

Creating A Friends Group

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Outline

- Why Friends?
- Roles and Responsibilities
- First meeting
- Organizing your Friends group
- Logistics
- Pitfalls
- Examples



Why have a friends group?

- Advocate
- Increase public awareness
- Raise funds
- Sponsor programming
- Provide support for programs or special events
- Establish a good volunteer base
- Enable you to achieve goals that might not otherwise be achieved.
- Bridge between park/forest and community

Things to Consider:

- How can you develop goals jointly?
- What is the purpose of the group?
- How will you work toward common goals?
- What can a friends group do that you can't do on your own?
- Where will the group be housed? What can you offer?
- Liability
- Who has final say? Who from agency sits on board?

Role of the Friends/Friends Board

- Be informed and be an informer
- Work with a diverse set of user groups
- Leave behind personal or other organization agendas
- Seek win-win solutions
- Remember that you are the face of the public lands.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Govern the friends group
- Raise funds

First Meeting

First Meeting

- Promotion—invite wide array of user groups—reach out to diverse audience
- Planning
 - Agenda
 - Potential project ideas
 - History of park/forest
 - Time for open discussion

Promotion

- Advertise the meeting to attract interested people who are regular users.
 - Personally invite volunteers and user groups.
 - Reach out to civic organizations, tpa's, business owners, and others who benefit from your work.
 - Encourage attendees to help spread the word.
 - Use social media, flyers, traditional media, and word of mouth.
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- Activity: Who would you invite?

Planning the First Meeting

- Work cooperatively to develop agenda, plan location, and brainstorm projects.
- Location of meeting
- Refreshments.
- Assign someone to welcome guests as they arrive and have a sign in sheet to capture name, address, email, phone
- Have a rough idea of the purpose/mission of the group.

Sample agenda for first meeting:

Welcome and Introductions

Background on park/forest

What is a friends group

Sample projects

Ideas from audience

Discussion

Pulse of interest for group

Next steps



Follow Up To First Meeting

- Utilize on line communication to discuss goals/issues.
- Get a feel for leadership
- Build support for the group
- Begin baseline action plan
- Begin discussion of mission statement—participatory
- Discuss goals
- Organize second meeting

Steering Committee

- Serves as a transition body to a Friends group.
 - Responsible for drafting the Friends' Constitution and By Laws, as well as board structure.
 - Board should represent the user groups.
 - Keep board size minimal! Can always add committees.
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- Activity: Potential board members and what to look for in a board member

Constitution and Bylaws

- Governing documents – Constitution and By Laws – are a necessity to outline the purpose of your group, the executive positions and a job description for each position, what happens to the funds you raise and defines the friends relationship
- If you are planning to apply for Charitable Status, governing documents are required as part of your application. You must also incorporate. Resource: PANO.org

Charitable Status

- PPFF Groups function under our charitable status.
- Benefits of charitable tax status.
 - ✓ the organization may issue tax receipts;
 - ✓ Exempt from taxation
 - ✓ May more readily qualify for other benefits;
 - ✓ More appealing to donors
 - ✓ Necessary to register with the BCO

- Takes time to receive approval at state and federal level.
- Yearly filing requirements must be met. Yearly conflict of interest statements now required.
- In Pennsylvania, also recommend that you register with BOC even if you do not meet the minimum average budget.
- Best to work with attorney for filing.
- Articles of incorporation, IRS filing, local/state requirements/bookkeeping

Organizational Questions

- Will it be a membership based organization?
- How will revenue be raised?
- Project priorities?
- How often with the group meet?
- Will there be committees of the board, and if so, what will they be?
- What are some easy projects that can be tackled in the beginning to bring success to the group, that are relevant to need and meet skill levels?

Keeping Things Moving

- Its easier to get people involved/keep people if they know what is expected of them and are given guidance but not micro-managed.
- Limit meetings-go quickly to actions.
- Stick to agenda at meetings—no meeting should last more than 90 minutes!
- Thank often.
- Have a plan
 - Activity: Discuss goals for your friends.

Early Success

- Pick a project that is guaranteed success, and do it.
- Promote the project and its success.
- Build relationships.
- Develop an identity—logo, brochure, etc.



- As part of the action plan, identify key volunteers required. Develop position descriptions for these volunteers.
- Develop committees based on the action plan and interests of the group.
- Promote the friends group at every opportunity.
- Remember: A member is not necessarily a volunteer and a volunteer is not necessarily a member.
- For DCNR, all volunteers must be registered Conservation Volunteers.
 - Activity: Develop a position description

PPFF Resources

PA Parks & Forests - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

PA Parks & Forests

www.paparksandforests.org/training.html

PENNSYLVANIA Parks & Forests FOUNDATION

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WELCOME
Marci Mowery, President
Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation

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Press Room/Videos

Join Support Volunteer **Speak Up** Events, Contests, Awards Store

Friends Training

The following forms are available for download in PDF format. Adobe Acrobat Reader or Accessibility Tools are needed for access.

 Get ADOBE READER

Chapter Handbook for Friends Groups
2012 Chapter Handbook

2012 Training Materials - During the fall of 2012, consultants from The Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, Payton Communications and Krisp Communications joined with PPFF staff to present a series of workshops and retreats for our chapters. These materials were used in those workshops and are valuable to any nonprofit.

Advocacy
Advocacy (More Information)
Board Development
Community Relations
Fundraising
Media Relations
Social Media
Volunteer Management and Recruitment

Specifics for PPFF Chapters:
Chapter Compliance
Technology is Your Friend


Videos from the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management:
Board Development
Fundraising


Donate to the Cause!
Support PPFF

Visit Our Blog
Out & About in PA

Playground Fund
Donate in Memory of Leah Vogel

PARTNERS:


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Grassroots.org

HOME • ALL ABOUT US • MEMBER LOGIN • CONTACT US • DONATE • ADMIN • JOIN • SUPPORT
VOLUNTEER • SPEAK UP • EVENTS AND PROGRAMS • STORE • WELCOME • STAY INFORMED • BLOG

Avoiding Pitfalls

- Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Friends may either be an independent 501c3 or part of an umbrella organization, and must abide by the roles and responsibilities of this designation
- Don't assume.
- Prepare to spend time—especially in the early days of a groups existence.
- Be aware of union concerns/constraints
- Train, train, train; thank thank thank

Success

- Visibility in the community
- Excellent media contacts
- A good volunteer base
- Being willing to learn from what other Friends groups have done
- A good recruitment plan for additional volunteers and Friends members
- Open communication with hosting entity.
- Flexibility and a sense of humor.
- Ability to answer question, "Why are we here."
 - Activity: Why a friends group? Can your goal be met other ways?

Social Media

- Enewsletters
- Facebook/Twitter
- Pinterest
- Web pages (free)
 - Grassroots.org
 - Weebly
 - google