

**Friends of the State Line Serpentine Barrens
Board Planning Meeting – October 6, 2019
Nottingham County Park**

Participating: Chris Hoess, David Ross in person; Gordon Bosler, Don Callihan, Rocky Gleason, Sandy Laden by conference call:

(716) 748-0224 (potential toll call)
Participant Access Code: 445962#

Chris convened the meeting at 2pm

A) Key Dates

1. Future Planning Meetings

Nov. 17, 2019 (alternate Nov. 24) 2:00–4:00 PM

2. Hikes, Talks, Work Days and Other Commitments

Saturday, Oct. 19 — New Texas
Friday, Nov. 8 — Goat Hill — mowing
TBD — New Texas — mowing

B) Action Items

Gordon Bosler

Will circulate several dates for a walk at Rock Springs.

Don Callihan

Don will circulate his draft best practices notes.

Rocky Gleason

Will exchange emails with Gordon about planning notes for Rock Springs.

Chris Hoess:

Will share our draft set of FSLSB workday guidelines, equipment list.

Will contact Gordon about Pennsylvania Plant Conservation Network minigrants.

Will update Marci Mowery on our progress in addressing our challenges, invite to our planning meetings, request help in pulling together workday procedure overviews for volunteers.

Will invite Kristi Allen to November planning meeting.

Will contact Roger Latham as a first step in scheduling a meeting with Owen Prusack and sharing our concerns for the status of serpentine sites at NCP and the future of FSLSB's partnership activities at NCP.

David Ross:

Will send invitations to our Dropbox site.

Will circulate mission statement and strategic objectives.

C) Business

1. Introductions

- a. Gordon Bosler: member of the Pennsylvania Master Naturalist program, working on a plan for restoration of the Lancaster Conservancy Rock Springs preserve (Lancaster County, PA)
- b. Don Callihan: the outdoor ethics advocate for the Baltimore Area Council, Boy Scouts of America. He was developing an invasive species plan for Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation and learned about the serpentine on the property, would like to know what can be done to restore serpentine habitats there. Retired microbiologist and Maryland Master Naturalist. (Harford County, MD)
- c. Sandy Laden: managing the restoration of Cherry Hill Barrens, on property owned by Camp Moshawa. Initial restoration was undertaken there in 1988 as a pilot project for techniques used at Soldier's Delight, but it then received essentially no maintenance until she started up in 2014. She is a veterinarian and serpentine restoration is a side passion. (Harford County, MD)
- d. Rocky Gleason, Chris Hoess and David Ross: representing FSLSB, which currently focuses on Lower and Upper Chrome preserves (Elk Township, Chester County, PA), Nottingham County Park and Goat Hill preserve (West Nottingham Township, Chester County, PA) and New Texas (private property in Fulton Township, Lancaster County, PA)

2. Summary of needs

a) FSLSB

People to serve as board members, take care of "backend" and PR tasks (correspondence, social media and outreach, volunteer retention, fundraising). We have a pretty solid core of field volunteers, but our board & planning corps slowly disintegrated over a few years. We need back-office people! Sandy asked if we have a vision and mission statement. We do have a vision but not the resources to execute it right now.

FSLSB is organized as a PPF (Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation) chapter due to the link through Goat Hill (a state forest). Provides an umbrella organization to shelter what was once a TNC volunteer group and covers legal liability for volunteers. (Some discussion of releases: Sandy has her own release form for volunteers and avoids using any camp equipment.

Don reports that the BSA is self-insured but doesn't really have a mechanism for outsiders to volunteer.)

b) Rock Springs/LC

While trails have been maintained and parking lot signage replaced, serpentine areas are badly overgrown and hard to find.

Agreement for Game Commission prescribed burns and other maintenance needs to be completed.

In the meantime, Gordon would like to organize volunteer restoration activity on some smaller plots. He would like advice on which areas to clear, what type of equipment to use, and will try to recruit volunteers through Lancaster Conservancy. The Conservancy doesn't have a lot of in-house knowledge about serpentine right now and has a wide portfolio of lands to manage, especially Susquehanna Riverlands; serpentine needs an advocate.

Rocky noted that PA Natural Heritage Program staff worked with Lancaster County Conservancy on planning at the time of the transfer from TNC. He will follow up with Gordon via email.

Gordon has a plant list that was made at the time of the handover.

c) Broad Creek

While taking the Maryland Master Naturalist course at Oregon Ridge, Don was exposed to serpentine at Lake Roland Park (Bare Hills Barrens), which is currently being restored; Roger Latham has a consulting contract to help. (Bare Hills Barrens have mostly been cutting pine and surveying rare plants over the past 5 years, and will start some soil scraping in 1 to 2 years.) His involvement with the BSA connects him with Broad Creek Memorial Scout Reservation, which is the largest contiguous forest block in Harford County. There is an old serpentine stone quarry on the property. Building on visits from Roger, Chris, and others, Don is trying to get a handle on the extent of serpentine communities present on the camp property. Next step is to see what comes up in the spring and have some botanists and geologists out to survey at that time.

While there is an extensive network of volunteers (adults and kids) associated with scouting, they tend to only be available on weekends and are pulled in many directions. It can be hard to get them to focus on conservation. Volunteers on the property have to be approved through BSA. Many of them are sawyers with their own chainsaws (after vetting).

The camp has a decent collection of mowing equipment; not likely to gain much more despite a current capital campaign, which is mostly directed at building rehab. There are Federal, state, and county easements on the property which may restrict management techniques.

He is interested in sharing equipment. Prescribed fire at Broad Creek is a long way off. He would like to see documentation of what has been done to other serpentine barrens in the past, develop a plan, and seek grants.

d) Cherry Hill

Like the FLSB, Sandy has a large nominal base of volunteers, from whom only a few customarily turn up for workdays. Right now, her serpentine openings are largely in maintenance phase: not trying to open up new terrain as grassland. She just bought a brush-cutter (all equipment used here is personal to avoid liability for the camp). There are 4 serpentine openings; 2 are being actively managed and she's hoping to use the brush-cutter to make an access route to a third for management. Doing a burn is complicated. As a private property, they would have to use a commercial contractor, at much higher expense (because a burn by Maryland DNR would rest on the camp's liability insurance).

Two plant surveys have been done and Maryland DNR helped clear the largest barrens. Her needs are not too bad, and she is writing a formal restoration plan. The Southeast Grasslands Initiative could help fund this! (Chris & Roger took Dwayne Estes of SGI on a tour of Nottingham last year.)

The role of Maryland TNC was discussed. They originally recommended Cherry Hill to Maryland DNR for preservation in the 1980s. Sandy has had some contact with Deb Landau (Maryland TNC burn crew/land manager) and has a reasonably close relationship with Wayne Tyndall at Soldier's Delight (talks to him a few times a year and she volunteers at Soldier's Delight). The Friends of Soldier's Delight have provided help at Cherry Hill on occasion, including sawyers.

Don sees value in forming some sort of consortium among our groups from Soldier's Delight to the State Line Barrens; would like to hold a meeting near the border sometime in the future, share a list of equipment.

3. Existing resources
 - a) FLSB

Equipment stored in shed at Goat Hill including 3 brush cutters, 2 Billy Goats, hand tools, loppers, weed wrenches, safety gear. Chris will share list.

Web server with CiviCRM contact management software and GIS files.

Dropbox archive of resources. David will invite access.

- b) Don

Has been drafting best practices guidelines for working on serpentine. He'll share his notes and would like to see ours.

Coordinate use of iNaturalist project sites. There are tools online for figuring out how to do a proper plant survey. Would like to see plant lists from other serpentine barrens for comparison.

Reaching out to Towson University for potential GIS and other class-related support. David sees maps as very important in supporting restoration activities.

Roger Latham has promised to deliver a version of his conference talk that could be adapted for use as a standard introduction to the regional serpentine barrens.

c) Sandy

Has network of contacts, including Anne Francis, lead botanist at NatureServe, Rachel Spigler at Temple, and Aviva Glaser, grasslands restoration specialist at the National Wildlife Federation.

d) Pennsylvania Plant Conservation Network: minigrants focused on individual plant species (must be on privately-owned land in PA)

http://www.panativeplantsociety.org/uploads/1/7/8/2/17829397/minigrant_callforproposals.pdf

e) Master Naturalist Program: Gordon sees a lot of value in the program. They publish a monthly(?) list of master naturalist activities. He thinks there are a number of people who are not up for heavy physical labor and would be willing to work on newsletters, and other general administrative work to get their service hours for the program.

4. Avenues of cooperation -- next steps

- a) Continue talking about potential consortial activities. Schedule next meeting for November 17 or 24.
- b) Share best practice and other items as noted above.
- c) Gordon will circulate several potential dates for a walk at Rock Springs.
- d) We've agreed in principle to share information about scheduled events and workdays and promote these with our volunteers.

5. FLSLB disbursements

- a) We grossed \$672 from native plant sales at the last Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research open house. The board authorized payment to Octoraro Farm of \$415.50 for the cost of the plants and \$50 to Tri-State for partnering with us.
- b) We agreed that FLSLB might serve the PA Master Naturalist program by offering participants in the program alternative ways of meeting their service responsibilities, including meeting many of our "back office" needs. Therefore, the board authorized payment of \$100 annual dues to join as a member organization for 2020.

Adjourned at 3:56.

Submitted by David Ross and Chris Hoess