

MINUTES FINAL - as of 4/15/08
Governor's Wisconsin State Trails Council Meeting
Monday, January 7, 2008
GEF 2 Building
101 S. Webster Street, Madison, WI 53707
10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

State Trails Council Members Present: Ken Carpenter, Randy Harden, Tom Huber, Jim Joque (via telephone), Mike McFadzen (via telephone), Dave Phillips, Martha Schouweiler (via telephone), Tom Thornton (via telephone), Robbie Webber

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Brigit Brown, Kelly Kearns, Steve Petersen, Joseph Warren

Others Present: Alex Bub, Ken Linzmeyer, Rob McConnell, John Newton, Luana Schneider, John Schnorr, Harold Schmidt, Mike Schwarzenbacher, Bill Sloey (via telephone), David Vogt

Agenda review/repair and approval of October meeting minutes

- Phillips called the meeting to order. Approval of the October 12, 2007 meeting minutes by McFadzen. Seconded by Webber. Minutes approved.

Chair Report

- Phillips has been in contact with members of the Wisconsin Legislature regarding support for a non-motorized legislative study committee (the STC passed a resolution of support for a non-motorized study committee last April). Study committees will be selected at the end of January or beginning of February and Phillips stated that it was important for Council Members to contact Senator Fred Risser, Representative Steve Wieckert and their legislators to help get the non-motorized study committee selected.
- Phillips attended the Mid America Trails and Greenways Conference in Chicago. The Conference, held every two years, is good for networking. Wisconsin is behind our neighbor states in terms of planning and funding trails. Surrounding states have water trails programs and also designate much more money to their trail programs. Phillips observed that there was a tendency from some people to not recognize trails not used by their own group. Phillips stated that as the Conference brings many groups together, this was an issue that trail users could work to resolve.
- Phillips stated that the subcommittee was unable to meet to discuss the trail use resolution for the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest and would leave the resolution tabled for the time being. Phillips asked Council Members to send him ideas they would like to see included in a trail use resolution. Regarding the ATV trail proposal for the forest, Phillips stated that Council Members should contact their legislators and the Natural Resources Board to represent their constituents on the issue.

DNR Report

- Steve Petersen, Property Superintendent for Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest (NHAL), updated the Council concerning the ATV trail proposal in the forest. Public comment on the stakeholder group recommendation ended on November 1, 2007. More than 700 people attended three public hearing meetings. The DNR received almost 2,900 comments from 400 zip codes in 22 states and Ontario and is developing a summary of those comments and an internal feasibility assessment. The DNR will be drafting a green sheet for the Natural Resources Board's (NRB) February meeting which describes the recommendation of the Department. The summary of the public comments will be included with the green-sheet. The green-sheet and agenda for the NRB meeting will be available to the public about two weeks before the meeting. Petersen will send to Council Members when available.
- The DNR is planning a meeting of stakeholders for the motorized state recreation area concept and hope to accomplish that in the first part of 2008. A large amount of background information has already been collected and the DNR is continuing to gather data on issues surrounding the concept. The stakeholder list will include all levels of motorized use.
- Master Planning continues at Straight Lake and Pike Lake state parks. Master plans will be starting at Copper Falls, High Cliff, and Cross Plains. Cross Plains is a State Ice Age Trail Area and a unit of the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. The DNR is working on a process that will allow existing master plans to be updated on a more efficient and timely basis. Much of that will be done to meet the criteria of third party certification efforts.
- The DNR is putting the finishing touches on the distribution plans for the Wisconsin State Park System Strategic Plan. Copies of a final plan should be available in the near future. Brown will send to Council Members when available.
- The Department of Justice is continuing to work on the Amery to Dresser State Trail lawsuit. A legal decision by the court is expected soon. Brown will send the decision to the Council when available.
- The WSPS Director position is open for applications until January 18, 2008. Brown asked Council Members to encourage good potential candidates to apply.
- The Trail Crew has finished work for winter and will be starting back up at Governor Dodge State Park in spring. An article about the WSPS Trail Crew appeared in *Silent Sports Magazine*, and also in *Mammoth Tales*, a publication by the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation. Brown will send Council Members a copy of the article.
- On the side of the 2008 Wisconsin State Trail Pass is a web link asking people to go to the DNR website to give feedback relating to their trail pass and trail use via an electronic survey. The DNR is implementing a new survey tool and the trail pass survey should be available soon. Brown will send to Council Members when available.

- Quinn Williams, Wisconsin DNR Attorney who discussed the Managed Forest Law (MFL) issue with the STC on December 6, drafted a memo which provides guidance for the DNR relating to MFL. Phillips asked if the STC should take up the issue at the next meeting. Brown stated that the issue should be addressed by the memo.

State Trails Council Member Reports

- Council Members submitted reports in writing due to the shortened length of the meeting.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* Cross-country ski use across the state is booming due to early and consistent snows. Many races have been held and many more are scheduled. Kid's programs are flourishing, even in southern Wisconsin. The Northern Kettle Moraine Ski Club has developed a 10-year Master Plan and has presented it to the DNR. The plan concentrates on facility improvement and trail lighting, with a futuristic look at snowmaking for one trail. The Wisconsin Nordic Network (WINN) has been involved in supporting a Joint Legislative Committee Non-motorized Study Group and is opposing AB600. The WINN annual meeting will take place in January.
- *Snowmobiling.* The Snowmobile season has been very good for Wisconsin businesses in December, which has not happened in the northern part of the state for the past several years. Early snowfall amounts allowed counties to groom before the holiday season for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowboarding, downhill skiing and snowshoeing. A few southern counties lost some snow due to rain, but most of the state had good trail conditions for the entire holiday season. As of January 2, Wisconsin has had nine snowmobiling fatalities. Three fatalities were caused by drowning that took place early in the season when ice conditions on the lakes was poor. In many cases the ice on lakes and rivers is still unsafe for travel due to heavy snow and slush on the surface. The 55 mph night time speed limit is again in effect this season and will hopefully cut down on accidents at night.
- *Users with Disabilities.* Joque contacted the DNR Disabled Advisory Council and also plans to contact the DNR Disability Coordinator once the position is filled. Joque hopes that both Councils can coordinate their efforts, which would be a valuable opportunity to both the DNR and citizens with disabilities who enjoy using state trails. Joque was contacted by Don Erickson, IAPTF Volunteer, to introduce a resolution asking for help from the DNR to fund the Tuscobia Segment of the Ice Age Trail reconstruction. This issue will be added to the next meeting agenda in April and Erickson and DNR regional staff will be invited to present the issue.
- *Department of Transportation.* The DOT will be accepting applications for the 2008-2009 Transportation Enhancement program and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities program until April 18, 2008 for projects to be developed in 2009 and 2010. Both of those programs are popular sources of funds for trail projects serving bicyclists and pedestrians.

AB 600

- John Schnorr, representing the Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association (WOHVA), and Alex Bub, representing the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association (WOHMA), gave presentations outlining their reasons for their support of AB600. The proposed legislation would increase State Trails Council membership to 11 with 4 seats

assigned to motorized uses. Reasons for support included: The STC is responsible for administering Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funds which are federal funds used to develop and maintain both non-motorized and motorized recreational trails and are derived from motorized uses. The STC oversees RTP funds and should represent a variety of non-motorized and motorized users. A portion of RTP funds comes from the motor fuel excise tax on off-highway recreational vehicle use. STC representation is currently skewed towards non-motorized use as Council Members are already appointed to specific uses. The proposed legislation should not be a surprise to Council Members as it was mentioned at previous meetings. AB600 did not originate with the STC, but the Council has not historically introduced or lobbied for legislation. The STC has never had a quorum issue. The Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) lists a large percentage of the population as OHM and OHV users and there is a lack of riding opportunities available in the state.

- McFadzen thanked Schnorr and Bub for speaking before the Council to represent their constituents, and asked what goals they saw for AB600. Schnorr stated that one of WOHVA's goals is to have a motorized recreation park in Wisconsin. Schnorr stated that the State Trails Council passed a resolution of support of a motorized state recreation area and was surprised that members are not showing the same support for AB600.
- Both Schnorr and Bub stated they would like to see additional riding opportunities for off-highway vehicles and motorcycles, including added opportunities on existing ATV trail systems. Bub stated that there are trails available in counties that have fees. Brown stated that both user groups are working towards a registration program similar to that of ATVs and snowmobiles.
- Phillips stated that according to SCORP, many other trail activities have a higher number of participants than off-highway vehicles and motorcycles. Currently no STC positions are designated in statute. AB600 gives statutory authority to designate four spots specifically to motorized uses. Phillips stated that if some spots on the Council are designated in statute, then it would seem that all the major user groups should be designated as well.
- Webber asked at what point would the STC become too large and at what point should a group have a specific seat.
- Schnorr stated that he believes that motorized user groups are not adequately represented by the STC and AB600 helps to address the issue. Schnorr stated that all user groups should be encouraged to seek increased representation at the STC.
- Webber stated that many groups, such as mountain bikers, bird watchers, snowshoers, and dog sled and motorized watercraft users feel they are underrepresented. Webber stated the STC has to find a solution to ensure all voices are heard, but that does not necessarily mean adding a seat for every trail use
- McFadzen stated he saw a problem with codifying certain positions. Only motorized users would be protected by the proposed legislation while other users could lose a representative. McFadzen also stated that when discussing money and gas taxes, non-

motorized users feel they are not being equally represented because they do not have similar funding sources or registration programs to compete with the funds from motorized users.

- Phillips stated he was glad the issue of representation came up and would like the STC to discuss the issue at future meetings.
- Carpenter asked Council Members if it would be beneficial to have someone from the STC represent both sides of the Council to the Legislature. Thornton stated that Council Members can speak individually to legislators but should not be representing the entire Council and should let the legislation run its course.
- Webber motioned that Phillips as STC chair, represent the State Trails Council in discussions with the Wisconsin Legislature regarding AB600. Seconded by Carpenter.
- Harden stated that it would not be appropriate to have only a non-motorized Council Member as voice of the entire Council. Webber stated that Phillips should automatically represent the Council unbiased but was open to an amendment to the motion to specify this. Harden asked to amend the motion allowing Phillips to represent the STC in regards to AB600. Webber accepted Harden's amendment.
- A roll-call vote on the motion allowing Phillips to represent the State Trails Council in discussions with the Wisconsin Legislature regarding AB600 for information purposes only (not expressing any bias for or against AB600) was requested. Motion passed 8-1, opposed by Thornton.
- Huber noted that Council Members can still discuss AB600 with legislators as representatives of their user groups.

Invasive Species

- Kelly Kearns, DNR Plant Conservation Program Manager, informed the Council about terrestrial invasive species and the DNR's work with Best Management Practices for invasive species. Invasive species are defined as not-native species that affect the economic or environmental health of an area. Kearns stated that terrestrial invasive species may not get as much media attention as aquatic invasive species, but they are just a big of problem.
- Kearns described invasive species such as garlic mustard, gypsy moths, feral hogs, emerald ash borer, Asian beetle, soil invertebrates and wild parsnip, and passed out some information to Council Members. *Handouts: Reed Canarygrass Control Practices: Effects and Management Recommendations, Species Under Consideration and Classification, brochures for Japanese Knotweed, Wild Parsnip and Garlic Mustard and New Invasive Plants in the Midwest.*
- The DNR is in the process of developing administrative rules to identify, classify and control invasive species. The proposed rules are now out for public comment. Phillips forwarded information about the public comment sessions to Council Members.

- Garlic mustard is abundant in southern Wisconsin with small patches found in the north. Garlic mustard, like non-native grasses and other invasive plants, often start at the edge of trails and move inland. A linear trail system can make invasive species difficult to control.
- Many vectors contribute to the spread of invasive species. Any vector that moves soil, such as trails, can assist with the spread of invasive species. Kearns stated that more studies are needed to help determine the extent to which recreation spreads invasive species, but trails and trail use are definitely a cause. What is needed to help control invasive species is education, early detection of species, and monitoring of those species to keep them under control.
- The DNR is working on a set of Recreation Best Management Practices to minimize the spread of invasive species via trails, trail use, and trail management. Examples of what may be needed to help control invasive species includes; temporary trail closures, mowing at certain times of the year, as well as installing boot brushes and wash stations. Kearns stated that the Best Management Practices are intended to educate all user groups.
- Bill Sloey, Professor Emeritus of Ecology at UW-Oshkosh, sent two handouts to Council Members before the October 2007 STC meeting. Sloey reviewed his proposal concerning invasive species and the construction of new trails and synopsised a third handout he sent to the council just before this meeting. Sloey thanked Kearns for her work with invasive species and supported the best management practices effort. Sloey stated that despite strong efforts to control invasive species, it is nearly impossible to eradicate any invasive specie once it has become established, and asked the Council to take efforts to control the construction of new trails.
- Sloey stated he was concerned with the protection of State Natural Areas and Forests, especially with the ATV trail proposal in NHAL State Forest. Sloey stated that the proposed trail route would pass through clusters of old growth forests and other sensitive natural areas, which would make the areas the trails pass through, vulnerable to invasive species. Sloey stated that the proposed ATV trails need to be kept out of NHAL and asked Council Members to take caution with their votes and consider the invasive species issue for the development of future trails in the state.
- Brown stated that some recommendations for user groups will come out of the Best Management Practices effort. Phillips stated he would like to bring up the invasive species issue at a future council meeting.

Proposed Bylaws

- Brown reviewed the proposed bylaws changes which would allow officer elections to be held at meetings besides January, and which would define Council Member representation. These proposed changes were initially presented at the October meeting in accordance with the bylaws. Bylaws as proposed were moved by Webber. Seconded by Carpenter. Passed unanimously.

2008 Officer Elections

- Huber presented a slate of officers for 2008: Dave Phillips, chair, Randy Harden, vice chair, and Ken Carpenter, secretary. Huber motioned to accept the nominations, seconded by Webber. Passed unanimously.

Other Business

- Webber and Huber will present a proposed resolution for the Complete Streets Initiative at the April meeting.
- Thornton stated that there was still no decision for the lawsuit concerning the rail corridor in Bayfield County.

Public Comment

- Several comments were e-mailed to the Council both supporting and opposing AB600.
- John Newton, President of the Wisconsin Dual Sport Riders, stated he was in support of AB600, and also stated that as a result of off-highway motorcycle users being underrepresented, there is a lack of areas to recreate. A lack of legal areas to ride has led some riders to believe they can ride wherever they want to. Newton stated that non-motorized users have opportunities to recreate in any county in Wisconsin, which is not the case for off-highway motorcycles.
- Harold Schmidt, with the Wisconsin Off-Road Bicycling Association (WORBA), stated that WORBA is in support of advanced riding opportunities for motorized users in other areas of Wisconsin, but is opposed to AB600 because it is not appropriate to designate four spots on the State Trails Council specifically to motorized uses and not designate any non-motorized spots.
- David Vogt, Deputy Executive Director for the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW), stated that BFW does not want to see shared or mix-use trails for motorized and non-motorized users. The BFW is concerned about the size and speed of machines on trails, and is concerned for the safety and enjoyment of all users.
- Mike Schwarzenbacher, Legislative Officer for American Motorcycle Association (AMA) District 16, stated he was in support of AB600 and felt it would give motorized users equal representation in the state.
- Luana Schneider, with the Wisconsin Four Wheel Drive Association (W4WDA), stated she was in support of AB600.
- Motion to adjourn by Huber. Seconded by Webber. Meeting adjourned.