

MINUTES FINAL - as of 10/17/08
Governor's Wisconsin State Trails Council Meeting
Friday, July 11, 2008
Wyalusing State Park
13081 State Park Lane, Bagley WI 53801
10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

State Trails Council Members Present: Randy Harden, Tom Huber, Jim Joque, Dave Phillips, Mike McFadzen, Robbie Webber

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Diane Conklin, Brian Hefty, Andy Janicki, Joseph Warren, Kathleen Wolski

STC Ad Hoc Committee Members Present: Ron Bergin, Ron Bohl, Alex Bub, Ken Linzmeyer, Bryan Much, Joel Savilonis, Jeff Schimpff, Harold Schmidt, Sam Tobias, Bill Ward

Others Present: Doug Johnson, Judy Peterson

Agenda review/repair and approval of April meeting minutes

- Phillips called the meeting to order. Amendment to the agenda. Two items, the presentation about the Minnesota Parks and Trail Council, and the presentation about wider/safer machines for the physically challenged were removed from the agenda as the presenters were not able to attend the meeting. These topics will tentatively be moved to the October STC agenda.
- Approval of the April 15, 2008 meeting minutes by McFadzen. Webber seconded. Minutes approved.

Chair Report

- Martha Schouweiler has resigned from the STC due to health concerns. Phillips thanked Schouweiler for starting the role of water trails for the STC. Phillips asked council members to talk to Brown or the Governor's office with suggestions of possible representatives to fill Schouweiler's position.
- The non-motorized trails legislative study committee was selected by the legislature to review non-motorized trail issues. The committee will be similar to the previous motorized trails legislative study committee.
- The Wisconsin Bicycle and Pedestrian conference will be taking place on August 13 and 14 in Eau Claire and there will be a number of sessions related to trails. Additional information and registration is available online.

- Following the STC meeting, the Ad Hoc Committee to Recommend Improvements to the Structure of the STC will be holding its first meeting. Phillips and Harden will give an update later in the meeting.
- Brian Hefty, Property Manager for Wyalusing State Park, described the damage from the 2007 storms that is keeping some of the park's trails closed. Wyalusing is working to acquire funding and open/reroute the trails. The Trail Crew is expected to be moving to Wyalusing sometime this year.

State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Department of Transportation.* In early August a committee will meet to select projects to receive transportation enhancement funding for FY 2009-2011. The committee will notify project recipients in September or October. A large percentage of submitted and approved projects are bike/ped trail projects. Other projects may include such things as street-scaping or historical preservation. McFadzen asked if an increased number of bike/ped projects will be funded as more people are walking and biking to work. Huber stated that the committee will be reviewing all the submitted projects, the interest in these projects is up but it is dependent on the amount of funds obligated for the program.
- *Cross-country skiing.* Cross-country skiing and all winter sport recreation across the state was as high as it has been in recent years. Due to the success at Lapham Peak, more places are considering adding lights and/or making snow for next winter. The sport of skijoring (cross-country skiing while attached to a dog or dogs) is growing. There were some conflicts between skijorers and other trail users, including snowmobiles, and some work/education or guidelines may need to be done before winter. McFadzen would like to see snowshoeing added to the list of winter activities in the Department of Tourism Wisconsin Activity Guide.
- *Bicycling.* The 2008 National Pro Walk/Pro Bike Conference will be held in Seattle in September. Webber stated that the projects submitted just for Dane County could use all of the transportation enhancement funds, and with the additional capacity on bike trails, the legislature needs to obligate the full amount of funding. Metro areas are working to put together case statements to look at different sources of funding. The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin has been receiving many inquiries about trail conditions and is glad to hear the DNR is getting that information out. The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) is teaming with the Wisconsin Off-Road Biking Association (WORBA) and Capitol Off-Road Pathfinders (CORP) to put on a sustainable trailbuilding class at Cam Rock in Dane County on August 9 and 10.
- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* The Youth Education Expo was held May 15 and 16 in Beaver Dam. The Expo is very important for getting kids involved in the outdoors. Kids take part in activities such as hunting, fishing, riding an ATV, hiking, camping, etc. There has not been much conflict with trail users in the counties that have the Lightweight Utility Vehicle (LUV) pilot program. The program will help determine the trail compatibility of LUVs. Other motorsports, such as off-highway vehicles, motorcycles and trucks are trying to introduce their own registration programs to the state legislature.

- *Users with Disabilities.* Andy Janicki, Accessibility Coordinator for the DNR, was invited to the meeting. Janicki explained an accessible kayak that is available at Devil's Lake for anyone with a disability to use. Janicki attended the sustainable trails workshop at Wyalusing. Sustainable trails provide a more universal design to increase accessibility. Terry Larson, who has a grandson with a disability, was going to talk to the council about wider/safer machines for the physically challenged. The machine his grandson has is qualified as a Lightweight Utility Vehicle (LUV). Brown and Harden have provided information about the LUV pilot program, and motorized vehicle classifications and regulations. Warren will contact Larson to see if he would like to reschedule for the October meeting.

DNR Report

- In May, Dan Schuller was named the new Director for the Wisconsin State Park System. Schuller has an extensive background with the Park System, and began his career as an LTE at Devil's Lake. In his first couple weeks several parks and trails have had to deal with closures due to the June flooding.
- Schuller stated that one of the responsibilities of the State Park System is to provide high quality recreation, which for trails may mean combining trail uses in some areas or separating in others, such as a motorized recreation area or areas with a silent sport emphasis. Recreation uses have changed over time, and are continually changing.
- The State Stewardship Program was reauthorized for ten more years starting in 2010. There are still questions relating to hunting opportunities. The Natural Resources Board is taking the lead on this issue. McFadzen asked if there could be an update at the next meeting.
- The State Park System and the Lands Division in the DNR are taking the lead on the "Get Outdoors Wisconsin" program, part of the national "No Child Left Inside" initiative. The program is intended to provide awareness across areas of government and help connect and get kids, as well as adults, enthused about being outside.
- The Wisconsin State Park System Strategic Plan presents a series of goals and objectives intended to guide the Wisconsin State Park System over the next five years. The plan will be available online. The DNR will be taking the Plan before the NRB, and when it is public, will be sent to council members.
- There are master plans in the process for Straight Lake, the Pike Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest, Bohn Lake State Ice Age Trail Area and Black River State Forest. Other master plans will also be coming up for Copper Falls and High Cliff state parks, Point Beach State Forest and the Ice Age Complex at Cross Plains. There is a trend of park visitors going from more active use to less active use. Beach use is down. The DNR is working with the public to develop the features and facilities people want.

- In June there was a meeting of motorized trail users in Wausau to discuss the motorized recreation area concept. The group included representatives from ATV, OHV and other motorized users. Biermeier stated that this was a very valuable session and an important step to move forward in the concept plan.
- The Amery to Dresser corridor was involved in a complicated lawsuit, and the DNR is working with Polk County to at least open the corridor up to foot travel.
- The June storms resulted in trail damage at several properties, including Devil's Lake, Wildcat Mountain and the 400 State Trail. The DNR has been issuing press releases and e-mails to provide updates about conditions. Some trails have severe damage and may need to be closed indefinitely and/or possibly rerouted. Temporary trail crews will be implemented to get the trails open. The DNR has worked to develop a Trail Assessment Form to evaluate damaged trails.
- Brown updated the Council about the results of the Trail Pass Survey to date. Since January there have been nearly 3,000 responses to the survey. The survey focuses on questions related to the state trail pass. The survey has provided some valuable information and Brown would like to continue the online survey into 2009.
- The Trail Crew has been a success for the State Park System. With the crew in place, the DNR has been in a better position to respond to some of the damage caused by the June floods. There is one crew at the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. There is also a crew at Governor Dodge State Park which will be moving to Wyalusing.

Complete Streets Resolution

- Webber and Huber presented a Resolution in support of Complete Streets. There is a coalition of groups working on Complete Streets and the Wisconsin Partnership for Activity and Nutrition is looking to pass a similar resolution. Webber stated that the three steps as identified in the resolution could take some time to accomplish but it is important for individuals and communities to start thinking about the concept of Complete Streets.
- Resolution moved by McFadzen, seconded by Joque. Huber abstained from vote. Resolution passed.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) projects update

- Diane Conklin, Financial Assistance Specialist for the DNR, passed out and reviewed a listing of current RTP projects. *Handout: Federal Recreation Trails Program – Review/Results for Fiscal Year 2007.* Conklin stated that as the cost of projects increases, it makes it difficult to fund as many projects as they would like.
- Conklin stated the issue of bridge inspections, and finding a funding source for these inspections, has come up recently after the bridge collapse in Minnesota. Conklin asked the council for an endorsement to adjust the RTP grading tool to include bridge inspections.

- McFadzen stated he did not want to see funding diverted away from new trail development projects. Conklin stated that the money for bridge inspections would only come from funds that were left over in that particular category after all other trail-related projects received their funding.
- Motion to adjust the RTP grading tool and criteria to encompass bridge inspection (as the lowest priority of the grading tool) by Phillips. Seconded by Webber. Motion passes.
- Council members had questions as to why inspections would not be covered under maintenance and asked to review the grading tool and criteria, after any adjustments have been made, either at the October or January STC meeting. Phillips stated the STC has previously discussed a cap on projects. The council may want to consider this issue when reviewing the funding rule.

Ad Hoc Committee update

- At the last STC meeting, partially in response to AB600, the Council discussed forming a subcommittee. The proposed legislation did not make it to the floor before the Legislative Session ended and may be brought up again during the next Session. Phillips stated that members of the legislature have told him they would prefer the STC to work on this issue internally.
- This Ad Hoc Committee has been renamed with the objective of recommending improvements to the structure of the State Trails Council. Ten members with backgrounds in a variety of trail uses were selected along with two council members. The committee will review the vision and mission of the STC, and propose recommendations for changes.
- For a timeline, Ad Hoc Committee members will be holding their first meeting following this STC meeting and will meet a few times between now and next April. The Ad Hoc Committee will present a report to the Council at the 2009 April STC meeting. Mike McFadzen and Randy Harden will co-chair the committee, and Kathleen Wolski, Program Specialist for the DNR, will facilitate the meetings.

2009 STC Officer Election Process

- Officer elections have previously been in January, but to give officers a chance to start the year in a position, the STC decided to shift elections to the end of the fall meeting.
- Huber asked that Council Members send him nominations by the end of September for chair, vice-chair and secretary. Huber will bring a slate of those nominations for members to vote on in October.
- Motion to adjourn by McFadzen. Seconded by Webber. Meeting adjourned.