

Attending: Mary Kanitz, Lynn Crawford, Jan Marsh, Debra Wilhelm, Jackie Benka, Keith Schulenburg, Rick Kaiser, Rob Vajagich, Betsy Abert, Don Lawson, Jody Johnson

We had an impromptu potluck as a reward for our efforts to restore the slope in the Seven Bridges ravine the previous Saturday, June 8th. A herculean effort moving compost down the hillside on a large plastic toboggan, perhaps a bit more of a physical challenge than our aging group was prepared for... but only one injury was reported. Lunch was provided by Rick Kaiser and family and greatly appreciated by all. Lots of interested passers by learned about our group and our passion for Grant Park.

We talked about the remainder of the Southeast Wisconsin Watershed Trust (SEWWT) grant project. We discussed signage to remind park users to stay on the trails (please?) and a few to direct beach traffic toward the bridge and stairs instead of the eroded path up the hillside they may have attempted on previous visits. Jody created a small sample sign, but is awaiting county approval before beginning production. Betsy will forward the sample sign to the parks' landscape architects.

Now that we have successfully completed a portion of the slope restoration project, we need to get the message out to the community that the Friends of Grant Park support restoration ecology. And we should encourage youth to take an interest in sustaining a healthy park ecology by inviting school teachers and/or students to our meetings to tell us what they are doing in the school in the field of science/ecology/biology. We need to look for the overlap in our interests. We need to get the word out via news articles and pictures of our project in such publications as Community Newspaper's NOW, the Journal Sentinel's Cue section, and perhaps a natural areas Facebook page (if someone would like to adopt that as a project).

Betsy informed us that there is still roughly \$6,000 left of the grant money to work with. A large part of the remainder is a result of not having to purchase fencing for the bluff and instead installing the brush fence (thanks to Americorps for the great looking natural barrier). She hopes to bring Mike Marek back to the ravine along with his crew and hire them to finish the slope by installing more slope interrupters and spreading the remaining compost on the hillside. Mike owns the landscape company that worked with Betsy to devise a plan to restore the slope. Betsy also wants to add some straw mulch on top. She spent \$400 on native seed that she will be broadcasting later this summer. And she hopes to purchase some prickly ash tree transplants later that were unavailable to purchase this spring.

More work is planned for July 9th, in cooperation with Alliance for the Great Lakes and Americorps. They will assist with weed-out between the beach head and 7 bridges. Look for a separate e-mail regarding sign up for this event.

The Friends of Grant Park received an award from the Park People for being their Volunteer Group of the Year. Executive Director of the Park People, Jim Goulee, presented the award at a friends group gathering in Greenfield Park on May 30th. Accepting the award were Don Lawson, Betsy Abert, Jan Marsh and Jody Johnson. We

will need to find a suitable spot in the clubhouse to mount the award. Don asked how other groups are able to find new members. Facebook was mentioned by others as a great new tool to find like minded people. Do we have a member willing to create, monitor, and post a Facebook page?

Don brought up a problem regarding another donated park bench intended to go on the beach by the Seven Bridges trail. That location was discouraged due to the likelihood of beach ice pushing up on the beach in winter and uprooting the bench. Don asked for suggestions for an alternate location. The top of the stairs on the south slope above the new bridge would be a good spot, so that people can sit and catch their breath after the long climb up the stairs.

Our next meeting is July 11th.

Respectfully submitted by
Jody Johnson