

GPTA Board Meeting March 18, 2011

Written by Rick Moon

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Thank you all for coming and for those that wanted to but couldn't. We covered a lot of material and a lot of ground

in a very short time. We had great participation and interest from the NFS, Murray County Government, Murray County

Chamber of Commerce, the Georgia State Parks, the Conservation Fund and our on GPT BOD. Please send me any

additions that I might have left out of these notes. I didn't take notes I am just shooting from the hip.

We walked the property with an emphasis on the Conservation Property to the east of the Vann House. We had some

very good discussions among various members of the group but I think the one that will move things forward was between

Andrew Schock and David Ridley. They will be scheduling a follow up meeting to put a plan together for the property in the

next couple of weeks. Dick Barnes mentioned that if we hurried we might be able to get in before the dead line of March 31

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for some major funding that might get the shoulder and the little bridge widened on Alt 52 between the 4 way and the

Conservation Fund Property. Dick also said he would meet me this week to look at the exact spot to put the access for the

entrance to the big filed off of Alt 52. After walking this we all agreed it would be much better to cross 225 by the Vann House

Gate instead of at the 4 way. After a discussion later in the evening with Jeff, the Vann House Manager and the Farmer,

David, the best route for the Pinhoti across the field would be the shortest most direct that follows an old access road in the

field right up the center.

We discussed the Dennis Mill / Rock Creek Connector and how to proceed with it. There is about 2.5 miles of trail flagged

from Dennis Mill Rd to the gaited NFS Road. About 1 mile of that is on a tract acquired by the

Conservation fund. There

have already been a lot of man hours put in down there by Marty Dominy, Larry Wheat, Larry Thomas, other NFS personnel

and some of our NWGA SORBA folks. Marty has put in a huge effort down there, actually building about 100 yards or more

of bench cut trail and considerable chain sawing. Larry Wheat is working on finding us somebody with the right equipment to

build our mile section. He has 3 alternatives. I committed NWGA SORBA to donate at least \$1000 for fuel and maybe up

to \$2,000. I also said we would find them a place to stay if they needed to overnight while they are working on it. I asked

Diana Rowe if she could get some rooms comped and if that doesn't work out we will get some NWGA folks to put them up

or maybe Mulberry. If we can get this mile of trail built to sustainable levels for bikes and horse on this type of terrain for this

kind of money I will be very happy. David said the county is still willing and able to build the parking lot for us. We think it will

be the last thing we do down there not the first. Andrew is going to get me some release forms and I am planning to take a

group of community service people in there in April with loppers and hand tools to clear and define the route. I will take a

chain saw. The NFS is sending the public scoping letter out for their part of the project anytime now. The biological study

has been done and Larry doesn't expect any problems from the archeological study. They are going to apply for RTP grants

to get the funds to build their portion.

Larry and Larry brought us up to speed on Dry Creek. Most of the trail on west side of the creek is built and they expect the

contractor to be complete by the end of April. There has been some discussion about having a grand opening on NTD in June.

This is a great project and hats off to Larry Wheat for grabbing this one by the horns and wrestling it down. Also a great big

thanks to the NFS and Larry Thomas for having the vision and the work effort to make this happen. This project is very special

and will be a great addition to our outdoor recreation opportunities on this district. I believe it is 25 more miles of multi use

sustainable trails right on the Pinhoti.

We spent some time talking about how the Pinhoti can have a positive economic impact on the local economies that it touches.

This Dry Creek Project is one type enhancement that will give locals a chance to capitalize on it with local camping, stables and

events. The Pinhoti is starting to serve as a long green way across the northwest corner of the state tying and bringing

communities together. We are making a significant contribution to the quality of life in North Georgia. The Snake Creek Gap

Mountain Bike Race Series, the Broken Ankle Ultra Trail Marathon, and the Trans Georgia Mountain bike Race are bringing

national attention to our trail system.

We had some discussion about some organizational issues involving Friends of Parks in Rome and Floyd County and the Simms

Mountain Trail. Larry Madden and Mike Leonard are working this one. There is still a bridge out on the Simms Mountain Trail

due to vandalism. I will try to get down there and blaze a detour around it.

Marty brought us up to speed on the Great Eastern Trail with a focus on the routing through Chattanooga, and Point Park on

Lookout Mountain. We had some discussion around leasing the Conservation Fund Properties until we can resolve ownership

over the next couple of years. Andrew and Mike are going to work out the details.

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We didn't do any administrative work like elect new officers. I figure we will just keep rolling as we are unless you guys want

to have a recall. You folks are indeed a pleasure to work with. I am blown away by your dedication and expertise. I don't

know how we all found our way to this board but I am glad each of you did.

Rick



[More Chief Vann House and Rock Creek Pictures Here!](#)

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