



State of Wisconsin
GOVERNOR'S STATE TRAILS COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

FINAL - as of 7/8/11

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Room G09, GEF 2 Building, 101 S. Webster Street, Madison

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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

State Trails Council Members not in attendance: Dave Phillips

WI DNR Staff Present: Secretary Cathy Stepp, Deputy Secretary Matt Moroney, Kurt Thiede, Dan Schuller, Peter Biermeier, Brigit Brown, Courtney LeClair, Tim Parsons, Jeff Prey, Joseph Warren

Others Present: Alex Bub, Roger Kussman, Rob McConnell, Bryan Much, Dave Newman, Dave Peterson, Judy Peterson, Gene Roberts, Luana Schneider, John Schnorr, Hank Wozniel

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

- Harden called the meeting to order. Motion for approval of the January 20, 2011 meeting minutes by Thornton. Seconded by McFadzen. Minutes approved.

10:10 A.M. – Chair Report

- Harden attended and spoke at the Alabama Trails Conference, April 1-3. It was a conference for all trails, and to raise the awareness of trails and the benefit they are to tourism. Harden passed out a handout for the conference. Harden asked if a trails conference providing a cross reference of all trails was something Wisconsin could do as well. The last trails conference in Wisconsin was in 2002. The council will discuss further at the July STC meeting.

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

- *Bicycling.* The state bike summit will be April 19 at the State Capitol. About \$5 million in bike/ped was removed from the budget, which will be one of the topics of discussion at the summit. The first designated U.S. bike route across Wisconsin will be from Winona, Minnesota to Milwaukee. The route will utilize many already existing trails, including the Great River, La Crosse, Elroy Sparta, 400, Glacial Drumlin and Hank Aaron State Trails among others. Other routes across the state will eventually be implemented. Signage for the route may be eligible for DOT funds.
- *Equestrian.* Trail building workshops are planned for June, and one will be hosted by the Wisconsin State Horse Council, June 26-29. Several campsites in the horse campground at the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest will be electrified for summer. The project was completely user group funded. The Midwest Horse Fair is the weekend of April 15-17.
- *Department of Transportation.* The DOT has awarded projects for the three main programs for trail funding CMAQ, Transportation Enhancements and Bike/Ped Facilities for the next biennium. For the next biennium the funds available may be lower at both the state and federal levels. The DOT has finished updates for the statewide bike map. This map is available from the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and online by county.



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- *Snowmobiling.* The snowmobile season ended on March 31 in most areas of the state, with the season ending sooner in northern Wisconsin. Fatalities were down from past years, but many of the fatalities were related to alcohol and speed. Legislation to link a ticket for operating a snowmobile while intoxicated to the operator's drivers' license will need to start over. The court case involving the rail corridor in Bayfield County will be going to the Federal Court of Appeals in Chicago. If upheld, the next appeal would go to the U.S. Supreme Court. Snowmobile clubs are working on a connection of the Wild Rivers State Trail to the Tri-County Corridor near Highways 2 and 53.
- *Users with Disabilities.* The Department of Justice ruling relating to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the use of Power Driven Mobility Devices (PDMDs) on trails will be discussed during the DNR report. Due to time commitments with UW-Stevens Point, Joque will not be re-applying for a term with the STC, but will attend the July meeting at the Mead State Wildlife Area.
- *Tourism/Business.* Stephanie Klett, former host of *Discover Wisconsin*, is the new Secretary of the Department of Tourism. The budget for the Department of Tourism for the next biennium has been proposed to see an increase. People are taking shorter vacations and looking to stay closer to home, and Wisconsin is looking to have a good year for Tourism spending. The tourism industry is also looking to expand using social media such as Facebook and Twitter.
- *Cross-Country Skiing.* The skiing season is over in the southern part of the state with some trails still open in northern Wisconsin. Cross-country skiing has seen very good growth on the youth side. Over 11,000 skiers attended the Birkebeiner for all events which was a record. The Wisconsin Nordic Network funded about 40-50 youth scholarships for races for kids to have that experience. The World Snowshoe Championship was held in Cable, providing a good economic boost to the area.
- *Off-Highway Vehicles.* Legislation is moving forward to increase membership on the State Trails Council. One of the next steps will be to get co-sponsors of the bill. The ATV safety bill will need to have DNR certification. Working on the ATV side to try a free ATV registration weekend, and may try to coincide with the free parks weekend in June. Motorcycles, 4-Wheel Drive trucks, and UTVs are continuing work on registration programs.

11:00 A.M. – Bylaws Subcommittee Report

- The Bylaws Subcommittee met to discuss changes to the STC Bylaws. The subcommittee looked at updating the bylaws to ensure they are in compliance with the State Open Meetings Law. Webber passed out a handout of possible revisions to the bylaws, including tightening up the meeting agenda and allowing for public comment after each topic/item, similar to the public comment period for the Natural Resources Board. The subcommittee will draft some changes to the bylaws, and bring back to the council for the July STC meeting.

11:15 A.M. – Application Review Subcommittee Report

- Carpenter, Maletzke and McFadzen reviewed applications for the non-voting positions on the State Trails Council between the January and April STC meetings. The subcommittee expressed thanks to all who applied.
- On behalf of the subcommittee, McFadzen motioned to recommend Bryan Much as the representative for Off-Highway Motorcycles for approval to the DNR Secretary. Seconded by Thornton. Motion passes.



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- On behalf of the subcommittee, McFadzen motioned to recommend Luana Schneider as the representative for 4-Wheel Drive Vehicles for approval to the DNR Secretary. Seconded by Huber. Motion passes.
- The Bureau of Parks and Recreation will send a letter to the Secretary asking for approval of both positions. The STC will also solicit additional applications for the non-voting positions of Off-road Bicycles, Water Trails, and Boards/Small Wheels.

11:45 A.M. – Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Cap Proposal

- Tim Parsons, DNR Financial Assistance Specialist and RTP Grant Manager met with the council to discuss increasing the RTP construction grant cap from the current \$30,000 amount. Parsons passed out a handout to council members explaining the rationale for the increase. A grant cap of \$45,000 would put the total closer to the average request. The grant cap does not help larger projects, such as rail-to-trail conversions and bridge crossings. Parsons also suggested having a grant cap of \$200,000 every third year for larger projects.
- Harden asked if the \$200,000 projects in the third year would take all the funds away from some of the highly ranked smaller projects. Parsons stated the STC can also look again at the ranking criteria for awards to make changes. Carpenter stated the larger projects also have other larger funding options as opposed to RTP, and user groups can be more involved in the program if they can see some smaller projects can still be awarded funds. McFadzen stated he was in favor of raising the cap, but interested in reserving some money for smaller projects. Huber stated communities are finding it more difficult to find matching funds for projects. Parsons suggested a 2/3 to 1/3 split in the third year to include a \$200,000 and a \$45,000 cap respectively.
- Motion to increase the RTP construction grant cap from \$30,000 to \$45,000, with a grant cap of \$200,000 every third year for 2/3 of available funds (1/3 of available funds in the third year would be reserved for smaller projects at the \$45,000 grant cap). Seconded by Huber. Motion passes.

12:30 P.M. – Lunch and Introduction of Special Guests

- DNR Secretary Cathy Stepp, Deputy Secretary Matt Moroney, and Division of Land Administrator Kurt Thiede met with the council during lunch for introductions and discussion. The new administration acknowledged the importance of recreation and trails to Wisconsin's economy and Thiede stated he has been regularly meeting with the Department of Tourism. Secretary Stepp stated she was looking forward working with the council and welcomed comments from all in attendance.
- Gene Roberts, with Human Powered Trails, stated that he hopes the Secretary's Office will look at the DNR's position on access to state lands. Roberts stated that he would like the DNR to allow more access for users where appropriate. Deputy Moroney stated that the Secretary's Office wants to be receptive of public recommendations and is open to suggestions. The DNR will strive to balance the interests of the economy with environmental factors.
- Alex Bub, with the Wisconsin Off-Highway Motorcycle Association, stated that Michigan has a lot of off-road motorcycle opportunities for users which Wisconsin is missing out on. Bub stated that user groups are also working on registration programs to generate fees to help establish trails in Wisconsin.
- Roger Kussman, with the Wisconsin Off-Highway Vehicle Association, stated that Michigan and Minnesota also have developed off-road vehicle parks and Wisconsin is losing tourism money as users have to travel out of state to find these opportunities. Schuller stated the DNR continuing planning for establishment of a motorized recreation area. The area could also have the potential for various trails.



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- Luana Schneider stated that Wisconsin could benefit from an ATV sticker program that is used in several states by reciprocity, but is not currently offered in Wisconsin. Schneider stated she would also like to see more access and shared use of trails where appropriate.

1:00 P.M. – Lake Michigan Water Trail and SCORP Presentations

- Jeff Prey, Senior Planner with the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, updated the council on the Lake Michigan Water Trail and the 2011-2016 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The water trail along Wisconsin's segment of Lake Michigan will include a series of access points from Illinois to Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The DNR plans to finish SCORP in 2012. Information and updates for both planning projects are available on the DNR website:
 - http://dnr.wi.gov/master_planning/lakemichigan/
 - <http://dnr.wi.gov/planning/scorp/>

1:30 P.M. – DNR Report

- The Wisconsin State Park System has done well over the past year from a revenue standpoint, and is faring better than most states. The Park System will be looking to move forward in filling its vacancy rate in the near future. The State Park System will be installing a number of eco-boxes at various parks this summer. The eco-boxes are an audio-interpretive machine, which is powered by a hand-crank. The boxes can hold up to four different interpretive messages, and can be in different languages. The first box will be installed at Devil's Lake. Schuller passed out a handout describing the eco-box units.
- Master Plans in progress include Capital Springs State Recreation Area, High Cliff State Park, Point Beach State Forest, and the Cross Plains Ice Age Complex. Michigan recently bought land on their side of the Menominee River in the Upper Peninsula, across from the Menominee River State Park and Recreation Area in Wisconsin. The DNR will be looking to start master planning for the Mukwonago River Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest in Waukesha and Walworth counties. The State Park System will be looking into the possibility of conducting master plans on a landscape scale, as opposed to a property by property basis. The DNR will be developing hunting proposals for State Ice Age Trail Areas, and will be taking out for public comment during the summer.
- The new administration has been very supportive of parks and their development. Capital Development projects for the next biennium include new campgrounds at Buckhorn and Straight Lake state parks, repairs to existing facilities, an entrance station at Amnicon Falls State Park. A new campground, entrance station and shower building will be opening at Governor Thompson State Park this year.
- The State Park System has received donations for trail enhancements, such as lighting for cross-country ski trails and improvements to shelters. Blue Mound State Park has received donations for shelter to be built at the ski trailhead, sponsored by the Friends Group and private donations. The donations will also be used to set up an endowment fund, where the interest can be used to fund maintenance and upkeep.
- Upcoming events will provide a lot of exposure for volunteerism and for getting outdoors. The third annual Work Play Earth Day events will begin the weekend of April 16 and will be held at different state parks for several weekends. National Trails Day is the first Saturday in June, and State Park Open House Day is the first Sunday in June. The same weekend (June 4-5) is also Free Fishing weekend in Wisconsin. National Public Lands Day is the third Saturday in September.



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- Work is progressing for the Hank Aaron State Trail in conjunction with the large Interstate construction at the Zoo interchange in Milwaukee. The Wolf River State Trail received an application to allow off-highway motorcycles on the ATV portion of the trail. Possible extensions to state trails include, extending the Mountain-Bay State Trail west, further into the city of Weston, extending the Newton Blackmour State Trail east to get closer to the city of Green Bay, and extending the Wild Goose State Trail further north into the city of Fond du Lac.
- The sustainable trail trainings in June are open to anyone who manages or volunteers on public trails. Any STC members wishing to attend should contact Brown. One training will be in La Crosse and one at the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. The State Park System will be looking for approval to continue with the Trail Crew. The State Park System will be holding bicycle and pedestrian safety training for law enforcement staff in early May. The curriculum will be similar to the DOT program, and is designed to facilitate more patrols in the parks done by foot/bike.
- The DNR received more information on the Federal ruling to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) about Power-Driven Mobility Devices (PDMDs) on trails. According to the ruling, PDMDs can be used on trails and other public facilities unless an assessment to determine the compatibility of such devices is done to address public safety and environmental concerns. The DNR has posted more information about PDMDs on the Open the Outdoors website:
 - <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/at/af/open/pdmd.html>
- With the increased membership on the STC and available funding, the STC will need to have two telephone conferences and two in-person meetings in 2012. This will allow all members' expenses to still be covered.

2:30 P.M. – Invasive Species Best Management Practices

- Courtney LeClair, DNR Invasive Plant Education Specialist, updated the council about Invasive Species Best Management Practices. The DNR has been working to develop information about how different forms of recreation can spread invasive species, and how users can help with prevention. LeClair asked council members for help in getting the word out and distributing materials to user groups.

2:45 P.M. – Public Comment

- Public comments were made during the presentation of special guests over lunch.

3:00 P.M. – Adjourn

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