

## Minutes of the FOMNRR Board of Directors Meeting

February 18, 2020

MS-Teams Video Conference Invite and Telephone Conference Call Line Option

Members Present: Rich Burns, Jaron Condley, Tim Cowman, Jeff Fields, Bob Foley, Pat James, Terry Julesgard, Kristina Laska, Paul Lepisto, Dennis Menke, Don Nelson, Marshall Pritchard, Rick Spellman, Dave Swanson, and Barbara Yelverton. Rick Clark and Dugan Smith attended representing the NPS-MNRR. Tony Kellar tried to join but was not able to log into OS-Teams.

President Rich Burns opened the meeting at 1:35 pm.

### A. Reports/Updates

- 1. MNRR Superintendent's Report** – Superintendent Rick Clark gave the report. Hiring initiatives are a priority right now for the MNRR – Drew Podany has been hired as the Visitor & Resource Protection/ Law Enforcement (V&RP/LE) Program Manager at the MNRR. Drew will enter on duty 4/12/2021. The Park received a base increase in 2021 to establish a new V&RP/LE Program. Drew has an extensive background in river operations with NPS having served at Grand Canyon National Park and Grand Teton NP over the course of the last 10 years. Joining Drew later in the summer will be another commissioned permanent full-time ranger to be selected, and then in 2022 two additional seasonal commissioned rangers, who combined will enforce federal and state statutes and regulations within the MNRR corridor on a regular and reoccurring basis for the first time in the Park's history. Additionally, selections for the Interpretation, Education & Outreach and Interdisciplinary Science and Resource Management Program Manager positions, as well as a newly established Outdoor Recreational Planner position will hopefully be made and incumbents in place by June 2021. The MNRR is continuing to work with the NPS Land Acquisition Office toward the purchase of the James River Island property – the process is currently in the appraisal state (funds in place from the LWCF). A line item in the recent 2021 Department of Interior budget includes funding support for the acquisition of Sanctuary Island on the 39-mile reach, which upon acquisition will be the first property that NPS will hold fee simple title in the District. Efforts toward the purchase of this property with the current owner and willing seller are currently underway. Superintendent Clark will soon be leaving the MNRR to assume the Deputy Regional Director (DRD) for Science & Resource Management for Interior Regions 3, 4 & 5 of the National Park Service in Omaha, NE. While Rick assumed his new DRD duties 2/14/2021, until his relocation later in the summer he will continue to serve a dual role as MNRR superintendent until his eventual successor is selected and named, which is expected sometime mid- to late summer.
- 2. Finance/Membership** – Bob Foley gave the report. The current balance of all funds is \$16,863.56, which is higher than typical. Some of this amount is set-aside for certain purposes; \$8,567.10 is in the unrestricted account fund.

FOMNRR is currently at 30 renewed members. We continue to experience problems with getting past members to renew their memberships. Bob also reviewed some statistics relevant to the non-profit sector in the U.S. and how this sector was affected by COVID. The Outdoor Recreation sub-sector has been greatly impacted by reduced employment during the pandemic. Bob also mentioned several factors that impact donor decision-making and how those have been impacted by the pandemic and offered some suggestions for how FOMNRR might increase donations and membership, including increasing our social media presence. Some of the discussion centered on

the definitions of membership dues vs. donations and how we wanted to employ these terms to raise FOMNRR funding in the future.

- 3. Newsletter (Next Edition June 2021)** – President Burns thanked Pat James for the recent FOMNRR newsletter and urged BOD members to contribute to the upcoming June newsletter. Rich also mentioned the possibility of announcing a photo contest as a component of the June newsletter. Pat James also provided some comments and suggestions for how to advertise and conduct the photo contest. These details will be worked out later.
- 4. Website Update** – Tim Cowman and the website committee have been working on modernizing the website. Some updates have been made and others are in process in association with a colleague with graphics design expertise.
- 5. Strategic Planning Update** – President Burns mentioned that no progress has been made recently on the Strategic Plan, but the plan is to meet with the Strategic Planning Committee soon and to coordinate efforts with the MNRR strategic planning process. Some discussion of the impact of Rick Clark leaving the MNRR Superintendent position on the Strategic Planning process occurred. NPS-MNRR intends to develop a new strategic management plan in 2022, as the current plan sunsets this year. The process is not expected to occur until a new superintendent is in place, and incumbents to all PFT positions are on board and fully operational. NPS expects to enlist FOMNRR BOD representation and involvement in developing the document.
- 6. FOMNRR Comments USACE Gavins Point/Lewis-Clark Lake Master Plan** – President Burns thanked several BOD members for their input into the FOMNRR comments on the Master Plan. Rich noted that the USACE mentioned that these comments were well received.
- 7. MNRR 39-Mile Section Public Access Opportunity** – Barbara Yelverton mentioned that a spring site visit to the proposed public access site would be beneficial for the group to decide if this is an opportunity that the FOMNRR wants to pursue. There is also potential for the FOMNRR working with NPS and university landscape architectural sources to develop a site conceptual plan for the area and consider working with the County to submit a funding proposal in 2024 under the next Federal Lands Access Program cycle to fund identified improvements to the area intended to enhance the visitor experience and access to the 39-Mile District of the MNRR (park).

## **B. Old Business**

- 1. FOMNRR Board of Directors Appointments** – President Burns noted that Kasi Haberman has resigned from her position with the Yankton Area Chamber and removed herself from the FOMNRR Board. FOMNRR has an opening for a representative supporting tourism/economic development. Rich mentioned some ideas to potentially fill this position. Discussion followed.
- 2. Membership/Outreach** – President Burns recalled that during the last FOMNRR BOD meeting, there was a consensus to use postcards along with sending maps and existing brochures welcoming new members. To date, three new members have been added to the FOMNRR organization and all have received a welcome letter. The Membership Subcommittee is working to draft a policy to remove non-active members from the FOMNRR membership ledger.

A discussion of strategies for moving forward on FOMNRR membership and outreach initiatives was undertaken. Rich noted that the last posting to FOMNRR's Facebook page was May 5, 2020.

Strategies to increase posting to the FOMNRR web page, including using some of the MNRR posts, were discussed. We also discussed the potential of paying an hourly stipend to supervise social media content for the FOMNRR. The next step will be to begin discussions with people with social media expertise that might be willing to assist with developing the social media presence for the FOMNRR.

### **C. New Business**

- 1. Grant Funding Opportunities** – The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) Restoration and Resilience Covid-19 Recovery Fund has application deadlines of April 1 and June 1, 2021. NEEF has a website for further information including access to their grant application. Tim Cowman is evaluating NEEF for funding for the Frost and North Alabama Trail projects. Tim mentioned that the grant funds are for the purpose of improving public lands and presented a mock-up of signage for the Frost Trailhead that is approved by the SDGFP. Similar signs at the North Alabama Bend sites are planned. Costs for signage for both sites would be over \$8,000. The FOMNRR account currently has \$2,000 reserved to apply toward the signage costs. Funding to help pay for this signage could be included in a proposal for funding to NEEF, but it is unlikely that NEEF would cover the entire cost, so other funding sources will also need to be approached to raise the entire funds needed for both projects. A motion (Swanson/Menke) to use the E. Howard Coker memorial funds and match that with unrestricted FOMNRR funds to provide a total of \$1,500 to support purchase of the Frost signage passed unanimously.
- 2. Potential upcoming Event opportunities** –
  - a. Hammock Swing-in Vermillion* – President Burns mentioned that the USD Hammock Club is looking at setting a Guinness World Book of Records by having the most people swinging in hammocks at one time. FOMNRR has been asked to participate. A date for the event is TBD but could happen in April/May of this year. President Burns will explore the possibility of using this event as a potential fundraiser for FOMNRR.
  - b. Frost Trail Sign Dedication* – President Burns mentioned that there is an opportunity to hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Frost Trail sign installation later this year. This could involve some guided hikes or other activities. The potential for waiting for the ribbon-cutting ceremony until both the Frost and Alabama Bend trail signage is installed, perhaps in association with an FOMNRR annual meeting, was discussed. Consensus was to move forward with this idea, with details to be determined later.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 pm.