

Freedom's Frontier

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



Partnership Meeting
Beecher Bible and Rifle Church
Wabaunsee, KS
July 12, 2007

Judy Billings opened the meeting.

Michael Stubbs welcomed the group to Wabaunsee and gave an overview of the area. He related many of the unique points of interest, including how special cases on the Underground Railroad (UGRR) often came through here. *The Last Train*, a diary of the UGRR experience is expected to be printed next year.

Judy Billings reported that the National Park Service (NPS) is using Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area (FFNHA) as a prototype for GIS mapping on a new Web site.

Judy presented the financial report for Martha Parker. The ending bank balance was \$1,524.26. The group expended \$100.00 to the Kansas Secretary of State for annual registration.

Judy Billings introduced Clark Balderson of Wamego, who serves on the Board of Trustees. He wanted the group to understand what the board is trying to accomplish. They must raise a minimum of \$300,000 to facilitate a management plan and get it approved by National Park Service and the Secretary of Interior. He explained his interest by saying that both sides of his family can trace their history in the region back to the 1800s and that his family still lives in the area. He feels the heritage area can help keep people connected to the stories of the region. It can also help preserve rural areas by bringing in low impact tourism dollars.

The board is still looking to add members from Missouri.

Judy Billings reminded the group that the board meetings are open to the public. The board meets 3pm on the third Tuesday of each month at the Eldridge Hotel in Lawrence.

There were extra copies for the group of the information packets that board members have been using to explain the heritage area. Electronic copies will be sent out.

The board will meet next on Tuesday, July 17.

Judy Billings announced the selection of the National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations to facilitate the management plan. To learn more about this group, visit their Web site at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/>

The Kansas Travel and Tourism Department has awarded the FFHNA \$75,000 to begin the process of the management plan. The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has committed \$25,000.

The National Park Service (NPS) has awarded FFHNA \$18,000 to pay for travel to meetings to develop the plan.

The National Geographic group has some questions that they need the partnership group to address. Judy is working to facilitate the answers, including:

- Does FFHNA have a good list of contacts?

Judy reported that there are people following the progress of the partnership group through the minutes. FFHNA has a good database of contacts.

- They need information on where the funding will come from; there are parameters on what money they can accept.
- Can FFHNA help to develop a “collision calendar,” which is a list of dates of events and other possible conflicts to holding public meetings?

FFHNA will use database to query the partnership about conflicting dates.

- What information will the partnership group collect as opposed to management plan team?

The partnership group is continuing to develop a scope of work. The Board of Trustees will sign the contract.

The minimum cost will be \$300,000, but the price will not be final until the scope of work is finalized.

Theme discussion

Sue Pridemore continued the discussion of themes.

Sue reminded the group that it is important to see her as a catalyst for discussion. She may say things just to get a reaction from the group. She wants to cause people to think about issues.

Before beginning the discussion, Sue had the following “public announcements:”

- Cornell University printed two documents from the 1800s, *Two Tracts for the Times*, www.library.cornell.edu that feature the pros and cons of slavery. The first by BF Stringfellow of Missouri is titled, *Negro Slavery, No Evil*. The second by D.R. Goodlow of North Carolina is titled, *Is it Expedient to Introduce Slavery into Kansas?*
- National Park Service has created a document for new citizens, *National Park Owners Manual for New Citizens of the USA*. There will be a new brochure on heritage areas coming out.
- The group should keep spreading the word and pass the emails along to others. There will be lots of dialog in the next two- to three years about what is important for this region.
- Competition still open to submit photos to National Landmark Calendar, www.cr.nps.gov/nhl
- Some books in Big Read have significance to the story. www.nea.bigread.org/books.php
- Clippings of Interests:
 - Symphony of the Flint Hills
 - Handout of IMLS grant and award opportunities

How does each story fit into the overall picture?

Dialog begins with definition of freedom

Bleeding Kansas was one of the best media manipulations of the time. Many others were bleeding, but Bleeding Kansas painted a picture.

Sue quoted Carol Bohl, who asked the question, “why do we still have a border rather than a state boundary?”

The group must try to get to three sub themes that fit within the definition of freedom.

Alexis Radil asked how to focus discussion (and put personal soapboxes aside) into concrete themes so that it can all be tied together.

The question won’t be answered in one session; does each topic help tell the story?

Many expressed that this process is hard work. The management team will compile the work, but the group has to decide on the plan.

The story is an ecosystem. The themes will define every other decision.

NPS is developing a Web site for the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War. The deadline for placing content on the site will be the end of August.

Sue presented her “Book of the Month” selections:

- *Daughter of Earth*, by Agnes Smedley, is one disenfranchised individual's story.
- *Does the Frontier Experience Make America Exceptional?* by Richard W. Etulian.
- *Cathy Williams, From Slave to Female Buffalo Soldier*, by Phillip Thomas Tucker

Sue passed out a press release about a tour of reconciliation taking place in Cass County. The tour will take in sites of past conflict from the time of the Border Wars and pray at each site.

The group needs to think about pre- and post Civil War connections. Dale Nimz suggested that the group use the word experience to describe the places within the story

If themes are abstract (philosophy), how do you make them real for visitors?

Julie Mulvihill suggested that the group needs more time to talk about these concepts. Judy Billings asked about having longer meetings.

Ann Crume from Lexington invited all to attend the August meeting in Lexington. Congressman Ike Skelton will attend. The meeting will be at the Wentworth Academy, and can hold 125-150.

The September meeting will be held at the Mid-America Regional Council in Kansas City.

Sue pointed out the literature and performing arts are also important to this story and need to be enhanced. She talked about many of the other ideas and philosophies that came from the region, such as the little Blue Books.

Two news releases were distributed. One announced that the Missouri and Kansas governors agreed to be honorary co-chairs of the Board of Trustees. The other announced the selection of the National Geographic team to conduct the management plan.

Report on International Heritage Development Conference, IHDC

Alexis Radil talked about IHDC held in Detroit. She feels that FFNHA is a trailblazer in comparison with other heritage areas. FFNHA is much more grass roots; it is not top down as other areas are. Alexis attended workshops on various topics. One, "Telling Stories of Conflict" suggests telling visitors HOW to think, not WHAT to think.

Board member David Dunfield, Judy Billings and Debbie White also attended the conference.

Committee Reports

Debbie White reported on the Peer Review Committee. Any site that is located within the boundaries of the heritage area that wants to be included must submit a written affidavit stating their interest and intent to be involved in the heritage area. A private property owner may submit a letter stating that they do not wish to be part of the heritage area, this is not necessary but may make them feel better about assuring their position.

Sue reiterated that property rights are vitally important. Property owners can not be pressured into participation. She stressed to all the partners they must understand, participation is voluntary.

Announcements

Judy has Civil War on the Western Frontier brochures. This is the 12th year of the event held in Lawrence August 9 – 21.

Paul Bahnmaier reminded the group to participate in the online voting for Lecompton as one of the Wonders of Kansas.

Michael Stubbs detailed several landmarks in the area of note for the group to take in as they traveled to lunch or left the area.

After lunch Dale will talk about development of Alma.

Attendees:

Humboldt Tourism	Eileen Robertson
Leavenworth	Keyta Kelly
KS Scenic Byways	Debbie Divine
Cass Co. His. Soc.	Carol Bohl
Wabaunsee Co. His.Soc.	Michael Stubbs
Wabaunsee Co. Museum	Alan Winker
Riley Co. His. Museum & Goodnow House	Cheryl Collins
Johnson Co. Museum	Stephanie Clayton
Lexington Area C of C	Ann Crume
Bushwhacker Museum	Terry Ramsey
Old Depot Museum	Deb Barker
Franklin Co. CVB	Kristi Len
1 st Terr. Cap. & Geary Co. Museum	Ron Harris
Wakefield Museum	Clif Gordon
Jefferson Co. Hist.Soc.	Julie Frisbie
Linn Co. & Mound City Hist.Soc.	Ken & Mary Asher
Lawrence	Dale Nimz
Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop	Alexis Radil
NPS	Sue Pridemore
KS Humanities Council	Tracy Quillin

KS Humanities Council
Lawrence CVB
Miami Co. Hist.Soc.
Leavenworth Co. Hist.Soc.
Leavenworth Co. Hist.Soc.
Leavenworth Co. Hist.Soc.
KS Travel & Tourism
Doniphan Co. Hist.Soc.
Doniphan Co. Hist.Soc.
Paxico Merchants
Osage Co. Eco. Dev.
Fort Scott CVB
Lecompton Hist.Soc.
Manhattan CVB
Coffey Co. Econ. Dev.
Wabaunsee Co. Econ. Dev.
Topeka
Topeka
Territorial Cap. Topeka
Lawrence CVB

Julie Mulvihill
Debbie White
John Nichols
Sue Gervasini
Joanie Kepka
Sally Hatcher
Regina Nicol
Pat Dill
Peggy Stanton
Bud Hund
Steph Watson
Katie Casper
Paul Bahnmaier
Dennis Toll
Jon Hotaling
Katie Carlgren
Carol McDouell
Don Lambert
Chris Meinhardt
Judy Billings