

MIDDLE ROCK CONSERVATION PARTNERS
8772 South Lowden Road, Franklin Grove, IL 61031
middlerockcp@gmail.com

Minutes - July 18, 2017

Meeting held at
Kickapoo Mud Creek Nature Conservancy Center
1919 North Limekiln Road
Oregon, IL 61061

Attendance:

Board Members: Present: Russell Blogg, Deb Carey, Damian Considine, Bob Piros

Absent: Bill Kleiman

Officers: Present: Austin Webb, Pres., Cody Considine, V.P., Kathy Lawrence, Sec., Paul Soderholm, Treas.

Members: Present: Grant Afflerbaugh, Jim Berle, Bernie Buchholz, Erin Folk, Zach Grycan, Dee Hudson, Greg Hunter, Tim Keller, Kent Lawrence, Jim McPherson, Pete Oliver, Cassandra Rodgers, Randy Singleton, Tim Smith, Jan Williams, Oran Wilder

The meeting began at 11:05 a.m.

1. Call to Order; Welcome - Austin Webb

2. Presentation of the Minutes - Kathy Lawrence

Noting one spelling correction and two typographic errors, the 5-23-17 Minutes as corrected, were unanimously approved by the Board.

Board Members unanimously acknowledged and agreed to adhere to the MRCP Conflict of Interest Policy.

3. Officer Reports

a.) President – Austin Webb

- The D & O and Liability Insurance with NSI/West Bend Insurance has been secured.
- The President and Vice-President are working on establishing a working document database that will enable the participants to record time spent working on various projects. This document will provide not only document of work done by type and location, but record the number of volunteer hours MRCP members contribute. It is the intention that MRCP use the document (or a revised version) be used a reporting mechanism for grant applications and reporting.

- In addition Austin and Cody are working on a rough draft of a focused Index of Illinois Natural Areas Inventory (INAI) that the MRCP may work in. This will be a “work in progress” document as the INAI rating process fluctuates and is intended as a reference only for MRCP. A **“Draft”** version is attached.
- A suggestion was made to add GPS locations on the form and/or a map.

b.) Vice-President – Cody Considine

- A work schedule is being developed that will align with areas that MRCP expect to burn in the upcoming burn season.
- Discussion was held to determine which sites may/should fall under the MRCP Burn Plan for 2017/18. It was suggested that a request form be devised that will allow the MRCP Board/ Fire Coordinator to suggest and/or review requests for parcels that may be part of the upcoming burn season. The “form” should include such things as scope of work; any equipment for use on site, number of personnel needed and expected time required accomplishing the task. It also must align with the mission of MRCP. The Fire Coordinator and Stewardship Coordinator should review potential sites and present those they believe are the most important to the MRCP Board for approval and to assist in setting the priority. The Fire Coordinator based on conditions at the time of the expected burn will determine final prioritization. A draft form will be presented at the next MRCP meeting.
- Austin, Cody and Pete will create a proposed plan for work and calendar for presentation to the Board for recommendations and approval before the annual meeting.
- It was strongly suggested that two sites become the focus of the MRCP 2017 efforts.
 - George Fell INP
 - Ryan Wetland

c.) Secretary – Kathy Lawrence

- Report and approvals completed at the beginning of the meeting.

d.) Treasurer – Paul Soderholm

- MRCP has opened a bank account at The First National Bank in Amboy, 20 East Main Street, PO Box 80, Amboy, IL 61310-0080
- The account was opened due to receipt of a contribution by one of the MRCP Board members. The opening balance of \$600.00 has been reduced by the cost of checks (\$41.19) which results in a balance in the checking account of \$558.81

- Paul will begin using QuickBooks for NFP and has contacted someone who has worked with many NFP's to assist in the endeavor.
- Additional funding is anticipated via a lease that The Nature Conservancy is in the midst of preparing between TNC and MRCP allowing MRCP to serve as a CRP Operator of certain Nachusa Grasslands property. The lease is expected to generate approximately \$13,000 annually.

4. Committee Reports

a.) Communications Committee – Bernie Buchholz

- Status of Incorporation; has been accomplished.
- Federal Tax Exemption: 501c3 status accomplished as of 6-12-17. FEIN is 82-1530110
- Bernie Buchholz presented a communications budget and Dee Hudson, consultant, presented a preliminary version of a MRCP web site. The communications budget was unanimously approved. *See attached.*
- To help establish the web site, MRCP members are encouraged to write a story about sites that encourage not only interest in that site, but provide information about sites that are in the MRCP area and that may become part of the inventory helped by MRCP and, of course, this information will help populate the information on the MRCP web-site. If members have high quality photos of a site that may accompany the article they would be welcomed. It was suggested that as we move forward with our workdays etc. that photographs be taken BEFORE the work is started and AFTER the work is completed. Please submit any article/photo to Dee Hudson at Dee@Hudsoncenter.com
- It is anticipated that the web site will have a password-protected portal for MRCP members where they can sign-in to view requests, work calendars, view meeting minutes etc. The draft version of the MRCP web site is available at www.middlerockconservation.org Please to be sure to enter the www in the address. The MRCP site is being modeled after the Friends of Nachusa web-site www.nachusagrasslands.org.
- It is anticipated that a general solicitation will be produced probably in November with a cover letter written by our President, Austin Webb. Not only will the solicitation be an opportunity to make others aware of MRCP and contribute, but it will also be an opportunity for members to financially participate.
- MRCP will produce an annual report in late January/February, again accompanied by a letter from Austin. This will be an opportunity to discuss the stewardship of MRCP and what has been accomplished.

- Kathy Lawrence volunteered to work with Dee to develop a more detailed web site for Board review and recommendations at the next MRCP meeting.

Prescribed Fire Coordinator – Damian Considine

- Establishment of Prescribed Fire Goals – The three most important aspects to prescribed fire goals are: equipment, personnel and getting to the site.
- The process employed at Nachusa is one that will be followed. In general anyone not trained/experienced with prescribed fire is matched with an experienced burn professional. After experiencing several burns and at the discretion of the Fire Coordinator, members may join in prescribed fires. If a volunteer has not participated in a prescribed burn and/or has had on-line fire classes, but has not been vetted by the Fire Coordinator, they may participate in a prescribed burn, but not next to the fire, e.g. setting out burn signs, directing traffic, etc.

5. New Business

Deb Carey has been approached by The Clean Energy Foundation and encouraged to apply for a stewardship challenge grant on behalf of MRCP. The grant requires in part, a minimum of 400 volunteer hours and that the site must have been purchased with The Clean Energy Foundation funds. If MRCP is approved, will be a 3 to 1 match. It was unanimously approved that MRCP should apply for the grant and if approved, set the MRCP financial goal at \$7,000.00. When MRCP reaches the \$7,000, The Clean Energy Foundation will then match that figure with an additional \$21,000.00 which would result in a total sum to MRSP of \$28,000.00. Ryan Wetlands was purchased using Clean Energy Foundation funding.

6. The next meeting of MRCP will be:

September 19, 2017 at 11:00 a.m.
Nachusa Headquarters/Barn
8772 S. Lowden Road
Franklin Grove, IL 61031

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Lawrence
Secretary MRCP