



State of Wisconsin  
**GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL**

## Meeting Minutes

Final - as of 4/5/11

**Thursday, January 20, 2011**

Teleconference - Room 613, GEF 2 Building, 101 S. Webster Street, Madison  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

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

**WI DNR Staff Present:** Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Tim Parsons, Joseph Warren

**Others Present:** Rob McConnell, Bryan Much, Luana Schneider, Hank Wozniel

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### 10:00 A.M. – Agenda review/repair and approval of August meeting minutes

- Harden called the meeting to order. Motion for approval of the October 29, 2010 meeting minutes by McFadzen. Seconded by Webber. Minutes approved.

### 10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- The STC agreed, with a few changes, to propose legislation to increase membership on the council from 9 to 11 members at the October 2010 meeting. The legislation has potential sponsors for bipartisan support (Senators Holperin and Leibham). Harden attended several meetings with the Department of Tourism in his capacity with WATVA, and stated he also used the opportunity to promote all trails and to support the proposed STC legislation.

### 10:15 A.M. – State Trails Council Member Reports

- *Bicycling.* Long-distance winter bicycle races are growing in popularity. The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin (BFW) met with Governor Walker at the beginning of January and has been reaching out to new legislators. Governor Walker indicated he was very supportive of bicycling in Wisconsin. Webber stated that as of December she is on the board of the BFW. The new federal transportation bill is drafted and may be soon coming up for a vote and includes funding for trails, although less than in recent years.
- *Hiking/Walking.* Phillips stated he will be in Scotland walking during the April meeting and will seek a non-voting delegate to attend in his place at the April STC meeting.
- *Equestrian.* The Wisconsin State Horse Council has been welcoming and reaching out to state and federal congressional delegates, and working with them on legislative issues. Several funding programs for disabled veterans are benefitting horse riding and cross-country skiing and providing disabled veterans a way to engage in these activities.
- *Department of Transportation.* In November the DOT held several Complete Streets workshops with nearly 700 attendees. The DOT is also finishing the guidelines. The law may result in an increase in trails within highway corridors, especially when land is purchased for highway construction.
- *Snowmobiling.* The snowmobile season has been good so far. Fatalities are down (three this year versus 11 last year at the same time). Snowmobile clubs got back 82 percent of each dollar spent on grooming last season. Take a Friend snowmobiling week is in February. The annual AWSC



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convention will be in Wausau in March. The DNR is opening and closing state snowmobile trails in accordance with the local opening/closing of trails.

- *Users with Disabilities.* Joque complimented McFadzen's recent article in *Silent Sports* magazine on cross-country skiing for the disabled (sit skis). There are six state parks with sit skis available for use. This is a significant advancement in promoting trail use by the disabled. Joque recommended two good resources: USFS accessibility guidelines and National Parks Accessibility pages.
- *Tourism/Business.* Things are moving ahead in business and tourism. 2010 was a good year for many resort owners. Tourism funding is looking positive for the future. The new Secretary of Tourism, Stephanie Klett formerly of the television show *Discover Wisconsin*, has significant media experience and understands the importance of advertising
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* About 8,700 skiers have registered for the American Birkebeiner. The Telemark Lodge is still closed. Heated shelters are an important amenity for ski trails. Fundraising for shelters at Kettle Moraine State Forest – Northern Unit and Blue Mound State Park are currently underway. Cable will be the site of the 2011 United States Snowshoe Association National Championships.
- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* An Off-Highway Motorcycle registration program is over with the Legislative Reference Bureau and is currently being worked on. A similar program for 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles is also being worked on. WATVA's annual meeting will be held in April. Coalition for Recreation Trails is asking for supporters from all trail user groups to sign on with them in support of trails and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

### **10:45 A.M. – Bylaws Subcommittee Report**

- Phillips reported on the work of the Bylaws Subcommittee. While the subcommittee members were reviewing the bylaws to propose changes as a result of reviewing the STC structure, several other potential changes were briefly discussed. Webber submitted a report on the open meeting laws and suggestions for how to ensure that the STC bylaws are clear and in compliance.
- While the first assignment to amend the bylaws to reflect the new STC structure was drafted, the additional issues of public participation also need to be discussed. The Natural Resources Board has registration where the public can sign up to speak on a particular topic when called on by the chairperson. Thornton stated he would like the STC to be able to discuss (without taking action) items brought up in public comment or by the public. Webber and Brown will draft a proposal for the additional bylaws changes and the subcommittee will introduce all proposed bylaws changes at the April STC meeting for discussion.

### **11:00 A.M. – Application Review Subcommittee Report**

- Carpenter reported on the work of the Application Review Subcommittee. Applications for the first round of STC positions are due by February 15. The subcommittee will collect the applications and plan to meet in early March to review all applications. Once the subcommittee determines a meeting date, the DNR will set up a teleconference for the subcommittee. The five seats currently open on the council are the non-voting positions; 4-wheel drive vehicles, boards and small wheels, non-motorized water trails, off-highway motorcycles, and off-road bicycles/mountain bikes. The subcommittee will introduce the applicants for the non-voting positions at the April STC meeting.

### **11:15 P.M. – DNR Report**

- There have been many personnel changes; the DNR has a new Secretary and executive team, Division Administrator, and staff in the Bureau of Parks and Recreation (Property Management Section Chief,



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Parks Ecologist, Capital Development Specialist), as well as many retirements. The DNR is also planning to hire a Trail Coordinator for the northeast area of the state.

- Upcoming and anticipated projects include; an update of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), transfer of management of the Capital City State Trail and Capital Springs State Recreation Area to Dane County, an agreement for operation of a Glacial Heritage Area, Devil's Lake State Park's 100th anniversary, hunting opportunities on State Ice Age Trail Areas, participation in the national "America's State Parks" program to tell the story about state parks (state park systems have more visitation annually than national parks do), the "Get Outdoors" initiative, a Lake Michigan Water Trail, creation of Administrative Code to guide management of State Ice Age Trail Areas, and working in Door County with the Town of Gibraltar on the feasibility of a segment of a transportation and recreation trail along Highway 42 and Peninsula State Park.
- Recently issues have surfaced regarding cross-country ski use on snowmobile trails that the department is working to address. Funding of the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund is being debated in congress. A list of suggested appointees for the Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council was sent to the Governor's office and appointments may be made in the future. The DNR is continuing planning for establishment of a motorized recreation area. Potential sites have been looked at across the state, and most recently in southwest Wisconsin. The DNR is looking at many issues, including local acceptance for any facilities. The motorized area could be a tourism draw and economic boost, and could potentially provide a number of recreation opportunities.

### **11:30 P.M. – Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Update**

- Tim Parsons, DNR Financial Assistance Specialist and RTP Grant Manager spoke with the council. The \$30,000 cap is still in place. The 30-30-40 split must be maintained between motorized-nonmotorized-diversified projects. With the next set of grant applications, the split, and the funding amounts will be considered in the application process.
- For the last round of RTP, the average project cost was \$366,000, and the median project cost was \$96,000. All eligible projects received funding in the last round of grants. Parsons stated the importance of getting more people to apply in the next round. Parsons will provide Brown with an announcement of the grant program funding cycle to be sent out to the Trail News email list.
- As follow-up from the conversation at the last STC meeting, Parsons recommends that the cap move from \$30,000 to \$45,000. This proposal will be on the agenda as an action item for the STC to discuss and vote on at the April meeting.

### **11:45 P.M. – Public Comment**

- Bryan Much stated off-highway motorcyclists have been participating in winter riding using studded tires, and there have been winter endurance (distance, time) events held in the state. Much stated the variety of uses on the Wild Goose State Trail is a good example of trail compatibility between users.
- Luana Schneider with the Wisconsin 4WD Association thanked Biermeier for an updated of the motorized recreation area and stated that user groups can offer assistance with local acceptance of these facilities.

### **12:00 P.M. – Adjourn**

- Motion to adjourn by Phillips. Seconded by Thornton. Meeting adjourned.



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**Submitted Written Comments to the STC**

- 1/11/11 – I am an avid trail user, and enjoy all the silent sports our state has to offer. I am especially blessed to live near the Flambeau river state forest which I must say is one of the best kept secrets of the cross country skiing world! And they are so pleasant and helpful to deal with. I also work in the field of nutrition and obesity prevention and feel maintaining our silent sports trails is one piece of the complex puzzle in the fight against obesity, not to mention just plain quality of life. Thanks to all who make these trails possible (especially Flambeau Hills ski trails!) Sincerely, *Wendy Rebne*
  
- 1/10/11 – The Great River Trail was a mess most of the summer due to application of new gravel, destruction of bridges with truck traffic, bridges were left so uneven as to be dangerous, the edges were not adequately mowed until late into summer, over hanging branches could easily strike in face and then late in Fall more gravel added between 8 and 9 mile markers and never leveled. I am not sure how this kind of repair work is to attract visitors when Minnesota has great paved trails just across the river. Experimental Forest south of Bangor was forested again but no thought is ever given to maintaining a buffer so ski trail is shaded enough to protect snow and offer wind barrier. Hikers continually destroy trail and even though State statute is posted it is never monitored for abusers. This is a great little forest and I do appreciate the need to log the forest, to provide public hunting area and be open to other users like horse back riders and mountain bike riders but somehow one user must respect the other or be held accountable. Regretfully this scenario is played out over and over again in our State. *Butch Bobenmoyer*