2026 FESTIVAL IN THE WOODS – DEBRIEF

MEETING – CHAS, ELLIE, KRISTIN AND DONNA – 10/14/2026

Should St. Paul's and GSR co-host the Festival in the Woods again next year? Yes

How did the date and time work? Depends on what's going on in the community. Need separation from peach fest and school starting.

- 4th Saturday – September 25, 2027
- 10 am to 3 pm – end at 2 pm
- Did we give ourselves enough time to plan?
- Shall we pencil planning + hosting in on the 2027 calendar? – mid-July – July 13, 3 pm to get started. Be ready:
  - Ellie and Kristin with vendor ideas
  - Donna and Chas with RCS participation ideas
  - Donna and Amanda more environmental partners – more active participation
  - Dave Putt for ideas for activities

How big?

- Was the event well-attended? Parking lot was mostly full. Hosts, partners, need to park across the street after setting up. Next year have someone to direct cars to RMS.
- Do we need to grow it or is it ok the same size? Grow it with more partners, have relevant vendors, invite RMS theatre kids to do an interactive story, or other RMS activity that has a summer.

Any comments on graphics and publicity?

- Ad in parks and rec and also bulletin board
- Community calendars ready by July 1 – Parks and Rec; Record; Michigan Gardener; WBRW, MittTV,
- Press release
- Media coverage – Record articles before and after event.
- Social media – Good social coverage by Clare.
- Emails – Donna shared with GSR list, partners forwarded.
- Flyers – need to be ready sooner, Donna to check if we can send out to students.
- Banner bigger and earlier – ask Clare to have ready to review in July. 2-sided. Get costs.

Any comments on partners? Any organization we should add?

- Lake St. Clair CISMA
- Clinton River Watershed Council
- Shelby Township Shadbush Nature Center
- Romeo Area Optimists Club
- Romeo and Juliet Garden Club
- Planet Detroit
- Michigoat
- Seven Ponds – Donna can talk to Charlie Turner on board
- Beekeeping (?)

Any comments on speakers and music?

- Intro message from Donna/ GSR - OK
- Welcome message from Chas/St. Paul's - Good
- 3 sets
  1. 10 – 11 am Harpist Stacy Stalles – Ellie will invite
  2. 11 am – 12:30 pm Richard Katona – B-side – reserve his band.
  3. 12:30 – 2 pm Guitar, harmonica and singer Ed Kiefer (with daughter Emma) – Donna will invite

Any comments on animal guests? Awesome. Ellie and Kristin work on nature center invitations.

- Shadbush Nature Center - Nature on Wheels and animal ambassadors – get it for another hour – 11:30-1:30
- Baby goats from Michigoat – see what Jessica thinks about more goats working. Maybe just babies again.
- Seven Ponds – what can they bring.

2026 FESTIVAL IN THE WOODS – DEBRIEF

Any comments on activities? Park our activities closer to entrance. More teenager / adult interest activities. Kristin suggested something from drama students at high school.

- Nature and stewardship hikes - great
- Scavenger hunt - great
- Putt putt course brought by Optimists – yes!
- Rain barrel painting
- Bookmark making
- Leaf tracing
- Coloring pages
- Cornhole game – bigger one.

Any comments on food? Advertise free food more. Need a sign – might be too far away and need more direction.

- Water
- Lemonade
- Popcorn
- Donuts and cider
- Hot dogs and chips

Revenue / expense - what did GSR + St. Paul's spend? Was there any revenue to offset cost?

GSR - $236.09

- Romeo Printing 9/8/2026 $(84.80)
- Office Depot 9/28/2026 $(55.19)
- Westview Orchards 9/28/2026 $(96.00)

St. Paul's - $1,180

- $400 on portable toilets
- $250 on food
- $250 in paint
- $180 for nature bus
- $100 in food donations

Some expenses were covered personally and have not been accounted for.

Next year budget $2,000 shared by GSR and St. Paul's. Start working on sponsorships in March. Acknowledge sponsorships in media releases and create a sponsor banner for the event. Consider asking:

- Malburg Funeral Home
- Heidebreicht Chevrolet (GSR)

Other thoughts or ideas?

Line up service volunteers from school early.

Get Optimists big tent (Nancy) for kid's activities.

Nice tent for food.

Thank you emails – GSR can send out – who should I copy? Copy Chas, Ellie and Kristin.

Include RMS principal in thank yous

Establish project communication with funeral home.

Donna: Set up meeting Donna, Chad, Brad at RMS. Chas has been in touch via email.

COMMENTS FROM CLARE

Since I won't be able to attend the meeting tomorrow, I wrote down some thoughts. (Thanks Donna for the questions to spark ideas!)

I thought this was a great event and would be great to do annually in conjunction with the church to share our restoration progress with the community. We had excellent weather. I think end of September was a good time of year to do it. 10am to 3pm was quite long, especially since several events (nature bus, goats) only ran from 11am-1pm. I think a slightly narrower time window would be better.

The event was well attended. It would be ok being the same size, but I think we have room to grow slightly to get more community involvement.

I thought press releases and media coverage were great! Please let me know any feedback on graphics, flyers, social media, etc.

The partners being there was great! Music was great! Loved the animal guests – would for sure want to see them in future events.

I thought the rain barrel painting was a super fun activity. Now that we have them painted, we probably won't need to do this again, but I think kids really

enjoyed this “big” craft activity. We will have to brainstorm fun things to do in the future.

COMMENTS FROM AMANDA

Here are some of my notes as well!

Should St. Paul's and GSR co-host the Festival in the Woods again next year?

How did the date and time work?

Time of year was fantastic! We could try earlier in September to guarantee nicer weather (at least for warmth) but the time we had was perfect and the day was gorgeous.

I would maybe reduce the official hours as the majority of attendees came in the morning.

How big?

The event was very well attended and was a great size! I agree with Clare the size was good and there is still space to grow with community interest.

Any comments on graphics and publicity?

Do we have post press coverage articles we can share around?

Any comments on partners? Any organization we should add?

Partners were great and offered a lot of variation for attendees with some fantastic kids’ opportunities. When we move through this year, there may be other opportunities with other partners as well.

Any comments on animal guests?

The nature bus was so cool! I never got to see them in action this way and the kids had a blast.

The goats were it! Kids (and adults) loved them!