

**FRIENDS OF THE CASEY JONES TRAIL ASSOCIATION
MEETING MINUTES
March 17, 2022**

The Friends of the Casey Jones Trail Association convened in regular session in-person and via Zoom on March 17, 2022 at 11:30 a.m at the Slayton Pizza Ranch. Members present: Mick Myers, Jakob Etrheim, Dan Wildermuth, Myron Koets, James Jens, Jon Hoyme, Chris Ingebretsen, Jessica Welu, Stephanie Korver (zoom), Lori Gunnick (zoom), Mike Zinnel (zoom).

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion was made by Dan, seconded by James and unanimously carried to approve the agenda.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion was made by Dan, seconded by Myron and unanimously carried to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meeting.

TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Jakob reported that the friends have received \$183.94 in donations and membership since the last meeting in February. The only expense was \$96 to Amy Rucker for reimbursement of payment to renew our website. Jessica and Jakob have tried to figure out how to transfer the website credentials from Amy but it has been difficult. So far, Amy has not minded that we reimburse her once a year.

Jakob reported that he was invited to speak at the Shetek Area Lake Association about the Casey Jones Trail and Friends. The SALA became a Friends member at the Contributor level (\$50) after Jakob's presentation. Jakob requested that we reciprocate a membership to the SALA from the Friends. Motion was made by Jakob, seconded by Dan and unanimously carried to approve a membership at \$50 to the Shetek Area Lake Association.

There is a total of 35 members, which is down from 2021 (44).

BUSINESS

Committee Updates

The Acquisition Committee met on March 2. They met with Kent Skaar and created a priority list. They will meet again in April. Stephanie Korver will take the maps that the club created last year and make them digital and editable. Kent provided characteristics of land that is most desirable and least cost effective to build trails.

The PR and Communications committee also met in March. They discussed acquiring trail user testimonials and photos. Posting more on facebook was a priority. Mick asked if we can use the user's photos for our publicity purposes. We can if we get permission from the photo creator with credit. April 23 is Rails to Trails National Trails Day. The first weekend in June is National Trails Weekend.

The Government Relations Committee met a few weeks ago. There was discussion if there needs to be a hearing at the State Legislature in order for bill concerning the Casey Jones Trail to be pushed through. Dan asked Senator Weber to contact him concerning this question. Myron mentioned that we could possibly go through DEED to get funding for the trail.

The Fundraising Committee has not met. The committee needs to work on getting large funds to use towards trail development or grant funds matching. Jakob mentioned that the Friends group ran a loss financially in 2022. The group isn't in immediate trouble but does need to do something moving forward. Myron mentioned that he has been working with a group of SW MN Mayors. He would recommend that the Casey Jones present to this group in the future.

Parks and Trail Grants: Seed Collection and Earth Day

Jakob reported that we have received \$950 in grant funds from the Parks and Trail Council of MN. \$800 is for a seed collection project with the DNR in the fall and \$150 is for a coordination of a Earth Day Clean Up event on the Lake Wilson section on April 23. The DNR is requiring that volunteers for this event sign up for a background check and prove COVID vaccine status. The Friends group officers have written a letter to the DNR Commissioner to express their disagreement with the stringent requirements for volunteering.

DNR Updates

Chris provided an update from DNR. They are looking for summer help at Split Rock Creek State Park. Mick asked about planting trees at the Pipestone Trail head. Chris will look into it.

Other

We will discuss the annual meeting details at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by James, seconded by Jon and unanimously carried to approve adjourning the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jakob Etrheim, Stand-In Secretary

Letters of Support for the Casey Jones State Trail

For individuals and businesses wishing to support the development and completion of the Casey Jones State Trail, a letter of support is very helpful. Tell something about yourself, your family and/or your business and the importance of the trail to you. The following are potential suggestions to include in your content:

A trail is a great activity for families young and old;

Outdoor recreation is a quality of life benefit that should be available to all;

Southwest Minnesota has limited access to state trails in comparison to other areas of the state;

Trails are a great way to enjoy our natural and cultural resources;

Outdoor physical activity is critical to our health, especially in our current pandemic.

Investing in parks and trails attracts employers, active workforces, and capital investment, helping communities thrive economically and socially;

Trails are an asset to developing the economic impact of tourism and quality of life for residents and visitors.

The development of the Casey Jones State Trail is important to the resilience of our area;

We support the resurfacing of the Lake Shetek to Currie loop trail and maintenance and future development of the Casey Jones State Trail to completion.

Sample:

Dear Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail:

Our family has farmed near Lake Wilson for decades. We are retired and walk on the trail at least twice a week. It's a safe way for us to get some outdoor physical activity, and is even more critical during the pandemic.

When our grandchildren visit, they bring their bikes to ride the trail. We feel the trail provides a great opportunity for families young and old.

Our area of the state has very limited access to surfaced trails. We support the maintenance and development of the Casey Jones State Trail to completion.

Sincerely,

Please address your letter to the Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail and send to:
Deb Nelson, City of Pipestone, 119 2nd Ave SW, Pipestone MN 56164

CASEY JONES STATE TRAIL RESOLUTION

Whereas outdoor recreation is a quality of life benefit that should be available to all;

Whereas southwest Minnesota has a huge void in access to state trails in comparison to other areas of the state;

Whereas trails provide direct access to our natural resources, including birds, wildflowers, lakes and prairie, as well as our historical/cultural resources;

Whereas outdoor physical activity is critical to our health;

Whereas trails, especially in our current pandemic, are an essential part of the healthcare system;

Whereas investing in parks and trails attracts employers, active workforces, and capital investment, helping communities thrive economically and socially;

Whereas trails are an asset to developing the economic impact of tourism and quality of life for residents, visitors and second home owners;

Whereas the Casey Jones State Trail was the first designated state trail in Minnesota;

Whereas the development of the Casey Jones State Trail is important to the resilience of southwest Minnesota;

Whereas while funding and trail development have generated trail networks in other areas of the state, the Casey Jones State Trail has been overlooked in this process;

Therefore, we hereby resolve to support the resurfacing of the Lake Shetek to Currie loop trail and future development and maintenance of the Casey Jones State Trail to completion.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION _____

DATE PASSED: _____

SIGNATURE OF PRESIDENT/OFFICER/AUTHORITY _____

Please send approved resolutions to: Deb Nelson, City of Pipestone, 119 2nd Ave SW,
Pipestone MN 56164