

West Virginia Master Naturalists Annual Conference Planning Committee Minutes

On February 25, 2015, the West Virginia Master Naturalists Annual Conference Planning Group met in the conference room of the WV DNR Operations Center in Elkins. Those present included Ellen Hrabovsky, State Chairperson, and Committee members Denise Gwinn, Andrea Dalton, James Van Gundy, Tommy Zeitz and Jim Fregonara

Ellen Hrabovsky reported that she has been in contact with Scott Warner, the new DNR Director of the Elkins Operations Center and is attempting to find a date for him to meet with representatives of the WVMN State Advisory Committee. The meeting will most probably be in Morgantown. Ellen will let the committee know the date and time once the meeting is set-up.

Ellen Hrabovsky reported that she had received a letter from Carolyn Barker of the Kanawha Valley Chapter and that they will not be offering classes this year. It was also reported that the New River Chapter is now apparently defunct since Emily Browning is no longer working for the New River Community College system. **Jim Fregonara** mentioned that he is scheduled to teach a class for the New River group on February 26th and that he will report on what he finds out about the future of that chapter.

It was announced that the 2016 WVMN annual conference will not be held in Elkins. Negotiations have been in progress with North Bend State Park, which will most likely be the site of next year's meeting. The facilities there appear to be adequate for our needs. **Doug Wood** has volunteered to teach a Mussels Class for the conference since there is stream in the park that is well suited for that purpose. **Ellen** has been authorized to sign a contract with North Bend SP for June 10th, 11th, and 12th of 2106. **Emily Grafton** has volunteered her chapter (Nature Nuts) to host the conference.

The Friday night program for the conference will be on recent progress to restore the American Chestnut. This program will be open to the public at no charge. A workshop on the American Chestnut will be part of Saturday morning's line-up. Tommy and Sam Muncy will work with the local newspaper to publicize the event.

Jim Fregonara agreed to find people to guide the Saturday and Sunday AM bird walks.

Jim Van Gundy agreed to make the arrangements for use of D&E's large van for the geology fieldtrip on Sunday. He will also line-up a driver and will get cost figures for driver and van rental.

Andy Dalton reported on the progress on the class schedule for the 2015 WVMN Annual Conference.

Ellen Hrabovsky reported that she is working with Paige McNeil of D&E on rooms in Graceland Inn and The Bird Center for Conference participants. Ellen will find out the date after which the rooms will not be held for conference registrants.

Andy Dalton will check with Michelle Mabry to see if she would be interested and willing to present something on the State Fungi Collection that is housed at D&E. This might be done on her own, or possibly in conjunction with Dr. Joe Morton who is already scheduled to teach on Saturday.

It was announced that the Saturday Evening meal will be an Italian dinner in the D&E cafeteria and the cost will be \$8.50 per person. There will be a vegetarian option available.

Jim Fregonara agreed to work with the WV DNR webmaster to get the conference registration procedure set-up. The system will be essentially the same as the one that seemed to work well last year.

Jim Van Gundy agreed to contact Seneca Caverns concerning the Geology fieldtrip caverns tour and to negotiate the best per person price.

It was agreed that conference registration information will be online no later than March 15th.

It was agreed that Conference registration will be \$75 for those who register by May 15th and \$100 for those who register after May 15th.

Reported by J. Van Gundy
Acting secretary

Note: Names in the minutes above are highlighted in **bold** if the person has agreed to take responsibility for the task mentioned.