNA happenings. The group wants to potentially discontinue the current page and have a city-authorized page. Lauren suggested an Instagram account would also be beneficial.
- L.** Ian Campbell bought enough wildflower seeds to cover 1/8 of an acre. The stretch of land by the recent prescribed burned field was thought to be a good area to cover.
- M.** Next meeting, July 17, 2025, 5pm at the BNA pavilion.
- N.** Adjourn
Recording Secretary,
Janet Schoenmeyer