

Thumb Land Conservancy NEWS

November 10, 2019

Silver Trails Update

We haven't dropped our Silver Trails effort but had to take a break to catch up on other work. The only information we get now is rumor and second-hand accounts because the gravel company has refused to communicate with us as promised. As far as we know, they have made little effort to communicate with Grant Township either. If the gravel company doesn't like all of the rumor and speculation swirling around, as they have mentioned in a few press releases, they should realize they have themselves to blame primarily, along with MCC.

Over the past few weeks, the camp has been emptied of equipment and just about anything that can be moved. We understand that most things have gone to D Bar A. Certain "artifacts" or memorabilia-type items have gone to a local Scouter for safe-keeping in a Blue Water Council museum. I hope to send more details on that later. For now, I am confident that these items are in very good hands.

The word is that the staff at Silver Trails plans to burn the Number 9 Tree today or tomorrow. I have no other details. The current few camp staff seems to think they are anointed to decide the fate of everything for all of us unworthy Scouters because they are at the camp now and we aren't. They don't seem to respect the many days we put in at Silver Trails in previous years. So, if you are concerned about the Number 9 Tree and other things like that, I suggest you go to Silver Trails as soon as possible. I'm told it has been kind of a free-for-all for signs and other items that take a little effort to remove. By the way, my dad made the three white flag poles out in the parade field. Those haven't come down yet but who knows.

The rumor is that the gravel company will mine just the parade field and use the rest for hunting. If understood correctly, they would leave the main entrance and Rotary Lodge intact to use as a hunting lodge. If this is true, I would ask that they leave the ridge intact all the way around Dead Man's Bluff, Devil's Point, and above the Black River floodplain to the east, and take their gravel out at Jeddo Road rather than building a road north through the camp. We are thinking, given the pursuit of trophy game by the owner of Dan's Excavating, they are likely to fence the camp and fill it with animals for "canned hunting". Not as bad as mining the whole camp, but this will be devastating to the forest vegetation. Regardless, we have no guarantees and their words mean nothing without a written legal agreement. If they really want to live up to their words, they would at least

grant a conservation easement to a land conservancy on that portion of the camp they are not intending to mine.

In the meantime, the Friends of Silver Trails needs to continue to track plans for the camp through Grant Township and persuade the Township that we need to negotiate a land use agreement sooner than later.

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