

Mulberry River Society Mtg.

MAY 7th, 2022

High Bank Access

11:00 am

Present Board Members: Mark Weathers, Robin Gregory

Guest Speakers: Matt Pfiefler - USFS Pleasant Hill District, Bently Reynolds & Zack Hays - Natural State Streams

Attendees: Danny and Debbie Stillwell, John Hanlon, Dave Gottchaulk, Dena Turner, Susan Gately, Perry Hays, Kara Ann Medsker, Ricky Murphy, David Allen, Pam Harkey, Jeff Hayhurst, Amy Reynolds

AGENDA

1. New Cargo Storage Trailer purchased - MARK
 2. Treasurer Report - MARK
 3. High Bank Improvements - MARK
 4. USFS River Access Updates - Pleasant Hill District = HeadwatersBoston Mtn District = Below Turner Bend - USFS Officers
 5. Stakeholder Intro - Natural State Streams - ROBIN
 6. Headwater Landowner Update - US Corps. of Engineers - ROBIN
 7. New Officer Elections - Nominations/Ballots - In person only (MARK/ROBIN) Paper ballots and pencils will be provided
 8. New Projects Discussion (OPEN TO MEMBERS)
1. Mark reports of trailer purchase, cost was \$1000 below budget. He said it looks good and all of our tables and chairs are loaded. There remain funds available for the painting or wrapping of the trailer. They are going to check about getting the logo added. Pam Harkey offered to check with Vendor contacts to get a good deal.
 - A. Discussion of purchased and used electric chainsaw for river management/timber clearing was made note that the battery doesn't last long.
 - B. Danny made motion to purchase 2 extra batteries and charger for chainsaw**
 - C. Robin seconded.
 2. Mark Treasurer report: Deposits from ticket sales: 1/08/22 \$2720, 2/16/22 \$500, 3/07/22 \$2,225 \$847.96 for a kayak, \$1,550.00 for a canoe, jacket and paddle \$148.11, \$450.00 for food Trailer for \$2,000, paid \$200 to paint the trailer, and \$40 to replace the stolen High Bank sign. Current balance is \$8542.17
 3. USFS Pleasant Hill District - Matt Pfiefler: High Bank bathrooms have been installed and more concrete and finish up will happen in upcoming week or two. More fill dirt would be added at the bottom and a trash can that was bear proof would be added. He advised that they have plan approval for extra parking if needed in the future but right now there are no funds available.
 4. USFS Boston Mountain - Mark Weathers Reports from phone/email conversation
 - Mark noted that the kiosk at the little Mulberry access needed repair and that some fill dirt was needed at the entrance, where the asphalt has a significant drop. David Allen quickly volunteered to assist with his tractor.
 - Mark Reported that he had communicated with Forest service ranger Alan Smith Who was responsible for the access areas on the lower end of the river. He reported that at the Present, the roads were ready and had been decommissioned; they still plan to install loops and a vault restroom at Big Eddy. Since the Timber has long been cut and believed sold, Mark intends to

follow up to learn more regarding what receipts may be needed, from whom they are expected and when.

- At Bibbs, There was a design in place but they were waiting on receipt of money on the timber sales. As to Coon Foot, Blevins, and The Shoe, there were no design plans as of yet.
- Mark intends to send a letter asking for some completion dates and asking about repair of the capstone at Redding.

5. Robin Intro. of Natural State Streams Zack and Bentley: <http://www.naturalstatestreams.com/>

"Natural State Streams (NSS) is a team of specialists focused on civilizations most valuable natural resource - Water. Founded in 2011 with a dedication to science and a drive to mimic nature's exemplary aesthetic, NSS produces superior projects that provide everlasting ecological benefits. We develop and execute projects of every scale, ensuring integrity every step of the way. Working alongside private landowners, industry professionals, municipal, state, and federal agencies, we will continue to conduct quality business and restore our environment to its Natural State."

- Their company can perform a Mulberry River study that would include geographical information system (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) for highly erodible areas of concern where the river needs Stream Bank stabilization and restoration.
- Natural State Streams LLC have seen with the rise in construction along rivers that landowners will unwittingly eliminate trees and will clear areas. One tree uses 11,000 gallons of water a year. Each tree that is removed destabilizes the bank, allows for erosion, too much sediment in the streams and contributes to additional flooding. Clear areas allow for the seeding of nonnative and invasive species.
- They work with the AGFC stream team and AR Dept of Natural Resources. They can insert monitoring rods into banks to determine how much soil and acreage is being lost each year.
- Natural State Streams LLC answered many questions and it was learned that we could seek a free estimate to determine the cost of mapping the river to determine areas of concern. They can help assist in grant seeking, to help fund such a study. There are also grants available to assist in offsetting the costs of bank restoration. An individual can qualify for up to \$50,000 in state tax credits, (\$10,000 over five years)

DISCUSSION

Robin is going to look into grants availability. It can prevent the loss of much acreage overtime and can benefit the health of the River by reducing unnecessary erosion and sediment.

- We asked Natural State Streams LLC that it be considered in any plan or estimates as to individual projects where volunteer labor be taken into consideration. MRS could assist with planting of the riparian areas. Natural State Streams LLC agreed this would significantly affect the time needed and cost on the project.
- Natural State Streams also described that landowners can receive mitigation points when highway department projects affect their property and that those points can be sold back to the highway as an offset to riverbank restoration costs.
- As to property that is owned by the forest service, the ranger present described that the banks belong to the Corps of Engineers so it could be a bit of a process called a Section 7. However, some of those repairs might be also available through highway department mitigation credits.
- Plans are discussed to have some type of riverbank preservation presentation for the next volunteer meeting or day, or possibly in September at the fall cleanup.
- Also of Note: Jeff also shows how our iPhones take photos with GPS coordinates on its meta-data which can be seen by choosing the lowercase by in a circle at the bottom of the photo, allowing

members to take photographs of areas in need of assistance along the Mulberry, which can then be sent to MRS who will try to assimilate these photos and provide them where needed

6. Robin Reported: Headwater Landowner Update - US Corps. of Engineers (Justin Newcomb) Phone conversation May 6th, 2022)- McGarragh private landowner who has cut down trees and destroyed the riparian buffer up to the riverbank of his land, and used heavy equipment to move rock in the Mulberry River Channel, after flooding the river upper cut a new channel because of this action. USACE has contacted him and made a cease and desist order, and have helped him to apply for a specific permit that will be submitted to many state and federal agencies for approval; including but not limited to the USFS, USACE, National Park Service, AGFC, AR Dept. of Natural Resources etc.

- The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA) charges administration of rivers in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (National System) to four federal land management agencies (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service).
- This permit process goes through nearly a dozen agency channels and his chance of getting a permit are slim.
- ANRC- 138.00 Arkansas Natural Resources Commission
Rules for the Utilization of Surface Water
<https://www.sos.arkansas.gov/uploads/rulesRegs/Arkansas%20Register/2016/jan2016/138.00.15-001.pdf>

7. New Officer Elections - Nominations/Ballots - Paper ballots for nominations were handed out, however specific voting for nominations were not made.

- Robin reports: Nominations include - Mark for president, Robin for vice president, Debbie Stillwell for treasurer and Kara Ann Medsker and Pam Harkey, both for secretary.
- The group was asked if we want to go with the majority of who was nominated, Mark suggested since the role of Secretary has had many responsibilities, why don't we have a dual or Co-Secretaries and the group decided:
- Mark Weathers - President
- Robin Gregory - Vice President
- Debbie Stillwell - Treasurer
- Kara Ann Medsker and Pam Harkey - Secretary's

OPEN DISCUSSION

- This led into the discussion of water quality testing. We are in possession of the water quality test kit given to us by the friends of the little Mulberry. Robin explained that when the pandemic began, schools ceased field trips and no testing has since been completed. It was explained that there are several viable areas from which to choose in order to conduct the testing. Susan Gately agreed to train us. Dena Turner wants to assist and other members all likewise expressed their interest in participating. It was agreed that when the water drops, we will set a date to do so.
- Robin and Pam - proposed to look into purchasing whistles to be given to paddlers of the Mulberry and attached to their PFD's. As we know, a whistle can save a life.
- *****At 6pm the same day: Kara Medsker sent this email to Mark, Dena, Robin*****
"I would like to concede to Pam the secretary position and give my best wishes for success in all endeavors the river society encounters. I am humbled by the offer, however the votes were majority for Pam. This decision will avoid duplicity & confusion regarding the role of the officer. "