

Tips for Building a Positive Working Relationship with your Agency Partners

Developed at the 2017 Statewide Conference for Friends

Friends groups and OPRHP park and site managers had the chance to huddle up to discuss challenges and opportunities. From those conversations came some tips to live by to create better working relationships. One common theme from all was that communication is key!

- Agree on a defined mission and vision going forward, they will be the tools to guide you through difficult times
- When doing a project, keep one park/site manager point person, and one Friends point person, they should communicate with each other regularly and communicate with their respective colleagues regularly, so everyone is on the same page
- Ask if you are doing what is needed – don't assume
- Discuss desires beyond one project (short term and longer term vision)
- Keep the line of communication open (no matter what the line is, Facebook, email, etc.)
- Ask your partners how you can help (money, in-kind, volunteer, etc.) and don't start anything until you do ask
- Communicate about hard topics, be polite but be honest
- Communicate your shared vision clearly with all partners (board, OPRHP, etc)
- Have an executive meeting before a board meeting to organize your agenda and be more productive
- Have a committee head for each group, who will send a report monthly before board meetings to help agree what to put on the agenda and make the meeting more efficient
- Remember your shared vision and have regular meetings between the park/site and Friends
- Keep disagreements within the group, don't let visitors know there are challenges being worked through
- Membership is perceived in different ways, understand how everyone perceives membership (roles, activities, etc.), articulate what membership can mean, and always welcome new members
- Invite Friends/board members to shadow park/site managers, so they can see what daily activities entail
- Have open communication, ask questions, listen, remember that all sides are valuable, and keep talking until you understand each other