

MINUTES FINAL - as of 7/17/09
Governor's State Trails Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 28, 2009
Governor's Conference Room
116 East State Capitol, Madison, WI
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

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

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present: Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Gary Eddy, Joseph Warren

Legislators Present: Steven Kulig for Senator Jim Sullivan, Carol Reineking for Representative Van Akkeren,

Ad Hoc Committee Members Present: Ron Bergin, Alex Bub, Ken Linzmeyer, Bryan Much, Harold Schmidt, Sam Tobias

Others Present: Jim Maze, Rob McConnell, Dave Peterson, Judy Peterson, Luana Schneider, John Schnorr, Hank Wozniel

Agenda review/repair and approval of January meeting minutes

- Harden called the meeting to order. Approval of the January 12, 2009 meeting minutes by McFadzen. Seconded by Webber. Minutes approved.

Chair Report

- Harden provided a brief background about the Ad Hoc Committee and introduced committee members. The Ad Hoc Committee Report to the STC was distributed to Council Members and posted online prior to the meeting.

Ad Hoc Committee Presentation

- The committee presented their report to the Council and went through each of the nine recommendations to answer questions from Council Members. Bergin, Much and Linzmeyer presented the PowerPoint developed by the committee. Much stated the committee was focused to fairly represent all trail users. In the committee report, appendix A lists each member's primary and other trail uses.
- Webber asked how replacing "multi-use trails" in the mission statement would impact the STC and trails. Schuller stated changing this phrase does not affect the DNR as property master plans will determine the primary and other trail uses at each property. Some uses can work well with others on the same trail and some do not (much is dependent on circumstances such as location and volume of use). Multi-use is more of a quality of recreation experience issue. Phillips stated the way the language is written is good and the STC can work within that framework.

- Webber asked about the phrase in the Mission Statement, “trails that are easily accessed by the people of Wisconsin”. Schmidt stated this was a reference to geography as well as physical accessibility. The committee was looking to include language about establishing trails where people live in both the northern and southern parts of the state.
- Phillips asked why the three trail use categories identified in recommendation 2 did not include all uses. Much stated the biennial review of trail uses the committee describes in recommendation 3 would allow the STC to identify and modify (including expanding) the list of minor and major trail user groups for each category.
- Huber asked how the committee determined to make the two seats advisory members. Much stated the committee focused on having trail users as the voting seats. Tobias stated the committee wanted to have a balance of trail use representation and did not want to have any wildcards on the STC. Schmidt stated the committee still wanted the DOT and Disabled Users representatives at the table to hear their input, but kept the nine council seats to the major trail user groups.
- Webber asked about motorized water trails. Brown stated that typically water trails are associated with non-motorized uses, which is why the water trails representative is in the non-motorized/non-mechanized trail use category. Brown also stated that motorized water trails have historically been part of the DNR and that may arise again in the future.
- Webber asked how a biennial review of trail uses would be conducted. Biermeier stated the Council may need to have a sub-committee write the procedures that the entire STC could review and approve.
- Joque stated he supported having the Disabled Users representative as an advisory member and felt the DNR Accessibility Coordinator would be a good person for that role.
- Huber stated that if the DOT representative is not an official member of the Council, it is possible the Secretary of the DOT may not want to commit time to staffing an advisory member position. McFadzen stated that the STC may then need to have advisory or “ex-officio” members required to attend meetings. Their roles would need to be determined. Webber stated that non-voting members are still considered official members.
- Webber asked why an off-highway motorcycle (OHM) representative would replace a water trails representative. Much stated the committee was looking to achieve a balance of the trail use categories in the interim until the STC can increase the number of seats to 11. The committee determined the OHM representative was the first step to achieve that balance with the DOT and Disabled representatives becoming advisory members.
- McFadzen stated he did not agree with the recommendation to replace the water trails representative because the number of water trails users is much higher than OHM users in the state.

- Schuller stated the DNR will be continuing to work on developing a water trails program regardless of the seat on the Council.
- Phillips asked why a 4WD representative was not selected as a major trail user for a restructured nine-member council. Linzmeyer stated the committee voted on filling the last motorize seat with either a 4WD or OHM representative, and the consensus was for an OHM seat. Much stated that the committee recommended increasing the number of STC seats to 11 which would include a seat for a 4WD representative.
- Harden stated that the Governor's Office has been notified of the recommendations but expects that there should be further discussion. The Governor may alter or change some of the recommendations, including the committee's recommendation for new appointments to the Council.
- The DNR is working on updating the entire website and the recommendation to develop a web-based user guide for the STC will fit in nicely with the DNR website redesign.
- Phillips stated that increasing the number of seats on the council to 11 may be too low. The STC may want to expand on the number of seats to include the DOT, 4WD and other trail users.
- Webber motioned to table the discussion until the public can review and comment on the report. Seconded by Phillips. Motion carries. The STC will discuss the recommendations at the July meeting. Harden stated that committee members are invited to the next meeting if they are available. Harden and McFadzen acknowledged this was a tremendous effort on the part of the committee and commended them on their results. All committee members were applauded for their efforts and commitment.
- The DNR will set up a process for the public to comment on the Ad Hoc Committee report and recommendations. The DNR will gather all comments and feedback prior to the next STC meeting in July. The DNR will ask the STC for any recommendations they may want to move from the report to discuss separately.

Legislator Round Table

- Steven Kulig from Senator Jim Sullivan's office updated the Council about Special Committee on Enhancing Recreational Trails for Non-Motorized Use. Three items that came out of the committee are being drafted to introduce to the Legislature; 1) Expanding trespassing laws, 2) Creating a Non-Motorized Trails Council, and 3) A funding mechanism for maintaining and developing non-motorized trails.

State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Equestrian.* The Midwest Horse Fair was held in Madison on April 17-19. It is in the top three horse expos in the nation with an estimated crowd of 52,000 for the three-day show. Carpenter passed out a handout of an Economic Impact Study of horses in Wisconsin by the Wisconsin State Horse Council and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The majority of horse owners use their horses for pleasure or trail riding. Dane County ranks first in the state for number of horses.

- *Department of Transportation.* The DOT has been busy for the last few months with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) otherwise known as the Federal stimulus package. There have been a lot of trails applications for the \$15 million in Transportation Enhancement funds. The time frame to start these projects has been condensed for the stimulus package.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* 2008 was the second year in a row for great snow conditions in Wisconsin. There has been a strong resurgence of classical skiing in addition to the popular skate-style skiing. The American Birkebeiner was dominated by regional skiers, including those from Wisconsin. The Birkebeiner set a maximum number of skiers this year for what the snow conditions could handle. The future structure of cross-country skiing may be changing from school-based teams to more of a club-based structure. Clubs are taking a bigger role as schools have limited funding.
- *Hiking/Walking.* Phillips will be working and talking with legislators to keep the work of the Non-Motorized Trails Legislative Committee progressing forward. Phillips stated that Wisconsin has a lot of possibilities for not only water trails in the state, but also to link water trails with hiking trails.
- *Bicycling.* The first annual Bike Summit is being held today at the Capitol. Over 450 bicycle advocates are lobbying at the Capitol. The Summit was organized in five weeks and the industry stepped up to help. Webber passed out a handout about the Bike Summit. A Bill to protect all road users in relationship to parked cars is being voted on in the Assembly. The International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA) is considering having their next bike summit in Madison, which would be the first time they have held it east of the Mississippi River. If the Olympics were to come to Chicago, three major bicycle events could be held in Wisconsin in the near future.
- *Users with Disabilities.* After the January STC meeting Terry Larson was able to connect with Andy Janicki, the DNR Accessibility Coordinator. Janicki sent Larson some recommendations on different size widths for vehicles, roll cages, safety courses for Light Utility Vehicles and ATVs, and other safety equipment for people with disabilities.
- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* The next youth education expo will be May 14 and 15 in Beaver Dam. The Land Manager workshop at WATVA's annual meeting went very well. One of the big issues discussed was the operation of motor vehicles while intoxicated. There was strong support for increased laws to tie-in OWI penalties with recreational vehicle use.

OWI and Trail Use Discussion

- Thornton passed out a meeting summary for the Recreational Vehicle OWI Tie-in meeting, attended by representatives of the Association of Wisconsin Snowmobile Clubs (AWSOC), State Waterways Commission, Wisconsin Association of Lakes, Off-Road Vehicle Council, Governor's Snowmobile Recreation Council, Wisconsin All-Terrain Vehicle Association and DNR.

- There were three recommendations that everyone agreed on at the meeting. A second OWI offense would be tied-in to the driver's license, if a license is currently suspended for an OWI, the OWI on a recreational vehicle would count as the second offense, and all penalties for OWI would be unified to the highest current penalties. The group determined that people can learn from mistakes, which is why the tie-in comes with the second offense.
- The Snowmobile Recreation Council will be voting on supporting the second offense tie-in after July. Other issues were not unanimous. There is a strong lobby from the Wisconsin Tavern League. Some people feel that existing laws should be enforced before making new ones. Thornton stated snowmobiling has gone away from being a family sport due in part to alcohol consumption and the speed of the machines.
- Thornton stated that instead of drafting a resolution he would like to send a letter to the Governor and DNR Secretary. Phillips motioned to draft a letter in support of an OWI tie-in to operation of a recreational vehicle. Seconded by Webber for discussion.
- Phillips asked if the letter should include intoxicated use of any trails. Thornton stated the Council may want to draft a separate letter or resolution for all trail use at a later time. Gary Eddy, DNR Snowmobile/ATV Administrator, stated Wisconsin's neighboring states have a tie-in with the driver's license. If a bill for the tie-in can be enacted by December 1, it will allow for feedback from the upcoming snowmobile season.
- Motion passed unanimously. Thornton and Phillips will draft a letter and send to Brown about three weeks following the meeting. Brown will distribute to Council Members, and members will vote electronically on supporting the letter before the July STC meeting.

DNR Report

- Like all state programs, the Wisconsin State Park System will be making some adjustments due to the budget. Coming into the summer season, Wisconsin State Parks are in better shape than many other state park systems. The focus will be to not change the quality of experience for park visitors. During winter, some Friends groups helped maintain ski trails. New campgrounds and facilities at Kohler-Andrae, Lake Kegonsa, Willow River and Harrington Beach state parks that will be opening in 2009 will help add revenue.
- The Straight Lake State Park Master Plan is nearing completion. The Ice Age Trail will pass through the property, and the DNR will look to have minimal facilities and road development at Straight Lake. The DNR will be finishing the master plan for Pike Lake, a unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest in 2009. The DNR will also be working on master plans for State Ice Age Trail Areas, including the Polk Kames area near Pike Lake, and master plan revisions for the two Kettle Moraine forests in 2010. Schuller passed out a handout about the Glacial Heritage Area. The concept is different from a state park. The DNR would work with counties for land acquisition and operation. The public lands in the area would be linked by a series of off-road and on-road trails.

- The concept plan for a motorized recreation area was taken to the Natural Resources Board in January. The NRB had many questions about the concept. The DNR has looked at a number of sites. The area would be a public partnership project.
- The Wisconsin State Park System will be starting a Trail Tenders program. The program will be like trail ambassadors. Trail Tenders will be out on the trails talking to users about trail etiquette and selling trail passes. A pilot program will start on the Military Ridge State Trail.
- The WSPS Trail crew will be starting up for the third year. Five crew members will be spending all of the 2009 season at Wyalusing State Park rebuilding trails that were damaged by flooding in 2007.
- Over the coming months the DNR will be working on developing trail standards and guidelines. Brown will be contacting user groups to participate and help develop the guidelines for different trails. The guidelines will be best practices for developing sustainable trails.
- There are two scheduled training sessions for trail building this year. One is in Grantsburg in the La Crosse area, and the other is in Governor Knowles State Forest, which the Wisconsin State Horse Council is sponsoring with the DNR.
- Brown outlined some of the funding in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that will or could benefit trails. The National Park Service, National Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be receiving some funds from the stimulus package. The Federal Highway Administration will also be receiving some funding, which could be used for complete streets. Other benefits to trails could come from the National Office of Community Service, which may establish programs similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and from the National Endowment for the Arts, for trails that have art along them.
- Thornton asked if the problem with grooming funds for some snowmobile clubs had been resolved. Brown stated there are not as many issues as earlier in the year, but she is also working with managers on any additional issues that come up. A model that has worked at some properties is having managers sit down with the clubs to go over what the trail expenses are and where the money is being spent. Communication is key to helping everyone be more comfortable with how the funds are being used.

Citizen Advisory Committee for Stewardship Program Access Update

- The Citizen Advisory Committee has completed their work and has made some recommendations. The draft administrative rule will be going to the NRB and public hearings will be held this summer. All materials from the Citizen Advisory Committee meetings and information about Stewardship Program Access are available on the DNR website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/stewardship/CAC/index.html>.

Other Business of the State Trails Council

- Brown passed out a handout about electric motorcycles. The issue of how to categorize an electric motorcycle came up during the Ad Hoc Committee meetings. Huber stated manufactures are building electric bicycles. Harden stated there are different types of Light Utility Vehicles, including those that are electric. The Council will discuss this issue along with the recommendations of the STC Ad Hoc Committee at the July meeting.
- Carpenter reminded the STC that the details of the projects awarded RTP funds had been requested but not yet received. The STC received proposed recommendations to the ranking criteria at the January meeting, but not the project awards.

Public comment

- Luana Schneider stated that when Council Members give their own reports, it is apparent some user groups need more representation on the STC to legitimize their use. The STC member reports are for individual uses, and not all user groups have a report such as 4WD vehicles and off-highway motorcycles. Schneider stated she was disappointed in the Council by not taking more action today on the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations. Schneider would have liked to see more information in the Committee report about the communication between different users at STC meetings. Schneider stated she would also like to see the Council have a way for the public to sit in on STC meetings electronically, such as through the web or other means. Harold Schmidt stated the Ad Hoc Committee had a lot of discussion about the major trail user groups in each category having the responsibility of representing all user groups in their category. Harden stated it is a positive sign that the 4WD and off-highway motorcycle groups are also trying to establish their own councils and the STC will be discussing and taking action on the Ad Hoc Committee recommendations at the next meeting.
- Dave Peterson stated he felt the Ad Hoc Committee Report was a very good starting point for restructuring the Council.
- Judy Peterson stated the Committee did a good job with the report but should also consider representation from a multi-use trail user. Some users will not want to be labeled into one use or category. Disabled users are also a group increasing in numbers, with an aging population looking to stay active by using electric golf carts and other vehicles, which the Council needs to take into consideration.
- Motion to adjourn by McFadzen. Seconded by Thornton. Meeting adjourned.